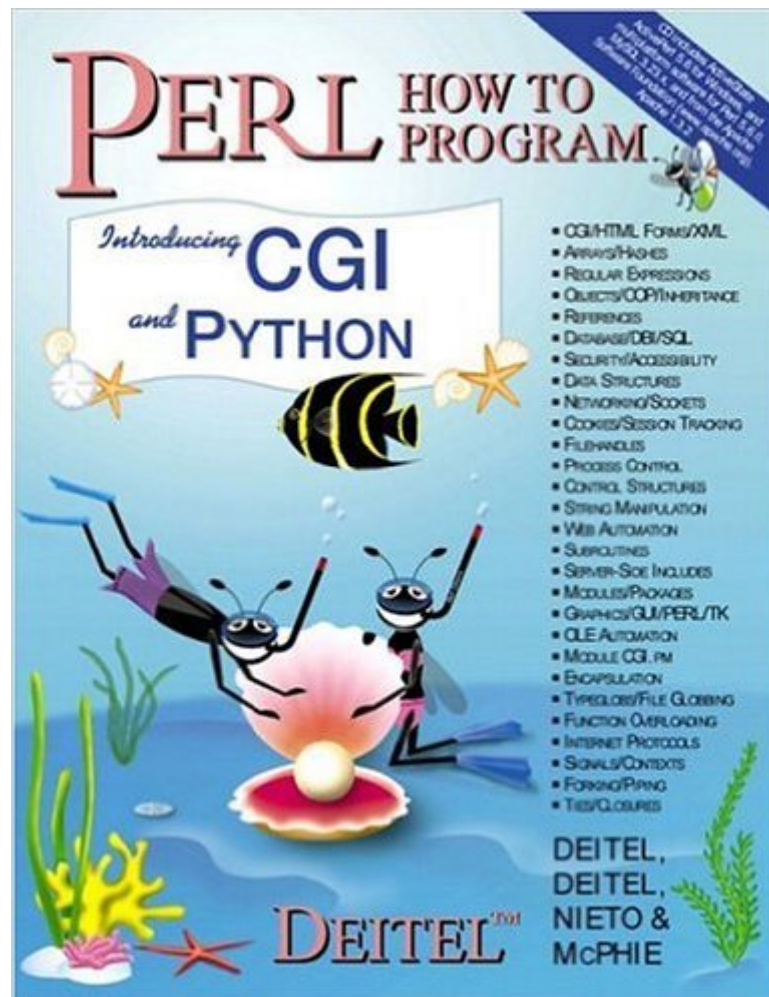


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Perl How To Program



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Customer Reviews

A Perl novice picking this book up will be impressed. It's big, the prose is good, and it seems to have a command of the subject. This is all misleading. The book was written by professional authors who pick up a language as they write a book. Perl isn't like other languages - the mindset and featureset are completely different. Writing effective Perl means getting a grasp on ideas taken from awk, sed, Lisp, C++, sh, and a dozen other places. This book teaches Perl as if it were another C dialect with a funny syntax. This certainly makes it easy to "learn Perl", but after reading over 800 pages, you'll actually learn very little Perl. And no wonder - large amounts of this book were cut and paste verbatim from other books Dietel wrote about C++ and Visual Basic! Nothing unique to Perl is discussed, such as Perl's excellent date manipulation facilities, object serialization, or indeed any module beyond the CGI module (on which a thousand books have been written). Descriptions of features are vague and half hearted showing lack of a clear understanding. To someone who knows Perl, this book sounds like a homework assignment where someone read about Perl and then wrote about their findings, uncertainties and all. Throughout the book, code listings basically work (I worked hard on that as a paid technical reviewer - my name is in the credits - and this was no small task) but they too completely miss the style, spirit, and indeed the point of programming Perl. They're riddled with security holes. They don't leverage modules, and Perl's CPAN repository is probably it's greatest strength. I don't like writing bad reviews. I don't like having failed to have persuaded the authors to address security. I wanted to like this book since it was the first I've

worked on.

Make no mistake, you are buying more than a book; this is a university COURSE in programming Perl. First, the peeves...Start with its price--\$\$\$--grrr! No solutions are to be had for the exercises???. The CD is really mickey-mouse. Think about it...this book is written by "Educators" on "computer programming" and the CD is little more than 1st generation "acceptable"?! If anyone could and should do better...?Right. Now the good points. Super organized...logically arranged, easy to find info as a reference. Each chapter tells you what you will learn, provides terminology to learn, and the obligatory quizzes at the end of the chapter reinforces what you just covered...all the pros of a good university text! The page layout--font, colors, etc., are all utilized with great effectiveness. The language of the text is closer to a 2nd or 3rd year text. You are definitely not talked down to. I found the language to be in the upper level of my comfort zone. I had to slow down and think. What makes it acceptable as an introductory text is that the authors are very precise and clear with their terminology/definitions. It's all there in black and white but if you didn't catch definition A the way THEY defined it, definition B will bring you back. It can be rather slow moving at times, albeit complete. To be sure, more information couldn't be supplied in a text this size without a shoehorn. It is as complete and thorough as anyone could hope. The teaching method is to show a morsel of programming which you then learn by dissecting for understanding. The code works. It all works. Unfortunately you aren't given much opportunity to implement what you have learned outside of playing with the illustrated code (since the exercises have no solutions).

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