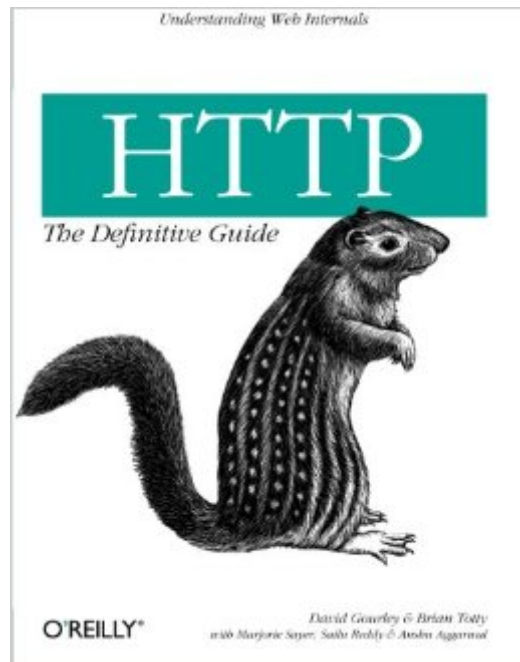# HTTP: The Definitive Guide (Definitive Guides)

Synopsis

Behind every web transaction lies the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) --- the language of web browsers and servers, of portals and search engines, of e-commerce and web services. Understanding HTTP is essential for practically all web-based programming, design, analysis, and administration.While the basics of HTTP are elegantly simple, the protocol's advanced features are notoriously confusing, because they knit together complex technologies and terminology from many disciplines. This book clearly explains HTTP and these interrelated core technologies, in twenty-one logically organized chapters, backed up by hundreds of detailed illustrations and examples, and convenient reference appendices. HTTP: The Definitive Guide explains everything people need to use HTTP efficiently -- including the "black arts" and "tricks of the trade" -- in a concise and readable manner.In addition to explaining the basic HTTP features, syntax and guidelines, this book clarifies related, but often misunderstood topics, such as: TCP connection management, web proxy and cache architectures, web robots and robots.txt files, Basic and Digest authentication, secure HTTP transactions, entity body processing, internationalized content, and traffic redirection.Many technical professionals will benefit from this book. Internet architects and developers who need to design and develop software, IT professionals who need to understand Internet architectural components and interactions, multimedia designers who need to publish and host multimedia, performance engineers who need to optimize web performance, technical marketing professionals who need a clear picture of core web architectures and protocols, as well as untold numbers of students and hobbyists will all benefit from the knowledge packed in this volume.There are many books that explain how to use the Web, but this is the one that explains how the Web works. Written by experts with years of design and implementation experience, this book is the definitive technical bible that describes the "why" and the "how" of HTTP and web core technologies. HTTP: The Definitive Guide is an essential reference that no technically-inclined member of the Internet community should be without.

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Customer Reviews

This book is more than just an HTTP reference. In fact the name of the book may even be a bit misleading. While it does an excellent job of describing the "what", "why", and "how" of HTTP, it goes a great deal further by describing how the various technologies that interact with HTTP work. And since HTTP is the very foundation of the Web, this book ends up being a great guide to the guts of all of WWW.If you ever had a question about how a certain piece of Internet technology works, there is a good chance you will find it described in this book. From various types of Internet gateways, servers, and proxies, to security, content publishing & distribution, and HTTP related performance issues.The topics are dealt in an insightful, practical way - full of useful examples, and "tricks of the trade". The writing style is very engaging, and accessible even to non-technical readers. Authors' knowledge and passion for the subject matter shows through. I have had the good fortune of working with the authors, and I can't think of a more qualified bunch of people to write this book.Size of the book appears a bit daunting first, but you don't need to read it cover to cover. Just pick your topic of interest, or keep the book as a reference. I have been closely involved with developing HTTP related high performance Internet servers/gateways/proxies for six years, and I haven't seen a better book on the topic.

I had never thought of HTTP in such a broad scale before I read "HTTP::The Definitive Guide". Apparently, Web sites and Web browsers are not the only things that should come to mind when one thinks of HTTP. Flexibility of the protocol made it home for so many breakthroughs of the Internet. It's amazing that there were no comprehensive textbooks covering the topic until today.Organizing such enormous data in a 500-line book is a challenge already. But authors managed to go even beyond. The result was a well organized, comprehensive and amazingly easy to follow book.The book is organized into 6 large sections. Each section is split into Chapters. Wherever appropriate, authors use figures and diagrams to illustrate the point.The first section,

called "Web's Foundation" covers most of the things an average web developer may already have known. It starts off with a chapter on HTTP Overview, and covers such topics as URLs, HTTP Messages - requests and responses, connections - parallel, persistent and pipeline. Some of the highlights are HTTP versions and their differences, URL conversion algorithms and status codes.The second section, called "HTTP Architecture", is probably the most informative section with lots of gory details. It discusses existing technologies that make things happen - players of the Web. Starts with Web Servers that actually serve the original content. Takes you step by step what exactly happens once the Server accepts the request from your browser and displays you the page. Other technologies, such as Proxies, Caching, Gateways, Tunnels and Relays are very well covered. They even talk about Web Robots (a.k.a. Crawlers) and allocate over 30 exciting pages on these both annoying and incredibly useful "creatures". The section is finished with a brief overview of HTTP-NG, also called "Next Generation HTTP"."Identification, Authorization, and Security" is the next section, that talks about just that. Detailed coverage on Cookies, Basic and Digestion Authentication available. Walks you through the architecture of HTTPS, a.k.a SSL/TLC and algorithms used.Fourth section is on Encoding, Internationalization and Content Negotiation.Fifth section is on Content Publishing and Distribution. Types of web hosting and Publishing systems - all covered. Also allocated good deal of time on explaining Redirections and Load Balancing - very useful topic. Wraps up the discussion with a chapter on Logging and Usage tracking.Last, over 100 pages of the book are all useful Appendixes.If you really want to understand how the Web really works (I mean, really), this is a "must have" book.

You think you may know enough HTTP, it's just a simple application level protocol eh? Hold your thought till you read this book. I borrowed this book from a library merely for doing some research on HTTP connection management and secure authentication. However, the more I read, the more I'm amazed there're lots of practical and interesting topics with so rich but not boring details. The book uses quite numbers of pictures to depict different handshaking protocols and complicated concepts, very easy to follow and understand. It is certainly not the HTTP specification reprint. It tells you what, why, where, and how. It is as the name suggested --- The Definitive Guide.This book gives you very resourceful details on how HTTP works with a wild range of topics like Caching, Proxies, Gateway, Tunneling, Web Robots, Connection Management, Cookies, Various Authentication, Security, i18n, Hosting, and even Load Balancing! For example, it addresses how web crawlers work, really the inside out information, how a web crawler can back track their visited paths and what other alternatives to prevent & resolve loops & dups.HTTP is becoming the

'operating system' for distributed applications in Internet. No doubt in my mind, from beginners, advanced users, even to researchers, will surely be benefitted from this excellent book. The authors really did a superb job. Five Stars!

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