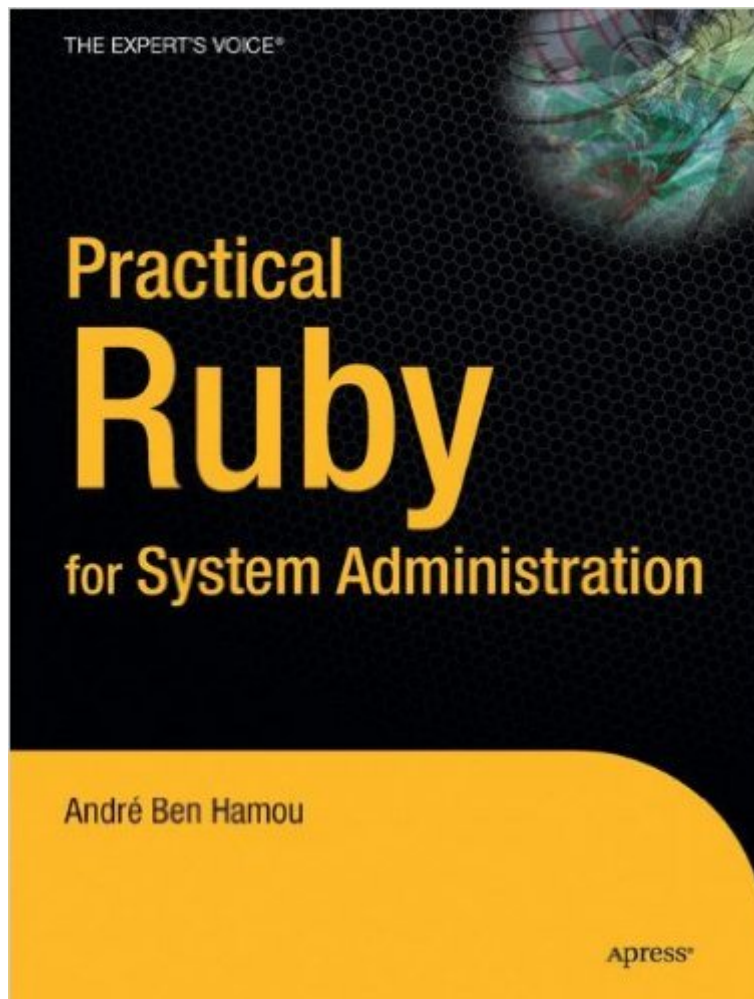# Practical Ruby For System Administration (Expert's Voice In Open Source)

Synopsis

Ruby has set the world on fire, proving itself a serious challenger to Perl and Python in all spheres. In particular, more and more people are discovering that Ruby's flexibility, superb feature set, and gentle learning curve make it a natural choice for system administration tasks, from the humblest server to the largest enterprise deployment. Within the pages of Practical Ruby for System Administration, you'll learn the Ruby way to construct files, tap into clouds of data, build domain-specific languages, perform network traffic analysis, and more. Based on author André Ben Hamou's own experiences working as a system administrator, this book will help you pick up practical tips on Ruby coding style, learn how to analyze and improve script performance, and make use of no-nonsense advice on scripting workflow, including testing and documentation. Above all, you'll come to appreciate the sheer power of Ruby and the hundreds of benefits it offers for system administration. This book places equal emphasis on fundamental Ruby concepts as well as practical how-tos. It uses examples from other languages to ease the transition to Ruby. The book is concise, entertaining, and informative—unlike many books aimed at system administrators, which can be overly long and stodgy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I thought this book would be great for me since I am a Unix administrator still relatively new to Ruby.

I was right. This book covers a wide variety of topics, from ActiveRecord, to parsing XML and several other normal administration tasks. (network programming, ssh, monitoring) The depth of the coverage is more than adequate in most places. I learned quite a bit about using Ruby to automate some tasks, and of equal importance, I learned about the infrastructure behind ruby. He reviews performance, documentation, rake, rdoc, gems and more.The book is a great length for system admins who are not hard-core developers, but looking to expand their skillset and get some real benefit quickly. The coverage of XML-RPC, and ActiveLDAP, I have already put to use.Besides having some really strong content, the delivery in this book is great. The author commonly sounds like a system admin just talking to his buddies at a bar. The quotes and fun sayings are numerous throughout, but this was my favorite.When talking about the confusing terminology use with ldap, (cn, ou, dc etc) he takes a two step approach.1. Use Wikipedia2. (Direct Quote) "Whenever anyone suggests continuing use/support/deployment of LDAP solutions, laugh in their face with such explosive force that your response may be easily interpreted as an act of war. "Disclaimer, the author thoroughly covers LDAP, and clearly understands it, it was just funny.I laughed out loud reading this book no less than a dozen times, which is rare with a technical book. If your interested in Ruby, check it out. You won't walk away an expert, but you will have a better understanding of Ruby and its usage.

If you've encountered Ruby primarily through Rails and know it chiefly as an elegant tool for writing web applications it's easy to miss its longer history as a tool for systems administration. Before Rails made Ruby the language-du-jour sysadmins bore much of the responsibility for keeping it alive, with the result that it has a suite of libraries helpful for server monitoring and a range of other administrative tasks.Author André Ben Hamou is clear that his book is not an exhaustive guide to using Ruby for systems administration. Rather than try to cover every possible context he provides an introduction to the language and some of its key libraries intended to give a feel for how it might be used and why it leads to succinct and expressive solutions. A number of the more important libraries for working with network protocols and files are covered, and there's a good introduction to rubygems and how they can be used and created.Having not done much work with Ruby on the command line I found the first couple of chapters, which cover command-line switches that can help with one-liners for file processing, particularly informative, though I suspect I'll be referring back to them for a while until the different options take hold. As with the book as a whole those chapters are clear and to-the-point, helped by a presumption that the reader has a good understanding of the problem space and some experience with using scripting languages to simplify their life.Don't go

into this book expecting to come away ready to work as a sysadmin. That's not its intention. Nor is it a comprehensive guide to ruby, and you'll probably still want a good language reference to go with it. But it provides a number of helpful hints and a good sense of how robust scripts can be built quickly and simply with ruby, and there are likely to be a few helpful tricks for most readers.Disclaimer: I was sent a copy of this book for review by the publisher.

The title just doesn't do this book justice. Yes, there's some sysadmin bent, but most of the discussion is much more broadly applicable -- it isn't just sysadmins who care about writing clean code, storing data in the cloud, LDAP, safe file handling, dsls, SOAP, graphing, etc etc etc.Plus Hamou is really funny in his own way. This book reminds of K&R or the Perl Camel book -- it is written in a conversational tone, with valuable gems (no pun intended) mentioned in passing.5 stars.

This isn't a bad book! There is coverage of LDAP, database processing with ActiveRecord, XML parsing and a number of tools that sys admins and developers who administer their own dev environment routinely use. The section on network monitoring as well as the Chapter on single liners for Ruby Sys Admins are worth the cover price for the book. However, I was a bit disappointed with the lack of coverage in some areas where the author introduced a basic concept at a level too basic for experienced users and then palmed off the user to a reference site for some more reading. There isn't a problem with this approach it is just that it happens a bit too much throughout the book. Perhaps the coverage was a bit ambitious and some of the more in-depth material was left out?Anyway, that's pretty much the reason for me not giving it 4 stars. However, do take a look at the one-liners, they are definitely going to save you time!Oh, the actual writing style is quite fresh and informative. You are not likely to get bored with this one... Overall I am still happy to have got my hands on it, but it wasn't exactly what I was led to believe from reading the other reviews.

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