Eclipse

Steve Holzner

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Support tools for computer programming are beginning to come of age, and their use can dramatically improve a programmer's productivity. The Eclipse tool is an open source IDE (integrated development environment) that works with a variety of programming languages, but is

initially targeted at Java. Eclipse integrates with development tools such as CVS (Concurrent Version System) version control and EJB (Enterprise Java Beans), and, through the use of plug-ins, is extensible and able to support other technologies.

This book is a tutorial guide to the basic use of Eclipse (version 2). It covers (albeit briefly) all of the main functions of the tool and is written in a clear and concise style, illustrated with a large number of black-and-white screen shots. The target audience is the working programmer, and specific Java skills are desirable but not essential. The 317 pages are divided into 13 chapters of approximately equal length, followed by a helpful index. Java is the development language used for the examples in the book, and all of the source code listed in the book can be downloaded from the publisher's Web site.

Chapters one and two present an overview of Eclipse and develop a simple "hello world" Java program covering the tool's facilities for automatic syntax correction, code refactoring, and insertion of Javadoc comments. From this point onward the focus is on integrating technologies (especially those that are Java-based) into Eclipse and how Eclipse is used effectively with them.

The first eight chapters are excellent: they are straightforward to follow, and I had no difficulty setting up my PC with Eclipse and getting started. I was not so certain about the following chapters, however. The supplementary technologies that Eclipse supports, including servlets, Java Beans, and Struts, are complex in their own right. Each such technology is introduced from scratch before the author describes its use within Eclipse, and this does not seem an effective approach. If readers already know about servlets, for example, then the few pages describing servlets merely remind them what they should already know. If readers are unfamiliar with servlets, the informa-

tion provided is unlikely to be sufficient to enable them to develop new servlets of their own.

Nonetheless, this is a very good book that performs both a tutorial and reference function for the serious programmer wishing to use Eclipse. With the caveat that some of the later chapters may require skills not covered in the book to be used most effectively, this volume is accessible to developers at all levels of programming ability.—*M. S. Joy*

Spoken Dialogue Technology

Michael F. McTear

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Spoken Dialogue Technology is a sufficient and comprehensive, yet focused introduction to the field of spoken interaction with computers. It starts with a chapter on the history and application of spoken dialogue systems, followed by an overview of relevant linguistic phenomena and computational models, as well as the basic components of a dialogue system. This first part of the book covers most of the important issues and includes sufficient sources for further information.

In the second part, the knowledge obtained in the first part is used to build working dialogue systems, using two different toolsets: the CSLU (Center for Spoken Language Understanding) toolkit and the IBM WebSphere Voice Server supporting VoiceXML (Voice Extensible Markup Language). The sections on VoiceXML, in particular, supply the reader with hands-on experience using the current industry standard. Emerging standards for multimodal systems, such as SALT (speech application language tags), are also described.

The third part covers advanced topics such as research systems for more complex and less limited systems, current hot items in research, and user-driven multimodal systems. From a researcher's point of view, these sections could be more extensive, but, as the author points out, the book is written for an audience somewhere between academic researchers and practitioners. In fact, it is good reading for researchers and practitioners, but especially for advanced students and anybody else who wants to gather theoretical and practical knowledge on spoken dialogue systems.—*T. Portele*

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