book reviews

Pro J2ME Polish:

Open Source Wireless Java Tools Suite

Robert Virkus, Apress, 2005, \$39.99, ISBN: 1590595033

It is easy for a book to be good when its topic is enthralling. Such is the case here. Few developers could resist the temptation to delve deeper after reading just a few pages. The book describes, and explains how to use, what I would best describe as a toolkit for Java development on cellphones.

What makes it enthralling is how accessible the technology is. Using preprocessing and a database of device capabilities, the toolkit will preprocess your code and recompile it for every target device that supports the capabilities your application needs. In addition, numerous utilities, classes, and developer tools make up J2ME (Java 2 Platform, Micro Edition) Polish.

After taking the reader through a step-by-step guide to getting the sample code running on a cellphone, author Robert Virkus digs into the components that make up J2ME Polish. The first is the database of device capabilities, an XML file that identifies the features, libraries, and hardware capabilities of a few hundred Java-enabled models. This is the key to building applications for multiple handsets.

Next, the author discusses the build process, including obfuscation, packaging, localization, and debugging. This is followed by a chapter on preprocessing. The two chapters on game programming and the GUI are by far the weakest in the book. They read too much like a reference guide. The chapter on extending J2ME Polish is also dry.

The final three chapters discuss the wireless market, how to work around device limitations, and how to optimize applications. The first of these is interesting, although prone to becoming inaccurate very rapidly. The second is very good at giving a quick overview of the available technology. The final chapter is of critical importance to developers, given the severe processing and storage limitations of current devices.

Overall, I heartily recommend this book. Although intended for intermediate to advanced developers, it should be accessible to anyone who has done a bit of Java programming. The target group is wireless application developers who are either struggling with cross-platform development or are considering using the J2ME Polish

platform. My guess is that the largest group of readers will be ordinary developers who just cannot help themselves and want to tinker with their cellphones in the evenings.

—Bernard Kuc

Protect your Windows Network:

From Perimeter to Data

Jesper Johansson and Steve Riley, Addison-Wesley Professional, 2005, \$49.99, ISBN: 0321336437

Most of us are just roadkill—viruses, worms, and script kiddies go for the low-hanging fruit. This book is about hitting a harder target: improving the level of security and changing the view on some key concepts in security.

Steve Riley and Jesper Johansson from Microsoft have developed a

best practice guide for Windows security. Whether it is the placement of the VPN server alongside the firewall (instead of behind or before), the protection of the data itself and not the perimeter, or the education of users, their ideas are fresh, logical, and comprehensive. Some of these technologies have been around for years, yet nearly no one uses them in the Windows environments. People still use insecure passwords, put their servers in closets, and administer them with clear text protocols.

After presenting what network protection is about and a possible attack scenario, the authors start with the most important topic there is in security today: patch management. Next they cover the user and management view with policies, enforcement of policies, and social engineering. They then address perimeter security and physical security, before moving to the internal protection of the network. The chapters on passwords and authentication mechanisms and rogue network access give readers new insights and strategies. From this point on, the book becomes more technical, discussing the protection of servers, clients, applications, services, and data.

Although this book contains a lot of deep technical information, it is an excellent resource for everyone who operates and manages a Windows network. You don't need to be a Microsoft certified systems engineer to understand the basic concepts, and the funny writing style makes the book an enjoyable read.

—Andreas Tomek

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