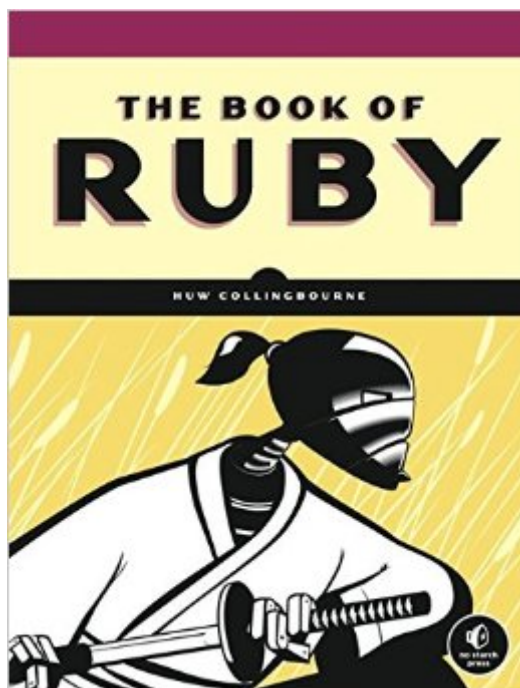


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The Book Of Ruby: A Hands-On Guide For The Adventurous



Synopsis

Ruby is famous for being easy to learn, but most users only scratch the surface of what it can do. While other books focus on Ruby's trendier features, *The Book of Ruby* reveals the secret inner workings of one of the world's most popular programming languages, teaching you to write clear, maintainable code. You'll start with the basics—types, data structures, and control flows—and progress to advanced features like blocks, mixins, metaclasses, and beyond. Rather than bog you down with a lot of theory, *The Book of Ruby* takes a hands-on approach and focuses on making you productive from day one. As you follow along, you'll learn to: Leverage Ruby's succinct and flexible syntax to maximize your productivity; Balance Ruby's functional, imperative, and object-oriented features; Write self-modifying programs using dynamic programming techniques; Create new fibers and threads to manage independent processes concurrently; Catch and recover from execution errors with robust exception handling; Develop powerful web applications with the Ruby on Rails framework. Each chapter includes a "Digging Deeper" section that shows you how Ruby works under the hood, so you'll never be caught off guard by its deceptively simple scoping, multithreading features, or precedence rules. Whether you're new to programming or just new Ruby, *The Book of Ruby* is your guide to rapid, real-world software development with this unique and elegant language.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Disclaimer: No Starch Press provided me a free copy for review. Ruby is a programming language that I always liked. When "No Starch Press" offered me the opportunity to review "The Book of

Ruby" I was curious because the two previous books I've read from them were simply excellent. I already have four books on Ruby so I was wondering how this one could compare to those but most important, if it would follow the same "fun style" as Land of Lisp and Learn You a Haskell. After reading the book, unfortunately, my feelings are mixed. The book is well-written, with a good structure, covering beginner topics to advanced ones. It contains 20 chapters (without the introduction) and 4 appendixes. The initial chapters focus on the basics of the Ruby language. The later ones focus on more advanced parts of Ruby and more specific topics, for example, debugging and Ruby on Rails. This is a positive aspect of the book since for someone starting with Ruby can have in a single source access to several important topics. The chapters also have a "Digging Deeper" section at the end, presenting interesting discussions of the topic at hand. Also a nice read was the last chapter since it deals with the dynamic aspects of the language (use of eval, etc). However, the book has some issues. The most important one is about the coding style, or the lack of it. The book is not consistent, does not follow Ruby conventions and it shows quite easily. I believe this is bad for a novice programmer in the language since it makes examples harder to understand, not to mention other things. Second, the book does not have the same "fun style" as the other No Starch Press books.

I've been reading this book trying to find what's good about it, and the best thing I might say is that, after reading it, you will probably be able to write a Ruby program that runs. But, given all the other "intro to Ruby" books out there, I can find no good reason for this book to exist. It fails in a number of ways. First, right off, the author says that Ruby allows much latitude in code style. You can, if you like, use method names such as myCamelCase method or myhardtoreadmethod or my_snake_case_method. This is true. But the author fails to explain that while the Ruby interpreter may not care, the vast majority of experienced Ruby developers most certainly will, and learning to follow some basic community coding conventions will go a long way in helping you work with other Rubyists, even just get some coding help as you learn. Second, even if we ignore that, the author for whatever reasons seems to make a point of avoiding *any* coding style. Class and method name follow no apparent reasoning; parenthesis are included or omitted at random (even after the author says he prefers them for clarity). Following this book your Ruby code will look, at best, ugly, and almost certainly amateurish. There are also assorted annoying technical inaccuracies and omissions. For example, the book says that attribute getters and setters are like properties in other languages. Well, no; languages that make a point of having properties (e.g. Java) do not allow you to override them; unlike in Ruby, properties are not methods. It's an example of an important aspect

of Ruby that should be grasped early on, not glossed over.

Overall, I'm giving this book a 4 star review hoping that programmers who are beginning to try out Ruby will give this book a go. I think as a beginning programmer the initial chapters are clear and well written and will give a beginner a good foundation on Ruby itself. Personally, I didn't really go for the writing style: it's a bit too friendly. For example, chapter 6 begins "Computer programs, like life itself, are full of difficult decisions waiting to be made" followed by an "if, then, else" example about daily life. This is very much a personal preference but I find that sort of introduction annoying as I don't feel it adds much to the book. I was not so happy with the later portions of the book which cover more in depth Ruby topics (such as blocks, closures, regexps, etc.). These chapters are where the 'mixed bag' comes in. For example, I thought the chapter on debugging and testing was way too short or should have been omitted altogether. The subject of unit testing is very important and deserved its own, complete chapter. And I don't agree with the characterization of unit testing as "a postdebugging testing technique". Part of the joy of unit testing is all the bugs that are shaken out along the way. Chapter 10 covers blocks, lambdas and closures with lots of examples. This is good, but I was surprised that the initial section on closures consisted of one example (and not a very exciting one at that) and two paragraphs. It's left to a sort of sidebar to actually get into the use of closures. Also, in the section on exceptions I found the first example of `raise` to be odd. It contains the following: `rescue Exception => e [...`

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