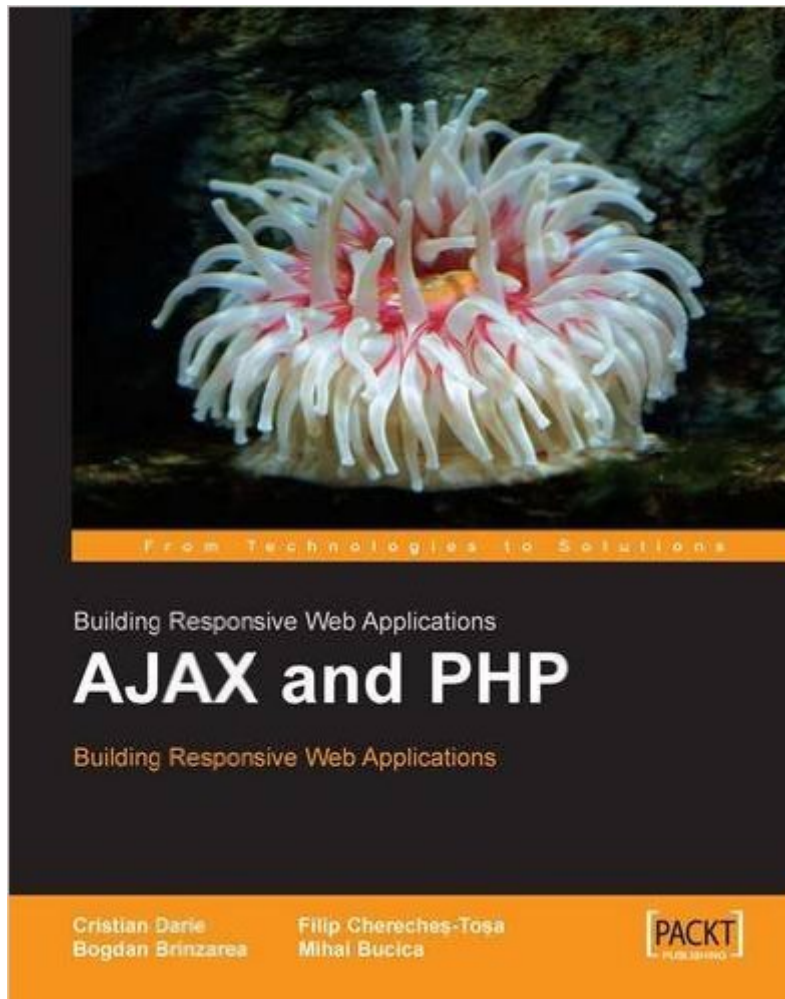


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AJAX And PHP: Building Responsive Web Applications



Synopsis

AJAX and PHP: Building Responsive Web Applications is the most practical and efficient resource a reader can get to enter the exciting world of AJAX. This book will teach you how to create faster, lighter, better web applications by using the AJAX ingredients technologies to their full potential. This book is for web developers willing to build better web applications. A basic knowledge of PHP, XML, JavaScript and MySQL, or a strong will to learn-as-you-type, is assumed.

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Customer Reviews

I admit, when I first opened this book, I thought it would contain a dry discussion of how to use AJAX methods with PHP. But the book turned out to be so much more than advertised, I think its title must be wrong. It should have been called, "How to Use AJAX Methods with PHP, MySQL, DOM, CSS, SVG, XSL, XML, RSS, and JavaScript Frameworks." I certainly never expected to read it cover to cover, but that's what I did. In addition to integrating a wide range of modern web technologies, the book contains great examples of how to write building blocks for powerful web applications. These include form validation, chat, suggest, auto-complete, charting, grid, RSS, and drag-and-drop. Somewhere in the code for these functions are techniques for almost everything you might want to program into an application. What I really like about the book, however, is the ongoing explanation of how to write the code so it will be secure, and will perform correctly in every browser. Most books I have read don't bother with such details, but this one even lays out a method to create user-friendly error reporting in production mode. It has a strong focus on writing code that might

actually be used in a production environment. My only quibble with the authors is that they seemed to be avoiding OOP in their JavaScript, though they used it with their PHP code throughout the book. They said OOP emulation techniques required a longer learning curve. However, the result of their decision is JavaScript files that run for seven or eight pages. I really think that OOP would have been less intimidating to a new programmer than page after page of unbroken code. I would recommend that the authors at least use eye-catching headers for the major functions in these files to help the reader understand the structure of the code. (Readers of the book as published might want to take a highlight pen to the function headings.) As someone who is attempting to write my first significant web application, I think this book is wonderful. I expect to wear it out before I'm through looking up techniques. I already know that my application will need chat, validation, suggest, and data grid. This book practically hands me the code for these. But more than that, it provides me with a view of the basic methods to do many other things. Much of the major content of this book is code. While the authors explain how the code works, the reader will still need to know the basics of HTML, CSS, SQL, and scripting languages, such as PHP and JavaScript. Another major advantage of this book, however, is that the authors give web links to many of the best tutorials on these topics. In fact, it would be possible to start with this book, and use the authors' suggested links to look up almost every major web technology in order to learn it in the context of AJAX and PHP. All in all, that's a lot of value for a book that has less than 300 pages!

This book teaches by example. The first few chapters introduce AJAX and what part PHP, Javascript and XML all play. Then the remainder of the book takes you through several example applications. The example apps are simple enough that you can easily follow. These applications include Form Validation, Chat, Suggest and Autocomplete, Charting with SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics), using grids, and Drag and Drop. Each example begins by showing you the source code and how to actually implement/deploy that application. There is also a supporting appendix for additional information about deploying the examples on a web server. Then each chapter follows by explaining how the example worked. If you would like to quickly begin using AJAX from PHP this book is a great start.

There need to be more Ajax books like this. No, let me rephrase. Rather, more of the Ajax books out there should've been like this one. I just finished reading through AJAX and PHP: Building Responsive Web Applications and it is by far my favorite book on the topic of Ajax yet. The authors of this book: Bogdan Brinzarea, Mihai Bucica, Cristian Darie and Filip Chereche'-Tosa have done a

great job of keeping the topics focused and applicable. While other books I have read covered the concepts behind Asynchronous JavaScript and XML, they did so with a shotgun blast of information. While I appreciate an eclectic approach, it is irrelevant because many examples are for languages I never use. For instance, one single book might have a slew of exercises in ASP.NET and Java, with maybe a few chapters on PHP. Sure, I could install Microsoft's .NET SDK or Sun's J2EE, but the likelihood of me every either using these two platforms is pretty slim. Don't get me wrong, I'm not against Microsoft or Sun as companies. I use Windows like everyone else, and am quite fond of OpenOffice. Suffice it to say, I am a front-end designer who is familiar with PHP. There is a full gamut of examples to test out. I liked the way they list the full code in the text, in addition to offering the option of downloading it from Packt. I've read too many programming books that assume you're right there at your computer while reading. I don't know about you, but I like to take books with me to read when I can grab a spare minute here or there. Before I get into the contents of the book, let me point out a few caveats, in case you are considering purchasing it (which I would still recommend, if you're into PHP). In some of their code examples, they use XHTML 1.1. This is all well and good, but they neglect to specify content-type, meaning that it defaults back to text/html. So, while it still works just fine in a browser, it is against the W3C recommendation for how to serve various media types. XHTML 1.1 should be served only as application/xhtml+xml, so their code examples would be better off as XHTML 1.0 Strict, because they aren't making use of any of the additional features to be found by stepping up to 1.1. Another thing to correct in their code would be line-breaks, which are consistently written throughout as [br/] when really it should be [br /]. Though seemingly innocuous, that single space is important. (Note: I used square brackets in the place of angled brackets, since does not allow for HTML in their reviews.) Anyway, here is what topics are covered in the book: JavaScript and the Document Object Model, some CSS, XMLHttpRequest, proxy servers, and MySQL. They also touch on how to make use of Prototype and Script.aculo.us. Using this armament, they show you how to create fun stuff such as: live form validation, chat room (with color picker), auto-complete search, real-time SVG charts, XSLT grids, an RSS reader, plus a drag-and-drop to-do list. While some of these topics are covered in other books out there, I had not found one which covered them all from a PHP standpoint. Now that I have, I think I will probably give book reading on Ajax a rest (not REST) for awhile, because I think that with this book, I am contented. Now it's just a matter of going out there and actually making use of the topics that were covered.

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