Assume that you're interested in obtaining funding for a project to power ships with cold fusion technology. To convince your prospective sponsor of the worthiness of this project, you decide to develop a computer simulation touting the benefits of the revolutionary approach. You have heard a little about object-oriented programming and its usefulness in developing simulation systems, so you explore this possibility. At the Applied Physics Laboratory, you need look no further than Marty Hall (and his merry band of software engineers) to help you win the day and the funding. For the rest of us, we have his book.

And a fine book it is. But don’t be misled into thinking that the flash in the simulation comes easily. Besides the science you’re concerned about, the computing science in the simulation must be coordinated meticulously. As the renowned computer scientist Allen Newell once said, “Science is in the details.” Well, there are enough details (including a few “daemons”) in Marty Hall’s book to classify his treatise as a science many times over.

It is clear that Marty Hall enjoys his craft. Despite the length of the book, the clarity, enthusiasm, and humor of the author never subside. From examples that exhort the reader to invest in cold fusion technology to poking fun at software engineers (these must be geeks) who fail to recognize hex input as integer input, the chapters can be read quite quickly. But assimilating all the information will take longer. The book is written for experienced programmers, and if you are not among them, this book may not be for you. In any case, it will give you a better appreciation for what a hacker does and laughs at daily (see the explanations of hacker and cracker on page 1029; yes, page 1029.)

According to the author, the purpose of the book was to provide a text for a course called “Distributed Development on the World Wide Web” offered through The Johns Hopkins University’s part-time graduate program in computer science. Because no single book was available for this purpose, the author set out to write his own book to cover most of what a professional programmer needs to know in Web programming. The book is divided into four parts dealing with the major topics of the original course: Part I, The HyperText Markup Language (HTML); Part II, Java; Part III, CGI Programming; and Part IV, JavaScript.

From the beginning, the author encourages the reader not just to read, but to do and try (page xxxiv). The course was designed to have “a lot of hands-on projects,” and this flavor is carried over into Core Web Programming. At one point, the author advises, “If you’re wise, you won’t sit down and read these Java chapters straight through, engrossing though they may be. <SARCASTIC> No doubt it will be difficult to tear yourself away, but you’ve got to do it. </SARCASTIC> . . . I suggest installing Java as soon as possible, reading a little, practicing a little, reading a bit more. . . . ”
The book contains many resources to help you get started with Java. It provides an introduction to the language, including basic syntax, simple examples, and some advanced topics. Each chapter builds on the previous one, allowing you to gradually develop your skills.

One of the strengths of the book is its emphasis on practical applications. It includes a variety of real-world examples, along with code listings and explanations. The chapters on HTML, JavaScript, and Java development are particularly strong, as they provide a solid foundation for building interactive Web pages.

In addition to the code listings, the book also includes a comprehensive set of exercises and problems. These exercises range from simple practice problems to more complex challenges that require you to apply your knowledge to real-world scenarios. The exercises are designed to help you reinforce your understanding of the material and develop your skills as a Java programmer.

Overall, I highly recommend this book for anyone looking to learn Java. It provides a comprehensive introduction to the language, along with practical guidance and exercises that will help you develop your skills. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced programmer, this book will be a valuable resource for your Java development journey.
first. The author himself struggles with the situation when deciding to cover window usage before discussing buttons, text areas, and the like, which are things that go into a window. The best approach would be to separate the 20 chapters into threads and to process them concurrently (ha!). Another is to read the text like a hypertext document, skipping around forward and backward. If you read the book closely, it’s filled with both forward and backward references, all of which should probably be followed like hypertext links.

In Chapter 8, the author introduces the Java Hipness Factor (JHF) but fails to give a scale and range of JHF values. No matter. In that respect, both of this reviewer’s thumbs are up.

Professor Ben Benokraitis
Chair, Department of Computer and Information Sciences
Shepherd College
Shepherdstown, WV 25443
vibenok@shepherd.wvnet.edu