

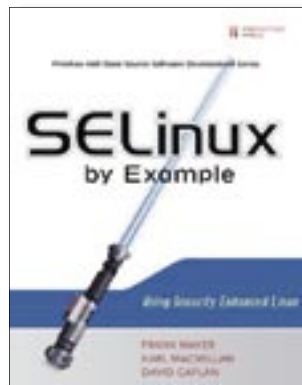
BOOK REVIEWS

BY JAMES PYLES

SELinux by Example: Using Security Enhanced Linux

Just like SELinux (Security Enhanced Linux), *SELinux by Example* seems overly complex on the surface. The reader should certainly already have some familiarity with SELinux policies, the Linux kernel, and programming before tackling this material. I have a hard time believing, though, that having a “good working knowledge of Linux, its conventions and filesystem layout” (as stated in the Preface) would be sufficient for the reader to take full advantage of the book’s content.

Computer and network security in general, and SELinux in particular, are “specialty” niches. Not every Linux user



in the world is capable of mastering the intricacies of advanced Linux security without some additional background.

While SELinux by Example is less than 500 pages long, much of the book seems more of a reference guide than a teaching text. Not that there isn’t plenty to learn from this book, but I don’t see it being learned all at once. This is the sort of text that can be read many times by the audience. A reader who gains experience with SELinux and reviews the book again later will glean new insights from its pages.

Even the authors recommend that most of Part II of the book should be “skimmed over” during the first read, as it is more of a “policy language reference.”

This is one of the few books to date devoted entirely to SELinux, and its time has come. That said, the reader who hopes to gain knowledge of SELinux from this text should come fully armed with a background in Linux security and programming if they expect to interact with the text at the level at which it is written.

**Frank Mayer, Karl MacMillian,
David Caplin**
456 pages
Prentice Hall PTR,
0-13-196369-4
£ 35.99, US\$ 44.99, EUR 48.10

Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML and CSS in One Hour a Day

If any book tries to be “one size fits all,” it is *Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML and CSS in One Hour a Day*. This tome is a beginners guide, a complete study text, and a reference work all rolled into one.

If the reader actually commits to reading a chapter a day and diligently practices what each chapter teaches, in three or four weeks, they will probably be well on their way to writing in HTML, CSS, and perhaps a little JavaScript.

The book is easy to read, but only the most dedicated audience will actually read it cover to cover in one shot. More likely given the amount of information presented, readers will start reading the book in the areas where they want to start

learning.

The most valuable feature in the text is the “input/output” presentation of HTML source versus visual result. Many similar texts make you hunt through several pages to find the screenshot of the web browser window that matches a particular HTML example. The Sams book always puts them back to back.

This is a tremendous help in learning HTML and CSS. The reader can observe the web browser display and compare it to the code, interpreting which areas of source resulted in which section of output in the browser.

The book presents so many different web-related topics that the audience can spend a lot

more than the 21 days (one hour a day per chapter and 21 chapters) that the book advertises. Hardly a trick is left unexplained, including XHTML, DHTML, JavaScript, and even an elementary introduction to AJAX and web development.

That’s probably more than someone who just wants to create a family website wants to know, but this book is aiming at the widest possible audience. The Sams book could easily be the first of several stepping stones for the amateur who wants to move into web development. *Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML and CSS* is quite an asset to anyone’s book shelf.

Laura Lemay and Rafe Colburn
816 pages
Sams,
0-67-232886-0
£ 28.99, US\$ 24.99, EUR 35.90



Ubuntu Linux for Non-Geeks

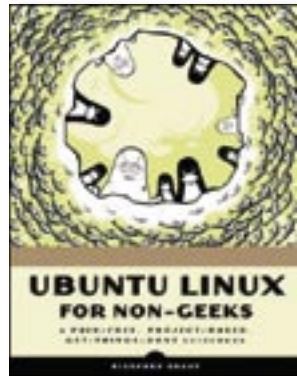
The best thing in Rickford Grant's *Ubuntu Linux for Non-Geeks* is plenty of practical examples. For example, the author teaches readers how to use Synaptic by having them search for, download, and install a game called Monkey Bubble (a silly, yet practical, example). To teach the audience to compile programs from source, Grant has them install Xmah-jongg.

Rickford Grant's method of teaching home users how to get comfortable with Ubuntu is to show them all of the "cool stuff" you can, do which is what most home users want (how to play DVDs, download music, etc...). To that end, he gives quite a number of examples of applications to do just about anything a user would want to do. For instance, Grant provides no less than seven different ex-

amples of graphics programs that can be used on Linux.

While the book has a friendly feel to it (as most No Starch Press books do), it did take an unexpected turn to the command line halfway through. I can see the author's rationale, in that there are applications that can be installed and run in the shell, but it seemed like a jarring detour from the more newbie-friendly X-window session.

Most of the rest of the book is dedicated to all of the easy-to-use features of the Ubuntu platform. As an Ubuntu user, I can vouch for the flexibility and usability of the application software Grant writes about, but I would have to also say that these techniques don't always work as well as the book advertises. I've had is-



sues getting Totem to play DVDs, as well as getting my Ubuntu laptop to hibernate. I've been working with Debian for sometime now and was able to work out the snags. The average home user might be surprised to have the same problems after reading this book. A caveat or two in the book about potential "gotchas" with Linux would have been helpful.

Rickford Grant

360 pages

No Starch Press,

1-59-327118-2

£ 23.99, US\$ 34.95, EUR 25.90

THE AUTHOR

James Pyles is on contract with Micron's Information Systems Services group in Boise, Idaho as their technical writer. He has also authored several books and numerous articles on a variety of technical subjects. Additionally, James provides support and content to the Linux-Tutorial website: <http://www.linux-tutorial.info>.

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