Book Reviews

Breaking Through the BIOS Barrier: The Definitive BIOS Optimization Guide for PCs

When I opened the box from Prentice Hall, I was pleased with the first book I found, *Breaking through the BIOS Barrier*, by Adrian Wong. I work on PCs every day, and this could be a book I can use!

The book is simply organized, consisting of only four chapters. The first two chapters are aimed at new-comers to PC hardware , describing the basics of BIOS functions and teaching the mechanics of changing your BIOS, both through flashing the software and by physically replacing the chip.

The third and fourth chapters are simple reference chapters. The third chapter describes some of the basic BIOS options, and the fourth chapter covers more advanced topics. The book describes each BIOS option and provides suggested settings. My favorite feature of this book is a detailed index reference of BIOS options printed inside the cover.

The book starts with a focus on BIOS fundamentals, aimed at readers new to computer hardware. Topics include "What is the BIOS?" "The Motherboard BIOS," and "How do I Optimize the BIOS?" Later chapters progress into advanced topics, such as "Hot Flashing," "BIOS Emergencies," "Flashing with a Different Motherboard," and "The Universal BIOS Flash Utility." The final sections of the book are reference guidelines for specific hardware products and components.

The book is missing a nice transition chapter that helps the reader apply this newly learned BIOS knowledge in a real-life situation. I'd have preferred the basic and advanced reference guide chapters to be combined, with a section that sorted BIOS options by application thrown in for good measure. A section like this could tell readers the settings to check to get the configuration just right for gaming, versus a programmer's computer or a multi-media display computer.
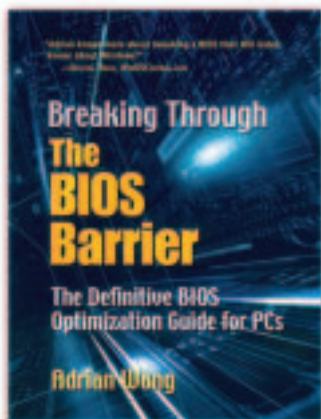
That criticism aside, this is the most complete reference guide for BIOS settings I've ever seen in print. *Breaking through the BIOS Barrier* would be a fantastic addition to your reference library. ■

Adrian Wong
384 pages
Prentice Hall, 0-13-145536-2
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Open Source Licensing: Software Freedom and Intellectual Property Law

It's always nice to open a book and, without reading any cover material or "about the author" sections, know precisely your author's qualifications. Prentice Hall was lucky to get Lawrence Rosen, a technology attorney, to author the book *Open Source Licensing – Software Freedom and Intellectual Property Law*. Rosen's technology background gives Prentice Hall the advantage of creating the most condensed yet readable book on Open Source Licensing on the market today.

This book is likely the most well-researched book I've ever seen on the topic of Open Source licensing. Covering every detail from types of licenses to how licenses are implemented and how to enforce them, this book has to be the perfect tool for developers and businesses researching the smartest way to release their product within an Open Source market.

The book is laid out quite logically, introducing the concepts of licensing and intellectual property from the beginning, exploring the various niches of Open Source Licensing in the middle, and ending with the implementation of a product's license. The specific licenses discussed are those that are approved by the Open Source Initiative (OSI).

This book primarily focuses on using Open Source licenses for software, though some of the licenses covered also apply to documentation.

You may not be surprised to find out that this book is copyrighted by the author, and Prentice Hall does state you cannot duplicate the text in any form without permission. However, Rosen is planning to release the text under the Academic Free License in early 2005.

If you'll be presenting Open Source solutions to colleagues and clients, or if you are developing a business plan for your own development project, this book is a must read. ■
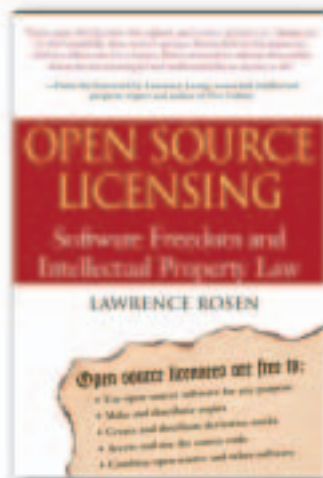
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