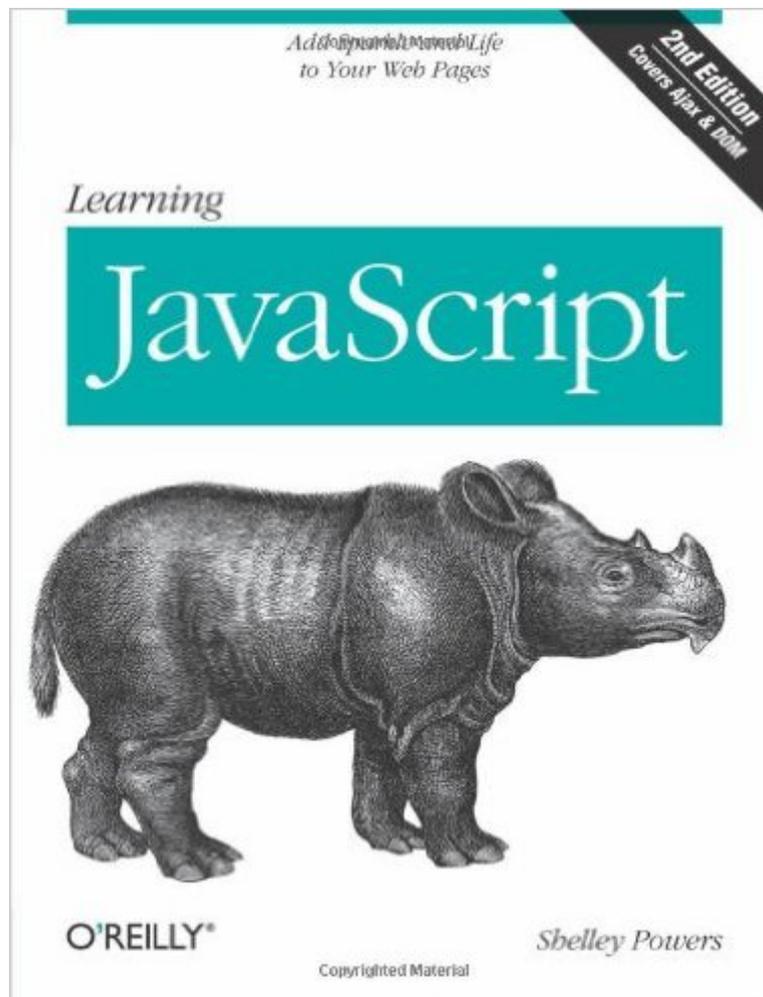# The book was found

Learning JavaScript, 2nd Edition

Synopsis

If you're new to JavaScript, or an experienced web developer looking to improve your skills, Learning JavaScript provides you with complete, no-nonsense coverage of this quirky yet essential language for web development. You'll learn everything from primitive data types to complex features, including JavaScript elements involved with Ajax and dynamic page effects. By the end of the book, you'll be able to work with even the most sophisticated libraries and web applications. Complete with best practices and examples of JavaScript use, this new edition shows you how to integrate the language with the browser environment, and how to practice proper coding techniques for standards-compliant websites. This book will help you:Learn the JavaScript application structure, including basic statements and control structures Identify JavaScript objects -- String, Number, Boolean, Function, and more Use browser debugging tools and troubleshooting techniques Understand event handling, form events, and JavaScript applications with forms Develop with the Browser Object Model, the Document Object Model, and custom objects you create Learn about browser cookies and more modern client-side storage techniques Get details for using XML or JSON with Ajax applications Learning JavaScript follows proven learning principles to help you absorb the concepts at an easy pace, so you'll learn how to create powerful and responsive applications in any browser.

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Customer Reviews

As an introduction to javascript, this book covers all the ground you'd hope it would. It introduces JS

in the context of a standalone programming language with its various procedural constructs, before moving onto the Document Object Model and Browser Object Model, touches upon objects, and finds the time to explain Ajax. Finally, there's a whistlestop tour of the commonly used JS libraries like Dojo, Prototype and script.aculo.us. Shelley Powers also sprinkles her opinions on JS best practices throughout, with a bias towards favouring accessibility over whiz-bang flashiness. I would recommend being comfortable with XHTML and CSS as a prerequisite for this book - something like O'Reilly's own Head First XHTML and CSS would be very suitable.If, like me, you know a few programming languages, but nothing about JS, and wanted a crash course so you could understand what all the fuss about the likes of Ajax or the Google Web Toolkit is, this is just what you need. So why am I only giving it three stars?First, I thought some of the features weren't very well explained - the writing lacks clarity when describing important points. Compounding this, a few of the examples are poorly chosen. Some of my quibbles may seem picky, but the feel of the book is that it's pitched at an inexperienced programmer, and a lot of the time I only followed the discussion because I was already familiar with the material from other languages. Some particular points follow.i) Accessing the length of various parts of a multidimensional array is illustrated with:alert(threedPoints[2][2].length); // prints out 3alert(threedPoints[2].length); // prints out 3alert(threedPoints.legnth); // prints out 3ignoring the error on the third line (more on that later), as can be seen from the comments, a three dimensional array has been created where every dimension is of length 3 - surely making them of unequal size would have been more illustrative.ii) The example of the associative array manages to be even worse:assocArray["one"] = "one";assocArray["two"] = "two";I struggle to think of an example that could be more misleading.iii) While the author recognises the importance of regular expressions, and goes into reasonable detail, the material is not terribly well organised, and the examples become complicated too quickly.iv) The section on chained constructors, and the use of call and apply is also unclear - disappointing, given I was most interested in the prototype style of object creation that JS uses.v) The callback functions of Array are not well described. The function Filter, apparently, "ensures that elements are not added to any element unless they pass certain criteria". So, elements are not added to any element - huh? wha? Those familiar with the likes of Lisp, Python, and especially the iterators in Smalltalk and Ruby will be able to pick up what's going on, but newcomers may be baffled.vi) The attempt to explain recursion is weak. Admittedly, most programming books do a bad job, but what's here is far too short to be useful. An illustrative quote is: "think of each iteration of the function call as pushing the string and numeric sum onto a stack, and when the numeric array has been traversed, the string and number have to be popped up through the stack to the top". I'm not saying this is wrong, but I

do not believe that someone who's just been introduced to recursion would find this description helpful.vii) Not all the programs have their output shown. This wouldn't be easy for some of the more complicated examples, but a lot of them are text-based.Second, there are lots and lots of typos in the book. When even a JS noob such as myself spots them, you know there's something up. Fortunately, they're only minor, and they generally aren't sufficiently bad to mislead. As an example, when function literals are introduced, the rather vital keyword 'function' is missing, but the examples quickly clarify the matter. However, elsewhere, some of the code won't actually run as presented (as early as the second example, alas), and it does take the shine off the production. Either the technical reviewers were asleep, or the editors at O'Reilly ignored them. Someone ought to be embarrassed, at any rate.None of these things are sufficiently show-stopping for someone who knows a little programming, so I would still recommend this book before wrestling with enormous tomes like David Flanagan's JavaScript - The Essential Guide, or a dedicated Ajax book. Complete beginners and the inexperienced, however, should look elsewhere, I'm afraid.

I recently became the maintainer for a site that uses a bit of JavaScript. Surprisingly, I have no previous experience writing or maintaining anything in JavaScript, so I needed to get up to speed, if only to know what is going on. To help me out, I picked up a copy of Shelley Powers' new book, Learning JavaScript.I am familiar with Shelley Powers' work, having read Unix Power Tools, a book that holds a special place on my shelf for its usefulness and depth. She is obviously someone who knows what she is doing.This book states in the preface that, "Readers of this book should be familiar with web page technology, including Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) and HTML/XHTML. Previous programming experience isn't required, though some sections may require extra review if you have no previous exposure to programming."That sums up the only negative thing I might be tempted to say about the book. Usually, O'Reilly's "Learning" series books are excellent resources for complete newcomers and are the sort of books that I might point a novice toward. While this book is designed for the JavaScript novice, it is not the best resource for a programming/web creation novice. If you can't follow or understand the following quoted sentences, this book isn't for you. If you can, this book does an excellent job of covering the basics of JavaScript in depth and may end up being the only text you need on the topic."JavaScript has just three primitive data types: string, numeric, and boolean. Each is differentiated from the others by the type of value it contains: string, numeric, and boolean, respectively."My first exposure to programming was in 1981, using BASIC on a Radio Shack TRS-80 Color Computer. Over the years, I have studied (and often forgotten, but can certainly read a bit and understand the concepts of) LISP, C, Bash scripting, Perl,

Python, and more. Lately I have spent more time using PHP and enjoying it, since that is the language of things like Wordpress, Drupal, vBulletin and other commonly used CMS and interactive web site software. The two sentences quoted above seem perfectly clear to me, but I can imagine what they must seem like to someone with no experience with programming languages. So, now you have been warned. Let's get to the good stuff for those who understand the jargon.This book is clear, with enough detail to help you understand what is happening without bogging you down in the minutiae. The reader is expected to see how and why each facet of the language would be useful, so the examples given are simple and seem to be designed to help the reader get the feel for usage without pretending to be a cookbook of programming recipes, although some seem quite useful as they are, such as Chapter 6's code for browser detection, which allows you to modify content and/or how it is displayed based on the web browser being used to view your site.The text covers everything you are likely to need while using JavaScript, and more importantly for me, most everything a person is likely to stumble across when reading existing code. You get a solid introduction to data types and variables, operators, statements, objects, and functions. This is built upon with chapters on debugging and cross-browser compatibility. This new second edition (just released earlier in 2009) has several updates and changes from the previous version including a wonderful comparison of the benefits of generating and processing XML data using Ajax versus using JSON.If you are considering using JavaScript on a website that includes the dynamic creation of web pages, or if you have inherited one that you are now responsible for maintaining, this book would be a good resource to help you start to understand one of the more common languages used for doing so. This is especially true if you have any prior experience with any other programming language. If you want a cookbook, scripted-style, "do this, now do that" sort of beginner's guide to making a site that holds your hand through the whole process, this is not the book you want.

I have to concur that while this book is marketed as a book for newcomers to javascript, it is too full of unexplained terminology for the beginner. I am very familiar with HTML and CSS, and the introduction to this book claims that should have been good enough for a starting point, but here I am scratching my head about every third sentence and having to run to the web for clarification.Other "beginning" O'Reilly books I have used relied on a tutorial model that starts with a "hello world" example and builds upon it to introduce more complicated concepts. Powers' book does indeed start with a "hello world" example, but does not build upon it. Instead, each chapter focuses on a particular facet and provides isolated examples that are not connected back to previous examples. It is arranged more like a basic reference text than a learning tool.

I am trudging through this book right now, and as a beginner who has no prior experience with JavaScript, I can tell you that this book isn't for the beginner. I've gone through a few examples and typed in the code as written and found that a few of the examples don't even work. I'm sure that it was written using some sort of word processing software, so what made it so hard to copy and paste the JavaScript code into a file to check to see if the code actually works? Also, I don't understand why the examples are so complex. After reading and rereading the script examples, I can usually figure it out, but having to do that is why I say that this book is not for the beginner.The good part about this book, is that I am actually learning the material. The "test" questions at the end of the chapter range from simple to intermediate, and I can answer all of them correctly. I just wish it was a bit easier to read for us beginners.

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