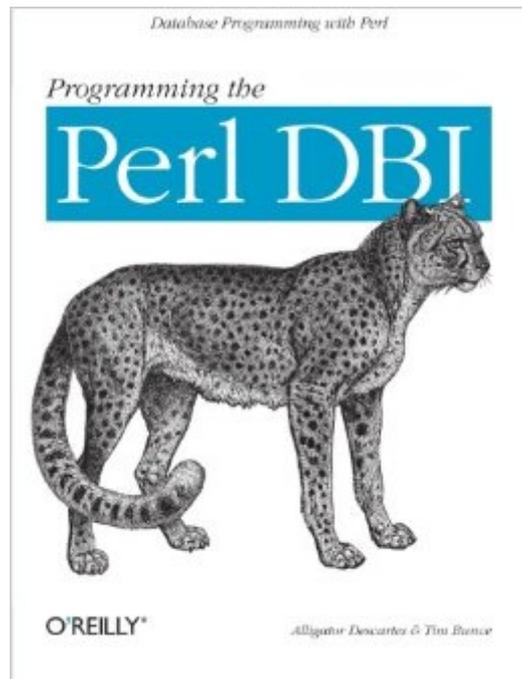# Programming The Perl DBI: Database Programming With Perl

Synopsis

One of the greatest strengths of the Perl programming language is its ability to manipulate large amounts of data. Database programming is therefore a natural fit for Perl, not only for business applications but also for CGI-based web and intranet applications.The primary interface for database programming in Perl is DBI. DBI is a database-independent package that provides a consistent set of routines regardless of what database product you use--Oracle, Sybase, Ingres, Informix, you name it. The design of DBI is to separate the actual database drivers (DBDs) from the programmer's API, so any DBI program can work with any database, or even with multiple databases by different vendors simultaneously.Programming the Perl DBI is coauthored by Alligator Descartes, one of the most active members of the DBI community, and by Tim Bunce, the inventor of DBI. For the uninitiated, the book explains the architecture of DBI and shows you how to write DBI-based programs. For the experienced DBI dabbler, this book reveals DBI's nuances and the peculiarities of each individual DBD.The book includes:An introduction to DBI and its designHow to construct queries and bind parametersWorking with database, driver, and statement handlesDebugging techniquesCoverage of each existing DBDA complete reference to DBIThis is the definitive book for database programming in Perl.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a good book, IF: - You want the online documentation with some extra fluff on databases, extra examples and the DBI spec. in one handy place (pages 187 - 333 are pretty much available

online, the rest of the book is the online material filled out). - You are interested in learning about the DBI, the book is about the DBI rather than database programming.This is not a good book, IF: - You want to learn how to program databases from the web (the widest application of Perl today is covered on one example/page and is an absolute joke). - You want to learn how to program databases other than Oracle (the massive Windows market, and other markets are left to you, the reader, to extrapolate techniques from the book to practice).This is a terrible book, IF: - You are a Perl/programming beginner. - You want to learn about databases. - You want to troubleshoot your application (to not include much more driver specific material, when the DBI relies so heavily on the database's driver, means that essentially the book's use is very limited in the real world).The DBI is a great tool in the Perl armoury; this book does not do it justice. You will learn more from the online documentation, DBI mailing list and the very generous Perl community than you could ever get from here - save your money (The forthcoming 'Web Databases with Perl' from Manning looks far more promising, but it's not out until Oct 2000).Of course, if the book is supposed to be nothing more than a guide to the DBI in the very limited scope of being a recycle and slight expansion of existing material, then you can't fault it, and it is a nice read. A lot of the reviews for the book reflect this sentiment. However, if you are after more, you will end up questioning what O'Reilly were thinking. On these grounds three stars is generous.

I am by no means a DBI master . . . but, I still expected more from this book. To be fair, I did get some "finer points" clarified for me, and saw some features of DBI I hadn't used before that I will try in the future. However, I didn't get enough out of it to have it be worth the price tag. Try this book only if you can't deal with the pod documentation that comes with the DBI module. (Or borrow it from a friend!)

The only moan I have is that it didn't come out earlier.The shop where I work asked me to cost a project using Perl as the back end for a T1 sales feed into an Oracle DB. They wanted to know if they could buy a package to do this. After a little research, I fell over the DBI. They were amazed at the "cost", and delighted with the speed.I finally got the book about a week ago. Lo and behold, it also covered flat files. A large part of this shop's income comes from a custom doc library, flat files exported from many different DBs. So not only did the book aid with optimising the script I'd already written for the Oracle interface, but it's going to make all our lives easier for the next release of their commercial app.The book is extremely well-written. (In a past life, I was a tech writer. Nothing worse than a badly written techie book.)The flow is well thought out. Not being a DB meister, the first few

chapters were extremely helpful. In my case (and I'm sure, many others as well), I had to get up on DBs in a large hurry. With the Cheetah book, I was able to do so.The examples given are concise, easy to follow, and they _work_. The latter point is invaluable.I would recommend this book to anyone who uses Perl and the DBI.

Programming the Perl DBI continues the long O'Reilly standard of providing accurate technical information for a reasonable price. If you develop or use Perl DBI, BUY THIS BOOK!Chapter 2:Humble beginning to start a Perl DBI book with how to use other types of data storage and retrieval features. I found this very enlightening as a solution to persistent data challenges not requiring a full database system.Chapter 3: A basic intro to SQL. Simple and to the point.Chapter 4-6 Describes development using Perl DBI. The information is excellent, as DBI is only an interface to the database systems. These chapters describe how to use the interface, the standard features supported, and expected results. Do you want to learn about reading BLOBs or binding output columns? Need to use bound input parameters? The information is all contained in these chapters.Chapter 7: I enjoyed the quick comparison between DBI (DBD::ODBC) and Win32::ODBC.Chapter 8: The description of DBD::Proxy and how to begin, is worth the price of the book. These simple pages make interfacing Linux to Win32 (NT/9[58]) easier to explain and do.The appendixes provide information about the DBI interface, what properties are available from which handle, also, a brief description of the drivers available. Good reading. I'd reference this section if selecting a database provider for a Perl solution. Enjoyed reading which driver supported what features. Is this information available in pod format, yes, however, this book provides it in one cover with an index. I'd check the driver pods for changes or additional features, as the development of DBD drivers continues.Interacting with a database system is a complex process. Using Perl DBI gives a standard interface to this complex process. This book does not explain how to use advance features of a particular database system. This is left to the reader and the large number of database references available. If you want to use a stored procedure with a trigger or execute a stored query, Programming the Perl DBI explains how to make the call, however, you'd need to know what to execute, and results to expected.As I stated in the beginning, this book is a must for anyone serious about using Perl DBI.

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