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Practical Mod_perl

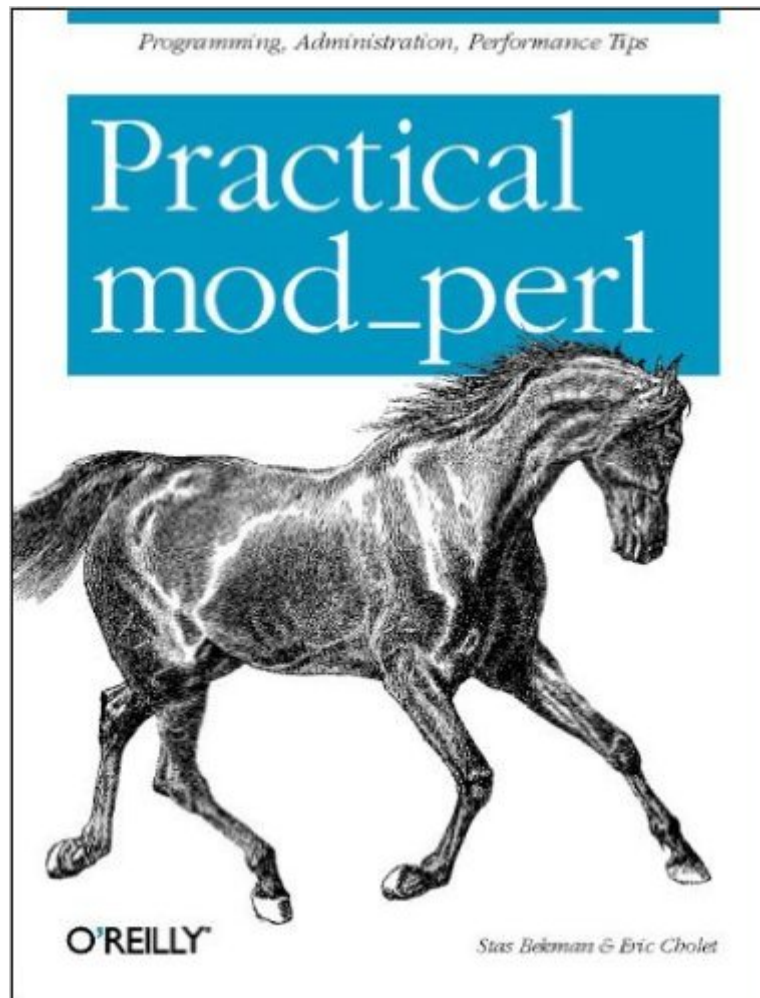Programming, Administration, Performance Tips

Practical mod_perl

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Stas BeCman & Eric Cholet

Synopsis

mod_perl embeds the popular programming language Perl in the Apache web server, giving rise to a fast and powerful web programming environment. Practical mod_perl is the definitive book on how to use, optimize, and troubleshoot mod_perl. New mod_perl users will learn how to quickly and easily get mod_perl compiled and installed. But the primary purpose of this book is to show you how to take full advantage of mod_perl: how to make a mod_perl-enabled Web site as fast, flexible, and easily-maintainable as possible. The authors draw from their own personal experience in the field, as well as the combined experience of the mod_perl community, to present a rich and complete picture of how to set up and maintain a successful mod_perl site.This book is also the first book to cover the "next generation" of mod_perl: mod_perl 2.0, a completely rewritten version of mod_perl designed for integration with Apache 2.0, which for the first time supports threads. The book covers the following topics, and more:Configuring mod_perl optimally for your web sitePorting and optimizing programs for a mod_perl environmentPerformance tuning: getting the very fastest performance from your siteControlling and monitoring the server to circumvent crashes and clogsIntegrating with databases efficiently and painlesslyDebugging tips and tricksMaximizing securityWritten for Perl web developers and web administrators, Practical mod_perl is an extensive guide to the nuts and bolts of the powerful and popular combination of Apache and mod_perl. From writing and debugging scripts to keeping your server running without failures, the techniques in this book will help you squeeze every ounce of power out of your server. True to its title, this is the practical guide to mod_perl.

Book Information

Paperback: 924 pages

Publisher: O'Reilly Media; 1st edition (May 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0596002270

ISBN-13: 978-0596002275

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1.9 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,476,095 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)   #109 in Books > Computers & Technology > Programming > Languages & Tools > Perl   #1036 in Books > Computers & Technology > Programming > Web Programming > JavaScript   #1510 in Books > Computers &

Customer Reviews

Practical mod_perl is a doorstop sized volume that provides more information on using mod_perl than you ever thought you needed.The almost 900 pages are divided into five parts and a bunch of appendices. Part I, "mod_perl Administration" covers building, configuring and installing mod_perl, followed by some Apache details and an 80-page guide to coding with mod_perl in mind. Part II, `mod_perl Performance' deals with ways of getting the best out of Apache and mod_perl, with a little about security. Part III deals with databases, including persistent connections and data sharing. Part IV is a great guide to debugging and troubleshooting. Part V is a brief look at Apache 2 and mod_perl 2.The appendices are useful. The first is a short section of around a dozen small `recipes' for performing various tasks using mod_perl. I found these a good base for more complex tasks, particularly when combined with examples from elsewhere in the book. The second is a list of Perl modules that extend Apache and mod_perl with a brief description of each. The third gives some strategies for providers wanting to host Apache with mod_perl. The fourth and fifth give good overviews of the Template Toolkit and AxKit, an XML application server built on mod_perl.The book is readable, tending towards heavy writing and certainly dense, but I didn't feel this was a problem in a book meant for a fairly advanced audience. I think you'd want to be a fairly good Perl programmer and well versed in Apache before needing this volume and shouldn't expect to be spoon fed. I thought it well written.In a book of this size you expect to find a lot of example code, and you won't be disappointed. The book is peppered with short Perl examples and example command lines and configurations, all well explained.

At almost 900 pages, this is certainly the biggest book on mod_perl that has been published so far. In my opinion it's also one of the most useful.Stas Bekman and Eric Cholet are two of the best-known and (probably more importantly) most respected names in the mod_perl community so you can be sure the the information you get in this book is going to be top quality.Part 1 of the book is about mod_perl administration. It starts with an overview of what mod_perl is and how it relates to CGI and the Apache web server before going into a chapter which gives a quickstart guide to installing and using mod_perl on some of the most common platforms. Chapter three then goes back over the installation process in far more detail. Chapter four explains how to configure mod_perl in various ways and chapter five cover monitoring, upgrading and maintaining your mod_perl enabled web server. Chapter 6 is full of advice about how to write Perl code that takes

advantage of mod_perl's features.Part 2 is all about mod_perl performance and contains chapters about benchmarking and tuning your server. I found chapter twelve to be particularly useful as it discusses a number of useful strategies for splitting server load between a mod_perl server for dynmaic content and a "plain" (non-mod_perl) server for static content. Other chapters in this section cover other strategies for improving performance by tuning Apache's configuration, changing your Apache and mod_perl build options and being cleverer about the HTTP headers that you return.Most dynamic web sites have a database involved somewhere so part 3 covers using databases with mod_perl. Part 4 is all about debugging and troubleshooting your mod_perl server.

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