Learn to Program

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It's now easier to learn to write your own computer software than it has ever been before. Now everyone can learn to write programs for themselves--no previous experience is necessary. Chris Pine takes a thorough, but light-hearted approach that teaches you how to program with a minimum of fuss or bother. Starting with small, simple one-line programs to calculate your age in seconds, you'll see how to have your webpage send you email, to shuffle your music more intelligently, to rename your photos from your digital camera, and more. You'll learn the same technology used to drive modern dynamic websites and large, professional applications.

Learn to Program Details

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From Reader Review Learn to Program for online ebook

Amy says

A good introduction to Ruby. Touches on a lot of basic functionality and offers interesting and humorous challenges to practice programming. If you're looking to get started with Ruby, this book is a good jumping off point without too much intimidation. As an added perk, he has it available online to read for free! But you'll have to work out the answers to the challenges yourself because those are only offered in the print edition. But that's ok. As Chris Pine himself so aptly put it, "Programming isn't about what you know; it's about what you can figure out." Well said.

Mike Riess says

The best tutorial- print or electronic- I've found for beginning coders. Clear explanations for those without a tech background and practical application of ideas with exercises that include 'how you could do it' and 'how I [the author] would do it' that demonstrate better/best practices. The book is humorous, entertaining, and engaging such that it never overwhelmed me as a student. Not only does the book cover the basic science of code, it also gives the reader a sense of how code can be beautiful, unique, and expressive. The best starting point for beginners looking to learn code and be inspired by the craft.

For more: http://wannabetechies.tumblr.com/post...

Mary says

I initially loved this when I first discovered it. It seemed like a gentle and carefully crafted introduction to programming with Ruby. The examples were thoughtfully done, if sometimes a little humorously silly, and the text surrounding them carefully transitioned from concept to concept.

So I decided to use it to teach a class of new programming students. Their reactions were quite a bit more mixed. Most couldn't handle actually reading all the text, not necessarily a fault of the book itself, but it was a problem for its use in the class. A bigger issue though was the way that the Ruby code is taught and written (and this is perhaps more of an issue for the very flexible Ruby language). The book examples are written in a very easy to read sort of way, but it is somewhat different than what is often found in code I've bumped into professionally and other examples and discussion online. For me, this wasn't a big issue, I know many languages and styles of languages and am comfortable flowing from one to another. For my students, though this was a big issue.

The main issue with this is with method parameters. The book doesn't use parenthesis around them, which is often fine, unless you're trying to combine multiple statements on a single line.

my_method param1, param2
vs
my_method(param1, param2)

Both are fine on their own, but start trying to show results of methods with puts and you can start running into trouble. Just adding puts is fine, but then if you try to "pretty" up the messages or convert numbers to strings, it's not so fine. Easy answer is to then do that on multiple lines, sure... but then you've got the students looking things up online saying no, just do it this way, and then confusion begins to set in. Why not just teach them to use the parenthesis in the first place? (as several of my students asked me)

Unfortunately, this was such a big issue for syntax errors in the class, that I've decided that I can't use this again. Does it make it a bad book, no not necessarily. I still think it explains things very well. However I really wish the code were just a little bit more in line with what I think of as standard rather than trying to be English readable. For me, that prevents it from serving the purpose I need it to serve. My students are adults, and perhaps a younger audience might be more inclined to learn from the book (vs many sources) and not find this as problematic.

Rich Fuller says

Great intro book to programming in general with a Ruby focus. I loved the author's tone and writing style. Chapter 9/10 seemed to take a pretty big jump and I found myself struggling to understand the concepts though. Overall great intro book, gets you writing some code and feeling the sense of excitement at making some things happen with programming.

David Rojo says

Después de leer el tutorial gratuito en línea (del cual realicé una traducción disponible en http://goo.gl/3UcZi), quede realmente complacido por el acertado manejo de la complejidad que se da al tratar los conceptos de cda capítulo. Encontré en el libro varios ejercicios y temas que complementan el tutorial en temas de manejo de archivos. Aunque algunos de los últimos problemas sugeridos son bastante desafiantes y probablemente no son aptos para personas que tengan con éste libro su primer contacto con la programación, el estudiante que logre resolverlos quedará muy satisfecho de sí mismo.

Me gustaría que hubiera más material de éste tipo sobre Ruby, disponible en para hablantes del español.

Rosa says

Verme ahora leyendo este libro explicar??a lo mal que me va con mi proyecto fin de carrera, claro. Si tras 4 a??os en Ingenier??a Inform??tica a??n necesito leer eso, tengo definitivamente serios problemas.

Todo parti?? de un pedido que iba a hacer a Amazon.com. Estaba echando un vistazo al cat??logo de The Pragmatic Bookshelf, que son unos libros muy chulos de programaci??n, y me detuve en ??ste (en gran parte porque sal??a fruta en la portada). Le?? la descripci??n y me llam?? la atenci??n la parte en la que hablaba del autor:

"Chris Pine first discovered the programming language Ruby in early 2001 and immediately began using it to build tools for his day job: programming computer games. After hours, he volunteered with gifted children teaching them advanced mathematics. With Ruby, he began to teach his students programming as well. Once

he saw how easily his students learned advanced programming concepts in this environment, he decided to expand his teaching materials into a book.

Chris enjoys board games and juggling, and lives with his darling wife and two darling children in darling Oslo, Norway. He is very happy."

Eran unos 12??? al cambio as?? que me dije, "venga, va". En cuanto me lleg?? el paquete, empec?? a leerlo como si se tratase de una novela.

Me ha parecido el libro t??cnico m??s adorable jam??s escrito, si es que los t??rminos "t??cnico" y "adorable" son muy compatibles. No he aprendido nada con ??l, eso es cierto, vamos, unas nociones de Ruby que con cualquier tutorial habr??a adquirido en much??simo menos tiempo. Pero aparte de eso, me ha gustado much??simo leerlo. Si no estuviera en ingl??s, se lo pasar??a a mi madre, para que al menos se hiciera una idea de a lo que me dedico.

Es un libro lleno de humor y de amabilidad que te hace mantener una sonrisa mientras aprendes lo que es la recursividad o las cadenas de caracteres. Incluso si no tiene nada que ense??arte, es muy agradable de leer. No s??, supongo que un fil??sofo puede disfrutar leyendo El mundo de Sof??a, a pesar de que no vaya a aprender nada nuevo, s??lo por el hecho de que es un gran libro. Es la comparaci??n m??s f??cil que se me ocurre.

Claro, si hay alguien con ganas de aprender a programar o de tener al menos una idea de lo que es, definitivamente ??ste es el libro. Ojal?? yo hubiese tenido algo as?? cuando empec??.

Rafid says

Great book for anyone who wants to learn how to program.

Mary Dickson says

What can I say? I wrote a Chris Pine Appreciation Post here: http://marydickson.com/chris-pine-app.... This is a great teaching companion. For one, the book has great examples and challenge problems — they're fun, whimsical, not too easy or difficult, and reinforce key ideas from the chapters. What's more, they're the type of programing challenges that a more advanced student could take and build on (make it better, make it live on the web, etc). I also especially admire the way he introduces and teaches recursive programming (further explained in my blog post). Very good for beginners or anyone seeking to go back to basics!

Cody says

Really good for a solid understanding of basic Ruby programming. I highly recommend everything up to Chapter 9 or 10. If you are new to programming in it's entirety, I don't think he does a great job explaining what lambdas or procs are and why they're useful. It's kind of a weird concept to wrap your head around. But

everything else was very well written and the exercises were easy to understand and helped build the fundamentals.

Katy says

I *ahem* know the person who wrote this, so... just so you know. But I think it's a great book, and I know how much time, thought, and effort he put into it. I served as a guinea pig of sorts through all the drafts and earlier versions. I was a non-programmer to begin with, and Chris actually tried to teach me to program a couple of other times before he started writing the book. The book worked! I don't program by myself these days, but I got enough understanding from the book to be able to listen to Chris tell programming stories :).

Scott says

This is a great book for anyone with no prior programming experience. If you're ambitious, this is a great weekend project. Chris Pine really knows how to answer the questions anyone brand new to programming is wanting to ask.

The work is very easy and the hand-holding really helps you get a good grasp on the basic concepts or programming, as well as the Ruby language.

Look at this as a bare-bones startup to your learning. Finish this book, and then decide if you want to be a programmer, as well as if you want to be a Ruby programmer. I haven't found any better book to get your feet wet in computer programming.

Melody says

Excellent book for any newbie Rubyist! No previous experience required. The best part in my opinion is the answer key that provides two versions of scripts! One that the reader could write with the knowledge they've read from the book thus far and another version which the author as an experienced programmer would write. The author's version motivates me by reminding me how much more is there to learn ahead of me.

Eden says

I wish I had read this earlier in my career. Absolutely recommended for anyone getting started with programming or anyone who thinks maybe they could be - you won't be intimidated by this book. It truly is for beginners and it lays an excellent foundation to build on.

hoffnarr says

Rather lazily written intro to programming through ruby. Bizarre examples and sample code that one gets

bored of sorting through.

Beginners won't find it very difficult, but there isn't enough time spent on flow control or classes or basic OOP concepts for it to be that useful.

Puck says

Some classmates are being driven crazy by the author's inner monologue but I think it's fine- I'm glad it's not a dry book, I like that there's a little personality.