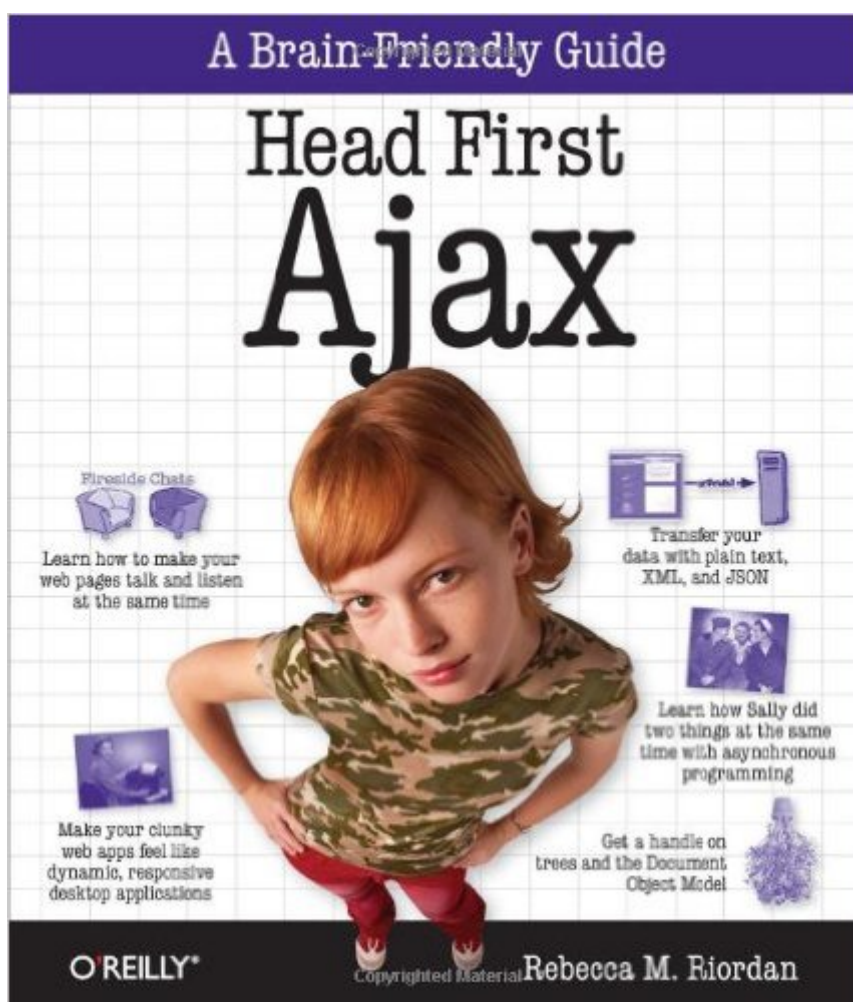# The book was found

Head First Ajax

Synopsis

Ajax is no longer an experimental approach to website development, but the key to building browser-based applications that form the cornerstone of Web 2.0. Head First Ajax gives you an up-to-date perspective that lets you see exactly what you can doâ "and has been doneâ "with Ajax. With it, you get a highly practical, in-depth, and mature view of what is now a mature development approach. Using the unique and highly effective visual format that has turned Head First titles into runaway bestsellers, this book offers a big picture overview to introduce Ajax, and then explores the use of individual Ajax componentsâ "including the JavaScript event model, DOM, XML, JSON, and moreâ "as it progresses. You'll find plenty of sample applications that illustrate the concepts, along with exercises, quizzes, and other interactive features to help you retain what you've learned.Head First Ajax covers:The JavaScript event modelMaking Ajax requests with XMLHTTPREQUEST objectsThe asynchronous application modelThe Document Object Model (DOM)Manipulating the DOM in JavaScriptControlling the browser with the Browser Object ModelXHTML FormsPOST RequestsXML Syntax and the XML DOM treeXML Requests & ResponsesJSON -- an alternative to XMLAjax architecture & patternsThe Prototype LibraryThe book also discusses the server-side implications of building Ajax applications, and uses a "black box" approach to server-side components.Head First Ajax is the ideal guide for experienced web developers comfortable with scriptingâ "particularly those who have completed the exercises in Head First JavaScriptâ "and for experienced programmers in Java, PHP, and C# who want to learn client-side programming.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is for people who already know HTML very well and are familiar - but not necessarily experts - with CSS and Javascript. If you are not in that category you should probably check out "Head First HTML and CSS" first. This is not a reference book, but a book for understanding and, more importantly remembering Ajax via an unusual presentation style. That unusual presentation style includes fake interviews, lots of illustrations, and question and answer sessions. You are also presented several designs and shown the right and wrong ways to approach problems. Ajax requires a non-traditional approach to web application design, and head first books are always good at adjusting your thought process as painlessly as possible.The topics covered include designing Ajax applications, Javascript events, multiple event handlers, asynchronous applications, the document object model and its manipulation, frameworks and toolkits, XML requests and responses, Javascript Standard Object Notation, forms and validations, post requests, leftovers, and utility functions.I liked this book not only for its casual and fun presentation style, but because it starts explaining Ajax at the beginning and does not get confusing as you go forward. The author knows how to ramp up the difficulty level without you really noticing. Plus, you don't feel like you need half a dozen other books to understand what's going on. The author is clear in her explanation of what the book's limitations are.

While "Ajax: The Definitive Guide" is certainly exhaustive, it's hard to have confidence in a text so riddled with errors. Other O'Reilly titles I've purchased in the last few years suffer from the same problem: very poor copy editing. In a "Definitive Guide," this is inexcusable.Furthermore, he author's decision to rely on the Prototype framework is misguided. It saves a few lines of code per page, but one expects a "Definitive Guide" to define, explore, and use the actual objects and methods defined by the language itself, not those defined in one of many, many external libraries.It is also somewhat comical to read on page 10 that developers, rather than browser vendors, "are to blame for not adopting standards" and that they are "stuck with the mentality of the 1990s, when browser quirks mode, coding hacks, and other tricks were the only things that allowed code to work in all environments," and then to read on page 191 that "Yes, there are always caveats in the world of standards compliance" and that "Example 7-2 will not work in Internet Explorer because Internet Explorer does not support the CSS2 rules that are used to make this work." And on page 187 that "Internet Explorer does not natively support :hover on elements other than . For this reason, instead

of using the CSS that will work for all other browsers, we must use this...."(It's hard not to laugh, too, at a sentence that begins with "To take the file menu example fully to the Web 2.0 level....")By the time all the errata are corrected and a second edition issued, it might be appropriate for the author to wag his finger at developers who can't yet afford to to be totally standards-pure, but by then the faddish jargon will seem very dated.And until O'Reilly starts employing copy editors, I'm not buying the first edition of any title they release.

First, a preface...I like Head First Books. I feel they make great primers for advanced subjects because of their plain-language approach, the playful fun they have, and the focus on the whys as opposed to a cookbook approach.Now the review (intended for the 1st edition):The selected content, and the order presented is excellent. I have little to add that hasn't already been shared by previous reviews.The editing however is laced with errors. I'm only a third through the text so far and have encountered and corrected 6 significant errors in the code. These are all backed up on the HeadFirst errata page, but I have to ask...where was the editor on this book? If I wasn't very familiar with Javascript, much of this code wouldn't work without debugging.One example as a case in point:Beginning on page 118, there's a sequence of instructions and code to get you to build a simple tab animation with images. If you build and test the code as written in the text, it has no hope of working as the code was obviously written with different image names than the ones provided with the downloadable code. (the text has you create code [pg.119] to build image filepaths such as "images/beginnersTop.png", when the file it intends to point to is actually "images/beginnersTabActive.png".The script I'm referring to is intended to be used as an example of bad coding choices...not bad code. It is there to show options for separating behavior from presentation. Despite that, presenting broken code is just not acceptable.My advice...good book but wait for the next edition when O-Reilly will have hopefully fixed these errors.And to the editor...you really dropped the ball on this one. A disappointment in an otherwise exemplary series.

Ã Â§There is a LOT of code in this 950 page book. I guess there is something here for everyone because there is code not directly related to Ajax but is directed to HTML structure or CSS presentational aspects or to frameworks that may include Ajax conveniences.In fact, the amount of code may interfere with the author's object of appealing to two very different types of people with this book: Web developers and project managers looking for a high-level view. Except for some intro chapters and the odd breather between 10-15 page code listings, I don't think any project managers *I* have worked with would extract much from the book.The book has 4 sections:Part 1 - Ajax

Fundamentals: the basic technologies that could form the core of a typical Ajax application.Part 2 - Ajax Foundations: approaches to standards-compliant structure, separation of the presentational layer and client-side behaviors. Code code code!Part 3 - Ajax in Applications: describes the specific implementations of these technologies into Web applications. More code!Part 4 - Wrapping Up: tips on optimization.In addition, there are some reference appendices on XML and XSLT; on JavaScript frameworks; on Ajax implementation risks; and most interestingly, a catalog of freely available Web service APIs.One thing I did not like about the code listings was the use of Prototype style $() function syntax. This means when I see something like:var titleText = $('title').firstChild;I had to check whether .firstChild was a reference to a Prototype object or a reference to the standard DOM object. If the standard object, it would have been a whole lot clear just to have written document.getElementById().The book index is actually pretty good. With 950 pages stuffed with content, you will probably be thankful for that!Ã Â§

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