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BOOK REVIEWS, ETC

the bookworm

by Peter H. Salus

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This will be an "all over the map" column. I've been reading and thinking about a variety of things.

For example, back in 1985 Peter Capek organized a session on "UNIX on Big Iron." At that time, UNIX had moved from being DEC-only to the Interdata and the early SUN machines. But I certainly never thought about UNIX at IBM – even though I worked at IBM Research and knew Peter.

More recently, IBM has moved into Linux, and so here's Eilert et al. giving us a fine volume concerning Linux on the zSeries and the S/390.

Most interestingly, Linux runs on the zSeries as z/VM, taking us back to the late '70s as well. Let's try to recall that the various software tools ran on Joe Sventek's VM. And, of course, those of us running on IBM iron in the '70s and '80s ran on virtual machines.

Nostalgia aside, *Linux on the Mainframe* is an interesting and valuable book produced by a group at Boblingen and in Poughkeepsie. There is a good bibliography of IBM "red books" and Web-available papers. The references to actual books are the sole notable weak spot.

Security

In a sudden burst, I received several more books on security. Outside of the second edition of Kaufman et al. (*Network Security: Private Communication in a Public World*, 2nd Ed., Prentice-Hall), I really don't think they're worth a great deal.

For example, Yeo's *Personal Firewalls* cites the 1995 [!] edition of Chapman and Zwicky, but nowhere even mentions Cheswick and Bellovin or Garfinkel and Spafford.

Day's book is "written in a manner that anyone with the most basic IT knowledge will be able to read it." Possibly so. It was so simplistic that I gave up on it. Garfinkel and Spafford is the sole technical book in the "Recommended Reading."

Linda McCarthy's book is supposed to give the "big picture" of IT security. It's so big, I missed the trees. The best parts of the book are Spafford's "Foreword" and the 40-page Appendix.

Java

On the other hand, there is a trio of really good Java books from O'Reilly, *Java Data Objects*, *Head-First Java*, and *Java Database Best Practices*. I've been coming across instances where Oracle-fits-all just isn't an appropriate solution. JDO lets you manage data without concerning yourself with db software or db query languages. Hey, you don't need SQL and you don't need to copy stuff using JDBC calls. It looks (to me) like a fine API; Jordan and Russell have written a fine book.

Sierra and Bates have written an exciting book that won't be for everyone. It's a quick read, a "contemporary" sort of learning experience, that incorporates humor and puzzles into instruction. This may be the best book on learning Java I've seen.

In *Java Database Best Practices,* Reese runs through the myriad APIs and technologies – EJB, JDO, JDBC, SQL, RDBMS, OODBMS, and more. He explains the various approaches and

gives all the information necessary to assess just which approach should be the most effective.

Storage

Orenstein's *IP Storage Networking* is a fascinating, lucid exposition of a very complex problem. I'm confident that more and more of us will be employing iSCSI. This book will be leading us in the developing processes.

A Reappearance

Robbins and Robbins is far more than merely a new edition of *Practical UNIX Programming* (1995). In addition to putting on pounds, it has gained in topics. It's now *UNIX Systems Programming*. As I was sent galleys, I can't tell exactly how many pages the finished book will have (nor its ISBN). And while it may never replace Rich Stevens' book in my affections, it is certainly more up-to-date.

Twenty-Five Years Ago in UNIX
by Peter H. Salus

Some of you may recall reading in *UNIX NEWS* that the long-announced UNIX issue of the *BSTJ* was available. Only $2!

It was the July-August 1978 issue. A full quarter-century ago.

I still consider the pale blue issue of the *BSTJ* the very best "book" on UNIX. I think the 21 papers are outstanding. Doug McIlroy on the beginnings; Dennis and Ken on "The UNIX Time-Sharing System"; Ken on implementation; Steve Bourne on the shell; Dennis, Brian, Steve Johnson, and Mike Lesk on C; Johnson and Ritchie on C portability; Heinz Lyclama on MERT; Ted Dolotta, Dick Haight, and John Mashey on "The Programmer's Workbench"; and so on.

Prentice-Hall reprinted the issue in 1987, together with the second *BSTJ* "UNIX" issue. I saw a two-volume set in a bookstore for nearly $300 recently. I presume Lucent now owns the copyright. Republish this, someone!

Browsing this old friend, I was repeatedly astounded at how relevant the articles still were.

No, Heinz, I'm not going to use MERT; no, Ted, not PWB either.

But there are about 400 pages of really first-rate ideas here. They are ideas, for the most part, equally applicable to OS X or any flavor of Linux.

(Maybe that's SCO's point in their silly lawsuit: Those ideas which were important to UNIX are the same ideas now used in the BSDs, in Linux, in OS X. Look out, Shakespeare! Your sonnets have the look and feel of Petrarch's. If history repeats itself as farce, then SCO is really into clown-paint. For a fine analysis, I recommend Eric Raymond's: *http://www.opensource.org/sco-vs-ibm.html.*

And a 20-year note . . .

In January 1983, in San Diego, Armando Stettner introduced the "UNIX" license plate. Armando, it's still up on my wall. Hey! SCO! "Live Free or Die!"