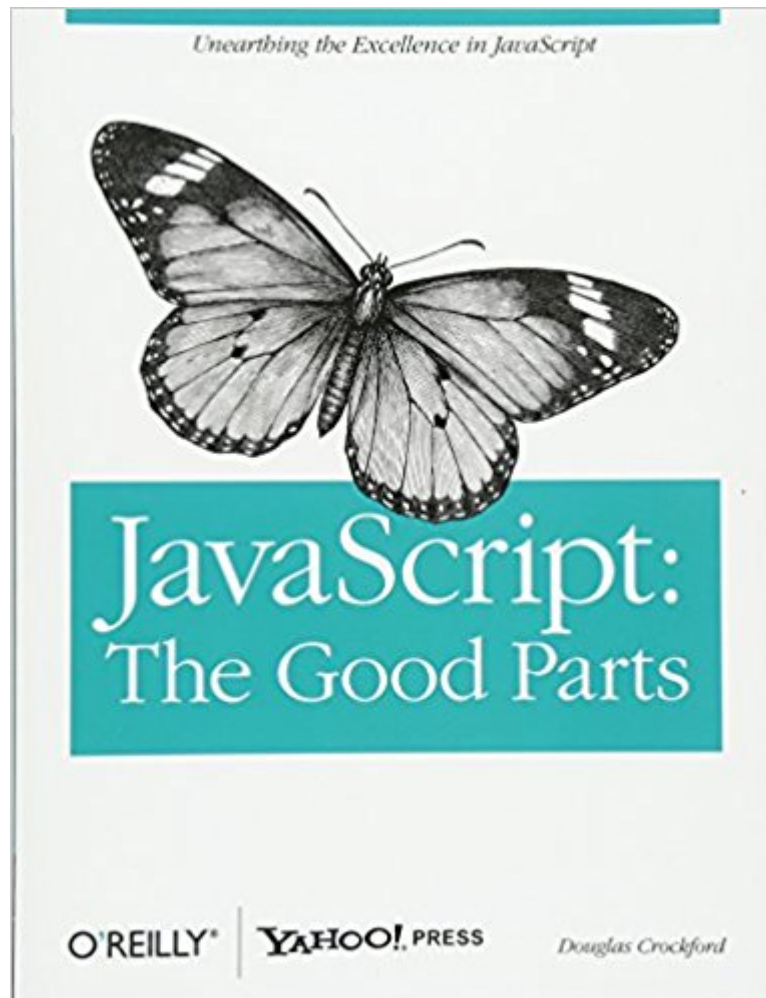




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JavaScript: The Good Parts



Synopsis

Most programming languages contain good and bad parts, but JavaScript has more than its share of the bad, having been developed and released in a hurry before it could be refined. This authoritative book scrapes away these bad features to reveal a subset of JavaScript that's more reliable, readable, and maintainable than the language as a whole. A subset you can use to create truly extensible and efficient code. Considered the JavaScript expert by many people in the development community, author Douglas Crockford identifies the abundance of good ideas that make JavaScript an outstanding object-oriented programming language—ideas such as functions, loose typing, dynamic objects, and an expressive object literal notation. Unfortunately, these good ideas are mixed in with bad and downright awful ideas, like a programming model based on global variables. When Java applets failed, JavaScript became the language of the Web by default, making its popularity almost completely independent of its qualities as a programming language. In *JavaScript: The Good Parts*, Crockford finally digs through the steaming pile of good intentions and blunders to give you a detailed look at all the genuinely elegant parts of JavaScript, including: Syntax, Objects, Functions, Inheritance, Arrays, Regular expressions, Methods, Style, Beautiful features. The real beauty? As you move ahead with the subset of JavaScript that this book presents, you'll also sidestep the need to unlearn all the bad parts. Of course, if you want to find out more about the bad parts and how to use them badly, simply consult any other JavaScript book. With *JavaScript: The Good Parts*, you'll discover a beautiful, elegant, lightweight and highly expressive language that lets you create effective code, whether you're managing object libraries or just trying to get Ajax to run fast. If you develop sites or applications for the Web, this book is an absolute must.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

View larger From the Preface This is a book about the JavaScript programming language. It is intended for programmers who, by happenstance or curiosity, are venturing into JavaScript for the first time. It is also intended for programmers who have been working with JavaScript at a novice level and are now ready for a more sophisticated relationship with the language. JavaScript is a surprisingly powerful language. Its presents some challenges, but being a small language, it is easily mastered. My goal here is to help you to learn to think in JavaScript. I will show you the components of the language and start you on the process of discovering the ways those components can be put together. This is not a reference book. It is not exhaustive about the language and its quirks. It doesn't contain everything you'll ever need to know. That stuff you can easily find online. Instead, this book just contains the things that are really important. This is not a book for beginners. Someday I hope to write a JavaScript: The First Parts book, but this is not that book. This is not a book about Ajax or web programming. The focus is exclusively on JavaScript, which is just one of the languages the web developer must master.

Unearthing the Excellence in JavaScript

Douglas Crockford is a Senior JavaScript Architect at Yahoo!, well known for introducing and maintaining the JSON (JavaScript Object Notation) format. He's a regular speaker at conferences on advanced JavaScript topics, and serves on the ECMAScript committee.

Like many old-school Programmers (with capital P), I always felt JavaScript was a "messy" language with horrible browser implementations and poorly planned, incompatible DOMs. I knew enough of it to get by - but just barely so. But I first began to reconsider my position when I saw projects like jQuery and their elegant solutions. It got me interested enough that I decided it was time to get better informed about "modern day" JavaScript. Well, this book completely turned me around on the language. It not only sold me on the idea that JavaScript can be treated as a serious language, but also on the idea that it's actually better suited for a variety of tasks. JavaScript can be elegant and powerful in ways that more traditional languages can't. The beauty of this book is that it

argues the case by creating a subset of JavaScript through selective use of features and voluntary syntax conventions. This book also manages to do it simply and concisely, eschewing the usual introductory, filler type stuff found in most programming books. It jumps into the meat and goes through it so fast, I read it in two relatively short sittings. And I've re-read it on occasion just as a refresher which is something I can say of very, very few technical books. I highly recommend this book for anyone who works with JavaScript or is considering it. I'd also recommend it to those steeped in traditional, compile-time focused, OO languages as a way to understand the power of a more dynamic language. In fact, given how short it is, I'd really recommend it to any programmer regardless of their current or past language of choice.

Let's be clear, this book doesn't cover jQuery nor was it written by the author of CSS: The Missing Manual. This book is also not about Ajax or Web programming. It's about how to take your understanding of JavaScript up several notches. The preface clearly says this book isn't for beginners and also warns it may take multiple warnings to understand. Don't let the silly negative reviews fool you, any serious JavaScript developer should own this book. It is certainly one of the most important JavaScript books ever written. It will make your JavaScript better.

I have decided to add JavaScript to the very long list of languages I've used in my career. Hands down, this book is absolutely perfect for the well seasoned software engineer looking for a no nonsense, no fluff, to the point, direct in content, high on information, short on explanation book about HOW TO PROPERLY USE JavaScript. Don't pay attention to the comments about this book not having direction or too much fluff. Those are opinions of readers who did not have the capability to understand the content. I can say this because I have read this book many times and to be truthy, I didn't understand but maybe 50% of the content on initial readings. This book is only about 100 pages (50 of which are the true core) of rock hard content. This is the book for a well seasoned traditional software engineer to begin learning JavaScript. If you want an easier JavaScript book to read, I suggest following the instructions given in the book on page 3, "If you want to learn more about the bad parts and how to use them badly, consult any other JavaScript book."

In one of his videos, Douglas Crockford states: "JavaScript is a language that most people don't bother to learn before they use. You can't do that with any other language. And you shouldn't want to." Crockford has well-founded opinions and he isn't shy about expressing them. Just because you *can* do something doesn't mean you should do it. Crockford explains what and why not without

wasting a lot of pages. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are the heart of the book. These thirty-six pages more than justify the book's cost. I tend to buy smaller books these days. This book reached a new high for the amount of useful content divided by price. (Rivaled by the "K & R" book. But have you priced that sucker lately?) If you're new to Javascript and/or programming and wonder whether you should buy this book: go ahead. You will get more out of it than you might expect. Some chapters, such as "Arrays" are not difficult and allow a bit of relaxation. I personally like the railroad diagrams. These grammar diagrams are repeated in the back of the book -- a bit of redundancy. I have to stretch to find something to gripe about, but here goes. In places, Crockford's explanation of a language flaw or limitation is immediately followed by a fix, usually by augmenting one of the base prototypes. It likely shows my own unfamiliarity with his subject matter, but I find these "corrections" jarring: I haven't yet grasped all the language features and here you are changing them in front of me. I'm not sure whether moving these fixes to a separate section(s) would be an improvement. Perhaps not. Overall, a great read. Something you can refer to many times.

If you are new to JavaScript, then you have voluminous options available to you for your pursuit of knowledge. In my case, I started with the ECMA-262 standard for ECMAScript 5. You can tell that there was a lot of love there; though it wasn't really the right place (at least for me) to get started. Instead I wanted a "when the tires hit the pavement" overview, and the book delivered that. The book is lovingly written in a way that all technical people should behave, or for that matter, every conscious entity should behave: focus on the positive, respect the negative, and move on with life. The book covers tons of great guts of the language and how to use it "for real". I need not say more, the book delivers on its promises, and that is why I gave it a 5/5. The Kindle version looks great, everything is readable. The chapters and sections are light and terse, you get a lot of bang for your buck. In terms of the voice, it wasn't my personal preference, and for me it was really hard reading, but that is my problem, not the author's, and consequently the rating stands.

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