

Dr Bob on Books

In our last issue, we published full tables of contents and synopses of four books, two of which Bob Swart has now reviewed. Rather than to print Bob's full reviews (which you can access on his website www.drBob42.com), here are his general comments on *The Tomes of Delphi: Algorithms and Data Structures*, on *Building Kylix Applications*, and also on Marco Cantu's new book, *Mastering Delphi 6*, the full contents list of which appears opposite.

You can buy these and other books for professional and personal use via our website from Amazon.co.uk where you will pay the lowest prices (and support UK-BUG too).

Building Kylix Applications by Cary Jensen and Loy Anderson

pub. Osborne, RRP £43.99, 832 pages including index plus supporting website (see our September/October issue for full table of contents).

This is one of the first, if not the first book on Borland Kylix, the RAD environment for Linux. It is both targeted at Delphi developers who want to make the move to Linux with Kylix, and at Linux developers who never heard of Delphi and just want to work with Kylix. Because of the diversity of these two potential reader groups, you may sometimes read information that you already know (about Delphi - if you're a Delphi developer, or about Linux, if you're a Linux developer already). I expect other Kylix books to follow that will make a distinction, and either focus on existing Delphi developers moving to Kylix (and are new to Linux), or existing Linux developers who want to try Kylix (and have never worked with Delphi).

If you're new to Linux or have never used Delphi before and you want to start working with Kylix, then this book can certainly help you along the way. If you're already familiar with Delphi and Kylix (and with the new features such as dbExpress and CLX), then there may not be a lot in this book that you can't also find in the Kylix manuals and examples (apart from the third part of the book which, in my view, covers the most advanced topics). Still, as a first book on Kylix, it's a good one, and will probably end up being a bestseller - assuming Kylix itself is a bestseller, which may not happen until the next release of Kylix which should be more on par with Delphi 6.

The Tomes of Delphi: Algorithms and Data Structures by Julian Bucknall

pub Wordware, RRP £48.50, 526 pages including index plus CD and supporting website (see our September/October issue for full table of contents).

This is a book that I've been waiting for for a long time (according to the acknowledgements, Julian worked on it from April 1999 until February 2001, probably even longer). But it has been worth it, because it's an excellent book about algorithms and data structures implemented in Delphi (and Kylix) - usually version independent.

A great plus is that the code in the book works for every version of Delphi and Kylix (and probably also in C++Builder), and I'm fairly confident it will remain working in the next version(s) of Delphi and Kylix to come. A bonus point is the syntax high-lighting in the source code listings. A small effort for the author/publisher, but a great help for the reader who sees the source code for the first time.

The conclusion is the same as the start: I have waited a long time for this book, but it has been worth it. If you're only half serious about data structures and algorithms (or efficiency for that matter), then you should read this book. You won't be sorry, trust me!

Mastering Delphi 6 and general thoughts

Now that I've finished Julian's book (and the review), I can finally finish Marco's book (I had already read the second and most interesting -for me - part, and now need to start from the beginning).

From what I can see, it's of the usually high standard bestselling quality. The only downside is that Marco tries to cover everything, and hence only has a few pages (sometimes not even a full page) to cover some topics, which are consequently a bit undertreated but, for most people, that won't be a problem. Still, I wonder how long he can continue with a general intermediate Delphi book trying to cover everything in breadth rather than anything in depth.

I'm hoping for a Delphi In-Depth series that will take on specific topics in real detail. Currently, the only publisher who attempts such a thing is Wordware, but not all their books are as good, and their topics seem rather unfocused (the ideas of the authors, not a Big Plan or overview - at least not one that I can see).

Wordware planned schedule

(from their production schedule)

- Tomes of Delphi: Developer's Guide To Delphi Troubleshooting by Clay Shannon now available.
- Delphi Developers Guide to XML by Keith Wood now available.
- Tomes of Delphi: Win32 Core API - Windows 2000 edition by John Ayres due December.
- Tomes of Kylix: The Linux API by Glenn Stephens due December.
- Kylix Development by Whipple and Ross due January.
- Delphi Internet Developer's Guide by Lino Tadros and Noel Rice due February.
- Tomes of Delphi: Win32 Shell API - Windows 2000 edition by John Ayres due February.
- Learn JBuilder 6.0 by Charlie Calvert due February.
- Extending Delphi: Components, Wizards and Add-Ins by Joseph Booth due March.
- Delphi Developers' Guide to Communications by Alan Moore, John Penman and Chad Hower due April.
- Advanced JBuilder 6.0 by Chuck Easttom due April?
- Delphi Developer's Guide to Internet Direct by Chad Hower, Allen O'Neill and Hadi Hariri due April.
- Enterprise JavaBeans Programming with JBuilder 6.0 by Chuck Easttom due May.
- Applying Design Patterns in Delphi by Xavier Pacheco due June.