

Book Review: Kylix Developer's Guide

by Bob Swart

I must warn you on beforehand that I'm a bit biased towards this book. And one look on the cover should make it clear why: my name is on it, next to the names of Charlie Calvert, Marjorie Calvert and John Kaster.

Four names on the cover means that each of us wrote a significant part of the book. I'm sure it won't come as a surprise when I tell you that I was responsible for Part V - Web, with three chapters (Apache Web Server Applications, Web Server Development and Advanced Web Server Development, using WebBroker and NetCLX in Kylix). I won't tell you that these chapters are essential reading for anyone who wants to do Kylix web server development, since they lack one important topic: WebSnap development in Kylix 2. I know that this is a book mainly about the first version of Kylix, but I also know that at least two of the authors are currently working on some new Kylix 2 chapters (covering WebSnap, DataSnap, BizSnap with XML, SOAP and WebServices). These topics are currently only covered in a special *What's New in Kylix 2* bonus chapter on the CD but, once we've finished the new and updated chapters, they will be made available (as far as I've heard, they will be made available on the CD as well as on the web for previous customers and other interested developers).

OK, so now you know that the book doesn't cover a lot of Kylix 2 stuff. *What does the book cover, you ask?* Well, it starts with a part introducing Delphi and Linux. This is a two-fold part of the book, introducing Delphi to Linux developers, and Linux to Delphi developers. And the combination of the two is, indeed, Kylix.

The second part of the book introduces CLX - the Component Library for X-platform. Even if you're an experienced Delphi VCL component user or component writer, this part will contain some new stuff. CLX is in many ways similar to VCL (they are both component libraries, and both contain a TButton), but there are lots of differences as well.

The third part of the book contains two specific Linux programming chapters, covering topics such as console applications, memory management, file I/O, processes and threads. These are especially welcome for Delphi developers who've seldom seen (or worked with) Linux before.

Part IV is about DataCLX, and contains five chapters about database development. A large portion of this chapter is also useful if you're using dbExpress (and DataCLX) in Delphi 6, due to the cross-platform nature of DataCLX. The same can be said for the second part that introduces CLX, actually.

The last part of the book is about web server development, that I mentioned in the introduction of this review. WebBroker is still one of my favourite features in Kylix and Delphi, although I must admit it has been a bit ignored by Borland recently with the release of WebSnap in both Delphi 6 and Kylix 2. Since WebSnap is just the first version



of a new architecture, it doesn't hurt (in my opinion) to be able to work with WebBroker, and the chapters in this last part of the book attempt to teach you just that.

Conclusion

I'm not 100% sure if I can recommend this book to anyone. If you know Delphi but are new to Linux, and want to use Kylix, then this book contains some helpful information (especially the third part). If you know Linux and don't know Delphi but want to use Kylix, then the

other parts may be even more useful.

However, if you really want to work with all the new features of Kylix 2 Enterprise (the WebSnap and BizSnap with XML, SOAP and WebServices), then you have to wait for the updated chapters. You can still buy the book (thanks in advance), but I just wanted to let know you what to expect. The Linux specific chapters were very helpful for me, and so was the chapter on database optimisations, but you have to make your own decision. If you read it, please let me know what you think. Thanks in advance!

For more information and news about the updated chapters, see <http://www.drbob42.com/books/kylix>

Kylix Developer's Guide by Calvert, Calvert, Kaster & Swart, pub Sams, esp £43.99 (Amazon price £37.39 + p&p). 908 pages plus index, and CD containing all the examples in the book.

Part I Understanding Delphi and Linux

1. Visual Development
2. Looping and Branching, Operators and Recursion
3. Basic Pascal Syntax
5. The Editor and Debugger
6. Understanding the Linux Environment

Part II CLX

7. CLX Architecture and Visual Development
8. Packages: Sharing and Reusing Code
9. Creating Components
10. Advanced Component Design
11. Graphics

Part III Linux Systems Programming

12. Console Applications, Memory Management and File I/O
13. Processes and Threads

Part IV DataCLX

14. DataCLX Basics
15. Working with Data-Aware Components
16. Data Access Layer
17. Creating a Real World Application
18. Database Optimizations

Part V Web (by Bob Swart)

19. Apache Web Server Applications
20. Web Server Development
21. Advanced Web Server Development