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Apache Jakarta Commons: Reusable Java(TM) Components



Synopsis

The Apache Jakarta Commons project is a collection of freely-reusable, opensource Java components. Commons components are used in a wide variety of projects, including Apache Tomcat, Hibernate, and many other commercial and open source projects. This book is a Java developer's guide to the Apache Jakarta Commons project. It covers in detail the twelve most important Commons packages, with sample program code provided for each. Included are a number of remarkably useful ideas for working the various Commons packages, such as using HttpClient to access web resources, File Upload for handling HTTP file upload, BeanUtils for easy form generation, implementations of various protocols such as FTP and NNTP, and building a command line tool to search for the location of classes on the class path. Also included are detailed instructions for combining the Commons project libraries with the popular Eclipse IDE. Plus, the book includes a handy 75-page Jakarta Commons quick reference Appendix.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Apache Jakarta Commons" shows the reader the power of the Commons libraries. It provides a very brief overview of the available components and goes into detail on 12 of them. APIs are explained through both class diagrams and description. The author provides best practices, warnings and project ideas. The book gets started right away, on page three. The code examples are clear and well commented. The consistent coding standard throughout the book helps with readability. The author highlights differences between the sample code and "real apps." The book is

meant for experienced Java programmers. The author assumes readers have knowledge of JSPs, Servlets, Swing and UML. Most importantly, he assumes readers are comfortable with learning by reading through code. Readers are not assumed to have knowledge of the specialized topics such as XPath or encryption. Note that this 325-page book is really a 201-page book. Appendix A is the entire API of the Commons lang project - word for word. I found the printed API to be difficult to read since the methods tend to run into each other. Since the other Commons projects have APIs online only, readers have to be comfortable using the online JavaDoc anyway. This is the type of book that readers will find either valuable or minimally useful. For those who like bound versions, this book gets you started quickly. For those who like online documentation, the UML diagrams are the primary benefit given the online JavaDoc and code samples.

I recently started working on several projects that require the Apache Commons libraries. After looking at several books I chose this one. This is a choice I regret. This book has been at my work desk now for a several months, and several times needed to look something up in it - doing a multi-part HTTP POST to send large files, for example. In every case, it was useless. Sometimes it didn't even have the needed classes in the appendix. This book has only the most introductory material that you could learn from a website in an hour. Except for the most basic questions, or for the complete novices this book is useless. I'd throw it away if I hadn't spent so much money on it. I gave it two stars, only because someone (a novice) might find it helpful, and it does have complete examples. More advanced programmers should skip this one.

Two of the most important projects are not introduced in this book except in the "Other Project" chapter where the information you can get from Jakarta Commons website is better and clearer. The two projects are: Validator - a must for almost every Java developer. Who doesn't do validations? This project provides useful validations such as email address and credit card numbers. More importantly, it allows us to define validation rules in XML format. Digester - also a must for anyone who needs to parse XML configuration files or rule files. Very handy. No need to use SAX directly anymore. I also found that other projects that enjoy a chapter in the book are not explained better than from Jakarta Commons Website. For example, the Lang project. I learned more from the Jakarta Commons website in an hour than from the book. To summarise, this book is really disappointing and not worth the money.

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