

FACEBOOK APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT BY NICK GERAKINES



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Review

"This is a classic presentation that underlines its [Wrox] quality and standing in the computing world." (The Bookseller, Friday 14th March 2008)

From the Back Cover

Facebook Application Development

Developing Facebook applications requires a different way of thinking than traditional web site development. This book guides you step by step through the process, covering topics and theory that can be applied immediately. It also highlights the various challenges and possibilities that you may encounter as you create your own feature-rich Facebook applications.

The author begins with a look at the Facebook Platform and explores the Facebook application basics. Next, he provides you with an example application to demonstrate some of the introductory concepts. The core components of the Facebook Platform are also presented along with examples and common use cases. You'll then delve deeper into the Facebook Platform to learn how to extend and enhance the applications you've already built.

This book will help you complete several introductory projects and progress to more advanced concepts. It arms you with the tools and know-how to inject new features and content into the Facebook environment.

What you will learn from this book

- How to create, configure, and develop an application on the Facebook Platform
- Techniques for using Facebook API requests and responses as well as method definitions
- Tips for working with Facebook Markup Language (FBML)
- How to query Facebook using the Facebook Query Language (FQL)
- Methods for utilizing the community-supported wiki and bug-tracker
- How to integrate automated and scheduled tasks
- Strategies to develop customized features for your application

Who this book is for

This book is for programmers who are new to the Facebook Platform or who have had some experience with it and want to go further. You should have an understanding of basic web technologies as well as some web development experience.

Wrox guides are crafted to make learning programming languages and technologies easier than you think. Written by programmers for programmers, they provide a structured, tutorial format that will guide you through all the techniques involved.

About the Author

Nick Gerakines is a software engineer at Yahoo! in San Francisco, California where he works on del.icio.us and contributes to numerous other projects and Facebook applications. In addition, he has written several Facebook applications of his own, including the popular I Play WoW application. He is an active member of the Facebook developer community and writes frequently on the topic. He lives in Mountain View, California with his wife, Carolyn, and daughter, Vanessa.

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- The wildly popular Facebook social networking platform has published an open Application Programming Interface (API) and developers are eating it up--60,000 signed up to use it in the first few days; with this API, any programmer can create applications and new features for Facebook
- Explores and explains the components available to programmers, including working with Facebook Markup Language (FBML), querying Facebook with FQL, application layout and flow, advanced configuration and performance tuning, and more
- Businesses such as NBC, Yahoo!, Red Bull, Forbes, and the Washington Post are building branded applications to reach the growing Facebook community

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Most helpful customer reviews

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

Acceptable, not Exceptional, Resource

By Christopher

I'm relatively new to Facebook development, and not nearly as fluent with PHP as I'm sure many of the folks considering this book must be. So, you should probably read this review with that in mind.

I bought this and FBML Essentials at the same time, hoping that the two together would provide a sufficient understanding of the api and mark-up language. This book, as described by the other reviewers, has many typographical errors, which of course can be a nightmare if you're relatively low on the learning curve (as I am/was). If you choose to buy this book, you should most certainly download the source code from the wrox site to accompany your reading (as it seems it to be error free and because the code snippets in the book often leave critical methods and files out.)

The greatest shortcoming of this book is its lack of applied examples... many of the more advanced features in later chapters are listed in almost dictionary-style format, with no illustration or example code to explain how the methods and such are actually written and how they might be applied. Again, if you're well acquainted with php, you may be less in the dark than I and thus able to conceptualize how everything fits together. This is definitely NOT a book for novices (I found the O'Reilly book, although short, to be a more effective introduction to development via FBML in this respect (though it doesn't touch much upon the api and other more sophisticated techniques broached in this text.)

That said, the fact that there is such scant information available for Facebook development make this book worth your consideration; but I would definitely consider supplementing it with a book like O'Reilly's, and

couple it with a pretty thorough acquaintance with the developer's wiki on Facebook. Even downloading and stepping line-by-line through the footprints application from Facebook will help you get the sense of how this stuff works.

Also be forewarned that this, and most of the books presently available, are not written for the new Facebook API written this summer (2008)... so methods like `require_add()` are no longer recognized and throw errors... this of course can be quite confusing if you're new to all of this.

Using this book, the wiki, and O'Reilly text, I was able to make my first Facebook App that lets users feature a particular video pertaining to a charitable cause from a small library in their profile boxes and application tabs. If you're trying to do something basic like that, you should be able to do so with these resources. Good luck!

15 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Poorly edited - full of annoying little errors

By A. Andrews

I found this book to be a barely acceptable reference, but only because the Facebook documentation is so bad. The book is full of annoying little errors in the text and sample code. For example, a section on FBML tags for navigation starting on page 51 promises a more complete discussion of the topic in chapter 10, which turns out to be about external application development.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Ok, but nowhere near worth its selling price

By John Licato

As already stated, there are lots of little errors, more than a few of them that should have been caught. It's very clear that this book was written in a hurry, and it's very much a reference book and not a very good how-to guide. You're gonna need to know php, obviously you'll need to know HTML, and it's best that you are familiar with javascript and perhaps some AJAX will help as well. Even so, the book is disorganized in such a way that I've frequently come across things that I don't remember him describing, so I'd look it up in the index and not find it there. So I'd end up having to use google to find examples and explanations, making me wonder why I bought this book in the first place.

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