Book Review: Database Developer's Guide With Delphi 2 by Ken Henderson

This is a solid real-world book for the professional Delphi client/server database developer. It's not for beginners or for learning Delphi, but for those who want to learn from Ken Henderson's practical experience of over 10 years database development.

The book consists of four parts: *Getting Started, Tutorial, Reference* and *Advanced Topics.* The *Getting Started* section can be used to convince you (or your clients) of the power of Delphi compared to other development environments. It also contains a good list of naming conventions, an introduction to SQL (an advanced sequel comes later) and very interesting chapters on Database and Application Design that, amongst other things, explain normal forms but also why you should watch out for over normalization.

The *Tutorial* section shows you how to design and build a database application and upsize it to an SQL server (such as InterBase), using (for example) the Data Migration Expert. This is an important part of the book and users who've never before tried to build a true client/server application from the ground up should really try to work it through from start to finish.

The *Reference* section is the 'least good' part of the book (I can't really say 'weak' part). Two chapters introduce Delphi's data access and data aware components, followed by two more chapters about InterBase and ReportSmith. These chapters are somewhat less in-depth than the rest of the book.

The final *Advanced Topics* section, however, is again very good. Two chapters deal with proper business rules deployment (with client and middleware but especially server implementations). These are followed by chapters on concurrency control (two or more users working on the same database) and transaction isolation, advanced SQL syntax, optimization techniques for client/server applications and the internals of the BDE and IDAPI drivers.

There's also a chapter to show how to build your own database (not data aware) components: `TArrayTable`, `TLiveQuery`, `TDBNav-Search` and `TZoomDlg`. In this chapter, the author refers to another component design book by Danny Thorpe (the proofreader of this book) which is not yet available.

The final chapter is about deploying your application, including the correct database drivers (and how to install them), covering all the things that can go wrong in a real-world situation!

The CD-ROM contains not only the source code for each chapter and example databases, but also some good third party tool demos.

The book will not only teach you Delphi database development, it will also prepare you for dealing with real-world client/server situations. I can recommend this book to any Delphi client/server developer and especially teams of developers!

Scores out of 5:

Technical contents:	5
Quality of writing:	4
Value for money:	4
Overall Assessment:	4

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