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## **Book Review: Rapid Development by Steve McConnell**

**W**hen he wrote *Code Complete* in 1993, Steve McConnell produced what has surely become one of the landmark books on software design and coding. Just about every one of its six hundred odd pages had a useful suggestion or strategy for writing better, faster or more readable code. Now he's turned his attentions to the Rapid Development process, something which Delphi is particularly well-suited to, and produced another enormously valuable work.

There are two sections. The first 15 chapters present an overview of Rapid Development, what the different approaches to it are, and what are the key concepts and main dangers which need to be understood before undertaking it. The second part is the more immediately applicable: a series of 27

Rapid Development 'best practices', all outlined and explained with commentary on where the likely benefits lie, and the associated risks. Some examples: Requirements Scrubbing, Daily Build and Smoke Test, Miniature Milestones, Throwaway prototyping; these are all sections which can be read in 5 minutes but which could seriously improve your software and your working life.

One of McConnell's key strengths is the sheer range and volume of his research. It seems every other page contains some empirical data on the best and worst ways to run a software project, and McConnell isn't afraid to let you know where his own opinions lie. He's also used fictional case-studies to good effect to illustrate differing approaches to

development, many of which will be depressingly familiar to programmers in the Delphi community and beyond. You could enjoyably read this book from cover to cover thanks to McConnell's excellent prose, and that's certainly the way to get the most from it. But even if you just dip into it occasionally for ideas and guidance, or splash out on a copy for your team leader, this book is a bargain, and highly recommended.

### **Scores out of 5:**

Technical contents:	n/a
Quality of writing:	5
Value for money:	5
Overall assessment:	5

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