
Book Review: **Delphi Database Development**

by Ted Blue, John Kaster, Greg Lief and Loren Scott

This is a useful book, but an unfriendly one, and it could have been a lot better. The authors have set themselves an admirable goal: to provide the definitive reference work for database developers using Delphi 1.0 and 2.0. The introduction states "This book is designed to be a reference, not a tutorial ... Every property, method, and event from every visual and non-visual database-related component is completely documented and clearly explained with short, practical examples of each."

Ironically, it's the emphasis on completeness that lets this book down and makes it so exhausting to wade through. Take Chapter 3 as an example, on Visual Data Controls. Although they start the chapter with a summary of common attributes, "to avoid severe redundancy", what follows still contains far too much unnecessary information. Do they really need to devote half a page to every `OnClick` event? There's over two hundred pages of detail on how these components

work, but it's badly laid out and organised, and finding what you need among the myriad of different fonts, type sizes and type styles becomes mind-numbing.

I suspect, however, that the sections on the more commonly used Delphi components were only added in for completeness. The book's real value comes in providing a detailed reference on the more advanced database topics, where developers like me are on relatively unfamiliar ground. The coverage of the BDE, for example, seemed to me to be impressively complete, although again I wish they had committed themselves to being a bit more of a tutorial and a bit less of a reference work, and highlighted where the really useful tips where.

According to the introduction, the authors spent months analysing how Delphi and the BDE work. Good for them. But most half-way intelligent Delphi people know how 90% of it works anyway, it's the last 10% they need help on. The infuriating thing about this book is that

its near one thousand pages probably do hold most of the answers, it's just going to drive you mad trying to find them...

Scores out of 5:

Technical contents	4
Quality of writing	3
Value for money	3
Overall assessment	3

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