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Essential COM

Forewords by Charlie Kindel and Grady Booch

Essential COM
Don Box

"Nobody explains COM better than Don Box"

- Gain critical insight into the why of COM, not just the how
- Master COM as a programming discipline
- Understand the impact of Distributed COM

develop mentor series
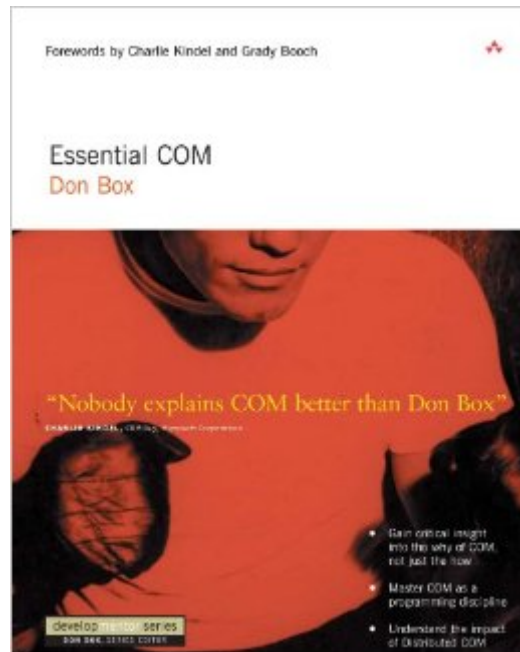
Synopsis

Written by a leading COM authority, this unique book reveals the essence of COM, helping developers to truly understand the why, not just the how, of COM. Understanding the motivation for the design of COM and its distributed aspects is critical for developers who wish to go beyond simplistic applications of COM and become truly effective COM programmers, and to stay current with extensions, such as Microsoft Transaction Server and COM+. Box examines COM from the perspective of a C++ developer, offering a familiar frame of reference to ease you into the topic.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book is a collection of technical notes and not a learning book. The author tries to show every little detail but forget about explaining the global idea behind it. There is no connection between parts and there is no writing technique that leads you into understanding. I got the feeling the author was more busy of showing how much he knows and less about trying to explain things to the reader. This book is "nice to have" but only after someone else show you the meaning of COM.

Obviously, Don Box is a COM and C++ master, which is where the problem lies. Admittedly, he does cover many aspects of COM quite extensively. The first chapter is the best background material on COM that I have read. But thereafter, Box changes his approach. He then seems to lapse into gratuitous, uncontollable programming razzle-dazzle when covering COM topics. His

multi-page macros are just plain confusing and distracting. [Who is his intended audience: COM neophytes or his COM cronies?] His explanations concerning his use of the subtleties of C++ are entirely too feeble. While COM is at heart a subtle C++ application, surely programming virtuosity can be de-emphasized when explaining COM basics. His examples have questionable utility. However, again, his book does fill in some of the gaps of COM that other books gloss over. But I'm still waiting for that five-star book on COM.

Yes, the book gets its job done. Once you are done reading this book, you will know COM quite well. However, this really is not for beginners. Unless you have a good idea on how COM works, you will be lost. I have read "Inside COM" before reading this book, and I was still somewhat lost(its that confusing). If you know how COM works, this book will lead you to more technical background and help you truly understand how COM works, but, things are not clearly written. The author expects you know COM quite well.

after reading this book (it was not easy) I was amazed how this book is perceived by other readers. Reading the reviews one has a feeling the reviewer would rather say something different but feels obliged to acknowledge the greatness of the author. "The author is a COM guru therefore this is a bible". Is this a phenomena of emperor's new clothes? This book presents a comprehensive review of COM as seen from the top, and is valuable to developers already familiar with COM. The style of this book is interesting, I personally would prefer a simple prose.

This book is esoteric. It isn't practical. I recommend something else.

If you are already familiar with COM in C++, then here is a book that can bring your skill to the next level. For those of you who already own many many books on COM, your collection wouldn't be complete if you miss this one.This book continues on where many others left off. It digs deep down and explores the areas that are ESSENTIAL to your understanding of COM's intricacies. Many insights given in this book are rare, and you probably won't find it elsewhere. If you are already familiar with COM, here is a book that surprisingly still intrigue you on the subjects that you think you already knew.Though, I don't recommend this book for beginners. As the matter of fact, if I was new to COM and had to write a review for this book, I probably would have only given it 2 stars. It is not because the book is bad, it is simply that this is NOT one of those how-to-book. However, if your level is in the intermediate to advance, you will most definitely want this one.So, if you do decide to

get this book, here is my tip for reading it. Don't try to read the book from front to end, for you may not find enough momentum to get pass the second chapter - that is, if you not into theory and all. Instead, just jump to the chapters that interest you the most. Also note the chapters near the end are very addictive, so you may want to start the book from there. This is how I "re-gained" the incentive to finish the book.You welcome:)

This book starts out by saying that it would cover COM at its most basic, no class libraries or macros to get in your way. That sounded like an absolutely wonderful idea.But what happened was that instead of explaining how the real world ATL COM macros worked, Don Box spent the entire book explaining how his own personal macros worked. That was not what I signed up for.Did I learn something? Yes, but I sure had to wade through a lot of Don Box's macros to see how COM worked.

I bought Essential COM about two years ago, and have since purchased and read other COM texts. I can say with certainty that if you want to start learning COM, this should be your first or second book on the topic. However, don't expect to be able to run out and start working with COM after reading the first few chapters. This is a very theory-oriented book aimed at developing a thorough understanding of COM, with few code-oriented examples that are used for explanation rather than demonstration purposes. The writing can be dense at times, but this is more a factor of the book's topic than the author's writing style.The text requires knowledge of C++ and a desire to learn something new. If you buy this book and don't understand what you're reading, try reading Chappell's Understanding ActiveX and OLE before returning to Essential COM.But by all means, this book is one of the best treatments of COM available.

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