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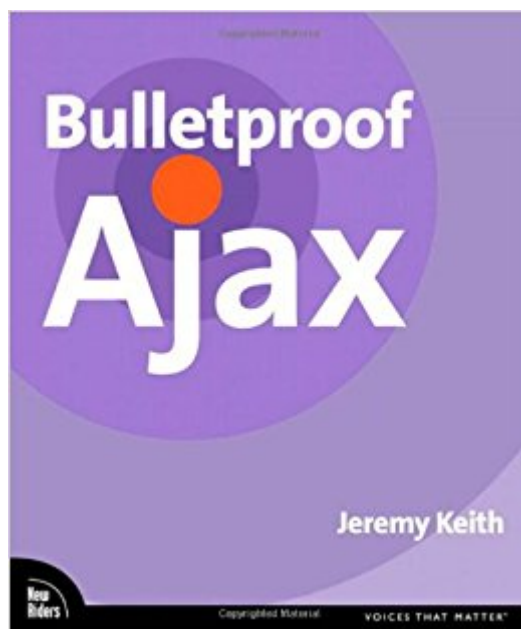
Bulletproof Ajax

Synopsis

Step-by-step guide reveals best practices for enhancing Web sites with Ajax   A step-by-step guide to enhancing Web sites with Ajax. Uses progressive enhancement techniques to ensure graceful degradation (which makes sites usable in all browsers). Shows readers how to write their own Ajax scripts instead of relying on third-party libraries. Web site designers love the idea of Ajax--of creating Web pages in which information can be updated without refreshing the entire page. But for those who aren't hard-core programmers, enhancing pages using Ajax can be a challenge. Even more of a challenge is making sure those pages work for all users. In Bulletproof Ajax, author Jeremy Keith demonstrates how developers comfortable with CSS and (X)HTML can build Ajax functionality without frameworks, using the ideas of graceful degradation and progressive enhancement to ensure that the pages work for all users. Throughout this step-by-step guide, his emphasis is on best practices with an approach to building Ajax pages called Hijax, which improves flexibility and avoids worst-case scenarios.

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Customer Reviews

Bulletproof AJAX by Jeremy Keith was an excellent beginners book to AJAX. For those who have read Bulletproof Web Design by Dan Cederholm, this book literally took the same approach. The book starts with the very basics and walks you to the end where you create a fictional bookstore that utilizes AJAX. Each chapter addresses what it means to make an AJAX application bulletproof. The author is brutally honest while informing you the barriers that AJAX faces, and how to get

around them. Sometimes the best solution is: don't use AJAX. Obviously, this isn't the case for everything - or there wouldn't be a book to read. I appreciated the approach of making sure that your AJAX applications utilize progressive enhancement and are unobtrusive. These are two key elements when dealing with JavaScript as a whole. The entire journey of this brief (but informative) 200 page book looked a little like this:Chapter 1 answers the question "What is AJAX?" and gives a brief introduction and history lesson as to it's origins. This is very basic, but begins to get your feet wet understanding that AJAX is not a new technology - but one that has recently hit the spotlight.Chapter 2 gives a thorough overview of the Document Object Model. He explains what the DOM is, how it relates to your structured HTML and Javascript, and the methods associated with traversing the DOM. This is very important as he moves forward to create unobtrusive AJAX.Chapter 3 dives into the XMLHttpRequest object, its origins, and how to create a bulletproof instance of the object. This handles the differences between IE and other browsers and how they implement the request.

Jeremy Keith has been on forefront of upcoming web practices for quite awhile now. He is a member of the Web Standards Project, joint lead of the DOM Scripting Task Force, stresses web standards and accessibly in web design. His website addaciao.com is a great resource of material on the subject and you can pretty much find him at almost any web conference in the world nowadays.This is his second book (Dom Scripting), and it pretty much continues his relentless pursuits of accessibility and unobtrusiveness wherever JavaScript is involved. This book focuses on the creating well structured Ajax web applications but making sure the reader does not forget the most important thing about web sites: their content. If all this fancy-shaky, bells and whistles Ajax stuff prevents a disabled user using a screen reader to be able to view your website content, what is the point?The book is aimed (like his first) at web designers as opposed to programmers. Jeremy does not use fancy techo-bable when regular simple English will suffice. He wants to make sure that anybody can understands the concepts of Ajax and its components (JavaScript, XML, XMLHTTPRequest) can be used properly by anybody who is willing to read it. Not too many books are written like this (unfortunately) and it is a joy to read. Though when you actually see it and how short it is (barely 200 pages with index), you may thing..."this is too short for me to get anything out of this". But you would be so wrong. There are around 10 or so Ajax books out there now (more on the way I'm sure), and I probably have at least half them. I would put this as probably I the top 2 of all the Ajax books out there.

"Bulletproof Ajax" is an indispensable resource for any front-end web designer, developer, or interaction designer who is involved or is planning on being involved in a project that includes Ajax techniques. Whether working on an in-house team or as an independent consultant, you'll need to understand the pros and cons of using this popular and somewhat controversial method of serving web pages.This is not a book for web designers who don't want to code. In order to benefit from this book, you'll need a strong understanding of semantic XHTML and CSS. A passing familiarity with JavaScript is a definite plus as well. (Keith's previous book, DOM Scripting: Web Design with JavaScript and the Document Object Model, is a good place to start.) Chapter 2 begins with an excellent overview of JavaScript terms and functions--the best I've read. (Until you become familiar with JavaScript statements, variables, data types, etc., you'll no doubt be referring back to this chapter often!)I found that "Bulletproof Ajax's" greatest strength is presenting ways to evaluate why and how a project should or shouldn't include Ajax:1. Is Ajax appropriate for the project?2. If yes, how will we most effectively implement Ajax?3. How will we provide for site visitors who don't have JavaScript enabled on their browsers?4. How will we address accessibility issues?In Chapter 5, Keith elaborates on a technique he calls Hijax (which he introduced in

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