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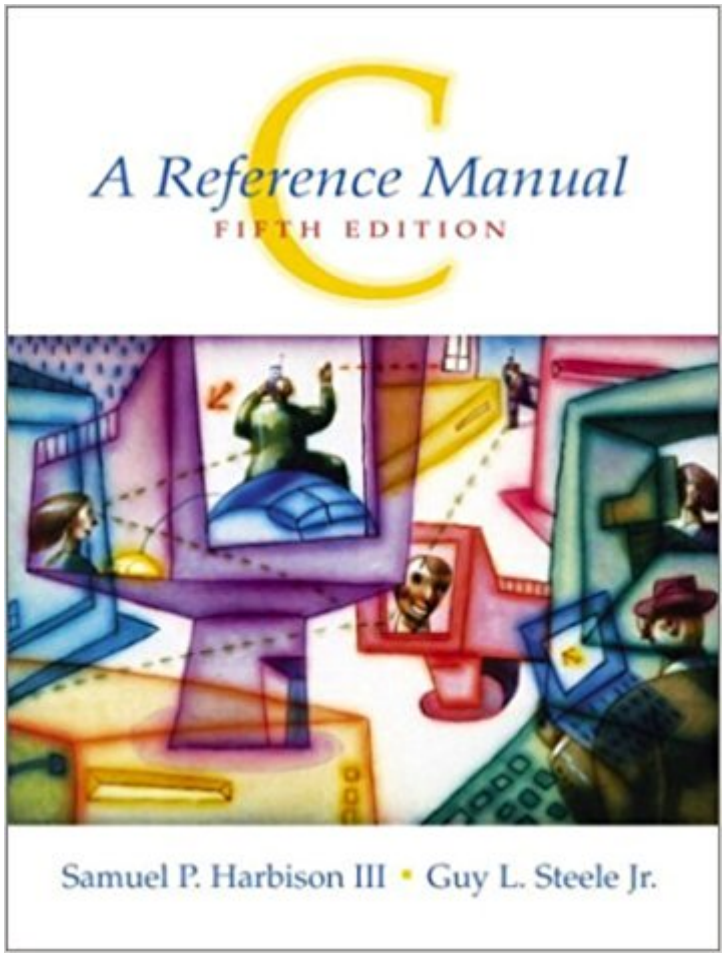
C: A Reference Manual (5th Edition)



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Synopsis

This authoritative reference manual provides a complete description of the C language, the run-time libraries, and a style of C programming that emphasizes correctness, portability, and maintainability. The authors describe the C language more clearly and in more detail than in any other book.

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Customer Reviews

I've never understood why this book hasn't gotten more attention, so I'll add my vote to the others.I'm a professional software developer (MFC, C++, and C). I first learned C in about 1992 using Kernighan and Ritchie, the only other C book you ever need to buy.I own several other C books, but have found that C ARM is the only one I ever use. Everything is there, in enough detail to answer every question I've ever had about C. The book even covers earlier versions of the language, if you're stuck with an older compiler (or need to port some older code).Secondly, the book is detailed and strict. Short of checking the actual standards documents, I know of no better way to answer those nit-picky language-lawyer questions that _will_ pop up sooner or later. I use a reference for those things that _don't_ pop up every day, and hence aren't usually covered in a tutorial book. They're in C ARM.C++ programmers should own a copy of C ARM, too. C is, after all, a "subset" of C++. However, C++ is such a huge language that the standard C++ reference/tutorials like Stroustrup (my preference), or Lippman and Lajoie, leave full coverage of C to other books. That's where C ARM comes in. No, you're not supposed to use printf() in C++ applications, but people do and you may well have to debug their code. If that's not convincing, recall that level of

detail that I mentioned above. Stroustrup doesn’t even have an ASCII table.Again, this is definitely not a primer. It is a reference for experienced C programmers. Buy K&R if you want to learn C.

My friend borrowed this book from me about two weeks ago and won’t give it back, I have since turned to my left side over 20 times looking for it to no avail (serious). If I was to describe this book in one word it would be "Clean", everything in this book is just beautiful, from the ease of use, to the technical details, to even it’s fonts and thickness of the pages, everything is so clean and precise that the book makes you want to read it and perhaps even keep it on a pillow next to you at night (but enough about my sheltered life).One thing that I did not expect before receiving this book was the amazing language overview that comes with the book, they could have sold the book with just that part and it would have still been great. The overview goes into great detail and is really good at pointing out things that other C books miss and the fact that the author is well versed on all the features of the latest C99 Standard adds even more to the wealth of information. My favorite part of the book is the part on the C Pre-processor, which had a great deal of information that I was not previously aware of.Apart from that, there is the reference side which has all the detail you could ever want in a standard library reference book, all in a very simple to search format (Oh yeah and I should mention, the index kicks ....).So long story short, if you want a single book that you can turn to for 99.9% of your standard C problems, divorce your wife and give that spot in your bed to "C: A Reference Manual (5th Edition)"... or 6th if it’s out by the time you read this review.ps. If your looking for this book in a bookstore make sure the lady types in "C: A Reference Manual (5th Edition)" and not "See: A Reference Manual (5th Edition)", long story, I’ll tell you another time.Hope you enjoyed reading this

This is absolutely the best book on the C language I’ve ever seen. The coverage is complete and detailed, the appendices accurarately and succinctly detail the ANSI standard C libraries. Basically, if you’re writing C code, you need this book. It’s displaced K&R on my desk as my C reference; it’s easier to read and better organized.Be forewarned, this is not a tutorial. It’s aimed at someone who already knows the language, and needs a detailed description for those nagging questions you can’t answer anyplace else.

I’ve been using the Harrison/Steele manual (4th ed.) for years. As a reference manual, it is unsurpassed. I decided to update to the 5th edition recently and all I can say is: don’t. For some reason, Prentice Hall has decided to print this edition on a low-weight, cheap paper. Whereas the

4th edition had clean, crisp text on bright paper, the 5th edition's text visibly bleeds along the paper fibers. This results in a smudged, blurry look to the text and makes reading more difficult. If you don't need the material on internationalization or complex arithmetic, you should find a copy of the 4th edition. Your eyes will thank you.

This book has no equal. If you need exact information about any fine point of C, the depth and precision of this book is unique. Also, I'm not aware of any other reference on C that clearly tracks the differences between K&R (original) C, traditional C, and ISO C. If you have to deal with legacy code, it can be invaluable to understand why older code does certain things the way it does. (You thought your predecessor did something stupid, only to find that it only looks that way because of a change in the language.) Finally, the 4th edition includes advice on writing C code that will be compatible with the C subset of C++. In a market jammed with 1200 page piles of padded garbage (and the only useful content pirated from the documentation that comes with the compilers), this book really stands out. It's an amazing piece of work. I've owned the 2nd, 3rd, and now the 4th editions, and if there should be a 5th I'll buy it without hesitation. I actually have two copies of the 4th edition: one at work and one at home. What more can I say? Note that the only negative reviews are because someone didn't read the title -- this is a REFERENCE manual, not a tutorial for beginners.

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