

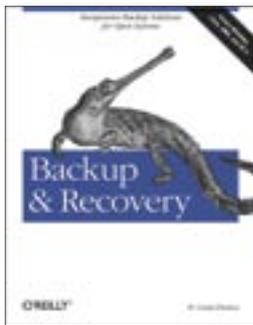
BOOK REVIEWS

BY JAMES MOHR

Backup & Recovery

When I was working in tech support, I got a call from a company that had a hard-disk crash. After a few minutes, it was clear the only thing the customer could do was to restore from backups. "We have no backups," the customer told me. "Our IT manager thought a backup system was too expensive." Hopefully, IT people understand the necessity of making backups. In any case, this is one book every administrator should have on hand.

Although I never really like books that have "Bible" in the title, I probably would not have complained if this book had used it – if there was any important aspect the author missed, I didn't find it. Perhaps you might need to look elsewhere if you have an uncommon operating system or configuration, but for the vast majority of systems, this



books is travel guide, companion, and bible – all rolled into one.

The author starts off with a couple of chapters on the basics, including the "Philosophy of Backups," in which he discusses what backups are all about and why you should do them, followed by the basics of how backups should be done, including how often, considerations, and so forth.

The next section discusses open source tools, including those that come standard with most Unix and Linux systems, as well as a few enterprise-grade packages like Amanda and Backula, followed by a discussion of commercial backup products – specifically, what features are available and what to look for.

The parts titled "Bare-Metal Recovery" and "Database Backup" deserve special mention because of their importance. I know of many companies that rely solely

on file-level backups, thinking that they can quickly re-install the operating system and various applications and then restore the data files. This solution is not always the fastest or one that works as expected, so the author spends a great deal of time covering the types of backups that are really necessary and how to use them to recover your system.

The book is full of real-world examples, in which the necessity of doing backups *right* is driven home. Although most of us know intellectually that backups are necessary, these examples provide the little extra emotional charge to get us up out of our seats and finally get our backups in order.

Do yourself, and your company, a favor – get this book!

W. Curtis Preston Paperback,
729 Pages
O'Reilly, 2007
ISBN: 978-0-596-10246-3
UK£ 35.50, US\$ 49.99, EUR 43.95

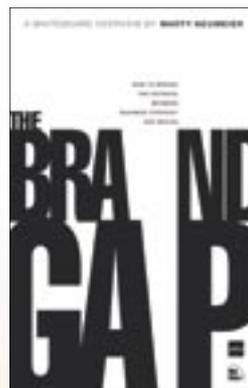
The Brand Gap

This book is a must for anyone who provides services or products on the Internet or who simply runs a website in an effort to build a user community. You won't find tips and tricks on creating cool Javascript applications or developing AJAX programs to connect to your product database. What you will find is a wonderful discussion of the concept of "brands." You might be asking yourself what brands have to do with websites or even Linux. However, if you think about it, brands – even in the narrow sense – exist throughout the Linux world.

The process for choosing SUSE, Red Hat, or Debian to install on a system is similar to how you pick a jar of peanut butter – in essence, it is the brand that

makes Microsoft so successful. The same is also true when choosing a particular Internet community among the thousands available.

This book sheds light on what brands are, how they are perceived by the customer, and what you can do to establish your own brand in almost any market. The author shows you how a brand extends beyond just the logo to a specific layout of the website and even a well-established "corporate identity." Although each element is associated with the brand, the author opens your eyes to how brands affect customer behavior.



This book is short and it's not all computer related. However, the other concepts covered by the author could also apply to branding in the IT industry. This book is definitely worth your money and time if you are trying to make a product or website successful.

Marty Neumeier Second Edition,
Paperback,
194 pages
New Riders, 2006
ISBN: 0-321-34810-9
UK£ 13.95, US\$ 19.95, EUR 17.45

Mastering phpMyAdmin 2.8

Considering that phpMyAdmin 2.10.1 was released in April 2007, this book is somewhat dated, but I would not call it “outdated.” The publisher’s website says this book will teach you how to:

- Administer MySQL users and privileges, and get statistics about MySQL servers and databases
- Manage databases, table data and structures, and indexes
- Use bookmarks and metadata
- Generate multiple SQL queries
- Generate better documentation of evolving table structures
- Effectively perform day-to-day database and table management
- Create efficient database tables and relational structures
- Document your evolving data structure easily

Like the other Packt books I have read, this one does not delve too deeply into the details of the topic. Instead, the book provides a quick and easy user’s guide. After the obligatory introduction to php-

MyAdmin and a brief history, Marc Delisle describes how to install the product on both Windows and Linux. He covers many different aspects of the installation and base configuration, discussing where to anticipate problems and how to solve them.

Having installed phpMyAdmin on a few systems, I was overjoyed to find several places where I finally “got it.” In the past, I would simply fit known configurations to the local system. After the installation, Delisle provides a basic tour of the user interface, what configuration options are related to appearance, and how the interface behaves. Details of the various components of phpMyAdmin is next.

As I got further into the book, I found the title to be misleading in terms of “mastering” anything. The author does

a nice job of explaining how to use phpMyAdmin, but to “master” phpMyAdmin, you need a good understanding of database concepts and SQL, both of

which were not presented in this book but should be considered for future editions. If you already have the previous edition, you can skip buying the new one. The publisher says the new edition, “brings the screenshots and user instructions into line with the new interface. If as a reader you are happy with the new interface already

you don’t need to upgrade to this new edition of the book.”



Marc Delisle Paperback,
293 pages

Packt Publishing, 2006

ISBN:1-84719-160-6

UK£ 21.99, US\$ 34.99, EUR 32.99

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