

PETER H. SALUS

the bookworm



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BOOKS REVIEWED IN THIS COLUMN

INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTER SECURITY

Matt Bishop

Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2004.
Pp. 784. ISBN 0321247442.

THE MYTH OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Marcus J. Ranum

2nd ed., John Wiley & Sons, 2003.
Pp. 240. ISBN 0471458791.

BUILDING APPLICATIONS WITH THE LINUX STANDARD BASE

Core Members of the Linux Standard Base Team

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall PTR 2004. Pp. 272 + CD-ROM.
ISBN 0131456954.

LINUX JOURNAL 1994–2003 ARCHIVE

Seattle, WA: SSC, 2004. CD-ROM.
(https://www.ssc.com/cgi-bin/lj/back_issue.) ISBN 1578310237.

THE CULT OF MAC

Leander Kahney

San Francisco: No Starch Press, 2004.
Pp. 280. ISBN 1886411832.

I've got a lot of stuff to write about this month, not least because this will be my last "Bookworm." I have been writing reviews for *;login:* since 1989. That's 15 years. I have no idea how many books I've read, commented on, reviewed.

However, fear not. There are other Bookworms.

On 2 May 1898, George Bernard Shaw wrote his farewell article in the *Saturday Review*: "The younger generation is knocking at the door," he wrote, "and as I open it there steps sprightly in the incomparable Max."

I am not GBS, and so no mere Max Beerbohm will follow me. Rather, in the April issue, there steps sprightly in the incomparable Aileen Frisch.

And now to the books . . .

SECURITY

Over a year ago, I reviewed Bishop's massive *Computer Security*. The volume to hand—a mere two-thirds the size—is a revised and cut-down version. As near as I can tell, Bishop has removed much of the mathematics and some of the explanatory material; the two chapters (on assurance) by Elisabeth Sullivan have been retained.

This results in a volume that is much less a university-level textbook, and more the sort of thing that a practitioner might read.

If you have been eager to delve into computer security in a systematic way, this is the book for you. It will not grow out of date, because it deals with principles. It is chock-full of examples. Bishop has done the field a great service.

A very different tack is the one taken by Marcus Ranum. His book is an out-and-out rant concerning *The Myth of Homeland Security*. I can't say I loved every page: a number of pages actually frightened me. But Ranum does a great job. To quote him: "Researching the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, CIA, INS, the PATRIOT

Act, and so forth, one falls into a rabbit's hole of interdependent lameness and dysfunction." Yep. Ranum is neither as focused nor as self-confident as Schneier, but his book is well worth reading. I read most of my copy sitting in Dulles, having had to take off my shoes despite the fact that neither the magnetometer nor the wand had been triggered. I felt much safer.

YET MORE PENGUINS

The LSB is an innovation that has enabled tens of thousands of programmers to write in confidence, rather than insecurity. In a mere 14 chapters, the Core Team has delivered methodologies for creating, testing, and certifying code that will be LSB 2.0 compliant. I wrote about LSB 1.0 several years ago. I'm thrilled that we now have 2.0, and application programmers will be happy to see this book.

Do you read *LJ*? Do you have a shelf or a stack of old issues? Well, throw 'em out! Get the *Linux Journal Archive*, a CD-ROM containing all 116 issues from March 1994 through December 2003. I've been reading it on Mozilla. I'm told it's a snap on Lynx or Konqueror. I'm sure Firefox'll be just fine. There's even a rumor that you can use IE. And it's really useful. I reread stuff by Doc Searls and Marcel Gagne. I even reread some stuff of mine.

LOW-HANGING FRUIT

I think you can get *The Cult of Mac* even if you don't use one. Perhaps not. I'm not a member of the cult. But I have used a Mac, and I've authorized purchases of cubes for folks working for me. This book is fun even for a guy like me.

It looks like an issue of *Wired*. Great typefonts. Outstanding pictures. Well printed. Hardbound. On top of that, there's content. That's right. Unlike many illustrated books, this one has substance.

Get it for someone you love as a Valentine's Day present!

Ave atque vale!