
Foreword

The Java platform and language were conceived with networking support as a core design principle. A measure of its success in this area is how unusual it is today to find a Java application that does not have at least some measure of network awareness or dependence. Developers today routinely build applications and services that a decade ago would have been regarded as highly complex and requiring rare expertise.

Frameworks, containers, and the high-level Java networking APIs have encapsulated this complexity, insulating developers from dealing with many traditional networking issues. However, many developers still make the fundamental error of taking this relative simplicity for granted by assuming that interacting across a network is no more complex than interaction with local objects. Many of the poorly performing or scaling applications I have seen are due to naïve decisions taken without considering the ramifications of distribution across a network and without attention to fundamental elements of network programming or configuration.

I was an early reviewer of this book and I admire its economical and thorough but eminently readable style, lucidly describing complex issues without ever overstaying its welcome. This book combines academic rigour with a practical approach deeply informed by real-world experience and I have no hesitation in recommending it to developers of all experience levels. Experienced engineers building network-centric infrastructure or services should not be without this book. In fact, any Java developer building distributed applications such as J2EE, Jini, and Web Services should read this book—at least to understand the fundamental implications of networking on application design and implementation.

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