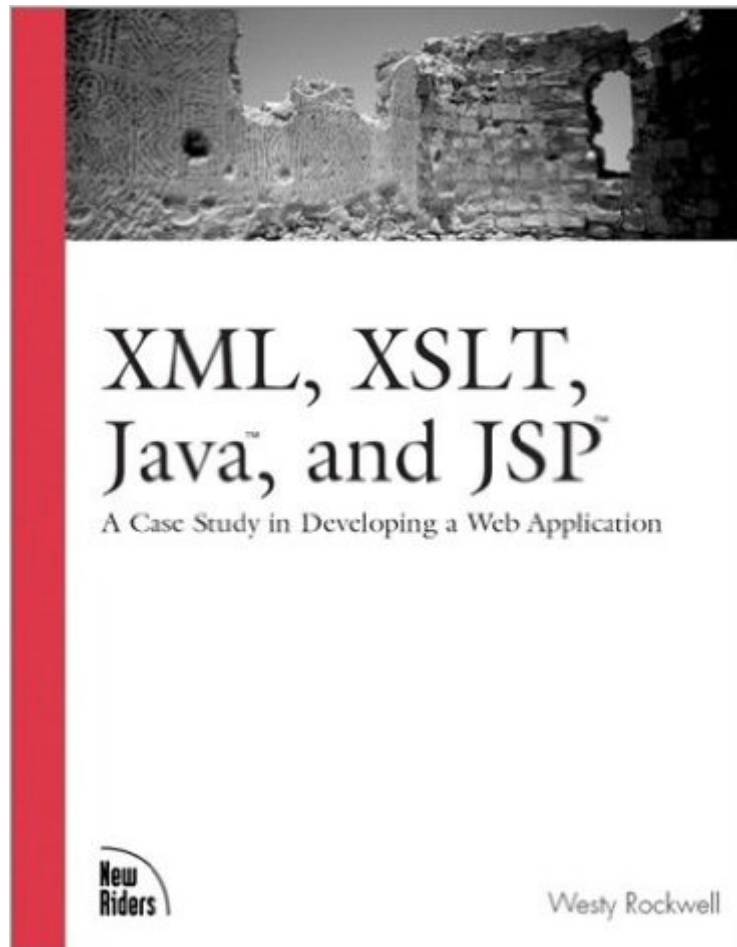


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# XML, XSLT, Java, And JSP: A Case Study In Developing A Web Application



## Synopsis

The book is a practical, hands-on experience in building web applications based on XML and Java technologies. This book is unique because it teaches the technologies by using them to build a web chat project throughout the book. The project is explained in great detail, after the reader is shown how to get and install the necessary tools to be able to customize this project and build other web applications. Of particular interest to readers will be the author's use in of XML in the book project as a language to express the architecture and design of the application itself, and not only the data content as is the usual case with "XML-based" applications. The book also contains some new and provocative techniques for XML storage using Java objects. The CD-ROM contains the web application project discussed in the book, which is a web chat called "bonForum." The complete source code is also provided. The files in the project consist of Java source and class files, HTML, JSP, XML, XSL, TLD, and image files.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There are some books that are published that you wonder why the publisher went through the exercise. New Riders should have rejected this manuscript. It claims to be a case study of XML, XSLT, and JSP but it isn't. It is a confused and confusing discussion of the author playing around with technology. The author wanted to try out some ideas so he decided to write a chat program. But there is no real design effort (you won't find a single UML diagram anywhere) so it is difficult to

understand precisely what the application is supposed to look like. Without any real design, the application ends up with one servlet of over 50 pages and another of over 40 pages in length. (The book is inflated with 300 pages of source listings that are unreadable.) As a case study in how to do bad design and write awful code, the book can serve as a warning perhaps. As far as actually trying to explain any of this technology, the author admits that isn't the purpose of the book. In a case study you like to hear of problems encountered or the different solutions attempted but you won't. No mention is made of security or performance. The code itself is useless and can't be used in other applications because it is so poorly designed. The author admits that huge chunks of code need to be refactored. Overall this book fails to provide any real value.

I bought this book hoping for an advanced and detailed comparison of 2 java server architectures: XML/XSLT versus JSP. It is not a comparison, or a tutorial, or an analysis of any kind. It is simply a meandering report of the author's experimentation with miscellaneous technologies. No conclusions are reached. No pitfalls are described. Topics like performance and extensibility are not even touched. XSLT is only mentioned in passing as an approach that was not followed. XML is only discussed as an application's data store; a mildly interesting exercise that most certainly would not be used on any production web site. Lastly, over one third of the book is source code print out.

Complete waste of money. I hate beating up authors, but this is nothing more than a dump of a software project from work. As such, there is little comparison-contrast, discussion of design choices, or benefit-pitfalls of the design. Don't expect to extract information from this text to apply to your own projects. I feel the publisher should put this book in a "out of print" status to save customer heartache. Did New Riders even review this book before releasing?

This book is a case study of a project using a combination of two of the hottest technologies around for delivering interactive web applications: XSLT and JSP Tags. It is not a text book. It is hard to give it a star rating because it is not particularly well written (the author is a better programmer than writer in my opinion) however the content is unique and will be of particular interest to those wanting to use both JSP and XSLT technologies to separate web page content from application code and data. There are many books on JSPs but they tend to have minimal content on XSLT beyond how to set up a basic custom tag to drive an XSLT processor. Likewise there are many titles dealing with XSLT that have little detail on how to intergrate XSLT processing into a JSP based application. This book deals with how they can work together which is why I describe it as unique. Another big plus for

this book is that the content is non-trivial and discusses a real problem, not made up easy-peazy ones designed to show off this or that feature of the XML, XSL or JSP specifications. The source code for the case study looks experimental because it is experimental. Mr Rockwell makes it quite clear that much of it is marked down for revision, as it should be in an iterative development process. It is not always easy to follow, but once you get into it you can see exactly what he's trying to do and there are some genuine nuggets in there which you won't find anywhere else. In summary, if you want to use both XSLT and JSP custom tags in your web applications and you are trying to figure out how to do it, you should consider investing in this.

Although the author patently knows his onions, it seems he hasn't a great deal of experience in conveying that information. In my opinion, if you just want to see an example of web app creation and get a few (great) ideas, then yes, buy the book. But if you want to figure out how to configure Tomcat, etc, in preparation for a new development, then look elsewhere. The book spends a lot of its time telling the reader that what they need to know is either out of the scope (detailed descriptions of web.xml and server.xml are out of scope?!) or that they should look on some other (sometimes unreachable) webpage. For example, how do you tell Tomcat where to find your compiled classes? I would first try looking in the index for setting the Tomcat CLASSPATH. The index has one entry for classpath and what does it tell me on page 17? "If you are looking for some clarity regarding which, if any, setting for the CLASSPATH environment you should use, we can think of no better place for you to find answers than ..."

At first glance, the author covers many well known applications for XML, XSLT, Java and JSP that many web-masters are familiar with. However, for me, it has saved me literally hours of work and research that I simply don't have. I applaud New Riders for their steadfast commitment to authentic original ideas shared by new intelligent authors. A great find and a bargain at the lower resale price!

I've found that this book goes in a lot of depth on a host of topics. I wouldn't recommend it for someone who is just starting out, because the topics are pretty advanced, but for those who are looking for a depth of study, this is definitely the way to go. It covers each topic in detail, with a realtive amount of background that helps cover the topic completely.

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