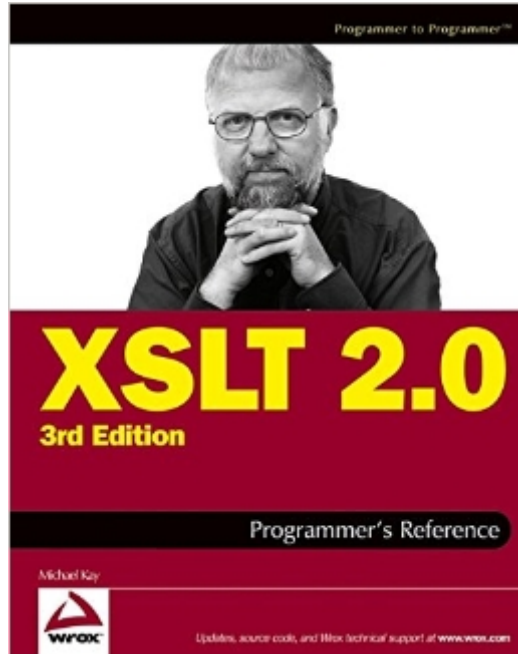


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# XSLT 2.0 Programmer's Reference (Programmer To Programmer)



## Synopsis

What is this book about? *XSLT 2.0 Programmer's Reference, 3rd Edition*, is the authoritative reference guide to the language. Without using the formal and inaccessible language of the W3C specifications, it tells you exactly what every construct in the language does, and how it is intended to be used. This book is a reference rather than a tutorial; it is designed for the professional programmer who is using the language every day. It is the book that people quote when they claim that a particular product is giving the wrong answer, and the book that implementers of the language turn to when they want clarification of the specifications. At the same time, the book is readable. Reviews of the previous editions of the *XSLT Programmer's Reference*, which this book grew from, show that readers appreciate the background material on the design thinking behind the language, the essay on functional programming, the occasional dry wit, the gentle criticism of the language specification when appropriate, and the fact that the examples stray into a diverse range of interesting application areas.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It is difficult to give a numeric rating to this book because it depends on what kind of reader you are:- If you have done little or no XSLT, and you want a book to efficiently explain how to start doing XSLT this is a TERRIBLE choice.- If you are a beginner who wants to know every tiny detail of XSLT and has plenty of time to learn it, then this is a good choice.- If you've already read an XSLT

book, you are already comfortable with XSLT, and now you want to learn all the extra details the other authors thought wasn't important enough to include, then this is a GREAT choice. This book almost reads like a specification. Although to be fair, I've read some specifications, like the EJB specification, that are more focused than this book. Any good trainer or training author knows that you have to organize your material to first put the emphasis on the central introductory concepts. Once your audience understands the basics, then you can build upon that foundation to explain the advanced topics. Along the way, you should always put the main focus on the most important topics, and just briefly mention extraneous details. Unfortunately, this book does not organize the material for learning and covers everything with approximately the same emphasis. As just one example of this, Chapter 1 spends eight LONG pages on the history of XSLT including details like when so-and-so joined the specification team or presented a paper at a conference. What Chapter 1 does not do is give you any idea of how to write an XSLT sheet. I plodded my way through the first two chapters wondering when we'd get past all the gory details to a description of how to write an introductory XSLT sheet. Finally, I had enough and looked through the book trying to find how far I should jump ahead to find the introductory section, and realized it didn't exist. All the basics are interspersed with endless details throughout the book. To be fair, the book calls itself a "programmer's reference." So one could argue that it shouldn't be designed to learn XSLT. However, trying to use this book as a reference would be equally problematic because it's too hard to find the important information among all the extraneous details. So if you already know XSLT well and want to know all the extra details, I truly do highly recommend this book. But if you want to learn XSLT in a reasonable amount of time, I strongly recommend against this book.

The author is one of the great xslt scholars, and this book is a brilliant testimony to the breadth of his knowledge. The author is a professional, Wrox is a professional publisher. Then how come the book is so utterly poorly organized? Any book bearing the subtitle "Programmer's Reference" should be organized in such a way that the programmer will rapidly find what she's looking for. That is certainly not the case here. An intelligent use of page headers and footers is the first thing a reference book should try to achieve. No such attempt here (try to imagine a dictionary with no page headers...). The same goes for the use of titles and subtitles, general chapter and page organisation, font choices etc. The whole thing is a typesetter's nightmare. I might be wrong, but one suspects the author was allowed to typeset the book himself... Bottom line: it takes way too long to find what one's looking for. In a reference work such flaws are unacceptable. I still enjoy the book's excellent coverage of the subject matter, but its use is bound with much bickering and

swearing out loud.

As with the previous editions, Michael Kay has written a book whose content is of the highest quality. Being the editor of the W3C XSLT and XPath recommendations and the developer of one of the only XSLT 2.0 implementations in town makes Kay the ultimate authority on XSLT. He also writes in a style that is accessible to developers of almost any level (although this is not ideal as a beginner's book). My big beef with the book is likely not Kay's fault. Being an author myself, I know how stubborn and pig headed publishers can be about their "style guidelines". Well, Wrox, your guidelines stink because this book is virtually impossible to use as a reference. Your font usage makes information impossibly hard to find by flipping pages. Your use of page headings is lame and unhelpful to the developer needing to find info fast. In the end I have to recommend this book to XSLT 1.0 developers that need to get up to speed fast on XSLT 2.0 but it is too bad most of the profits are going to Wrox and not Kay.

This is a difficult book to review. It contains invaluable information and, with a lot of work, I was able to learn what I needed to learn about XSLT. On the other hand, it could have been written so much better. You can't plan on using it as your only source of XSLT information. Supplement it with other books and online resources and you will do fine.

There is no better book on XSLT. No matter if you want to learn XSLT from scratch, or have a long-term reference for the XSLT syntax. This book is the bible for XSLT users. The original book covered the 1.0 standard. This book extends that to support both 1.0 and 2.0 in the same book. There are two large pieces to the book. The first piece covers the basics of XSLT, with a tag-by-tag reference to the language, as well as XPath in the same manner. Both of these start with introductions that make it easy for novices to pick up the language. The second piece covers design patterns for templates then brings the whole work together into case study sections. XSLT is an invaluable tool for anyone who works with XML. Once you understand it you will never want to be without it. This book is the best way to learn XSLT, and the best reference for those who already know XSLT. Period.

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