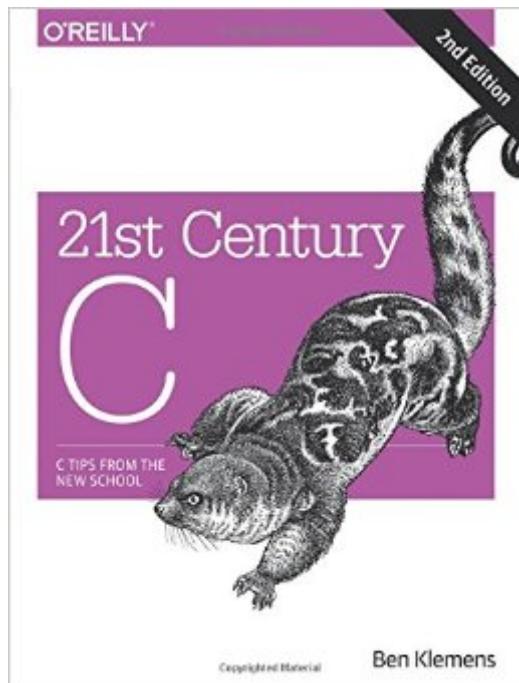


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21st Century C: C Tips From The New School



Synopsis

Throw out your old ideas about C and get to know a programming language that's substantially outgrown its origins. With this revised edition of 21st Century C, you'll discover up-to-date techniques missing from other C tutorials, whether you're new to the language or just getting reacquainted. C isn't just the foundation of modern programming languages; it is a modern language, ideal for writing efficient, state-of-the-art applications. Get past idioms that made sense on mainframes and learn the tools you need to work with this evolved and aggressively simple language. No matter what programming language you currently favor, you'll quickly see that 21st century C rocks. Set up a C programming environment with shell facilities, makefiles, text editors, debuggers, and memory checkers. Use Autotools, C's de facto cross-platform package manager. Learn about the problematic C concepts too useful to discard. Solve C's string-building problems with C-standard functions. Use modern syntactic features for functions that take structured inputs. Build high-level, object-based libraries and programs. Perform advanced math, talk to internet servers, and run databases with existing C libraries. This edition also includes new material on concurrent threads, virtual tables, C99 numeric types, and other features.

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Customer Reviews

The C programming language is alive and well: it is used not only in vast amounts of legacy code but also in new development, often when efficiency is important and the learning curve imposed by C++ is deemed unacceptable. As for the literature on C, the standard high-quality text is the one by

Kernighan & Ritchie (K&R), while the "second book" genre doesn't have too many representatives. Peter van der Linden's "Expert C programming: Deep C Secrets" and David Hanson's "C Interfaces and Implementations" are probably the best choices (perhaps supplemented by P. J. Plauger's "The Standard C Library"). However, given that all these books date from the 1990s or earlier, a book on modern C programming was sorely needed. The Good: Ben Klemens' "21st Century C" is a text that assumes some knowledge of classic C and attempts to expand and update that knowledge. This has allowed the author to write a book that is not too long and can thus be read cover-to-cover. Even though this is not an elementary tutorial, the author has also included overviews of some basic concepts to make sure everyone's on board. The writing is for the most part pleasant enough and sometimes even humorous, e.g. "If you and a friend both have v1 [...] Or, if you have no friends". The code for the complete programs shown in the text has been packaged and is available on the publisher's website. Almost all of these programs are easy to compile and run -- this should go without saying, but unfortunately many books are rushed out too soon. One attractive aspect of this volume is that it contains a grab bag of tips (e.g.

[This review was written for the 2014 Second edition.] I have been programming for about 40+ years now. I learned C from a K&R first edition. Much of the bits of C I learned early on no longer work or are recommended these days. The language has changed, the tools have changed, and my watch has more than 1,000 times the memory of my first computer. This is a book that gives a good refresher course in C. The author has a good knowledge of the history and structure of the language. He warns of the pitfalls and advantages throughout the book. The book is not the average dry textbook. The style is light and readable, without being "jokey". I did not get bored with it, as I have with some other books. The book not only covers C, but the tools needed to write good code. This includes Make, Git, GDB, autotools, and valgrind. (Among others.) It also covers a number of useful libraries that most C books ignore. (It does not suffer from the "here are the basics, fend for yourself" style of book.) The OSes covered are Windows, Mac and Linux. It includes extra help for Windows and Mac, probably because if you are using those OSes, you will need it. (Linux has a much more complete toolchain for writing C code.) There is some mention of setting up a BSD environment, but much of that is covered in the Mac references. (OS X is BSD.) The version I have is the 2nd edition. It covers C11 and some newer features of the OS and compilers that C programmers need to be aware of. It does not contain everything you need to know, but if it did it would be more than three times the length. The coding environment has been changing a great deal in the last 5-6 years, especially on Linux.

A very useful book. Mainly a book of ideas more than anything else. Sometimes that is missing in the software development literature. The C11 standard has yet to take hold far and wide. A large body of code will be in earlier versions of C for the foreseeable future. New development however presents an opportunity for doing things with new versions of C in a different way. Source code in C that fully embraces new constructs in the latest revision of C is as different from previous versions of C as code based on the later C++ revisions are to earlier C-Style C++. Code based on earlier revisions are forward compatible, but the latest revisions are not backwards compatible. Like C++, C standardization has gotten on track to encode in the language, the lessons learned in the realm of software development. The book is an attempt to leverage some of the possibilities and express them in a way that is relevant to real-world use. Some of the ideas in the book goes against widely held programming orthodoxy and will probably be seldom adopted, but such ideas are discussed. The book, despite the impression I may have given, is not about C11. A lot of the book is still rooted in the earlier revision. The author acknowledges that not all compilers have embraced the latest revision. Some will have read this book within the first two decades of the 21st Century and dismiss many parts of it. Much of that will be due to the gap between the ideas expressed and the reigning orthodoxy. The book does foreshadow that code defined in the C language during the middle and later parts of the 21st Century will be completely different in form and structure to code in revisions of C prior to C11.

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