

Review - Bulletproof Ajax

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When we think of web pages - well, creating web pages really - our thoughts usually turn to HTML, and maybe even CSS. If pressed, you may even remember the name Javascript - isn't that some way that people can hack into our computer, or at least invade our privacy? These terms all invoke an element of mystic; a sense of "geek required here", but in fact they are the names of the standards-based technologies that form the basic building blocks of the web pages throughout the internet.

A little over 2 years ago, a new name appeared, AJAX - and its continued prominence has caused some of us started wondering just what was this new thing and how did it become prominent so quickly.

A recently published book, Bulletproof Ajax by Jeremy Keith, is aimed at not only answering just those questions, but also at how to use the ideas to provide an improved user experience for visitors to your website. That's right, the ideas, for Ajax is not any new technology at all - it is just a name for the way we can use existing technologies - for doing things that we are already doing. This is not to say that Ajax is worthless - by formalising and promoting the techniques, developers will end up providing better websites, and we will benefit when we visit those sites.

In Bulletproof Ajax, Jeremy provides a history of the name Ajax, and follows this with a step-by-step introduction and refresher guide to the technologies that are being gathered together by the name. The objective is to enable you to enhance your websites in a robust manner using these tools. The style is casual and easy to read, and hides a depth of experience that manages to lead without the confusion of too much at a time.

The 200-odd pages of the book - relatively small by today's standards - are assembled into 9 chapters for you to work through at your own pace, or to skip around as you like to fill in gaps in what you know.

What is Ajax

Javascript and the Document Object Model

XMLHttpRequest

Data Formats

Hijax

Ajax Challenges

Ajax and Accessibility

Putting It All Together

The Future of Ajax

The book is complemented by a website, <http://bulletproofajax.com>, where you can not only read the book's introduction, but you can download the examples from the book to enhance your experimentation.

Bulletproof Ajax by Jeremy Keith; published: New Riders

Thanks to Peachpit Press for providing a review copy of this book.

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