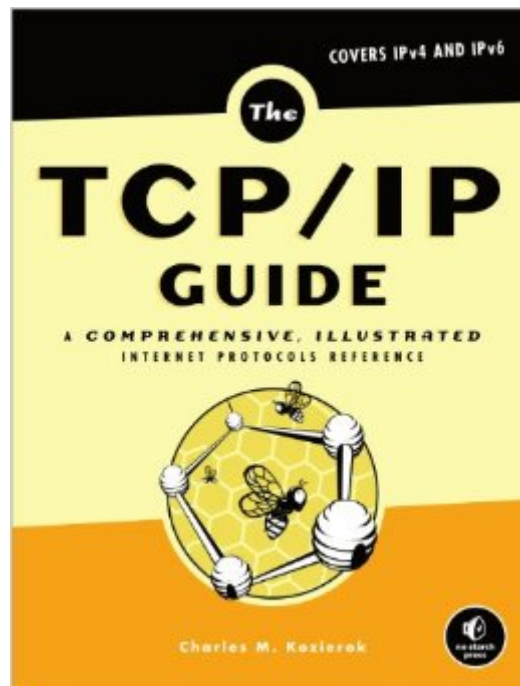


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TCP/IP Guide: A Comprehensive, Illustrated Internet Protocols Reference



Synopsis

The TCP/IP Guide is both an encyclopedic and comprehensible guide to the TCP/IP protocol suite that will appeal to newcomers and the seasoned professional. It details the core protocols that make TCP/IP internetworks function, and the most important classical TCP/IP applications. Its personal, easy-going writing style lets anyone understand the dozens of protocols and technologies that run the Internet, with full coverage of PPP, ARP, IP, IPv6, IP NAT, IPSec, Mobile IP, ICMP, RIP, BGP, TCP, UDP, DNS, DHCP, SNMP, FTP, SMTP, NNTP, HTTP, Telnet and much more. The author offers not only a detailed view of the TCP/IP protocol suite, but also describes networking fundamentals and the important OSI Reference Model.

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Customer Reviews

Right away I must state that I did not read "The TCP/IP Guide" (TTG) cover-to-cover. I doubt anyone will, which raises interesting issues. This review is based on the sections I did read and my comparisons with other protocol books. Protocol books should be divided into two eras. The first is

the "Stevens era," meaning those written around the time Richard Stevens' "TCP/IP Illustrated, Vol 1: The Protocols" was published. For six years (1994-2000) Stevens' book was clearly the best protocol book, and it taught TCP/IP to legions of networking pros. The second is the "modern era," beginning in 2000 and continuing to today. TTG fits in this group. I question the approach taken by TTG. The book contains extremely basic information (what is networking, why use layers, what is a protocol, etc.) and extremely obscure information (PPP Link Control Protocol Frame Types and Fields, SNMPv2 PDU Error Status Field Values, Interpretation of Standard Telnet NVT ASCII Control Codes, etc.). If TTG were an introductory book, it wouldn't need the obscure material. If TTG were a reference, it wouldn't need the introductory material. I think beginners would be scared by this book, although the tone and explanations are suitable for those with a real dedication to learning. (Note: TTG features 88 chapters, 14 of those are 8 pages or less.) For beginners, a better introduction is Jeanna Matthews' "Computer Networking: Internet Protocols in Action." Matthews' book is shorter (273 pages), more direct, and packet-example-based, meaning it ships with a CD-ROM of traces that readers can analyze as they read Matthews' commentary. The lack of examinations of packet traces is one of my biggest problems with TTG.

At 5.25 pounds and 1616 pages, and chock-full of charts, figures, and diagrams (its lists of figures and diagrams alone are 19 pages long) this book truly earns its subtitle. I've been working with TCP/IP for a long time (as far back as the early 1980s) and I've never seen a book on this subject before to match this one. That said I've only been working with it for months so I'll probably update this review after I've lived with and used the book a while longer -- but even now, I know of no other resource (except its online analog at [...]) to equal its depth or breadth of coverage. Literally, when it comes to TCP/IP, this book's got it all. You need only flip through the table of contents (better still, the index at the back) to get a sense of how truly encyclopedic its coverage really is.

The TCP/IP Guide is a huge reference book (1616 pages). Its size alone may intimidate those simply looking to obtain a basic understanding of networking protocols, which would be a shame as the book is very readable, well-laid out. Moreover, the introduction is very sound and helps to educate readers with a baseline of information by covering such topics as theoretical and real-world throughput, networking structures, and bits and bytes. Because of its size, it is virtually impossible to sit down and read the book from beginning to end. That said the book, from chapter to chapter, is very readable. However, with reference books, it is often more important to talk about structure, contents and format. The book is broken down into eighty-eight chapters grouped into three

sections: TCP/IP Overview and Background Information TCP/IP Lower-Layer Core Protocols TCP/IP Application Layer Protocols Each chapter and section starts with a brief introduction laying out its contents and putting them in the context of the TCP/IP protocol. The book looks at the web, HTTP, SNMP, ICMP, SMTP, Email, DHCP, Mobile IP, FTP and TFTP. It includes an overview and comparison of TCP and UDP and discusses establishing connections, management and termination of TCP. IPv6 receives roughly sixty pages of discussion, ranging from a high-level overview to transition challenges, physical address mapping, auto-configuration, reassembly and routing. There is also a fine chapter explaining IPsec components and protocols. And one can find more than a hundred pages on DNS. Scattered throughout the book are more than three hundred figures to aid in the understanding of concepts.

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