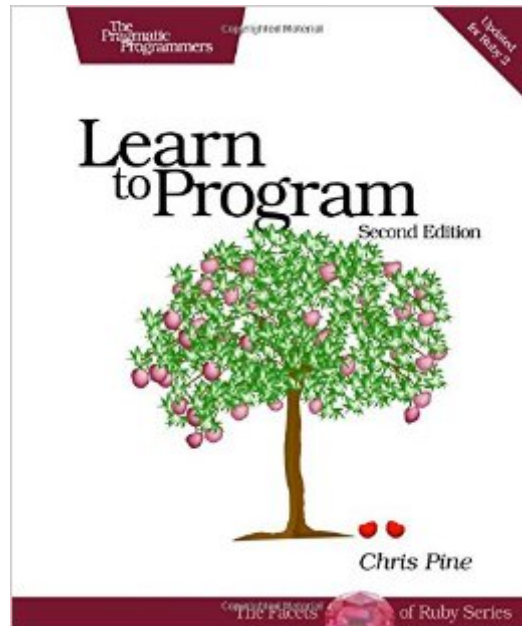


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Learn To Program, Second Edition (The Facets Of Ruby Series)



Synopsis

Printed in full color. For this new edition of the best-selling *Learn to Program*, Chris Pine has taken a good thing and made it even better. First, he used the feedback from hundreds of reader e-mails to update the content and make it even clearer. Second, he updated the examples in the book to use the latest stable version of Ruby, and also to use code that looks more like real-world Ruby code, so that people who have just learned to program will be more familiar with common Ruby techniques. Not only does the Second Edition now include answers to all of the exercises, it includes them twice. First you'll find the "how you could do it" answers, using the techniques you've learned up to that point in the book. Next you'll see "how Chris Pine would do it": answers using more advanced Ruby techniques, to whet your appetite as well as providing sort of a "Rosetta Stone" for more elegant solutions. Computers are everywhere, on every desk, in your iPod, cell phone, and PDA. To live well in the 21st century, you need to know how to make computers do things. And to really make computers do what you want, you have to learn to program. Fortunately, that's easier now than ever before. Chris Pine's book will teach you how to program. You'll learn to use your computer better, to get it to do what you want it to do. Starting with small, simple one-line programs to calculate your age in seconds, you'll see how to advance to fully structured, real programs. You'll learn the same technology used to drive modern dynamic websites and large, professional applications. It's now easier to learn to write your own computer software than it has ever been before. Now everyone can learn to write programs for themselves---no previous experience is necessary. Chris takes a thorough, but light-hearted approach that teaches you how to program with a minimum of fuss or bother. Printed in full color.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book was great until Chapter 8. Now it's going way too fast without enough examples. Also there are only a few practice exercises now and they start out too advanced so that you can't do them without looking at the answers. This does not inspire confidence! There should be more practice exercises at the end of the chapter, starting with easy ones and getting harder and harder.

To start out with, I have tried to learn programming before, but it never really stuck. Mostly I looked up tutorials on Youtube and poked around in forums, but it all seemed so confusing and insurmountable. I am absolutely not a math person, so I thought programming would always be beyond my reach. However, my little nerd dream of making video games took root, and so I bought this book. Two weeks later, I made my first video game. Yes, it's a piece of crap, but it's just the beginning. This book teaches you from square one, in a way that is very approachable and friendly (and includes a ton of nerdy references to everything from video games to Buffy). So if you have never tried programming before, this is a great book to start out with. A note that a lot of reviewers bring up is about the learning curve of the book. Yes, the later chapters cover some advanced stuff, and it can really throw you for a loop. However, you don't NEED to understand everything all at once. Having trouble understanding recursion? Just skip that section. You can come back to it later as you need it. The great thing about this book is that it is both a guide and a reference. Once you get the basics, if something seems overwhelming or unimportant, you can skip it and come back to when you need it. I would definitely recommend this book to people interested in learning to program. And for anyone interested, you can check out a copy of the simple game I made using this book. This is a good example of the kind of stuff you will be able to do after just about 7-12 hours with the book. (Note: you will need ruby installed on your computer for it to work)[...]

About a year ago, I decided to pick up Learn to Program because I had very little programming experience (primarily characterized by copy-and-pasted AWK scripts and some web design via HTML/CSS) and I wanted something that would provide a truly introductory text to programming as a skill (the Ruby language is a plus). Learn to Program kind of falls short of that expectation. While the first seven or so chapters are written well, the latter half of the book jumps the boat. The

assignments were too difficult to solve without peaking at the answers and there were very few assignments at that. Although the anecdotal approach that Pine takes to develop a concept through a chapter is helpful and appreciated, the book can be improved through the addition of more examples that increase in complexity as well as more assignments. However, the experience can be improved by completing related exercises on CodeAcademy (Ruby), RubyMonk, and Ruby Koans (a bit more advanced).

Glad to see I'm not the only one. Just as others have stated, this book was easy to follow until chapter 8 or so. The concepts introduced aren't really that much harder to understand, the problem is with the exercises at the end of each chapter (they get significantly more difficult). Once I got about half way through the book the exercises at the end of the chapter got much harder to figure out on my own. Each exercise has two solutions, "How You Could Do It" and "How I Would Do It". The latter is how the author would solve the problem. The problem is that his solutions use concepts not yet introduced in the book and he doesn't explain them. Even if it said something like "see page X for more info", that would be more helpful. I wish there was an explainer on why he would do it the way he does or what he is even doing. Overall it seems like a good book. But as a beginner trying to learn Ruby, it was pretty difficult without a lot of online help.

At first I thought the book was well written and understandable, but after getting further education in programming, including other languages, I changed my mind. The internet is full of information on all levels to fulfil your every need, including some online courses. This book is written on a lower mentality level than most. The choice of programs, their content and explanations are not of a professional quality. The author admitted that this particular edition presented some immaturity on his part and later works are more mature in context. I cannot vouch for that as I have not purchased any further works from this particular author. The book falls short in giving the student a better grasp of the structure that coding involves. Without understanding the structure and what you are attempting to attain, you are just glossing over the real concepts. This, I feel, is where the book falls short. Halfway through the book, one is declared a 'programmer'. Now I believe it was in jest, but with some limited knowledge of a language, it does NOT make one a programmer of substance. I would advise others to save their money and seek other sources for better content and value.

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