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## Book review: Wicked Cool Java by *Brian D. Eubanks*

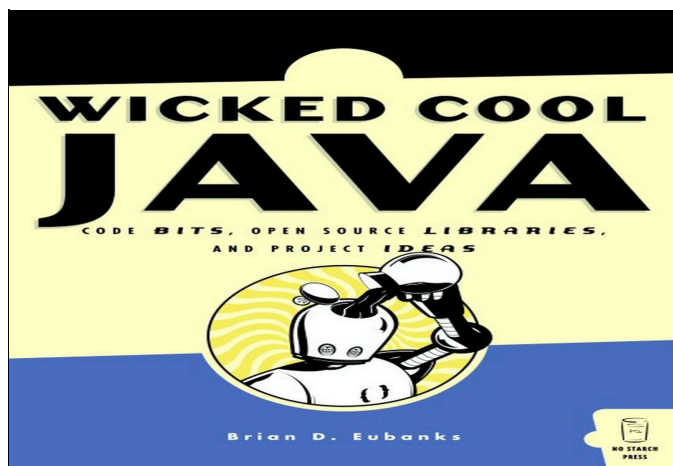
### Code bits, Open-Source Libraries, and project ideas

By Alan Berg

The range of Java related libraries and frameworks are immense. It is a challenge for motivated Java practitioners to keep in contact with this constantly varying and exponentially increasing landscape. Challenging oneself with the new freshens one's own ideas and helps the everyday programmer or hobbyist to adopt the right pose and attitude to constant learning. *Wicked Cool Java, code bits, open-source libraries, and project ideas* authored by Brian D. Eubanks and published by No Starch Press, as correctly stated in the title introduces the reader to a collection of code examples and Java libraries that are treats for the continual learner.

Okay, I admit for the nth time I really like getting my intellectual fingers dirty. Therefore, *Wicked Cool Java* by Brian D. Eubanks was a fun book for me to read. I am a very tactile learner, reviewing, and running the downloaded code examples while reading the book really helps my subconscious to accept new knowledge. With Java programming, some programmers sit stuck at Java 1.4, while others look to enhance their code with the newly introduced features of 1.6/1.5. Brian D. Eubanks has thoughtfully exemplified a number of significant features of 1.5, including important techniques such as Generics, enums, vararg methods, string utilities and few more handy coding tricks besides. Because I enjoyed the book so much, I naturally wanted a couple more chapters with yet even more projects and coding examples.

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The book's cover

## The contents

Being less than 300 pages in size and mostly explanations of coding examples, for a typical programmer the book makes for a light, relaxing, easy read. Starting with examples of key features of Java 1.5 that did not previously exist in Java 1.4, the book works hard at delivering relevant, non-superficial information... and succeeds.

### **The book works hard at delivering relevant, non-superficial information... and succeeds**

The book progresses through descriptions of how to process XML and HTML (a must-have set of skills in this day and age) and also looks at crawling through the semantic web, graphics, multimedia, scientific and mathematical applications with data visualization. I should mention keywords such as “neural networks”, “synthesizers”, “swing”, “XPath”, and “truth tables”. I particularly enjoyed the description of how to publish newsfeeds and aggregate using the Informa project (pages 93-98).

The final chapter of the book delivers intriguing ideas for new projects that I hope some of the more motivated readers could might enhance via giving back to the ethically correct free software movement.

## Who’s this book for?

Wicked Cool Java is for the programmer that wishes to continually learn and challenge themselves with new libraries and coding examples. Just to know that a project exists may save rewriting, recoding and reinventing the wheel.

### **Just to know that a project exists may save rewriting, reinventing the coding wheel**

## Relevance to free software

Finally, after a couple of years of deferring, Java has been made free software. Brian D. Eubank’s book mentions only free software projects or ideas and therefore is totally about free software. Books like this one are needed to continually remind money holding decision makers in companies that free software is an alive and vibrant source of quality API’s that can easily compete against languages from proprietary vendors with lock-in hearts and a view to your wallet.

## Pros

As stated previously in this review *Wicked Cool Java* is book candy for those of us who keep pushing at keeping in contact with an ever-changing environment full of new Java related projects, libraries, patterns, frameworks and syntaxes. Life evolves and we need to be open to this force of environmental change.

## Cons

I found the book so enjoyable that I was slightly disappointed that it finished after only 8 chapters, I wanted more of the same but for other unknown to me projects as well. The relative brevity just begs for the publication of a range of books mentioning, of course, different and helpful projects.

## Book review: Wicked Cool Java by Brian D. Eubanks

Title           Wicked Cool™ Java  
Author         Brian D. Eubanks  
Publisher      No Starch Press  
ISBN           1593270615  
Year           2005  
Pages          248  
CD included   No  
FS Oriented   10  
Over all score 9

### In short

## Biography

[Alan Berg](#) (/user/8" title="View user profile.):

Alan Berg Bsc. MSc. PGCE, has been a lead developer at the Central Computer Services at the University of Amsterdam for the last eight years. In his spare time, he writes computer articles. He has a degree, two masters and a teaching qualification. In previous incarnations, he was a technical writer, an Internet/Linux course writer, and a science teacher. He likes to get his hands dirty with the building and gluing of systems. He remains agile by playing computer games with his kids who (sadly) consistently beat him physically, mentally and morally.

You may contact him at [reply.to.berg](mailto:reply.to.berg@chello.nl) At [chello.nl](mailto:reply.to.berg@chello.nl)

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