

The Minimum You Need to Know to Be an OpenVMS Application Developer

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Reviewed by Regan Windsor for Reader Views (8/07)

While at first glance “The Minimum You Need to Know to Be an OpenVMS Application Developer” may look like a classroom textbook, you don’t need to read very far into it to realize it is much, much more. Roland Hughes has managed to write a comprehensive guide on the OpenVMS operating system and a variety of the tools, languages, and databases used, as though he was standing over your shoulder mentoring you through the process. In addition to source code, best practices, and tips and tricks, aimed at saving the novice developer hours of frustration, Roland also includes critical historical information on various applications. This information transfer is critical to the success of the IT industry and consequently the success of all companies whose systems are impacted by the historical trends in application development!

“The Minimum You Need to Know to Be an OpenVMS Application Developer” covers the fundamentals of OpenVMS, including hardware and software, as well as some tips on choosing an editor, and then starts the reader off with some hands-on exercises that build throughout the book. Also included are some end-of-chapter exercises (with answers included at the end of the book) to ensure the reader has grasped the key elements of the chapter.

The chapters that follow cover various tools, languages, and databases for developing applications on the OpenVMS platform. Beginning with DCL and Utilities, moving through DEC, FMS, CMS, CDD, FORTRAN, COBOL, C/ C++, covering Object and Text libraries, as well as Message Utility, Mail and Phone, describing MySQL and RDB databases, and ending with a chapter on the authors observations on the IT industry. Each chapter includes an overview, a discussion of functionality, and other relevant historical information, tips, tricks, best practices, and much more, and then works through several programming examples and exercises (source code provided). Many of the exercises walk the reader through the same process with the various languages, providing an appreciation of the trade-offs between them. Where more advanced functionality is available, Hughes provides a high level overview of what the additional functionality can provide.

“The Minimum You Need to Know to Be an OpenVMS Application Developer” should be on the desktop of anyone new to the OpenVMS platform and on the bookshelf of those seasoned veterans looking for a comprehensive reference book. Hands-on programming throughout the book provides a highly effective learning tool, and the best practices, advice, and knowledge transfer from the author gives the reader the unique feeling that they are sitting down next to a mentor, being coached through the tricks of the trade!