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Subject: Re: Book Tour Report

Posted by [pgrigis](#) on Thu, 28 Apr 2011 21:11:45 GMT

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On Apr 28, 2:14 pm, David Fanning <n...@idlcoyote.com> wrote:

> Folks,  
>  
> Just thought some of you might be interested in hearing  
> about the recent "book tour" I was on, mostly visiting  
> national labs in the Washington, D.C. and Virginia areas.  
>  
> The turn-out for these seminars was overwhelming. In one  
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> room and people were forced to stand in the hall where  
> they couldn't see the screen to listen to the presentation!  
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> meeting old friends and people I had only known previously  
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> until I got to the rental car counter that I realized  
> he had switched my driver's license with one that had  
> expired six months ago when I was on my long walk in  
> Oregon! Yikes! Let's just say I am *\*extremely\** grateful  
> to a certain Chinese bus company who picked me up in  
> front of a Chinese grocery in Washington and dumped  
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> to expect this kind of behavior from me.) Live the  
> adventure, I always say. :-)  
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> Anyway, all this activity has pushed the book  
> (briefly) above the 25,000th most popular on Amazon  
> yesterday. I have a ways to go to catch Slaughter  
> House Five, but I'm making progress, and it's clear  
> that *\*someone\** is buying the darn thing, and hopefully  
> reading it! If you are someone who *\*has\** read it, please  
> consider writing an Amazon review of the book. You don't  
> have to have purchased the book at Amazon to write a  
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> I have been thinking a great deal about the next book  
> I hope to work on, and I think I am extremely close  
> to making a decision about this. If you have strong  
> views on this topic, this would be a good time to  
> voice them.

## Python Programming Techniques

(this is actually a serious suggestion... but I am not sure how much competition there is in that field for books...)

Ciao,  
Paolo

- > This one may take some time to write and
- > may have to be written in a less sustained way,
- > as people are asking for courses to be taught in
- > far-off and exotic lands and I find it very hard to
- > pass these kinds of opportunities up. :-)
- >
- > Mostly, though, I want to say thanks again to the
- > folks on this newsgroup whose overwhelming support
- > and encouragement makes it possible for me to do this
- > work. You really are the best!
- >
- > Cheers,
- >
- > David
- > --
- > David Fanning, Ph.D.
- > Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
- > Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming:<http://www.idlcoyote.com/>
- > Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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Subject: Re: Book Tour Report  
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 28 Apr 2011 22:40:27 GMT  
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Paolo writes:

- > Python Programming Techniques
- >
- > (this is actually a serious suggestion... but I am not sure
- > how much competition there is in that field for books...)

To tell you the truth, this thought has crossed my mind, too. In fact, if I would have had any money to bet on what my epiphany would have been on my big hike, I would have been heavily on "python" rather than "idl." But, the Universe has its own reasons, I guess.

Anyway, Greg Wilson has a wonderful on-line Python

programming course called Software Carpentry:

<http://software-carpentry.org/>

I've learned a lot of things there. Greg recently ran out of money for his web page, and did the math to see whether he could "afford" to write a Python programming book from the material he already had (quite a lot!). His answer was no, he couldn't afford to do it.

<http://software-carpentry.org/2011/04/by-the-numbers/>

I thought his words per day figure was way too high, and his total days were off by a factor of at least two, so it probably would have cost him twice as much as he was estimating, so... Bottom line, it's hard to write a book. And even harder to write one when you don't really know the subject inside and out.

Python Programming Techniques is probably not going to make my short list, anyway. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.idlcoyote.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

---

Subject: Re: Book Tour Report

Posted by [Mort Canty](#) on Fri, 29 Apr 2011 12:24:01 GMT

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Am 29.04.2011 00:40, schrieb David Fanning:

> Paolo writes:

>

>> Python Programming Techniques

>>

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>> how much competition there is in that field for books...)

>

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> Cheers,  
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> David  
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Right, David. Don't let them tempt you. I've got Langtangen's "Python Scripting for Computational Science, 3rd Ed." on my bookshelf, and I sure as heck wouldn't like to have to compete with it.

Mort.

---

Subject: Re: Book Tour Report  
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 29 Apr 2011 13:19:27 GMT  
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Mort anty writes:

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Probably there is more interest in a book that explains how you can install and maintain all the "parts" of the Python environment in a form that allows you to write code rather than debug package installation and compatibilities. :-)

Cheers,

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--

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Subject: Re: Book Tour Report

Posted by [Mort Canty](#) on Fri, 29 Apr 2011 13:52:07 GMT

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Am 29.04.2011 15:19, schrieb David Fanning:

> Mort anty writes:

>

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>

> Cheers,

>

> David

>

>

Agreed. Pythonxy does all that for me on 32-bit Windows, but it would be nice to know how to set something like that up for yourself, e.g., as 64 bit.

Mort

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Subject: Re: Book Tour Report

Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Sat, 30 Apr 2011 20:59:58 GMT

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On Apr 28, 2:14 pm, David Fanning <n...@idlcoyote.com> wrote:

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- $\geq$

Craig

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> On Apr 28, 2:14 pm, David Fanning <n...@idlcoyote.com> wrote:

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>

>

 $\geq$  $\geq$ 

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>> Mostly, though, I want to say thanks again to the  
>> folks on this newsgroup whose overwhelming support  
>> and encouragement makes it possible for me to do this  
>> work. You really are the best!  
>  
> Hi David, It was great seeing you at NASA, hearing your talk, and then  
> having lunch with you. I'm glad you made it out to the right  
> coast! :-)  
>  
> Craig  
>  
> P.S. My vote for a book would be a way to turn files into objects.  
> The current situation with logical unit numbers harkens back to the



> FORTRAN of the 1970s.

Or, speaking of files, how about a nice and neat way of dealing with parameter files?

---

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Subject: Re: Book Tour Report

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Sun, 01 May 2011 00:14:05 GMT

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Craig and Gray write:

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>> FORTRAN of the 1970s.  
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> Or, speaking of files, how about a nice and neat way of dealing with  
> parameter files?

Humm, I like these suggestions, both of which I have implemented before in the DataViewer application I wrote for NSIDC. Which--coincidence!!--is written with the Catalyst Library.

Perhaps an "Application Programming in IDL" book that starts with GUI fundamentals, which leads naturally to objects and the Catalyst Library, which leads to all manner of neat and useful applications and tools you can build with objects.

Humm. I guess I better go order Ronn Kling's new book. Maybe he has beat me to this idea. :-)

Cheers,

David

P.S. The fact that Craig is suggesting objects has me REALLY excited! ;-)

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

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Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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Subject: Re: Book Tour Report  
Posted by [Maarten\[1\]](#) on Mon, 02 May 2011 11:15:32 GMT  
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On Apr 29, 2:24 pm, Mort anty <m.ca...@fz-juelich.de> wrote:

> Right, David. Don't let them tempt you. I've got Langtangen's "Python  
> Scripting for Computational Science, 3rd Ed." on my bookshelf, and I  
> sure as heck wouldn't like to have to compete with it.

My suggestion as well. Langtangen's other book "A Primer on Scientific Programming with Python" is a great intro as well, a better starting point. I'd love to see a merger between Software Carpentry and Langtangen's books. The ideas behind software carpentry are really worth to be absorbed, regardless of programming language.

Maarten

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