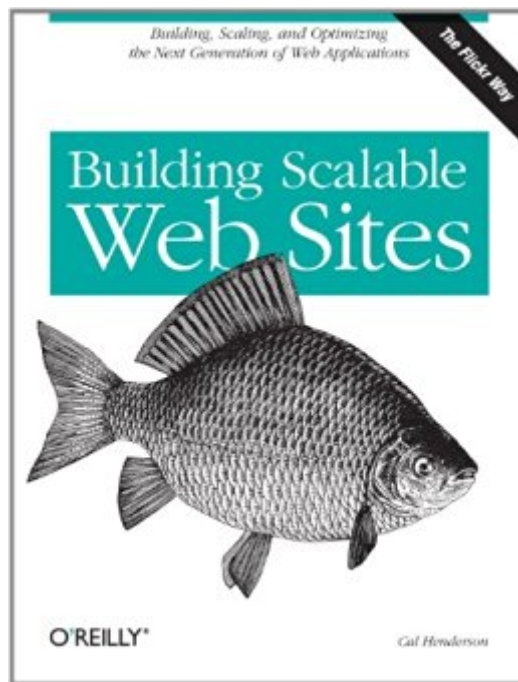# Building Scalable Web Sites: Building, Scaling, And Optimizing The Next Generation Of Web Applications

Synopsis

Learn the tricks of the trade so you can build and architect applications that scale quickly--without all the high-priced headaches and service-level agreements associated with enterprise app servers and proprietary programming and database products. Culled from the experience of the Flickr.com lead developer, Building Scalable Web Sites offers techniques for creating fast sites that your visitors will find a pleasure to use.Creating popular sites requires much more than fast hardware with lots of memory and hard drive space. It requires thinking about how to grow over time, how to make the same resources accessible to audiences with different expectations, and how to have a team of developers work on a site without creating new problems for visitors and for each other.Presenting information to visitors from all over the world Integrating email with your web applications Planning hardware purchases and hosting options to have as much as you need without breaking your wallet Partitioning and distributing databases to support large datasets and simultaneous transactions Monitoring your applications to find and clear bottlenecks* Providing services APIs and using services from other providers to increase your site's reach and capabilitiesWhether you're starting a small web site with hopes of growing big or you already have a large system that needs maintenance, you'll find Building Scalable Web Sites to be a library of ideas for making things work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When I first starting working on Web application development teams, I was a bit overwhelmed by the number of skills and range of knowledge needed to drive the project through establishing the technical foundations; design, development and testing iterations; to final staged release. Lots of things got discussed in team meetings that I had barely a clue about. Not only do I wish I had this book *then,* I wish all members of my teams could have it *now.*Cal Henderson has a wide background in the area and is lead developer for Flickr, the photo sharing site that has gained deserved popularity and is often mentioned as the quintessential Web 2.0 application.The author does an excellent job of spreading out before you the whole process at a high enough level so the book can be valuable for managers, designers, and all sorts of people involved in putting out the final product.His focus is on program design and design implementation issues, not programming as such. Code is not neglected. Many points regarding design implementation are made with code examples and solutions.I find this book so personally valuable in grounding me in a complex process, I give it the highest rating even though I found aspects of the book's organization to be completely incomprehensible. This is a book about scalable Web sites and applications but the author does not define scalability nor does he deal with the broad Web issues (like the scaling myth) until 60% into the book! Chapter 9, titled "Scaling Web Applications" should have been much closer to the beginning since it was a high-level view with no code, as the other chapters.

The title should be "Overview Of Building Scalable Web Sites".I give it 2 stars not because it is a bad book but because I was tricked into thinking it was going to be useful as a scalable website builder. What you should do is look at the table of contents and research those topics and not bother reading this book.The book is more of an overview of the topics you need to consider when building scalable web sites. For example, if you are building a scalable website and the powers that be put someone who knows nothing about web sites in charge of managing you, this really is the perfect book to give to your new manager. Your new manager will get a clue, but your new manager won't know a thing about HOW to build anything, but will know ABOUT what is being built.The thing thaÂt got me is the first 188 pages of the book, just doesn't seem all that useful. On page 1 there is a definition of "What Is a Web Application", I'd estimate a book like this should assume you know what

it is (it even suggests you do know what it is), but probably should save space and not even bother writing about it.Some sections and my summaries:Layered Software Architecture - could summarize into: DB layer, app code, html, css on topLayered Technologies - get appropriate book on actual topic such as DB book, and use a template languageGetting from A to B - separate program from markup, use a template systemHardware Platforms - dedicated, co-located, self hosting, space/power consumption, networkingIt took 26 pages to get through all of that.

Unfortunately, I'm finding that there are still some in the software industry--from "two guys in a garage" to the largest corporation--don't know, follow, or believe software best practices. Suddenly when something goes wrong (e.g. the wrong version of a file was deployed, changes can't be rolled back, the application won't scale), everyone scrambles in an effort to figure out what happened. Oftentimes, if simple software practices were followed, many of these issues would never surface.This book does a tremendous job identifying many of these best practices, identifies how to easily implement them--in almost any situation, and discusses application scaling techniques. As the book mentions, scalability is made up of three characteristics:* The application can accommodate an increase in users* The application can accommodate an increase in data* The application is maintainableLike any good book on application scalability, this one begins discussing the tiered architecture that is common in so many modern applications, and is a fundamental step in creating any truly scalable application. This follows into a discussion on source control--another fundamental part of keeping the application maintainable.The author briefly discusses security issues by touching on cross-site scripting (XSS), SQL injection, and the like. The discussion is well written and thorough for the amount of time spent on the topic.Finally, the author discusses many of the issues related to deployment of web applications, including system monitoring and alerting. There is also an excellent section on load balancing, techniques to keep databases scalable, and caching.

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