



*Learning Cocoa with Objective-C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*  
By James Duncan Davidson & Apple Computer, Inc.

O'Reilly Press, \$19.95 (retail)  
ISBN #0-596-00301-3



*Objective –C Pocket Reference*

By Andrew M. Duncan  
O'Reilly Press, \$12.95 (retail)  
ISBN #0-596-00423-0

**Reviewed by David Wang**

I must admit that I did not feel qualified to write a book review on programming due to my lack of experience in that area of study . As a result, I decided to model this review upon the style and presentation of the classic programming book, *The C Programming Language* by Brian Kernighan and Dennis Ritchie. After reading *The C Programming Language*, I believe all programming books should follow one of two formats: that which was modeled by Kernighan and Ritchie or that which the reader can learn from actual programs. Of the two formats, though, I prefer the former.

One of the elegant aspects of the Kernighan and Ritchie book presents itself with the smooth flow of programming ideas in a short volume. Simple programs are introduced with simple ideas. These ideas are then made more advanced with slight modifications to the original programs, and ideas are presented in a very logical manner.

While *Learning Cocoa with Objective-C* tended to follow this format, I was more interested in learning Objective-C rather than Cocoa frameworks. Consequently, the supplement to *Learning Cocoa with Objective-C* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, *Objective-C: Pocket Reference* by Andrew M. Duncan proved very handy. This compact reference (128 pages), provides a quick introduction to Objective-C for those familiar with other programming languages (C or C++) and acts as a reference for Objective-C syntax and programming facets.

Objective-C, as touted by Davidson, “is easy to learn and has a simple elegance that is a welcome breath of fresh air after the abstruse and confusing C++.” However, the ease of learning and simple elegance of Objective-C were never apparent to me. I could not understand why NextStep modified the syntax of pointers, addresses, methods, etc. I personally felt that the modifications did not enlighten my understanding of other object-oriented programming languages like C++. I found myself wishing that Davidson and Apple had provided the motivation behind each change made to the Objective-C language.

Despite the weak background information provided on Objective-C, I found the material helpful, albeit slow in reaching a conclusion or main point. At times, I found myself re-reading a section, because I would occasionally lose myself muddling through the protocol on application development. However, I cannot think of a better way to effectively outline the steps; it’s a necessary evil. I particularly enjoyed the callouts and concepts used to explain Objective-C and Cocoa programming.

After reading the book, I am more familiar with the capabilities of Objective-C and Cocoa, yet I do not feel completely comfortable to write an original program. More examples and detailed explanations of concepts used in Objective-C and Cocoa would have been helpful.

Learning Cocoa with Objective-C, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

**Rating: Two out of Five stars**

+helpful material on Cocoa/Objective-C

-weak background information on Objective-C, more motivation on using Objective-C

Objective-C Pocket Reference

**Rating: Four out of Five stars**

+focused in approach, comprehensive, good reference

-more motivation on using Objective-C