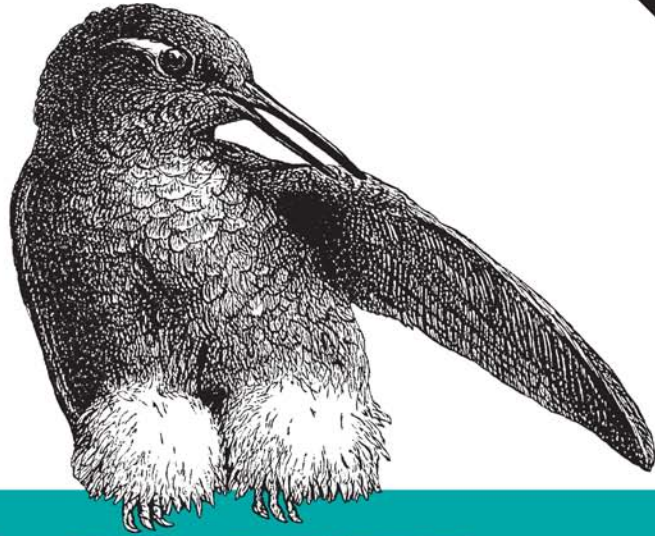


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# PHP

*The Good Parts*



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*Peter B. MacIntyre*  
*Foreword by Susie Sedlacek*

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Get past all the hype about PHP and dig into the real power of the language. This book explores the most useful features of PHP, shows how they can speed up the web development process, and explains why the most commonly used PHP elements are often misused or misapplied. You'll learn which parts add strength to object-oriented programming, and how to use certain features to integrate your application with databases.

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- Discover the advantages of using PHP as an object-oriented language
- Explore how PHP interacts with databases, such as SQLite and MySQL
- Learn input- and output-handling best practices to prevent security breaches

**Peter B. MacIntyre** has more than 20 years of experience in software development, using client/server tools and relational database systems including PHP, PowerBuilder, Visual Basic, and Active Server Pages. He is a former contributing editor and author for the online and print magazine *php|architect*.

*“Coverage of the latest PHP features makes this book current and very valuable. It even shows you how to automate SMS text messaging! As PHP adoption continues to broaden, pick up this book to help you be a part of it!”*

—**Andi Gutmans**  
CEO, Zend Technologies

*“Where was this book when I was learning PHP? This is a great resource for anyone just starting in PHP. Peter gives you the tools you need to get started with PHP the right way.”*

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# PHP: The Good Parts

*Peter B. MacIntyre*

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## PHP: The Good Parts

by Peter B. MacIntyre

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*I dedicate this book to my wonderful wife,  
Dawn Etta Riley.*

*I love you!*



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# Foreword

Why, you might ask, do we need yet another book on PHP? And why, now, is it relevant to point out the “good parts?” Well, this is not just any book, and this is not just any time in the life of PHP. PHP is gaining adoption more rapidly now than ever before, and there are progressively more people who want to know what PHP is and to understand its popularity. With the continuous shift of individuals and enterprises towards deeper adoption of PHP, it is important for the world to have a quick read (and reference) to get the basics of the language before committing to deeper works, larger projects, or training. This is that book. No matter who or what you are today—a non-programmer, a Java programmer, or an RPG programmer—there is no better place to quickly start to understand what is good about PHP. Once you have this under your belt, decisions on how to move forward with or without PHP—and whether to delve into it at a deeper level—should become much easier.

I have spent the last three years and more working side-by-side with the team that brought PHP to a place where it could easily be used in business, and I have seen the many ways in which PHP has offered great benefits to enterprises. One example was a single sign-on portal for 1,800 auto dealers and 2,400 service centers (comprising over 42,000 users) to be able to customize, order, and service consumer vehicles in 17 countries across Europe. Integrating 15 disparate software applications to communicate with backend systems is a challenge in any language, but PHP offered a rapid turnaround, quick time-to-market “glue” language solution that enabled this enterprise to accomplish its goals in short order and with cost savings over other possible solutions.

In my former position as the VP of Global Services at Zend Technologies, the progressively increasing demand for PHP within enterprises led us to develop a full portfolio of service offerings, including a strong curriculum of training courses. There was a similar demand from individual developers who benefited from these offerings as well and, despite the recent economic environment (or maybe because of it), we saw no dip in student registration and attendance. I would recommend this book as an excellent precursor to any of those courses.

Peter MacIntyre has, for many years, been instrumental in helping many people gain the benefits of PHP through his writing, teaching, and speaking engagements. I had the pleasure of meeting Peter about three years ago, when I was introduced to him by

colleagues at Zend. Peter had completed a couple of webinars for us and my colleagues felt so strongly about his ability to convey valuable information that they believed he would make a great addition to our training team. Since that time, I have continued to watch the many ways in which Peter has spread the word about the ease of using PHP, the many associated technologies and tools available, and the many avenues through which to learn it. He is an ardent user of this technology and knows it and all its associated technologies extremely well.

Peter, in this book, mentions some of the larger visible applications (such as Facebook and Yahoo!), and throughout my involvement with PHP I have seen many large organizations (including JC Penney, Best Buy, DHL, Fox Interactive, GE, and Deutsche-Telecom) use PHP in many ways that show the power of this simple language. Think job opportunities! If you plan to focus on using PHP to develop a career or expand it, you will be interested to know that in conversations with companies like ODesk, I learned that, of all the skills in demand through that site, PHP was one of the top and was at that time generating the highest rate per hour. Rates ran higher for those with a Zend Certified Engineer certification.

I think the most amazing adoption of PHP to date has been that of the IBMi/RPG world. It has been very rewarding to see nonprocedural programmers come into the new age of web development, first with a slight struggle, perhaps, but then with total eagerness once they see what modern interfaces they can provide to their users (or clients), with functionality as sophisticated as PHP can provide on the IBMi. So, if you are an IBMi user or an RPG programmer, buy this book now and you'll soon find yourself under the spell of PHP. Green screens can be modernized and your applications can live on.

What if you are a strong Java programmer and PHP is just, well, “beneath” you? This is always a fun discussion for all us PHP believers! I have heard a number of funny lines: “PHP is not Java” and “Java is dead” and then, from the other side, “PHP is for hobbyists.” But all one has to look at is the ramp-up rate of downloads for the Zend Framework, Magento, or Drupal to realize that the simplicity of PHP belies its power and potential. PHP is not a replacement for Java, nor can Java do what PHP can do. These two languages live side-by-side for each of the most successful and leading-edge IT teams. One note of warning, though: read this book carefully—there are different ways to use PHP than a Java programmer would assume based on Java, and this book will guide you on how to leverage PHP for the best results.

Today, over a third of the world's websites are written in PHP, and that number is growing. The language itself has evolved to where it has a complete development infrastructure in place, enabling its sophisticated application to business; Zend Framework, Magento, and Drupal are all very successful examples of this evolution. Market analyst Gartner recently published a report for their clients that forecasted the PHP worldwide developer count to grow to as high as 5 million developers by 2013 (up from 3 million in 2007 and 4 million in 2009). They also provided a short-term forecast indicating that PHP will remain a widely adopted web development technology.

It is time for more people, and for you, to understand what is behind this buzz. So I invite you to go ahead: read on, enjoy, and join the growing family of PHP users! You won't go back.

—Susie Sedlacek  
Former VP of Global Services, Zend Technologies



---

# Preface

## Conventions Used in This Book

The following typographical conventions are used in this book:

### *Italic*

Indicates new terms, URLs, email addresses, filenames, and file extensions.

### **Constant width**

Used for program listings, as well as within paragraphs to refer to program elements such as variable or function names, databases, data types, environment variables, statements, and keywords.

### **Constant width bold**

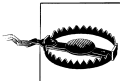
Shows commands or other text that should be typed literally by the user.

### *Constant width italic*

Shows text that should be replaced with user-supplied values or by values determined by context.



This icon signifies a tip, suggestion, or general note.



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## Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank all those folks at O'Reilly who are involved in books and never really get a pat on the back. I don't even know who you all are, but thanks for all of your work to help get this project done (and done well), and to finally make it to the bookshelves. The editing, graphics work, layout, planning, marketing, and so on all have to be done, and I appreciate your work toward this end.

To Julie Steele, my acquisitions editor at O'Reilly, who always showed great patience and professionalism on this project, thanks for giving me this opportunity and for working with me from start to finish. I think I could now consider you to be one of my better friends in the IT publishing business. One day I hope to meet you in person!

Much thanks to my technical editors, too. Charles Tassell, Brian Danchilla, and Peter Lavin, thanks for your keen eyes and for thoroughly testing my many lines of sample code. Many of your great pointers and ideas were used to make this book better. Wez Furlong and Derick Rethans also contributed some technical pointers; thanks for your assistance as well.

Finally, to Susie Sedlacek, former Vice President, Global Services, Zend Corporation—thanks for being willing to put together an introduction for this book. I was keen to have you do the introduction so that readers could get a global perspective on the ever-growing, worldwide use and impact of PHP. I was happy to hear that you and your husband have purchased a vineyard in California, and I hope that you really enjoy that new endeavor!

