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Piwik Web Analytics Essentials



Synopsis

Packed with code and the necessary screenshots, this is a step-by-step comprehensive tutorial which will help you learn about Piwik quickly and easily. This book is for everyone ranging from a reader who is new to web analytics to a seasoned coding expert wanting to switch to Piwik from another analytics tool. If you are a newbie, you will learn to install Piwik, install tracking, and customize the JavaScript for their custom needs, as well as why they need to track their visitors. If you are an advanced reader, you will learn to mix JavaScript with PHP, Flash, and other languages in order to write plugins for custom software.

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Customer Reviews

I've long been a Google Analytics user however I was wanting to use an analytics program where I have ownership of my data. I have dabbled with Piwik however I was wanting to delve deeper into its capabilities. Couple of reasons for not giving it 5 stars ...- there are some inconsistencies in the downloadable code examples. `setCookieDomain` is an example of using `setCookieDomain` and `setDomains` in Piwik's tracking code. The js code example uses `PiwikTracker.setCookieDomain` instead of `piwikTracker.setCookieDomain`, and where this is expanded on further in Chapter 8 the

code examples both in the book and files uses `tracker.setCookieDomain`- In instances where more than one modification to the code needs to be made such as subdomain tracking, I would have liked to have seen a final version of the required code with both the `setDocumentTitle` and `setCookieDomain` etc shown. Does the `setDocumentTitle` need to be added before the `setCookieDomain` or after the `setDomains`?- I would have liked the kindle version to include say a `chapter#` on each page or some kind of easy indication as to what folder to find the code example in, as I found I was often having to scroll back to see what chapter I was reading and then having to hunt through the relevant readme file to find the code example I was after. Overall though, this book with it's detailed information and code examples (for the most part) is useful and thorough in the topics it covers. I'm glad I purchased it.

Finally a real book about Piwik, thanks to him Piwik starts to be demystified. Stephan gives us here concrete examples about how to use Piwik and which lines of code we need to insert on our webpages. A really good job. Well done.

Miller does an excellent job covering all technical aspects of Piwik from initial installation, security, backups & maintenance (Chapter 1), using reports and features (Chapter 2), the asynchronous tracking code for pages, events and custom vars (Chapter 3), goals and conversions (Chapter 4), campaigns tracking and attribution (Chapter 5), the concept of events and social tracking (Chapter 6), e-commerce tracking (Chapter 7), administration (Chapter 8), and lastly, advanced tracking topics, debugging and plugins (Chapter 9). Chapter 10 covers integration into other platforms such as CMSs, mobile, accessing the underlying data or using the API. The book is not too technical but is certainly not a marketing or manager oriented one. It is a good technical reference for anyone starting with Piwik. Don't expect the book to help you justify the use of Piwik over other alternatives, nor should you expect to learn "how" to do analytics. While there are still debates about the implications of IT vs Marketing in web analytics, Piwik clearly stands on the IT side and the book clearly reflects that. With requirements for self-hosting, MySQL database handling, installation on servers and such, Piwik is clearly for the technically inclined or organizations that want to bring the technical side of web analytics in-house. The arguments I hear most often to justify a solution such as Piwik are a sense of greater control over the data, customization capabilities and a perception of greater security. I feel those aspects should have been a little better covered in the book.

Piwik is an open-source alternative to Google Analytics (and various other web analytic software). If

you prefer your data to remain in your hands and not stored somewhere in the Googleverse, Piwik is the way to go. This book is an excellent introduction to installing, configuring, using and maintaining a Piwik server. Some basic concept of how PHP and MySQL work and interact with one another is helpful, but that kind of goes without saying when dealing with open-source software in general. The text is clear and concise, with a good balance between description and screen shots (I hate when a book consists of mostly screen-shot - it's like padding a term paper with larger fonts and leading). I confess we only use the basic features of Piwik at the moment, but I know that when our account team asks for advanced tracking, campaign tracking, or even e-commerce tracking, I'll be able to quickly configure our installation using this book as reference. It even covers the basics of creating your own back-end widgets and documents the API near the end. All in all, an indispensable reference for anyone who needs to install and maintain a Piwik server.

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