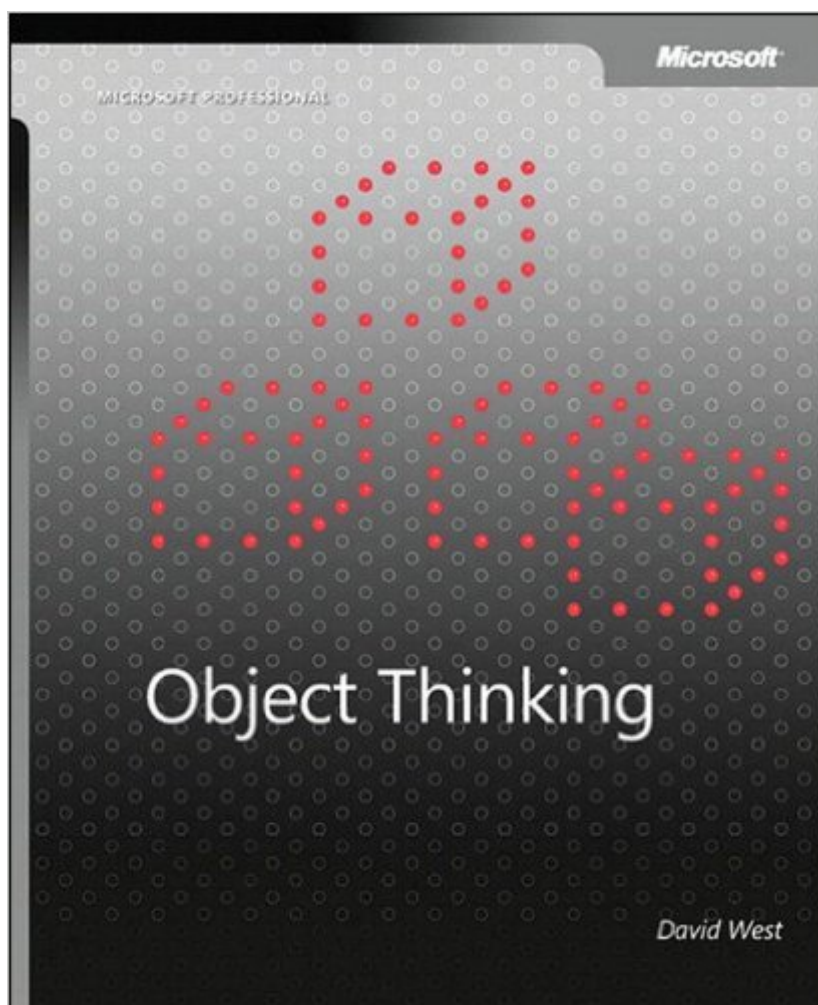


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Object Thinking (Developer Reference)



Synopsis

In OBJECT THINKING, esteemed object technologist David West contends that the mindset makes the programmerâ not the tools and techniques. Delving into the history, philosophy, and even politics of object-oriented programming, West reveals how the best programmers rely on analysis and conceptualizationâ on thinkingâ rather than formal process and methods. Both provocative and pragmatic, this book gives form to whatâs primarily been an oral tradition among the fieldâs revolutionary thinkersâ and it illustrates specific object-behavior practices that you can adopt for true object design and superior results. Gain an in-depth understanding of: Prerequisites and principles of object thinking. Object knowledge implicit in eXtreme Programming (XP) and Agile software development. Object conceptualization and modeling. Metaphors, vocabulary, and design for object development. Learn viable techniques for: Decomposing complex domains in terms of objects. Identifying object relationships, interactions, and constraints. Relating object behavior to internal structure and implementation design. Incorporating object thinking into XP and Agile practice.

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Customer Reviews

This is one of the first books in Microsoft Press' new "Microsoft Professional" series and first impressions are that it looks a bit dry. If you're as averse to "pretentiously long words" as I am - headings like "hermeneutics", "anthropomorphism" or "A syncretic Approach" leap off the page as you flick through the slim volume - then you're going to find the book a bit of a struggle ("Looks like a great cure for insomnia" as a colleague commented after a quick flick through it) and my initial hopes were not high. However persevere, because it's worth it! Although the language and presentation is almost the polar opposite of one of the "companion" titles in this series ("Extreme Programming Adventures in C#") this has a very high signal to noise ratio (which sadly the other much fatter volume doesn't!). So, don't be put off by the long names and endless footnote references to old ACM papers because what's presented here is a thoughtful and convincing book on the history of object-oriented development, the politics and design errors that have caused the "wrong" thinking to take place and a convincing argument as to why so many of us have got object orientation so wrong. The blurb promises "visionary insight" and if you can get through some of the "academic" language, against all expectations the book delivers on that promise. This ISN'T, as you might expect from a Microsoft Press book, a book of code examples and "silver bullet" handbook for the developer who wants to cut and paste code, for reasons that are well explained in the book.

Review of "Object Thinking" by David West This is a very interesting work from Professor West for those that want to explore the philosophical underpinnings of Object Oriented Software Development. Early in the text he relates the Greek philosopher Plato's comments to decomposition, dividing a problem along the natural joints. Although it includes good practical examples the philosophical basis for shifting from the deterministic approach of structured methodology in software development to the new agile techniques he so obviously favors is presented in a quite convincing manner. The book ably serves as a reference to the philosophical basis of thinking regarding programming with copious references notes and sidebars. This also helps improve the readability of the book by reinforcing the rationales offered and providing substance to his claims. Professor West we learn early on is a proponent of agile methodologies and still favors the Class, Responsibility, Collaborator (CRC) cards. There is much to recommend this in the early stages of software design. West also points out to no surprise that Object thinking is truly different and attaining this level of sophistication is not merely a matter of experience with Object

Oriented languages. As an example West includes an interesting statement "Eliminating centralized control is one of the hardest lessons to be learned by object developers.". My own experience with Java and J2EE bring to mind the example of Sun Microsystem's Pet Store. The example prominently features several classes which function as Controllers; ScreenFlowManager, ModelManager and ShoppingCartClientController. West prefers the use of Coordinator in that the objects register listeners and coordinate rather than actually control the events.

And I did - but I'm not sure how broad the appeal of a work such as this will be. Readers looking for a 'pure' programming book will be disappointed; readers expecting a theoretical introduction to object-oriented programming will probably find themselves overwhelmed. The other groups of readers for whom I feel saddest will be those where English is their second language and readers predisposed to hostility towards Agile programming methodologies ([...]) - for them, this book will be an exercise in frustration. The language in this book is written at a higher level of vocabulary than is typical - perhaps not atypical of a philosophy textbook (which is much closer to what this book is), but certainly outside the norm for books about programming. And it is because of this emphasis on philosophy that I find myself only able to give the book 3 stars. I loved it - but a lot of people will be put off by Dr. West's vision of titanic struggle between formalist culture and relativist culture, technocrats and managers against geeks and code poets. On an emotional level, I get it. At an intellectual level, I get it. The process he's describing, the methodology he proposes, totally gel with the way I've long thought about my programs. Even when I was writing largely procedural code, I was holding in my head metaphors that made it a lot easier for me to visualize what I was trying to achieve. West believes that by training developers to accept fuzziness and chaos, to embrace uncertainty and relativism, to adopt an almost Zen-like approach to software-by-metaphor, better software will come about. This book is almost a Gnostic text of sorts - to the believer or not-quite-believer actively seeking the message this book tries deliver, it will be a wonder.

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