Automate the Boring Stuff with Python: Practical Programming for Total Beginners

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If you've ever spent hours renaming files or updating hundreds of spreadsheet cells, you know how tedious tasks like these can be. But what if you could have your computer do them for you?

In *Automate the Boring Stuff with Python*, you'll learn how to use Python to write programs that do in minutes what would take you hours to do by hand—no prior programming experience required. Once you've mastered the basics of programming, you'll create Python programs that effortlessly perform useful and impressive feats of automation to:

Search for text in a file or across multiple files Create, update, move, and rename files and folders Search the Web and download online content Update and format data in Excel spreadsheets of any size Split, merge, watermark, and encrypt PDFs Send reminder emails and text notifications Fill out online forms

Step-by-step instructions walk you through each program, and practice projects at the end of each chapter challenge you to improve those programs and use your newfound skills to automate similar tasks.

Don't spend your time doing work a well-trained monkey could do. Even if you've never written a line of code, you can make your computer do the grunt work. Learn how in *Automate the Boring Stuff with Python*.

Automate the Boring Stuff with Python: Practical Programming for Total Beginners Details

Date	:	Published April 21st 2015 by No Starch Press (first published November 25th 2014)
ISBN	:	
Author	:	Albert Sweigart
Format	:	Kindle Edition 504 pages
Genre	:	Computer Science, Programming, Nonfiction, Science, Computers, Technology, Reference, Coding

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From Reader Review Automate the Boring Stuff with Python: Practical Programming for Total Beginners for online ebook

Anton Antonov says

I think this book isn't worth it's price of $30. Not at all.

The contents are extremely shallow and in fact, they are just a combination of some libraries docs. The author doesn't go in-depth and share something that you wouldn't find in the docs. In fact, you have better chances reading the libraries' docs since they should be always up-to-date.

The projects try to build some interest in the reader, but they aren't anything challenging nor unique.

If you're new to programming you should not believe that this book will teach you the basics of Python. It's a speedy introduction with not nearly enough exercises to learn the basics.

But if we skip that and assume that the book taught us Python, let's look again at part 2.

* Pattern matching with Regex - Google "python3 regex" - https://docs.python.org/3/howto/regex...
*Reading and Writing files - Google "python3 reading and writing files" - https://docs.python.org/3/tutorial/in...
* Organizing Files - Google "python3 organizing files" - http://openbookproject.net/thinkcs/py... and Python docs are good enough
* Debugging - Python docs
* Web Scrapping - Google "python3 web scrapping". It has a lot of quality top results
* Working with Excel - the Python library used `openpyxl` has awesome and in-depth docs and is 3rd google result for 'python3 excel' https://openpyxl.readthedocs.org/en/l....
* Working with PDF/Word - The working with PDF section is good since finding the right library isn't obvious, but the Word section is easy to find and just as good as in the `python-docx` docs
* Time Scheduling and Sending Emails - Python docs
* Manipulating images - equally good (or even better) top3 google searches
* Controlling the Keyboard and Mouse with GUI Automation - a unique chapter that actually tells something hard to find on your own if you don't know the right library to search for (pyautogui).

Overall, I don't think Albert Sweigart is a bad author or anything like that. He has the capabilities to deliver awesome books like his other ones - Hacking Secret Ciphers with Python, Invent Your Own Computer Games with Python && Making Games with Python & Pygame. But this one is far from their quality.

J. N. says

I've been trying to find a way to get myself through a basic python course for years!

Teddy Hartanto says

Two years into Computer Science, I got bored with the subject. This book has re-sparked that fire inside me. It has brought a new light, a new perspective on computer science. It's a practical problem solving book that focuses on getting shit done. In the process, you get to learn how to program. I personally think that the best way to learn is to have a purpose in mind. This book gives you that purpose. It makes you want to automate stuffs. And then it teaches you how to do it.

As someone who's quite experienced in programming, I find this so-called 'Beginner' book very interesting! It boasts crystal clear explanations, cool hacks, and makes you want to automate everything!

Lawrence Kurniawan says

Throughout the years, I've tried to pick up programming as a fringe interest of mine without much success. Looking back, I think it's because most beginner level programming books I've laid my hands on laboriously walked the readers through the concepts without much practicality. With no interesting real life application on sight, surely the interest soon dwindled.

Not this book.

The provided examples were interesting and useful without going too much in depth that would have ended up confusing the readers. And the exercises at the end of every chapter were set at a difficulty level that is not too far off from the examples but were still plenty challenging. By the time I've finished the book, I have written at least 25-30 programs without guidance. That's a first. I sure don't remember exactly how to write programs to edit Excel files, pull data from websites, or control my keyboard and mouse, but I'm confident that I can figure it out by re-reading parts of this book and my previously written programs.

Finishing this book doesn't make me a computer scientist, but it has provided me with the tools to automate boring tasks (yes, the title didn't disappoint) and set up a solid foundation in basic programming.

If you are one of those "I want to know how to program but is it too late to start?" people, this is the book for you!

Deepak Shah says

Instead of the old-school thought of stuffing up all the details •— which most of the programming experts do; Al has condensed the basic stuff in about 30% of the book, leaving a lot of space for modules and independent projects.

My goal was to understand python, by practicing it; and the author managed to help me really well.

Don Holloway says

This is a great book for anyone that is interested in making the transition from learning Python code to actually creating programs that do useful things.

The book includes a basic overview of Python. It provides practical examples, starting with how to read and write data to files, then quickly moves into webscraping, creating spreadsheets, image manipulation, and other useful techniques.

It is both well thought out and well written. I've listened to a podcast interview of the author, Al Sweigart. He is an educator as much as a programmer. Some of his other work focuses on using games to teach young people about Python. In this case, the focus is on practical utility for adults.

This approach lines up well with my own views. We are just starting to realize the advantages of what I call computer assisted intelligence. For many years, people have viewed human and computer intelligence as an either/or proposition. Man versus machine. Automation or people.

It turns out that the answer to "Who plays the best chess" was neither the Grandmaster nor Watson. The winner was a smart kid with a cheap chess computer. People learn what an application does well, but also when they need to take over control.

People's contributions become more valuable when they take advantage of computer assistance. For people in sales, this value goes directly to top line revenue growth. A computer assisted sales person should be able to book more business. One of the biggest challenges can be that each sales person has a different set of challenges, customers, and skills.

The book is subtitled "Practical programming for total beginners". At the time that I read it, I wasn't a total beginner, but would hardly call myself an accomplished programmer either. I skipped the first section on programming basics and went right to the section on reading and writing files to a disk. I then jumped to reading and writing excel sheets. In a fairly short time, I found two things. First, that I could actually read and write excel programatically in Python. The second was that I wanted to go back and read up on some of the foundational stuff that I had skipped over.

It is well indexed, gives wonderfully practical advice, and strikes a great balance between informing directly and encouraging you to "kick the tires" and learn for yourself. I'm working on a contact management tool for myself that pulls contacts, looks for duplicates, completes information from other sources and allows me to pick and choose what I upload into other systems and formats it accordingly into an excel spreadsheet format.

I would recommend this book for any adult that is interested in learning Python and would prefer to focus on things that will deliver practical results. Al provides the full text of his book online, so you can check it out and see its value for yourself.

[Here's the link to the online copy of the book](https://automatetheboringstuff.com)

Jason says

There are criticisms that this book doesn't go deep enough, but you will find those arguments are from people who probably have programming experience and have experienced the deeper depths of the rabbit hole.

If you've read more than one programming book, you're probably not within this book's target audience.

If you've never programmed before and want a great starting point, this is a wonderful introduction. Too many launching points for novice programmers are mere syntax guides, and I'm pleased to finally have a more holistic reference that is accessible and introduces new learners to thinking of programming languages as a collaborative ecosystem.

Tim says

I've recommended this book to multiple friends who aren't programmers but interested in learning to code. This book is also great because it equips the reader with the knowledge necessary to actually do useful things.

Alamin Mahamud says

Must Read for Python Developers. See yourself if you can go through this projects and feel comfortable without working on it..

After reading this book you shouldn't do any stuff repeatedly... you write some code and tell the script to run and kaboom! you are virtually automating your stuff.

Al sweigart thanks!

Jackie Zhao says

This book is totally for the beginner of Python.
The explanation is easy to understand. I understand all the explanation though I am from a non-English country.
I hope you guys will love this book,just enjoy the world of Python!

Tim says

Make no mistake--this IS a book about programming. However, if you are an "experienced programmer" seeking to methodically study a new language, this book is not for you. It is not very "methodical", see. The book's primary audience is a moderately experienced group of power PC users who seek to expand their horizons by mixing a bit of scripting into their routine, boring daily tasks. As such, no prior programming experience is really required. That said, as long as you understand that, even if you are an "experienced programmer" looking to pick up Python, you can squeeze quite a bit of value out of this book. On the theory front, it doesn't go very far beyond the basics (such as explaining the basic concepts of the language--lists, tuples, dictionaries--something that more traditional programming languages either don't handle or handle in a very different manner), but where it excels is in opening your eyes to what the language is truly capable of. The book is chock full of interesting (if sometimes silly) practice projects and does a good job walking the reader through them and explaining how the language works. Become a master of Python programming after studying these projects you will not, but you will be very comfortable with perusing the (very excellent)

online Python documentation and, more importantly, know what it is you are looking for.

Lucas Rodrigues says

This is a book that I took a time ago to start learning Python. Nowadays I'm studying slightly more advanced material, even so, this book proves to be a good source of reference. It has very careful and detailed definitions of concepts. Though these concepts are basic the adequate understanding of them is crucial to further developments of programmer skills.

In the future, we are all going to be programmers in some level. I think this book is a useful tool to help us on this journey.

K?rlis Bergmanis says

Five stars, as book does what it promises really, really well.
I'm a Powershell guy and wanted to expand my skills a bit - so this worked out great. I skipped some parts - Excel, Word, PDF, as they are not really relevant to me now, and completely ignored Image manipulation - but parts that I went through explained a lot.
I also managed to create one real-world program that I had failed to get to work in PS, so this is great. - I wouldn't consider learning another language to do something I know how to get done in another, but as this expands and builds upon, it's great. Also helped to prove my theory that if you know how system works, learning another language is really simple.
Recommend!

Grace Nellore says

My absolute favorite book for Python so far!

Pros:
very user-friendly, excellent for beginners, but still super useful for those more experienced, saves SO much time, and people think you're some awesome cool hacker although its actually SO SIMPLE!

Cons:
got me over-excited and made me spend $$ on a bunch more books in the same series... okay, that's my own fault, but seriously, I have enough books to last me well into 2016!

Jose Seco Sanz says

Well, I think highly of this book, and I look forward to try some of the things in it. I'm not sure a beginner can follow all of it, but fortunately I'm not a beginner.
The book is more focused in doing things than in teaching all about python, so if you are interested in thoroughly learning the language you are going to need more than this book. Recommended.