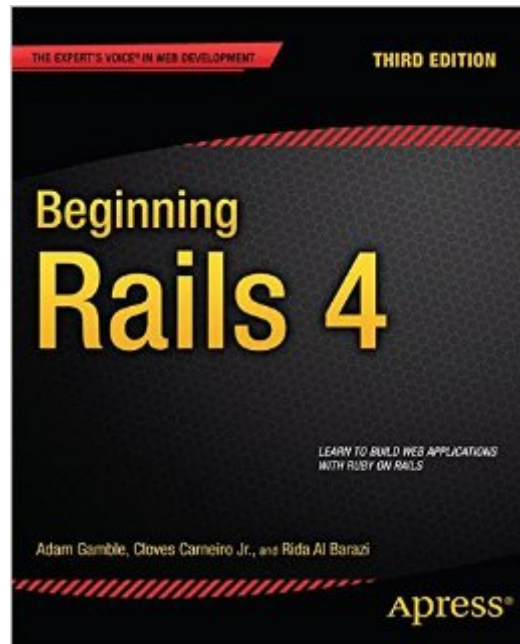


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# Beginning Rails 4 (Expert's Voice In Web Development)



## Synopsis

Beginning Rails 4 is a book that will guide you from never having programmed with Ruby, to having a Rails application built and deployed to the web. You'll learn how to combine all the components of Rails to develop your own web applications. You will learn how to use Git for source control and best practice techniques to create applications like a pro. Essential, and often-missed, information on testing and learning to program with Ruby are also covered. This book is well suited for someone with little to no Ruby or Rails experience, or possibly even someone with no experience developing web applications at all. Beginning Rails 4 does assume a basic familiarity with the web and typical web terms, but doesn't require you to be an expert of these. This book will springboard your journey into web application development, and show you how much fun building web applications with Ruby on Rails can be. Learn to create Rails applications from the bottom up Learn the basics of the Ruby programming language Completely updated for Rails 4, including new information on turbo links, etc. Beginning Rails 4 gently guides you through designing your application, writing tests for the application, and then writing the code to make your application work as expected. What you'll learn Learn the basics of the Ruby programming language Learn the components of Rails, and how to leverage them to build rich web applications Build a good foundation so you can move on to more advanced techniques Learn the basics of databases and how to use them to store and retrieve your data Use git source control and contribute to open source on Github Deploy your application to the web so others can use it Who this book is for Beginning Rails 4 is for anyone who wants to learn to quickly build applications, and deploy them to the web. No matter your experience level you'll learn something from this book. Table of Contents Introducing the Rails Framework Getting Started Getting Something Running Introduction to the Ruby Language Working with a Database: Active Record Advanced Active Record: Enhancing Your Models Action Pack: Working with the View and the Controller Advanced Action Pack JavaScript and CSS Sending and Receiving Email Testing Your Application Internationalization Deploying Your Rails Applications Appendix A: Databases 101 Appendix B: The Rails Community Appendix C: Git

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Beginning Rails 4 has reasons to be a great book. The structure and content is very good, the writing is clear, and the running project is a good idea. Unfortunately it has so many technical errors that it makes what could have been a really great reading experience, at best, mediocre. The book has a good structure for beginners. The first three chapters explain Rails and get something running quickly; an important feat to keep beginners captivated. From there on the book dives into each aspect of rails in sequence; the underlying Ruby language, the object-relational model in Rails (ActiveRecord), and then Action View and Action Controller. The remaining chapters touches on several other important areas; JavaScript & CSS, e-mail handling, testing, and finishes with a chapter on deployment. Regarding the content itself, it is generally very good. One thing I made particular note of is that testing isn't mentioned before chapter 11, which is the second-last chapter in the book. Some people may be put off by this, but I urge you not to be. The late introduction of testing, and the particular way in which the book introduces it, works surprisingly well. I've seen too many books where the actual content is drowned in testing practicalities. Not so with Beginning Rails 4. This is also supported by the fact that the book is (almost!) completely neutral towards HOW you should do your testing (e.g. test first vs. test last). The only thing the book emphasizes is that you SHOULD test - how you do it is up to you. However, even the best writing, structure, and content cannot make up for the abundance of technical errors that are present in this book. When I read the book it almost felt like a chore to get through each chapter, knowing that I had to double-check every example and important statement to be sure they were correct. Reading a book should be enjoyable, and not feel like a chore. The worst part is that most of the technical errors are caused by the fact that the authors are writing about or using Rails 3.2 (or even earlier!) features. In a book that touts itself as "Completely updated for Rails 4.0" this is just not acceptable - especially not on the scale it occurs on here! Let me give you a few examples:-- Example 1 --The book seems

to be quite inconsistent about which model validation syntax it uses. In the first part of the book the model validations use the Rails 2.x syntax, for example "validates\_presence\_of :title" on page 119. However, in later parts of the book this same code is magically transformed (no mention) to use the newer (recommended) syntax, for example "validates :title, :presence => true" on page 177.

Another example is on page 254 where the text refers to the new syntax: "Congratulations! You just translated the validates: title, presence => true error message.." - but at this point the readers' code doesn't have such a line of code.-- Example 1 ---- Example 2 --

In the section "Finding a Single Record Using first" on page 72, the authors mention that 'first' is nondeterministic and dependent on the default ordering in the underlying database. This is not true as of Rails 4.0. See e.g [...] - "Default ordering added to first". From Rails 4.0 and on, 'first' adds an implicit 'order by id' to the generated SQL query.-- Example 2 ---- Example 3 --

In the section "Finding All Records" on p.73 it's mentioned that 'Article.all' returns an array. This is not true as of Rails 4.0. See the following output:  
\$ Article.all.class=> ActiveRecord::Relation::ActiveRecord\_Relation\_Article  
This makes most points in the section moot as almost all demonstrated features are backed by the argument "this works because Article.all is just an array!" - which it is not (though Relation is very similar).-- Example 3 ---- Example 4--

In Listing 8.11 on page 158/159 the book uses the deprecated (in Rails 4.0) confirm action. This is true for several places in the book.-- Example 4---- Example 5 --

There are several things wrong with the section "Applying a Style Sheet" on page 183/18. First of all the book mentions the "public/stylesheets/application.css" and "../scaffold.css" stylesheet files. These files are not in those directories (they moved with Rails 4.0). They are both in app/assets/stylesheets. Secondly, there's not even a file called "scaffold.css", it's "scaffold.css.scss" (Rails has now adopted SASS).-- Example 5 ---- Example 6 --

Listing 11-12 on page 231 shows a controller generated by Rails. Only problem is, this is the controller generated by Rails 3.2 and thus looks different from the one generated by Rails 4.0 which is confusing.-- Example 6 --

It is clear that the authors have not spent enough time on updating this book for Rails 4.0. The section "Finding All Records" on p. 73 builds it's whole argument on the fact that a particular method returns an Array, which it doesn't anymore in Rails 4.0. This makes the section pretty moot. When reading the book I almost spent as much time double-checking the content as I did reading it. While a good exercise it's not something that should feel (or be) necessary. Part of the problem with many of the errors in this book, is that you have to know when something doesn't sound right to actually notice them. For a complete beginner with no experience in Ruby or Rails (or people who aren't as critical as I), the book may seem very good at first. However, for a book which purpose is to teach Rails 4.0, teaching just the opposite (e.g. Rails 3.2) is not good enough. Coupled with the fact that there are more than

several severe types of errors, which could have been avoided if the authors had just looked at the list of Rails 4.0 changes, and updated the code listings to actually reflect what is generated by the new version of Rails, the book just doesn't seem very trustworthy. Despite the large amount of technical errors I give the book 3 stars, due to the fact that the content and writing is very good. If the errors are fixed in a future printing, this will be a (really!) good book for beginners, but as it is now, I cannot recommend it.== UPDATE 5/10/13 ==I have been in contact with one of the authors, Adam Gamble, who has sincerely apologized for the amount of errors I have found in the book. He has been very cooperative and has promised to fix all of them asap. The fixes will be in the e-book version as soon as they're committed. However, for the print book, I'm not sure. Until I have confirmation that the errors have been fixed in both versions, I will leave my review as is. Thus for those of you who want to read the book, I can only recommend the e-book version, when the errors have been fixed, which they haven't yet as far as I know.

Beginning Rails 4 is a book exactly for me, but I am not sure how much it is a book for complete beginners. It is a great book, very unique, very tasty and full of valuable knowledge not just about Ruby and Rails, but also about testing, SQL, Ajax, Ruby community, etc.. I can say that it gives you the perfect starting point of everything you could need in Ruby on Rails application. That is a really complete approach, which I miss in other sources. On the other hand, I do not think someone without a previous knowledge of other programming language or without a bits of Ruby would gain so much from the book. It may seem overwhelming. Also some parts of the book were really hard to grasp, as for example introduction to Ruby - explaining classes and objects. The getter and setter methods which were immediately replaced by attr\_accessor just confused me. Sometimes I also got the feeling that the book expected that I know something which I really didn't, but it didn't bother me much, as I could usually find it in the other parts of the book. I really loved the first chapter - introducing the rails framework. I read a few other books or online tutorials about rails before but I have never seen such a nicely written introduction. I appreciate the explanation of web application in general, frameworks and mainly the part about agility. I think lots of people know what agile programming means, as did I in theory, but it was really valuable to me to read how exactly Ruby on Rails encourages this agility in practice. I also liked the explanation of Active record and Action pack. For example the scheme 7.1 - The action pack request cycle really put everything what I have read into its places. I think such kind of visual explanation are very important. Although I skip some of the parts, like the one about Ajax and CSS ( I hoped I already knew this stuff and I did not want to distract myself away from rails), I really liked how the book is really full of all-around knowledge not

just about Rails. You can find really useful overview of SQL in the appendix, for example, which I am sure I will have to read again very soon, since is very condensed. To summarize it, the book was very useful for me, I would recommend it to all beginning programmers who already heard something about Rails, maybe watched few tutorials but need a deeper understanding. It is also a great material to meet related tools which you will have to face as a programmer, and get a basic understanding of it. However, do not pick this book as your very first intro to programming or if you are not motivated enough - it may discourage you as it is not superficial nor easy.

I had high hopes. I prefer to learn while doing, and don't mind frustrations along the way, as they're opportunities to learn. I just completed the first real activity ("Hello world") and had to turn online for help... not because I was stumbling as a beginner, but because the book seriously misled me. The code provided in the kindle book, and what the book links to on github, wasn't only pre- Rails 4, but pre-Rails 3.1. It may get better later on in the book, but since the return window is only 7 days for a Kindle book, I can't risk reading much further to find out whether such glaring errors continue.

Returned for a refund.

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