



## TEXT SUPPORT

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## Under Review

DB2 Express — Easy  
Development and Administration

By Paul Yip et. al.

RATING: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TWENTY YEARS AGO WHEN relational database technology was conceived, the storage, retrieval and interpretation of data that is now possible was only a distant goal. Today the technology is not only more powerful, it is easier to use. This means the texts that help guide users need to consider more accessible formats in order to be user friendly to the less technically learned who use technology such as database management tools in their own businesses.

Paul Yip recently spoke to Carolyn Weaver about DB2Express. His co-authors on the book are Kit Man Cheung, Jason Gartner, Clara Liu and Stephen O'Connell.

Who are you targeting with this book?

This book is for anyone whose responsibilities at work includes database application development but is not a database administrator. The book does not discuss advanced database administration, but an experienced DB2 user would still gain information in the later chapters including the troubleshooting section.

Is it truly possible for a small business owner who has to wear many hats to get up and running with DB2 Express?

Not only is it possible, but with DB2 Express they are often surprised at how easy it is. Usually within a few hours of having installed Version 8 (even on Unix platform) they are up and running.

The Express branding is used by IBM to identify IBM software products that have been specifically tailored to meet the needs of the small and medium-sized businesses. The autonomic capabilities, such as automatic database backup and database configuration advisor to name a few, are among the industry-leading autonomic

## FAST

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Favourite book  
Economics of Political Behaviour

Favourite Web site  
finance.yahoo.com

A good book ...  
Helps you see better with your mind

Guilty pleasure  
Options trading

technologies. The book has been written with these users in mind.

I noticed in the book that you include a lot of visuals. Why have you devoted so much space to screen shots?

Other books often focus heavily on command line instructions that the user is supposed to memorize. IBM user studies show that new users respond well to Graphical User Interface tools. This is a feature of

the program and we wanted to show it off and validate the usability of it. We really wanted to make the book and program accessible to the needs of small business owners.

What does the program do to help the small business owner?

We focused on the needs of these users. The book is not about telling the reader everything that can possibly be done but showing them how to do the things they need to do. It is important that they see the benefits as it relates to their own business. An example would be analyzing their sales and getting a sense of how efficient their business is. This book is also one that is appropriate for professional schools.

How do you know that this book works well in a classroom situation?

We use the book in our own enablement classes that are given free to our business partners. Information on classes can be received by e-mailing iic\_toronto@ca.ibm.com. Our

business partners are taught DB2 from the ground up in five days. The last two days they apply what they have learned and can shift the database program they have been using to DB2. Another feature we focus on is populating a fictional database which is a good way to test the usability and set up.

How did you know that the book delivered an accessible approach to learning how to create and manage a database?

We had a great team. The team approach is important as everyone brings different skills to the writing process. Clara Liu and I are consultants at the IBM Toronto Laboratory and we work closely with the business partners to develop and tune third-party products. Kit Man Cheung and Jason Gartner are members of IBM's DB2 development team and have deep technical insight. Gartner had a great insight into the GUI. Stephen O'Connell, a member of DB2 User-Centered Design Team, brought insight into how people used the product prior to Version 8.



INSIDER

## Obsession — the new fragrance from Apple

DESPITE MY LINE OF WORK — IF WRITING ABOUT technology can actually be considered productive labour — I'm not a technophile. Sure, the flashy gadgets occasionally distract me, but that's just the short attention span talkin'. I've test-driven umpteen PDAs, cellphones, laptops and peripherals, and only one or two have really screamed "BUY ME!"

Thus, it's difficult to understand my positively visceral reaction to Apple's two new gewgaws — the iPod Shuffle and the iMac Mini. From the moment I laid eyes on their sexy jpegs, I have had but one thought: I. Must. Have. Them.

I am not of that breed of user who has that touching, if somewhat odd, attachment to all things Mac. In fact, I'm in a bit of a Mac snit at the moment, having just suffered an OS upgrade at work — my new applications actually seem to perform slower than the old versions; the applications that weren't updated are running under an emulator, and have dropped some functionality and default settings; and the keyboard is too sebsuative for a clumsy

typist like me. But as I don't make much of an emotional investment in technology, I'm sure I'll get used to it. As a friend of mine likes to say, I'll be fine when the swelling goes down.

Nor am I a sucker for Apple's admittedly first-rate marketing savvy. The original iMac was a victory of form factor over function, but I did not fall over myself to snap one up. The iPod — arguably the most significant consumer technology development of the century so far — has evolved to the point of status symbolhood, its owners wearing the trademark white earphones as a badge of hipness (even if it does put them at risk of iPod-targetted muggings). Don't want one, thanks.

Why, then, have I fallen so deeply, so passionately, for the pixieish duo recently launched by Jobs & Co.?

I think it's those dimensions. The Shuffle is smaller than a pack of gum and hangs on a lanyard around your neck. The Mini is about the size of a CD boxed set from a not particularly prolific or popular band. They're light, sleek, smooth and tiny —



everything technology is supposed to be in the 21st Century. It's a new IT marketing strategy, an evolution of the wave that brought the new VW Bug and Cooper Mini to the fore in the auto market — Technology That's Too Cute To Resist™. As responsible corporate IT users, we must be on guard against succumbing to such marketing wiles, lest we see Minis proliferating like white, rectangular tribbles throughout our enterprises. And mine are back-ordered — would it kill you to wait a couple weeks?

PSST! Got an inside scoop? Email us at insider@itbusiness.ca