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Herb Schildt's C++ Programming Cookbook

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Preface

Over the years, friends and readers have asked me to write a programming cookbook, sharing some of the techniques and approaches that I use when I program. From the start, I liked the idea, but was unable to make time for it in my very busy writing schedule. As many readers know, I write extensively about several facets of programming, with a special focus on C++, Java, and C#. Because of the rapid revision cycles of those languages, I spend nearly all of my available time updating my books to cover the latest versions. Fortunately, early in 2007, a window of opportunity opened and I was finally able to devote time to the cookbook. The two most requested cookbooks were ones for Java and C++. I began with Java, with the result being my Java programming cookbook. As soon as I finished the Java book, I moved on to C++. The result is, of course, this book. I must admit that both projects were among my most enjoyable.

Based on the format of a traditional food cookbook, this book distills the essence of many general-purpose C++ techniques into a collection of step-by-step *recipes*. Each recipe describes a set of key ingredients, such as classes, functions, and headers. It then shows the steps needed to assemble those ingredients into a code sequence that achieves the desired result. This organization makes it easy to find the technique in which you are interested and then put that technique *into action*.

Actually, "into action" is an important part of this book. I believe that good programming books contain two elements: solid theory and practical application. In the recipes, the step-by-step instructions and discussions supply the theory. To put that theory into practice, each recipe includes a complete code example. The examples demonstrate in a concrete, unambiguous way how the recipes can be applied. In other words, the examples eliminate the "guess work" and save you time.

Although no cookbook can include every recipe that one might desire (there is a nearly unbounded number of possible recipes), I tried to span a wide range of topics. My criteria for including a recipe are discussed in detail in Chapter 1, but briefly, I included recipes that would be useful to many programmers and that answered frequently asked questions. Even with these criteria, it was difficult to decide what to include and what to leave out. This was the most challenging part of writing this book. Ultimately, it came down to experience, judgment, and intuition. Hopefully, I have included something to satisfy every programmer's taste!

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