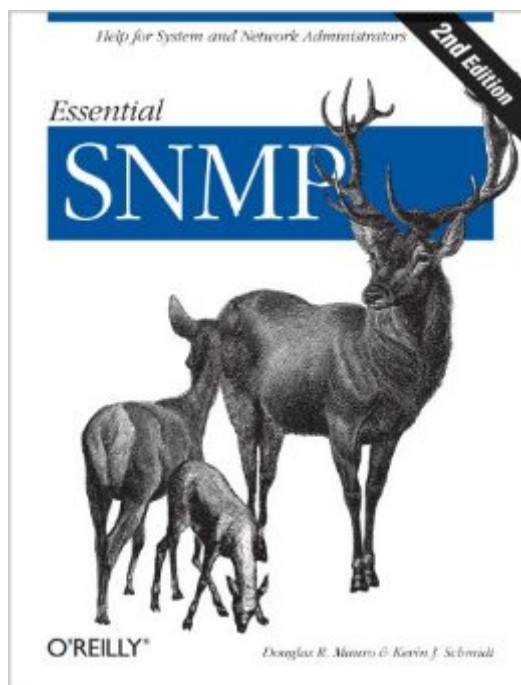


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Essential SNMP



Synopsis

Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) provides a "simple" set of operations that allows you to more easily monitor and manage network devices like routers, switches, servers, printers, and more. The information you can monitor with SNMP is wide-ranging--from standard items, like the amount of traffic flowing into an interface, to far more esoteric items, like the air temperature inside a router. In spite of its name, though, SNMP is not especially simple to learn. O'Reilly has answered the call for help with a practical introduction that shows how to install, configure, and manage SNMP. Written for network and system administrators, the book introduces the basics of SNMP and then offers a technical background on how to use it effectively. Essential SNMP explores both commercial and open source packages, and elements like OIDs, MIBs, community strings, and traps are covered in depth. The book contains five new chapters and various updates throughout. Other new topics include: Expanded coverage of SNMPv1, SNMPv2, and SNMPv3 Expanded coverage of SNMPc The concepts behind network management and change management RRDTool and Cricket The use of scripts for a variety of tasks How Java can be used to create SNMP applications Net-SNMP's Perl module The bulk of the book is devoted to discussing, with real examples, how to use SNMP for system and network administration tasks. Administrators will come away with ideas for writing scripts to help them manage their networks, create managed objects, and extend the operation of SNMP agents. Once demystified, SNMP is much more accessible. If you're looking for a way to more easily manage your network, look no further than Essential SNMP, 2nd Edition.

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Customer Reviews

Essential SNMP, 2nd Ed (ES2E) fills a gap in being a modern book about an important management protocol. SNMP is used extensively by network management stations (NMS) like Nagios, which is now the subject of two independent books. E2SE does a good job covering SNMP issues important to administrators and NMS users. However, the book's organization and subject matter could be improved in the 3rd edition. Initially I thought it was helpful to include Tethereal output of SNMP messages, but I realized it was very wasteful to include all of the packet headers above SNMP itself (i.e., Ethernet, IP, and UDP). Many pages could be removed, and the readability improved, by removing unnecessary material. The authors should also bold or highlight important parts of those messages, and maybe add inline callouts of descriptions to point out important parts of the protocol. I liked E2SE because it gave balanced coverage to SNMP v1, v2c, and v3, more or less. The chapter on v1 and v2c (Ch 2) explored those protocols using tools bundled with Net-SNMP. Unfortunately, the same is not true for the chapter on v3 (Ch 3). This was disappointing, because SNMP v3 is most likely to confuse readers. With respect to tools, I don't think it makes sense to use Net-SNMP apps to demonstrate SNMP in Ch 2, but wait to explain Net-SNMP in Ch 6. Sure, there is an appendix on Net-SNMP, but I think it would have made more sense to guide the reader through a setup of a Net-SNMP agent, and then use snmpget, snmpwalk, snmpset, and snmptrap to communicate with snmpd and snmptrapd. This would explain basic SNMP operations in a safe, non-production environment.

I hadn't seen a new book on SNMP come out in some time, and the older ones I had read were so abstract and unhelpful that I was reluctant to try another one. This book, though not perfect, is much better than the older books I have looked at on the subject. For one thing, it just didn't dive into the subject with a bunch of confusing graphs and object trees assuming I already knew the big picture. Chapter one is just a general introduction to SNMP and network management. Chapter 2

goes into details on both SNMPv1 and SNMPv2. It talks about how SNMP sends and receives information, how to read MIB files, and about SNMP communities. It looks in detail at three MIB's - MIB-II, Host Resources, and RMON. MIB-II is a very important management group because every device that supports SNMP must also support MIB-II, thus objects from MIB-II are used in examples through the whole book. Chapter 3 introduces SNMPv3, which addresses the security problems present in v1 and v2. Next the book introduces the idea of a network management architecture. It stresses that you need a plan that helps you use Network Management Stations (NMS's) effectively in order to effectively manage your network. This section includes how to properly choose your hardware and what questions you need to ask yourself. Next the book discusses actually installing and running your software. Specifically HP's OpenView Network Node Manager and Castle Rock's SNMPc Enterprise Edition are discussed. Included are detailed instructions along with screenshots of the application. Next there are instructions on how to configure SNMP agents. You are walked through some standard configuration parameters plus some advanced parameters that sometimes crop up.

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