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Kehoe, Brendan P. Zen and the Art of the Internet: A Beginner's Guide to the Internet. Chester, PA: 1992. [Computer file] Reviewed by Billy Barron.

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Zen and the Art of the Internet is a new guide to the Internet that was written by Brendan Kehoe of Widener University. His goal was to introduce the reader to the resources that are available on the Internet. At the same time, Kehoe tried to avoid system specific information. It should be noted that parts of Zen and the Art of the Internet were derived from other works.

Zen and the Art of the Internet starts off with a chapter on network basics. This chapter is a good introduction to the Internet, but it is not a general guide to networking. Rather, it is Internet and TCP/IP specific. If this chapter can be faulted for anything, it is that it oversimplifies some of the material. On the other hand, it definitely should not scare off the novice user.

The e-mail and FTP chapters are very good, although they do get technical at times. The e-mail chapter could be improved by the addition of a section on etiquette similar to the excellent one in the FTP chapter.

The Telnet chapter is packed with examples of Telnet-accessible services, and it explains how to find out about more services. I was rather disappointed by the omission of any information on tn3270. A description of how Telnet is different on IBM mainframes is also needed. These omissions may lead to some confusion on the part of IBM mainframe users.

Kehoe describes other tools that are available on the Internet. These descriptions are well-rounded and useful, but Kehoe has just covered the most common tools.

One of the most outstanding sections of Zen and the Art of the Internet is called "Things You'll Hear About." In a lot of ways, this chapter is a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) to the Internet, and it will answer many questions of the new network user. At the same time, it introduces the novice user to the folklore of the Internet without being intimidating.

Zen and the Art of the Internet also has useful sections that contain information about commercial services, other networks, how to retrieve files, and how to find out more about the Internet. The USENET chapter does a great job of covering the most common misconceptions people have about that network.

The document includes a helpful glossary.

The conclusion states "this guide is far from complete—the Internet changes on a daily (if not hourly) basis." Then Kehoe goes on to ask for suggestions. For Zen and the Art of the Internet to be useful in the long run, it will need to be updated on a fairly regular basis. From what I can tell, it sounds like Kehoe is planning on doing this. I'm sending in my suggestions, and I highly recommend you do the same.

Overall, I was very impressed with this document. In fact, the same day that I downloaded it I had our receptionist make copies and distribute them to the whole Academic Computing Support Staff. In a couple of days, I am going to do the same with our library. My girlfriend's university just got on the Internet and I'm giving her two sources of information to start with: the first is HYTELNET and the second is going to be Zen and the Art of the Internet. It has a few rough spots, but I'm sure that Kehoe will fix them. The biggest problem is that it paints too rosy a picture of the Internet, but this kind of document is intended to get users interested in the network not to critique it.

I try to stay ahead of most Internet users in terms of my knowledge of what's available and how to access it. Well, I learned a couple of things while reading Zen and the Art of the Internet, so it is not just for novices. At the same time, it is easily understandable by novices. My message to Brendan Kehoe is: Keep up the good work!

#### Access Instructions

The file is available on host FTP.CS.WIDENER.EDU (147.31.254.132) in the directory pub/zen and on FTP.UU.NET in (137.39.1.9) in the directory /inet/doc. Although the author reports that he has signed an agreement with a major publishing house, he has indicated that the network versions will continue to be available.

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