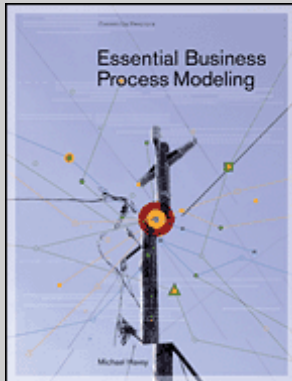


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Essential Business Process Modeling

Michael Havey

O'Reilly, 2005.
\$44.95, 334 pages

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From the title, you might expect that this was a book for managers who wanted to create diagrams of business processes. In fact, it's essentially about a number of technical issues related to Business Process Management Systems. Moreover, it is primarily for software developers who want to think about modeling rather than for practitioners who want advice on how to actually model.

Here's the table of contents, with two chapters broken into subsections to give you a flavor of the scope of the book:

Part One: Concepts

1. Introduction to Business process Modeling
2. Prescription for a Good BPM Architecture
3. The Scenic Tour of Process Theory
 - Family Tree
 - The Pi-Calculus
 - Petri Nets
 - State Machines and Activity Diagrams
 - Summary
 - References
4. Process Design Patterns
 - Design Patterns and GoF
 - Process Patterns and the P4
 - Basic Patterns
 - Advanced Branch and Join Patterns
 - Structural Patterns
 - Multiple Instances Patterns
 - State-Based Patterns
 - Cancellation Patterns
 - Yet Another Workflow Language (YAWL)
 - Additional Patterns
 - Process Coding Standards
 - Summary
 - References

Part Two: Standards

5. Business Process Execution Language (BPEL)
6. BPMI Standards: BPMN and BPML
7. The Workflow Management Coalition (WfMC)
8. World Wide Web Consortium (W3C): Choreography
9. Other BPM Models

Part Three: Examples

10. Example: Human workflow in Insurance Claims Processing
11. Example: Enterprise Message Broker

A quick glance will suggest that Part One is about BPM systems techniques, with an emphasis on theory and patterns. In this case the patterns are mid-level workflow patterns. (If you are really interested in this topic, you'll want to read Wil M.P.van der Aalst's work on workflow patterns which is much more comprehensive.) Clearly Section Two is about BPM standards, and unfortunately most of it is out of date. It would be hard to get a book published these days without being out of date, given the pace of BPM standards efforts. That said, Havey provides reasonably clear explanations of the various standards initiatives as they stood at the beginning of 2005. Havey provides some good diagrams and code to illustrate some of the more confusing points. On the other hand, I wish he had made it clearer that BPEL doesn't support workflow in its current state and that the examples depended on other workflow engines to supplement BPEL.



If you buy this book, you should buy it for the Insurance Claims example in Section Three. Curiously, given that Michael Havey is an architect in IBM's Global Services division, the examples describe BPM systems built in Oracle's BPEL Process Manager product, although the application is fielded in IBM's WebSphere environment. The insurance example is detailed and provide lots of code to illustrate key points. The example, more of toy problem than the Insurance example, is modeled in Visio and written in BPEL.

If you want a general introduction to BPM Systems, Rashid Khan's *Business Process Management: A Practical Guide* is much better. If you are interested in process patterns, van der Aalst and van Hee's *Workflow Management: Models, Methods, and Systems* is the book to get. That leaves the Insurance example, and Enterprise Message Broker. If you are a software developer and are interested in using BPEL and in either of these two problems, you would probably find it worthwhile to read through the relevant chapter.

