

designer (and, judging by her extensive list of references, read by Nardi). Is there any reason why we should welcome yet one more (blessedly slim) volume?

There is every reason. Nardi is a natural historian of humanity, with acute powers of observation and analysis, and—which is even rarer—the ability to marshal evidence and conduct argument. In her discussions of the mundane human conversation as a model of the human/computer interface, and of a variety of interaction techniques, she wields the blade of reason so courteously and delicately that even those whose ideas have been cut to size, or given an elegant *coup de grace*, could scarcely complain at the treatment. But between these discussions comes Nardi's major achievement: a beautifully sustained and forceful argument that ordinary human beings can master formal systems, and even special notations. Now recall all those other approaches to usability, including not a few among the writings of the Artificial Intelligentsia, that start from a presupposition (rarely evidence or argument) to the contrary.

We are offered here a collection of well founded and immediately applicable advice by a skilled advocate of the user. While most of that usability literature may safely be left on the shelf, the package designer that does not now read Nardi will be without excuse.

A. LARNER

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DOUGLAS E. COMER AND DAVID L. STEVENS

*Internetworking with TCP/IP Volume III: Client-server Programming and Applications*. Prentice Hall International, 1994, £22.95, 508 pp softbound, ISBN 0-13-097627-X

Volume III of this now established series on the Internet protocols augments Volume I (which explains what the TCP/IP network is) and Volume II (which shows how it works) by giving an extensive and readable account of how applications may be built to use TCP/IP.

As TCP/IP was loosely specified to allow it to run on a variety of operating systems, there can be (and are) different application software interfaces with TCP/IP protocol software. However as the authors state, in practice there are only a few. The two main interfaces being Transport Layer Interface (TLI) and the socket interface, companion versions for Volume III were written, one for each interface. Much of the material is of course common to both versions, but as any one site is likely to use only one interface, having different versions has the advantage of hiding irrelevant details of the interface one is not using.

Internetworking with TCP/IP has several introductory chapters, which give a general overview of TCP/IP and client-server programming in general. More specialized chapters follow on NFS, telnet, etc.

I found the descriptions offered very clear and unambiguous. Important concepts are emphasized with short

summaries of a few lines in italics. Algorithms are numbered and placed in boxes for easy identification where they are referenced. In the later chapters example code is presented, which is always useful. I received the TLI version, which had a handy appendix describing in detail all the TLI library functions, I presume the sockets version has a similar section.

The structure of the book has clearly been given thought. Cross referencing between chapters is very adequate, the contents, bibliography and index are excellent, and chapters are short enough to be read in one sitting. Each chapter starts with a brief description of what chapters prior to it are directly relevant, and which follow on from it, which for readers such as myself who browse a lot is handy, and exercises are offered on each chapter.

I particularly liked the simple map at the beginning of the volume with internet and electronic mail connectivity shown. While it is the nature of the internet that this will (hopefully) be out of date almost immediately, it does show yet another east-west north-south divide. For almost all eastern Europe and much of South America has no internet (but do have e-mail) and Africa alone is singled out as almost entirely lacking in internet connectivity (except South Africa) or even in most cases e-mail connectivity.

I am not expert in networking (though colleagues of mine to whom I have shown this volume are and have found no major errors), but I found the text easy to understand as it is a coherent, cogent and lucid presentation of what is often seen as a rather arcane subject. At £22.95 for a fairly extensive treatment of the subject (508 pages) this volume is inexpensive as technical texts go. The former two volumes have become the *de facto* standard references to TCP/IP, and there is no reason to believe this volume will not fulfil the same role for builders of applications using TCP/IP.

D. ANTHONY

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CHRISTOPHER BABER AND JANET M. NOYES

*Interactive Speech Technology*. Taylor and Francis, 1993, £37.50, 212 pp, hardbound, ISBN 0-7484-0127-X

This is a useful collection of articles about the problems involved in using existing speech technology (speech synthesizers and speech recognizers) in realistic applications. It does not have much to say about how speech synthesis and recognition works, but concentrates on speech-driven HCI. Many of the contributions were first presented at a one day conference at the NEC Birmingham. Most of the major UK laboratories involved in this kind of work are represented, but there is no international dimension apart from the foreword. The editors have put considerable effort into a series of linking articles which introduce groups of individual contributions.