

# The Definitive Guide to Pylons



James Gardner

Apress®

## **The Definitive Guide to Pylons**

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*Dedicated to my brother, Ian,  
and my parents, John and Maggie,  
whom I love very much.*

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# About the Author



**JAMES GARDNER** is an Oxford University graduate in physics; cofounder of the Pylons web framework; and founder of 3aims Ltd, a knowledge interaction technology consultancy based in London. The majority of his professional experience has been in the development and support of R&D systems for three different National Health Service organizations in the United Kingdom, and he also coded the popular “What Should I Read Next?” book recommendation service.

James has been writing computer programs since he was a small boy when he first got his hands on a Sinclair ZX Spectrum and was very proud to show his grandmother the flashing colored shapes he had managed to get to appear on a black background on the TV. The excitement and satisfaction of being able to create something extraordinary from a series of carefully ordered characters in a file and a little bit of logical thinking has never left him.

James is heavily involved in open source software, and in addition to his involvement in Pylons, he wrote the Python web modules AuthKit and FormBuild and has a keen interest in authentication and single sign-on systems such as OpenID. He is an advocate of building web applications with the Web Server Gateway Interface APIs that you’ll learn about in this book.

While not traveling to London or Oxford, James enjoys nothing more than discussing ideas with challenging and like-minded individuals or sitting down with a cup of tea, a pile of blank paper, a pen, and an Internet connection to think about better ways to solve complex problems using web technology.

In his spare time, James enjoys everything to do with the outdoors from cycling to climbing and from astronomy to scuba diving. In fact, he recently went on a dive trip to the Farne Islands off the coast of Northumbria in the United Kingdom where he thoroughly enjoyed having his equipment nibbled by inquisitive seals. James is lucky enough to have traveled widely and enjoys meeting new people and learning about the different ways people see the world.

James’ company’s web site is at <http://3aims.com>, and he maintains a personal blog documenting his experiments with Python and Linux, amongst other things, at <http://jimmyg.org>.



# About the Technical Reviewer

■ **MICHAEL ORR** is one of the Pylons developers and has been writing Python web applications on several frameworks for the past ten years. Michael is the release manager for the WebHelpers component in Pylons. Previously he was the editor of Linux Gazette, a web-based ezine. Mike lives in Seattle, and his other interests include MMA fight sports, languages, and vegetarian cooking.



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# Source Code and Updates

**T**his book contains many source code examples as well as the code for a complete hierarchical wiki application called SimpleSite. All the source code is available to download from the Apress web site at <http://www.apress.com> or from <http://pylonsbook.com>. The source code includes a `README.txt` file that outlines what each example demonstrates. The examples were all tested in early November 2008 with Pylons 0.9.7 and SQLAlchemy 0.5 release candidates.

This book is released under the GNU Free Documentation License (the same license used by Wikipedia), so I have also been able to publish the text online. You can find the online versions of the chapters at <http://pylonsbook.com>.

The Pylons community is always dynamic and constantly improving, so if you find a problem in the text or source code with the version of Pylons you are using, I encourage you to report it via the <http://pylonsbook.com> web site so that the online chapters can be updated. It is my hope that, with your help and the help of the Pylons community, this book will continue to be a useful resource for a long time to come. If you are interested in contributing to the online version of this book or in helping me review the updates or contributions that other readers send in, I'd love to hear from you. My address is [feedback@pylonsbook.com](mailto:feedback@pylonsbook.com).

I very much hope you enjoy the book and find it a useful resource to help you learn and fully understand Pylons. I'm sure you'll find working with Pylons very liberating, and I look forward to meeting you online if you choose to take part in the Pylons community to share your thoughts and ideas.

