Practical CakePHP Projects

Kai Chan and John Omokore
with Richard K. Miller

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For Rita
—Kai Chan

For Comfort
—John Omokore

For Marian
—Richard K. Miller

Contents at a Glance

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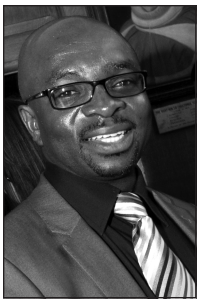
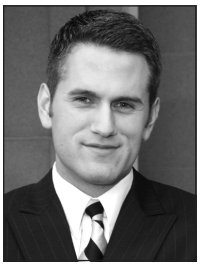
About the Authors

KAI CHAN started his computing career in the late 1980s. His current interests include programming methodology, the Semantic Web, data visualization, and enterprise systems. Kai holds a Computer Science bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Computer Graphics. He is a cofounder of the Azzian MVC CMS framework. Together with John Omokore and others, he runs a software and training company in London, specializing in various large-scale projects, from SAP to e-commerce web sites. When he has a spare moment, he likes tennis, squash, and long-distance running.

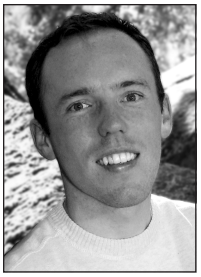


JOHN OMOKORE is a developer, technical consultant, writer, and trainer. John has programming experience in many technologies, including Linux, PHP, MySQL, and Ajax. He has worked on market research data analysis, database development, and related systems. He received his bachelor's degree in Mathematics and is pursuing a postgraduate degree in software engineering at Oxford University in England. John provides consulting and web development services to corporate organizations around the world. He's a cofounder of AlternativeBrains and the Azzian MVC CMS framework and sits on the board of many companies. John lives outside London with his wife, two children, and some animals. His career interests include open source scripting languages, OOP programming, and the use of SAP in large-scale industries (chiefly oil and gas). When not scripting, he enjoys playing chess and squash, visiting the gym, and a bit of socializing.



RICHARD K. MILLER graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in Business Management but has been interested in technology since he began computer programming at age 10. His experience includes web programming, Internet marketing, and new media strategies. He is the developer of several MediaWiki extensions and WordPress plugins, including the widely used What Would Seth Godin Do plugin.

About the Technical Reviewer



DAVID GOLDING began developing web sites in 1999 and first started using CakePHP on a bet he couldn't complete a web application in five minutes. He is the author of *Beginning CakePHP: From Novice to Professional* (Apress, 2008) and has taught CakePHP even while it was still in early stages of development. David has a degree in European Studies from Brigham Young University and continues work in religious studies and history as a graduate student at Claremont Graduate University. He lives with his wife, Camille, and his son, Kenny, in Southern California.

Acknowledgments

When we first decided to write this book, we really didn't think it would be that difficult a task. After all, we've been coding and writing documentation for years and years. Now having written the book, we can honestly say it has been one of the hardest projects we've done since we wrote our first-ever Hello World program. As such, with tears streaming from our eyes, we would wholeheartedly like to thank all the people involved. It all sounds like a cliché, but it's all true. Thank you to the team at Apress, the Cake Software Foundation, colleagues, friends, families, and neighbors. In no particular order, we would like to thank them individually. They are Steve Anglin, Richard Dal Porto, Matt Wade, Marilyn Smith, Joohn Choe, David Golding, Nancy Wright, Richard K. Miller, Rita Woo, Terry Wells, Dan Jackson, Candace English, and God.

Kai Chan and John Omokore

Thank you to Kai Chan and John Omokore for allowing me to take part in this book. I've enjoyed working with them and the entire Apress team. Thanks to David Golding for getting me involved. I'm thankful for good parents, family, friends, and colleagues, and to God.

Richard K. Miller

Introduction

First off, thank you for picking up this book. Whether you are standing in a bookshop or reading this at home, we assume you probably have a strong interest in developing web sites. In the past few years, the number of web site frameworks has increased dramatically. This is especially true for PHP-based frameworks. Many people have chosen to adopt CakePHP (Cake, for short) for various reasons, such as these:

- PHP programmers are widely available. Most projects have tight deadlines, and you want team members who can quickly pick up a new piece of technology.
- CakePHP is easy to learn. You want a powerful tool that you can easily master.
- CakePHP has good support. Developers frequently post and reply to messages on the Cake forum. And there are always some good discussions happening on the Cake IRC. (To see for yourself, simply download mIRC from `http://www.mirc.com/`, connect to the server `irc.freenode.net`, and join the `#cakephp` channel.)

When you are developing a site using Cake, you often find yourself trawling through tutorials online to see how things are done. We've done that ourselves many times. However, despite the power of the Internet, we still like to look through books. And we think you will find this book a great help in your Cake development endeavors, in addition to all of the material available online.

Most of the applications in this book have been written as a result of some real-world development we have done in the past. We focus on projects that we think are relevant to the future of web development.

Let's take mashups, for example. We should all take an interest in this ever-expanding area of web development. We can honestly say that any successful online web site in the future will need to easily communicate with other applications. Application designers will need to bear this in mind. Matters such as search engine optimization need to be built into the application itself. Cake allows us to think in terms of the high-level architecture instead of the nuts and bolts of a web application.

Who Should Read This Book

Practical CakePHP is a book mainly for developers. To get the most from it, you should be comfortable with a number of web technologies and programming concepts. These include PHP, SQL, HTML, JavaScript, object-oriented programming, and design patterns, as well as the general principles of web development. If you are at the forefront of web development, then this book is for you!

If our book sounds a little too advanced for you, we recommend that you do some preliminary reading. We suggest the following books:

- *Beginning PHP and MySQL: From Novice to Professional, Third Edition,* by W. Jason Gilmore (Apress, 2008)
- *Beginning CakePHP: From Novice to Professional* by David Golding (Apress, 2008)

How This Book Is Organized

Each chapter in this book has been chosen so it will cover the core features in Cake, plus some of the minor features as well. The following is a rough breakdown of what each chapter includes.

- Chapter 1, "Cake Fundamentals," gives you an introduction to Cake. If you are new to the CakePHP framework, this is the place to start.
- Chapter 2, "Blogging," provides you with a simple blogging application. It's perfect for beginners who want to know what a Cake application looks like. If there are two chapters in the book that need to be read in sequence, they are Chapters 1 and 2.
- Chapter 3, "E-Commerce," gives you greater insight into the way Cake is used in a common application. We walk through implementing an online shop using the Cake framework.
- Chapter 4, "A Message Forum Web Service," covers the development of a web services API. We guide you through creating a clean API, so any third party can access your application using standard protocols.
- Chapter 5, "Google Maps and the Traveling Salesman," shows you how the Google Maps API is used with Cake. One of the main features of this chapter's application relates to the classic traveling salesman problem: a salesman needs to visit a number of cities only once and return to where he started.
- Chapter 6, "Mashing Twitter with the Google Translator," emphasizes the importance of web services in modern web application development. In true Web 2.0 and Cake fashion, this chapter's application mashes the Google Ajax Language API with the Twitter API to provide automatic translation of Twitter messages.
- Chapter 7, "Unit Testing and Web Testing," covers one of the hottest topics among web professionals. Cake 1.2 devotes a large section to testing, and this chapter shows you how to take advantage of Cake's integrated unit testing features.
- Chapter 8, "A Cake Control Panel," covers Cake's access control lists and security features. We develop a web-based front end that allows administrators to manage user security.

- Chapter 9, "Translating Stories," provides you with the knowledge to tackle Cake's internationalization and localization features. We develop an application in which news stories are available in other languages, with an administration area where translators can translate stories from a base language to another language.
- Chapter 10, "Adding Automagic Fields," demonstrates extending Cake's use of automagic fields like `created`, `modified`, and `title`. We create three new automagic fields.
- Chapter 11, "Cake Tags," shows you our take on an established technology where XML tags are used as a wrapper to coding logic. Using Cake, we develop our own HTML-based tags to display two Yahoo maps.
- Chapter 12, "Dynamic Data Fields," extends the e-commerce chapter with a special product-filtering technique. We take a dynamic data approach to product searches.
- Chapter 13, "Captcha," shows how ASCII Art can be used as a Captcha test. In this chapter's project, the Captcha test is housed in a Cake component so it can be used by other applications.

How to Contact the Authors

The authors can be contacted as follows:

- Kai Chan can be contacted at `kai.chan@edgeable.com`.
- John Omokore can be contacted at `john@omokore.com`.
- Richard K. Miller can be contacted at `richard@richardkmiller.com`.