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English 3302

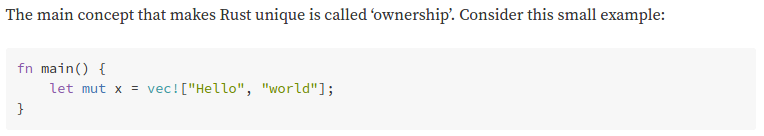
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Calm, Cool, and Collected: Rust Documentation

*The Rust Programming Language* is a freely accessible online book that teaches readers about the systems programming language called Rust. The Rust website links to the book and recommends the introduction page to anyone interested in developing software using Rust. The text provides users documentation for nearly all aspects of Rust: installation, syntax, and best practices when designing systems. In addition to lengthy descriptions about syntax, the book offers a “Syntax Index” and glossary at the end for easy access and additional background on the terms used in the book. Although no authors are listed, we can extrapolate from the Rust website that its maintenance is provided by the “core team” whose duties encompass upholding the text. While it’s self-described as a book, it’s not formatted like a print book, but rather in a scrolling and linked fashion often found online. Documentation of programming languages varies greatly but Rust has found a relaxed yet effective method of transforming technical documentation into a way of ensuring users can interact and join the larger Rust programming community.

The text’s presentation is important to consider since the online format allows more flexibility and dynamic interaction than a physically printed text. When accessing the text online, the most important aspect is how easy it is to navigate. The table of contents can be found on every page in a side tab and contains links to each of the different, well named sections. While this feature is not unique to Rust, this style indicates that the book does not need to be read from start to finish; it's equally effective used as a quick reference or as a comprehensive tool for learning Rust. This can be seen in the aforementioned “Syntax Index”. This index makes quick references more efficient for experienced Rust programmers while clear tutorial sections such as, “Learn Rust” help beginners identify where to start. The clarity and easy-to-read format of the text means that readers are not restricted to a certain group of people - anyone can read it from experienced developers to beginners and children. Additionally, the online format is crucial for the interactivity of the embedded code blocks. The introduction contains a number of simple code blocks with examples that support the written language: 1(“Introduction”)

This code block demonstrates the way Rust and English are used concurrently within the book to allow readers to interact with the text in a way print restricts. If readers want to test out the concepts explained in the text, they can easily copy the code blocks into their own editors and learn by “doing” rather than just observing. Using a familiar phrase such as “Hello World”, which is heard widely throughout computer science, and adding the interactive ability of code blocks while reading helps to demystify Rust as a new language. Thanks to the online format of *The Rust Programming Language,* using the book as a learning tool becomes much more effective for all levels of programmers and further encourages the use of Rust over other, more well-established languages.

The software development world works to foster a community of programmers that collaborate freely. The fact that no specific authors are listed for *The Rust Programming Language* is an example of this collaboration and knowledge sharing. As mentioned before, the language used in this document is easy-to-read partly because it is informal. When reading the book, it sounds more like a dialogue between friends than a textbook on a new programming language. It uses phrases like, “Sounds good?”1(“Guessing Game”) and, “Whew! Congrats for following along this far.”1(“Guessing Game”) constantly throughout every chapter. This informality makes readers feel as though they are a part of the dialogue. This kind of language represents the growing “brogramming” trend in software companies. This trend fosters a culture where programming is cool, fun, and exciting by trying to diminish the stigma of quiet and reserved programmers. Brogramming culture encourages involvement in the general computer science field especially through forums and chat rooms. *The Rust Programming Language* is written so that getting connected emerges as a natural next step. It even dedicates a section of the book to pointing out (and providing links to) areas where readers can interact stating, “there are a number of places where you can get help. The easiest is the #rust IRC channel on irc.mozilla.org, which you can access through [Mibbit](http://chat.mibbit.com/?server=irc.mozilla.org&channel=%23rust). Click that link, and you'll be chatting with other Rustaceans (a silly nickname we call ourselves), and we can help you out. Other great resources include [the user’s forum](https://users.rust-lang.org/), and [Stack Overflow](http://stackoverflow.com/questions/tagged/rust)”1(“Nightly Rust”). Clearly the writers of the text work extremely hard to convince readers to get involved in the rest of the Rust community.

Despite its unique style, the technical information in this text fits what one would expect to find in the world of programming. It allows quick learning, interactive methods, and embraces the online format. In a work environment involving any kind of coding, there is constant use of similar documentation and tutorials. Especially during a Co-op position, self-learning is very necessary. Employers don’t expect new hires to know everything but they do expect them to know how to read and research what they need to. Although the writing is simple in most programming documentation and the tone is easy to follow, it can be very difficult to create the relaxed yet technical writing which demonstrates mastery in the field. The more I explain code and coding techniques over the course of my co-ops and college career, the more it will help me establish myself as someone who can write and speak about my field clearly and concisely. As we have seen from this document, the world of software development emphasizes ease-of-use and development of a collaborative community as means to success.

Reference

1. The rust programming language [Internet]. [cited 2016 Jan 18]. Available from [https://doc.rust-lang.org/book/README.htm](https://doc.rust-lang.org/book/README.html)l