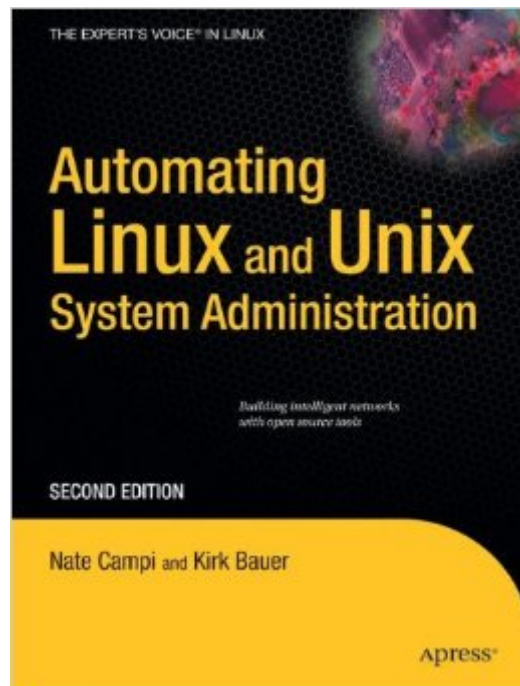


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# Automating Linux And Unix System Administration (Expert's Voice In Linux)



## Synopsis

The author focuses solely on how UNIX and Linux system administrators can use well-known tools to automate tasks, even across multiple systems.

## Book Information

Series: Expert's Voice in Linux

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## Customer Reviews

I bought this book expecting it would describe and demonstrate a variety of automation methods and tools. The book surprised me -- pleasantly. The majority of the book focuses on CFEngine ([...]) and how to use it to manage server configurations, deliver applications automatically to those servers, and enforce a consist policy across the servers. The book goes into some depth demonstrating how cfengine works. It has chapters on configuration, setting up a production environment, setting up automated installations, and delivering applications using cfengine. There are smaller chapters on SSH, Nagios (and using CFEngine to deliver it), and improving server security using cfengine. The book is about 400 pages and is packed with content. There are interesting facts and config bits in every chapter. With the exception of the cfengine manuals, there are no other books on the market today which provide a detailed, comprehensive look at cfengine...until now. If you are using, will use, or have questions about what CFEngine can do, get this book. I'm happy I did.

Repetitive tasks not only waste time, but each repetition is prone to error. Automation is the solution to repetition and any serious System Administrator will tell you that automation is a cornerstone of the profession. Automating Linux and UNIX System Administration is a great guide to building this cornerstone. This book covers a wide variety of topics including: simple shell scripting, remote management with SSH, automated installations, monitoring, and configuration management. The majority of the items are explained with using CFEngine in mind -- so much so that I feel this book should probably advertise its heavy use of CFEngine somewhere in the title or at least on the cover. If you don't use CFEngine and have no plans to do so, a lot of this book becomes irrelevant. However, CFEngine is a popular, robust management system and is worth getting to know. If you're still managing servers by hand, it's probably time to start thinking about automation. Automating Linux and UNIX System Administration is a solid book that will set you on the right track.

As a CFEngine evangelist I find this book very useful to brush up my automation skills, Cfengine peculiarities and even such obscure features as modules and methods in Cfengine. The only drawback of this book is that it needs better visualization - a Cfengine and automation is a complex concept, so few more diagrams would be very helpful. The Cfengine portal ([...]) already has this book present!

This book has a lot of good advice in general about some of the issues in automated server management. Now that cfengine3 is out, however, a lot of the material here is obsolete because it relies on cfengine2. Cfengine3 is a major rewrite of the tool, so basically none of the examples here are totally relevant. An updated edition would be great, but it would probably mean basically rewriting the book from scratch.

The book fulfills the promise of showing how to setup and manage a properly automated fleet of Debian, RedHat Linux, and Solaris systems. It touches on all the essential points of doing so, from bootstrapping the initial install systems to configuring essential services such as NTP and Nagios. I believe the text is stronger for not considering (the many!) alternative configuration management and monitoring tools available, and not going into detail on LDAP and Kerberos, as these topics are covered elsewhere, and would make this book loose focus. Inexperienced systems administrators will benefit from the coverage of need-to-know utilities, such as sudo and SSH, along with the appendix of useful Unix tools, as well as learning how to properly setup a site from scratch. As an experienced sysadmin, I enjoyed the book, picking up a variety of good shell tips, and an excellent

way of organizing cfengine configuration files.

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