

# Book Review: Regular Expressions in 10 minutes

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Regular expressions have always been a bit of a mystery to me. I knew they were very powerful, but they've never been very intuitive. In the past, I've been fortunate to work with developers who could build them for me. I also have the book [Regular Expression Recipes: A Problem-Solution Approach](#), and as a last resort, I've used [RegExLib.com](#)

Eventually, I realised that I needed to learn Regex properly, so I bought **Regular Expressions in 10 minutes** by Ben Forta

## Oops!

There are more detailed books on Regular Expressions, but I wanted something to get me up to speed quickly. I could worry about more complex problems once I'd mastered the basics.

## Message

This book is split into 10 chapters, each with around a dozen pages. Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of regular expressions, and has plenty of real-world examples.

## Detail

Regex tester code is available to download from Ben's website in a number of languages, and there are several useful appendices, detailing the regex support in different languages, and some common regex patterns.

## Extended Info

## Tag Context

I found the length of the chapters to be well waited, and I could fit in one or two a day easily without losing concentration. Repeating the examples using the Regex tester code helped the lessons sink in.

Within a few days, I'd finished the book, and I don't find regular expressions scary any more. I'd also realised that regular expressions can do a lot more than simple search and replace.

It will take a bit more practice before I could say I've mastered Regex, but this book will be a handy reference along the way.

There are a few minor niggles with the book that stop it getting 10/10:

- I'd recommend downloading the errata from Ben's site, as there are a few regex typos which can be confusing.
- I was using the ColdFusion version of the Regex tester, and some expressions can mess around with the rest of the page code.
- The book is a bit old now, so some of the example code (e.g. HTML snippets) looks dated.

In summary, this is a great book to learn regex fast. If like me you've been avoiding regular expressions, this book will ease you in gently.

**Author** Ben Forta

**Publisher** Sams (March 2004)

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**Rating** 9/10