

Foreword

Rails is more than programming framework for creating web applications. It's also a framework for thinking about web applications. It ships not as a blank slate equally tolerant of every kind of expression. On the contrary, it trades that flexibility for the convenience of “what most people need most of the time to do most things.” It's a designer straightjacket that sets you free from focusing on the things that just don't matter and focuses your attention on the stuff that does.

To be able to accept that trade, you need to understand not just how to do something in Rails, but also why it's done like that. Only by understanding the why will you be able to consistently work with the framework instead of against it. It doesn't mean that you'll always have to agree with a certain choice, but you will need to agree to the overachieving principle of conventions. You have to learn to relax and let go of your attachment to personal idiosyncrasies when the productivity rewards are right.

This book can help you do just that. Not only does it serve as a guide in your exploration of the features in Rails, it also gives you a window into the mind and soul of Rails. Why we've chosen to do things the way we do them, why we frown on certain widespread approaches. It even goes so far as to include the discussions and stories of how we got there—straight from the community participants that helped shape them.

Learning how to do Hello World in Rails has always been easy to do on your own, but getting to know and appreciate the gestalt of Rails, less so. I applaud Obie for trying to help you on this journey. Enjoy it.

—David Heinemeier Hansson
Creator of Ruby on Rails