If you are an avid text editor user, then an integrated development environment (IDE) may seem like overkill. Today however, both the complexity of the Java language, and the need to better support the software development life cycle, have changed the landscape of tools.

This book is a clearly written how-to manual that showcases the important aspects of the software, without bogging the reader down in overwhelming details. This allows the reader to quickly get acquainted with, and functional in, the product. The fact that the book avoids the (possibly overwhelming) details that a reference manual would contain does not mean that the features described are poorly articulated. On the contrary, the book contains numerous examples and screen shots.

The first two chapters include a historical introduction to IDEs, and describe the first steps to get started with JDeveloper. The next four chapters are well written. They cover the basic real estate of JDeveloper, and the use of the product with Java, servlets, JavaServerPages (JSP), Java Beans, and databases. In between, there is a chapter on unified modeling language (UML) modeling, which is quite useful, and which demonstrates the versatility of the product. Chapter 7 introduces the notion of an application development framework, and chapter 8 covers Web services. Chapters 9 and 10 are also extremely useful; they cover debugging and tools. The authors have to be commended for their coverage of these topics: they are not considered trendy, but bypassing them can be detrimental during software development.

Each chapter is easy to read, and contains useful examples. The book is well organized, and has a detailed index. Many screen shots accompany the examples. Readers very familiar with IDEs may find a few parts of the material obvious, but the tips and tricks provided throughout the book make reading it worthwhile.