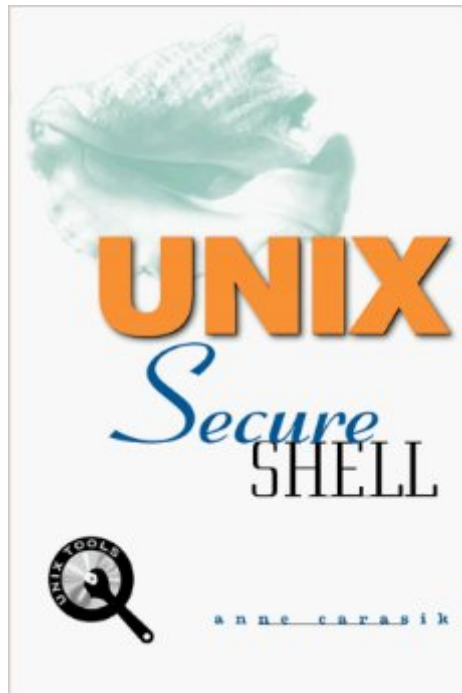


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UNIX SSH: Using Secure Shell With CDROM (McGraw-Hill Tools Series)



Synopsis

Ssh (secure shell) is an encryption program that allows a UNIX administrator to log into another computer over a network. This book shows readers how to log in to their system from anywhere, and how to prevent a cracker from getting access. The CD ROM contains ssh version 2 plus utilities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The use of terminology in this book is so inconsistent, it is all over the map! Example, in chapter 3, "server" sometimes refers to a daemon, sometimes to a machine, sometimes both usages in the same sentence. Similar crimes are committed with the words "remote" and "local", and several others. I'm no neophyte at client/server networking, but I couldn't make head or tail of some whole paragraphs. Contradictory information is presented. In one section we are told that only the server machine needs a daemon, yet elsewhere (e.g. Fig 1.2) we see a daemon on both client and server. The writing is highly repetitive. Example: Chapter 2 explains over and over again how the server daemon spawns a child process. Once is enough! Get on with it. The book digresses from the topic on strange tangents. The whole digression in Chapter 1 about hosts.equiv/.rhosts misconfiguration leads nowhere. After an 8 page digression, we learn that this has nothing to do with ssh, and is not a problem ssh addresses. This book lacks the essential structure that would guide the user through the learning process: Starting with an overview, describing the functionality in

broad strokes, then filling in details in later chapters. At the point where I gave up about halfway through, it had still not yet given a good synopsis of WHAT SSH IS. By that point, the reader should have been told in broad terms the main functionality, the security philosophy, where and how keys are generated, stored, and communicated, the roles that the public and private keys play, what criteria are used for authentication, etc. Finally, this is a book that has not targeted a particular audience. Is it for beginners? Then define your terminology and apply it consistently.

I have to disagree with the previous reviewers; this is a very useful book. In style it reads like a software manual--but don't take me wrong! I mean that the author provides lots of details, exactly the sort of information I was looking for before installing the program. I felt that the author's walkthrough of the "configure" process, which another reviewer criticized as unnecessary, was nicely annotated and gave an excellent feel for the process of installing SSH. I'll admit that a lot of people have seen "configure" do its stuff a thousand times before and can skip this section. For relatively inexperienced sysadmins, however, this kind of detail is reassuring and valuable. The author writes as a person who understands the operation of the programs in detail; sometimes you get little tidbits that seem oddly out of place in a user's guide (such as the discussion of child process forking in Chapter 3, which seemed to have offended one reviewer so badly), but which I thought were clearly explained. I didn't notice any technical errors in the author's explanation of clients, servers, and daemons, and I write code like this for a living. It's a good explanation, probably lots more detail than most people ever wanted to know, and it might be better relegated to an appendix, but there's nothing wrong with it, and I enjoyed it. Lighten up, people; if you don't care about the details, then skip it. (Note to the author: if you ever decide to write a book on client/server programming, call me!) It's true that you can find a lot of the same information in scattered FAQs and mailing list archives on the net.

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