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Help for Network Administrators

Network Troubleshooting Tools

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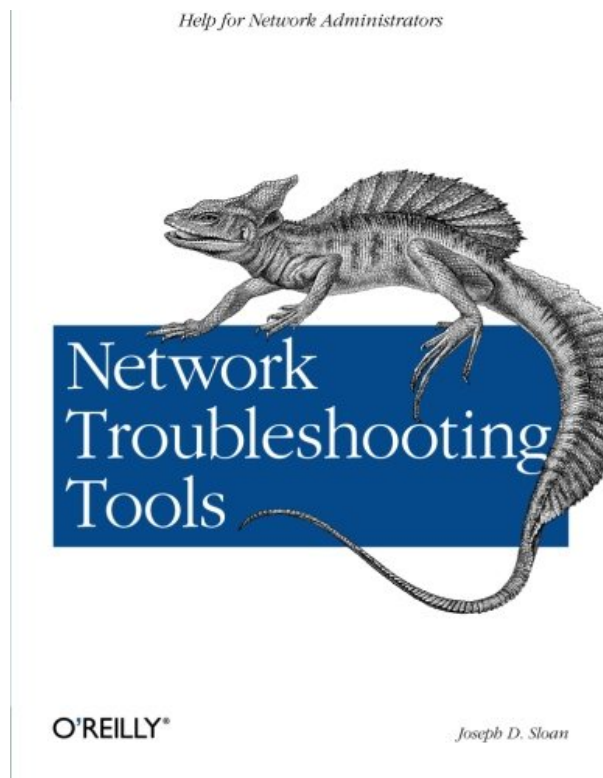
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Amazon.com Review
Hooray for Joseph Sloan, who has written Network Troubleshooting Tools. Sloan's book catalogs--and evaluates, with intelligent and carefully researched commentary--scores of free utilities that have been developed for monitoring, managing, and troubleshooting TCP/IP networks large and small. As such, it's a guide to the tools of the network administration trade. Without the concentrated wisdom that's found here, a network administrator might take years to stumble across all the fantastically useful utilities described in these pages, and waste all kinds of effort in the process. This book has found an excellent niche: a high-level technical book that earns its cover price by applying an author's experience and research to stuff that's freely available online, thus adding to readers' abilities to exploit the free stuff that's out there.

The organization Sloan has chosen is interesting and efficient. Chapters deal with categories of utilities, such as packet sniffers and device mapping. Chapters begin with descriptions of the general purpose of utilities in their category and describe features (and alternate means of providing them) in general terms. Then come sections on utilities, complete with commentaries on the strengths of each and command-line dumps of the utilities in use. As utilities often are best used together, the author does a good job of showing what steps to take when that needs to be done. There's no companion CD-ROM, but the URLs that link to the utilities appear--sorted alphabetically by the programs' names, in an appendix. --David Wall

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Over the years, thousands of tools have been developed for debugging TCP/IP networks. They range from very specialized tools that do one particular task, to generalized suites that do just about everything except replace bad Ethernet cables. Even better, many of them are absolutely free. There's only one problem: who has time to track them all down, sort through them for the best ones for a particular purpose, or figure out how to use them?Network Troubleshooting Tools does the work for you--by describing the best of the freely available tools for debugging and troubleshooting. You can start with a lesser-known version of ping that diagnoses connectivity problems, or take on a much more comprehensive program like MRTG for graphing traffic through network interfaces. There's tkined for mapping and automatically monitoring networks, and Ethereal for capturing packets and debugging low-level problems.This book isn't just about the tools available for troubleshooting common network problems. It also outlines a systematic approach to network troubleshooting: how to document your network so you know how it behaves under normal conditions, and how to think about problems when they arise, so you can solve them more effectively.The topics covered in this book include:

- Understanding your network
- Connectivity testing
- Evaluating the path between two network nodes
- Tools for capturing packets
- Tools for network discovery and mapping
- Tools for working with SNMP
- Performance monitoring
- Testing application layer protocols
- Software sources

If you're involved with network operations, this book will save you time, money, and needless experimentation.

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If you only have the time to read or money to buy one book on TCP/IP troubleshooting, then make it this one! Chapter 5 alone is worth it's weight in gold!

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I have been involved with networks and networking for over 12 years and I am always looking for new ways to make sure the network is running at its best, this book has provided me ideas that I hadn't thought of before and the information is easy enough to understand.

The author packs a serious amount of information in the 325 plus pages. Well documented and well laid out the author begins by showing you how to troubleshoot and what steps you'll have to take in the problem resolution process.

Using NETSTAT, IFCONFIG, IPCONFIG and WINIPCFG, ARP and PING are some of the utilities that are broken down and included in the book. Working with Windows, Windows NT/2000 and UNIX networks is the focus of the book.

Other topics included are working with and the breakdown of cables and cabling, use of TRACEROUTE or TRACERT, analyzing traffics and packets through filtering and SNMP. Checking out the performance of the

network is also an essential item and the author shows what traffic and bandwidth tools you can use.

Finally FTP and TFTP servers and utilities are covered as well as troubleshooting planning. Overall for the network technician of all skill levels should be able to benefit from something in this book - well done.

20 of 24 people found the following review helpful.
Not worth the O'reilly name
By A Customer
This might be a decent reference book if it contained more detailed information. I am a junior in college and was required to read this book from cover to cover and it was extremely boring. Anything the author discussed could easily be learned from help files or a quick glance at the website the product came from. THe author uses the phrase 'this is beyond the scope of this book' just when he begins to talk about something you may not have already known.
In conclusion, this would probably be an excellent book for somebody just starting out using troubleshooting tools, but if you have had more then 6 months experience in the field you already know most of the topics he covers.

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