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NaviSite Network Guru Authors Book on IP Networking

Cisco Press recently published a book by ClearBlue Director of Network Engineering Mark A. Sportack. The book, *IP Addressing Fundamentals*, is a “reader-friendly explanation of how the IP address space works and how it is used.”

The book was designed to provide students and entry-level technical personnel with all of the knowledge they need to understand the Internet's address space and its related sub-topics. Topics covered include IPv6, the binary mathematics of the IPv4 address space, subnetting, supernetting, CIDR and strategies for managing an address space. If that's all a little over your head, don't worry.

“It's a bit of a geeky book, and it certainly won't make the New York Times bestseller list, but that's fine with me,” says Sportack. “My goal is that it become an indispensable reference book for students and entry-level network engineers.”

Sportack has been writing and contributing to technical books about networked computing topics since 1997. His other titles include *IP Routing Fundamentals* and *Networking Essentials Unleashed*. Although he initially started writing simply for the personal challenge, Sportack now gets inspiration from his students at Syracuse University, where he teaches as an adjunct professor in SU's School of Information Studies and Technology.

“I teach a pair of graduate courses, both focused on telecommunications and data networking technologies,” says Sportack. “Despite the advanced nature of these courses, and the talented students that are attracted to them, I found myself continuously astounded at the limits of their working knowledge of important topics such as IP addressing.”

After two years of correcting misperceptions, querying students about where they picked up their misinformation and trying to show them a better way to understand the Internet's address space, Sportack's mission crystallized one night when a student approached him before class with a book.

“You could tell it was a new book, even from a distance,” says Sportack. “That shiny, unmarred cover, the smell of fresh ink, the uncracked spine; it was a thing of beauty! But, the look on his face was one of disappointment and anxiety.” Although the book was written by an industry luminary who had been instrumental in guiding the Internet's growth and development, the book was confusing and disappointing to the student.

“My student was asking my advice on whether he was smart enough to succeed in this industry. Of course he was, I assured him. It was the book and its author that had failed.”

Sportack immediately began making plans for a reader-friendly book that, in his words, “explained the fundamentals of the IP address space from the ground up, unraveled the mysteries of subnetting and CIDR and showed the reader how an IP address becomes an active component in both networks and Internet-works.”

To confirm he was on the right track, Sportack shared some of his rough drafts with his class as supplemental readings. “The result was even more gratifying than I could have hoped,” he says. “The smiles and the thank-you-for-helping-me-understands made the long hours at the keyboard well worth while.”

Sportack is pleased that the book is being published by Cisco Press, a joint partnership between Cisco Systems and Pearson Publishing. "Cisco is very protective of their logo and reputation, so they carefully monitor each book throughout its development cycle to ensure that they don't put their logo on something that would damage their brand image," says Sportack. "I consider having their logo on my work quite an honor."

When he's not teaching or writing, Sportack's responsibilities at ClearBlue include setting technical direction for data networks within our Internet data centers, network planning and design, capacity management and network security. Over the last 20 years, Sportack has worked in virtually every aspect of information technology, from administering networks and servers to managing technology and technical personnel, and directing day-to-day technical operations for an ISP.

Sportack's book is available through Cisco Press (www.ciscopress.com) and at on- and off-line retailers, including Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/1587050676/104-7876097-1607900>). More details about the book, including a Table of Contents and a sample chapter, are available on the Cisco Press web site.

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