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# Programming Scala

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**Programming Scala** 

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To Everette Lawrence Wampler, August 28, 1931 - May 9, 2013.

— Dean

# **Foreword**

If there has been a common theme throughout my career as a programmer, it has been the quest for better abstractions and better tools to support the craft of writing software. Over the years, I have come to value one trait more than any other: composability. If one can write code with good composability, it usually means that other traits we software developers value—such as orthogonality, loose coupling, and high cohesion—are already present. It is all connected.

When I discovered Scala some years ago, the thing that made the biggest impression on me was its composability.

Through some very elegant design choices and simple yet powerful abstractions that were taken from the object-oriented and functional programming worlds, Martin Odersky has managed to create a language with high cohesion and orthogonal, deep abstractions that invites composability in all dimensions of software design. Scala is truly a SCAlable LAnguage that scales with usage, from scripting all the way up to large-scale enterprise applications and middleware.

Scala was born out of academia, but it has grown into a pragmatic and practical language that is very much ready for real-world production use.

What excites me most about this book is that it's so practical. Dean has done a fantastic job, not only by explaining the language through interesting discussions and samples, but also by putting it in the context of the real world. It's written for the programmer who wants to get things done.

I had the pleasure of getting to know Dean some years ago when we were both part of the aspect-oriented programming community. Dean holds a rare mix of deep analytical academic thinking and a pragmatic, get-things-done kind of mentality.

You are about to learn how to write reusable components using mixin and function composition; how to write Reactive applications using Akka; how to make effective use of advanced features in Scala such as macros and higher kinded types; how to utilize Scala's rich, flexible, and expressive syntax to build domain-specific languages; how to

effectively test your Scala code; how to let Scala simplify your Big Data problems; and much, much more.

Enjoy the ride. I sure did.

—Jonas Bonér CTO & cofounder Typesafe, August 2014

# **Preface**

Programming Scala introduces an exciting and powerful language that offers all the benefits of a modern object model, functional programming (FP), and an advanced type system, while leveraging the industry's investment in the Java Virtual Machine (JVM). Packed with code examples, this comprehensive book teaches you how to be productive with Scala quickly, and explains what makes this language ideal for today's scalable, distributed, component-based applications that support concurrency and distribution. You'll also learn how Scala takes advantage of the advanced JVM as a platform for programming languages.

Learn more at http://programming-scala.org or at the book's catalog page (http://bit.ly/programmingScala\_2E).

# Welcome to Programming Scala, Second Edition

*Programming Scala, First Edition* was published five years ago, in the fall of 2009. At the time, it was only the third book dedicated to Scala, and it just missed being the second by a few months. Scala version 2.7.5 was the official release, with version 2.8.0 nearing completion.

A lot has changed since then. At the time of this writing, the Scala version is 2.11.2. Martin Odersky, the creator of Scala, and Jonas Bonér, the creator of Akka, an actorbased concurrency framework, cofounded Typesafe (http://typesafe.com) to promote the language and tools built on it.

There are also a lot more books about Scala. So, do we really need a second edition of this book? Many excellent beginner's guides to Scala are now available. A few advanced books have emerged. The encyclopedic reference remains *Programming in Scala*, Second Edition, by Odersky et al. (Artima Press).

Yet, I believe *Programming Scala*, *Second Edition* remains unique because it is a *comprehensive* guide to the Scala language and ecosystem, a guide for beginners to advanced

users, and it retains the focus on the pragmatic concerns of working professionals. These characteristics made the first edition popular.

Scala is now used by many more organizations than in 2009 and most Java developers have now heard of Scala. Several persistent questions have emerged. Isn't Scala complex? Since Java 8 added significant new features found in Scala, why should I switch to Scala?

I'll tackle these and other, real-world concerns. I have often said that I was *seduced by Scala*, warts and all. I hope you'll feel the same way after reading *Programming Scala*, *Second Edition*.

## How to Read This Book

Because this is a comprehensive book, beginning readers don't need to read the whole thing to be productive with Scala. The first three chapters, *Zero to Sixty: Introducing Scala, Type Less, Do More*, and *Rounding Out the Basics*, provide a quick summary of core language features. The fourth and fifth chapters, *Pattern Matching* and *Implicits*, begin the more in-depth coverage with two fundamental tools that you'll use every day in your Scala code.

If you're new to functional programming (FP), Chapter 6 provides an introduction to this important approach to software development, as implemented in Scala. Next is Chapter 7, which explains Scala's extensions to the venerable for loop and how it provides a succinct syntax for sophisticated, idiomatic functional code.

Then we turn to Scala's support for *object-oriented programming* (OOP) in Chapter 8. I put the FP chapter before the OOP chapters to emphasize the importance of FP in solving many software development problems of our time. It would be easy to use Scala as a "better object-oriented Java," but that would ignore its most powerful tools! Most of this chapter will be conceptually easy to understand, as you learn how Scala defines classes, constructors, etc. that are familiar in Java.

Chapter 9 explores Scala's ability to compose behaviors using *traits*. Java 8 adds a subset of this functionality through its enhancements to interfaces, partially inspired by Scala traits. Even experienced Java programmers will need to understand this material.

The next four chapters, 10 through 13, *The Scala Object System, Part I, The Scala Object System, Part II, The Scala Collections Library*, and *Visibility Rules*, walk through Scala's object model and library types in detail. You should read Chapter 10 carefully, because it contains essential information to master early on. However, Chapter 11 goes into less critical information, the details of properly implementing nontrivial type hierarchies. You might skim that chapter the first time through the book. Chapter 12 discusses the design of the collections and some useful information about using them wisely. Again, skim this chapter if you're new to Scala and come back to it when you're trying to master the details of the collections API. Finally, Chapter 13 explains in detail Scala's

fine-grained extensions to Java's notions of public, protected, and private visibility. Skim this chapter.

Next we move into more advanced territory, starting with Chapter 14 and Chapter 15, which cover Scala's sophisticated type system. I've divided the coverage into two chapters: the first chapter covers concepts that new Scala programmers will need to learn relatively quickly, while the second chapter covers more advanced material that can be deferred until later.

Similarly, Chapter 16, Advanced Functional Programming, covers more advanced mathematical concepts that the average Scala developer won't need initially, such as Monad and Functor from Category Theory.

Chapter 17, Tools for Concurrency, will be useful for developers of large-scale services that require concurrency for resiliency and scalability (most of us, actually). It discusses Akka (http://akka.io), a rich actor-based concurrency model, and library types such as Futures for writing asynchronous code.

Chapter 18, Scala for Big Data, makes the case that a killer app for Scala, and functional programming in general, is *Big Data*, or any data-centric computation.

Chapters 19 and 20, Dynamic Invocation in Scala and Domain-Specific Languages in Scala, go together. They are somewhat advanced topics, discussing tools for construction of rich domain-specific languages.

Chapter 21, Scala Tools and Libraries, discusses tools like IDEs and third-party libraries. If you're new to Scala, read about IDE and editor support, and the section on SBT, the de facto build tool for Scala projects. Use the library lists for reference later on. Chapter 22, Java Interoperability, will be useful for teams that need to interoperate between Iava and Scala code.

I wrote Chapter 23, Application Design, for architects and software leads to share my thoughts about good application design. I believe the traditional model of relatively fat JAR files with complex object graphs is a broken model and needs to go.

Finally, the most advanced topic in the book is covered in Chapter 24, Metaprogramming: Macros and Reflection. You can definitely skip this chapter if you're a beginner.

The book concludes with Appendix A, References for further reading.

### What Isn't Covered?

A focus of the latest 2.11 release is modularizing the library to decompose it into smaller JAR files, so it's easier to exclude unneeded code from deployment in space-sensitive environments (e.g., mobile devices). Some previously deprecated packages and types of the library were also removed. Other parts are deprecated in the 2.11 release, often because they are no longer maintained and there are better, third-party alternatives.

Hence, we won't discuss the following packages that are deprecated in 2.11:

scala.actors (http://bit.ly/1tIem7W)

An actor library. Use Akka actors instead (which we'll discuss in "Robust, Scalable Concurrency with Actors" on page 429).

scala.collection.script (http://bit.ly/13p3wKl)

A library for writing collection observations and update "scripts."

scala.text (http://bit.ly/1s0PvrR)

A "pretty-printing" library.

The following were deprecated in Scala 2.10 and removed in 2.11:

scala.util.automata (http://bit.ly/1DDinM1)

For building deterministic, finite automatons (DFAs) from regular expressions.

scala.util.grammar (http://bit.ly/1tIeunQ)

Part of a parsing library.

scala.util.logging (http://bit.ly/1E8xNKn)

The recommendation is to use one of the many third-party, actively maintained logging libraries for the JVM.

scala.util.regexp (http://bit.ly/10akU3j)

Regular expression parsing. The scala.util.matching (http://bit.ly/13p4Lcm) package with regular expression support has been enhanced instead.

The .NET compiler backend

For a while, the Scala team worked on a compiler backend and library for the .NET runtime environment, but interest in this port has waned, so it was discontinued.

We won't discuss *every* package and type in the library. Here is a partial list of omissions for space and other reasons:

scala.swing (http://bit.ly/13p4LcD)

Wrapper around the Java Swing library. While still maintained, it is rarely used.

scala.util.continuations (http://bit.ly/13p4LJp)

Compiler plug-in for continuation-passing style (CPS) code generation. It is a specialized tool with limited adoption.

The App (http://bit.ly/108gMRJ) and DelayedInit (http://bit.ly/1E8xQpF) traits

This pair of types was meant to conveniently implement main (entry-point) types, the analog of static main methods in Java classes. However, they sometimes cause surprising behavior, so I don't recommend using them. Instead, I'll write main routines in the normal, idiomatic Scala way.

scala.ref (http://bit.ly/1tIeMv5)

Wrappers around Java types such as WeakReference (http://bit.ly/1wO9WfM), which corresponds to java.lang.ref.WeakReference (http://bit.ly/10FvyjC).

scala.runtime (http://bit.ly/13p4RB0)

Types used as part of the library implementation.

scala.util.hashing (http://bit.ly/1zmu0cL) Hashing algorithms.

## Welcome to Programming Scala, First Edition

Programming languages become popular for many reasons. Sometimes, programmers on a given platform prefer a particular language, or one is institutionalized by a vendor. Most Mac OS programmers use Objective-C. Most Windows programmers use C++ and .NET languages. Most embedded-systems developers use C and C++.

Sometimes, popularity derived from technical merit gives way to fashion and fanaticism. C++, Java, and Ruby have been the objects of fanatical devotion among programmers.

Sometimes, a language becomes popular because it fits the needs of its era. Java was initially seen as a perfect fit for browser-based, rich client applications. Smalltalk captured the essence of object-oriented programming as that model of programming entered the mainstream.

Today, concurrency, heterogeneity, always-on services, and ever-shrinking development schedules are driving interest in functional programming. It appears that the dominance of object-oriented programming may be over. Mixing paradigms is becoming popular, even necessary.

We gravitated to Scala from other languages because Scala embodies many of the optimal qualities we want in a general-purpose programming language for the kinds of applications we build today: reliable, high-performance, highly concurrent Internet and enterprise applications.

Scala is a multiparadigm language, supporting both object-oriented and functional programming approaches. Scala is scalable, suitable for everything from short scripts up to large-scale, component-based applications. Scala is sophisticated, incorporating state-of-the-art ideas from the halls of computer science departments worldwide. Yet Scala is practical. Its creator, Martin Odersky, participated in the development of Java for years and understands the needs of professional developers.

Both of us were seduced by Scala, by its concise, elegant, and expressive syntax and by the breadth of tools it put at our disposal. In this book, we strive to demonstrate why all these qualities make Scala a compelling and indispensable programming language.

If you are an experienced developer who wants a fast, thorough introduction to Scala, this book is for you. You may be evaluating Scala as a replacement for or complement to your current languages. Maybe you have already decided to use Scala, and you need to learn its features and how to use it well. Either way, we hope to illuminate this powerful language for you in an accessible way.

We assume that you are well versed in object-oriented programming, but we don't assume that you have prior exposure to functional programming. We assume that you are experienced in one or more other programming languages. We draw parallels to features in Java, C#, Ruby, and other languages. If you know any of these languages, we'll point out similar features in Scala, as well as many features that are new.

Whether you come from an object-oriented or functional programming background, you will see how Scala elegantly combines both paradigms, demonstrating their complementary nature. Based on many examples, you will understand how and when to apply OOP and FP techniques to many different design problems.

In the end, we hope that you too will be seduced by Scala. Even if Scala does not end up becoming your day-to-day language, we hope you will gain insights that you can apply regardless of which language you are using.

## **Conventions Used in This Book**

The following typographical conventions are used in this book:

Italic

Indicates new terms, URLs, email addresses, filenames, and file extensions.

#### Constant width

Used for program listings, as well as within paragraphs to refer to program elements such as variable or function names, databases, data types, environment variables, statements, and keywords.

#### Constant width bold

Shows commands or other text that should be typed literally by the user.

#### Constant width italic

Shows text that should be replaced with user-supplied values or by values determined by context.



This element signifies a tip or suggestion.



This element signifies a general note.



This element indicates a warning or caution.

# **Using Code Examples**

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If you feel your use of code examples falls outside fair use or the permission given above, feel free to contact us at *permissions@oreilly.com*.

## **Getting the Code Examples**

You can download the code examples from GitHub (http://bit.ly/prog-scala-code). Unzip the files to a convenient location. See the README file in the distribution for instructions on building and using the examples. (I'll summarize those instructions in the first chapter.)

Some of the example files can be run as scripts using the scala command. Others must be compiled into class files. Some files contain deliberate errors and won't compile. I have adopted a filenaming convention to indicate each of these cases, although as you learn Scala it should become obvious from the contents of the files, in most cases:

#### \*.scala

The standard Scala file extension is .scala, but that doesn't distinguish between source files that must be compiled using scalac, script files you run directly with scala, or deliberately invalid code files used at times in this book. So, in the example code, any file with the .scala extension must be compiled separately, like you would compile Java code.

\*.sc

Files that end in .sc can be run as scripts on a command line using scala, e.g., scala foo.sc. You can also start scala in the interpreter mode and load any script file in the interpreter using the :load filename command. Note that this naming convention is not a standard convention in the Scala community, but it's used here because the SBT build will ignore these files. Also, this file extension is used by the new IDE worksheet feature we will discuss in the next chapter. So, it's a convenient hack. To be clear, you will normally use .scala as the extension of scripts and code files alike.

#### \*.scalaX and \*.scX

Some example files contain deliberate errors that will cause compilation errors. Rather than break the build for the examples, those files will use the extension .scalaX for code files or .scX for scripts. Again, this is not an industry convention. These files will also have embedded comments to explain what's wrong with them.

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Bill Venners graciously provided the quote on the back cover. The first published book on Scala, Programming in Scala (Artima), that he cowrote with Martin Odersky and Lex Spoon, is indispensable for the Scala developer. Bill has also created the wonderful ScalaTest library.

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