

Extracted from:

Rails Recipes

This PDF file contains pages extracted from Rails Recipes, published by the Pragmatic Bookshelf. For more information or to purchase a paperback or PDF copy, please visit <http://www.pragmaticprogrammer.com>.

Note: This extract contains some colored text (particularly in code listing). This is available only in online versions of the books. The printed versions are black and white. Pagination might vary between the online and printer versions; the content is otherwise identical.

Copyright © 2005 The Pragmatic Programmers, LLC.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior consent of the publisher.

The
Pragmatic
Programmers

Rails Recipes



Chad Fowler

The Facets  of Ruby Series

Rails Recipes

Chad Fowler



Many of the designations used by manufacturers and sellers to distinguish their products are claimed as trademarks. Where those designations appear in this book, and The Pragmatic Programmers, LLC was aware of a trademark claim, the designations have been printed in initial capital letters or in all capitals. The Pragmatic Starter Kit, The Pragmatic Programmer, Pragmatic Programming, Pragmatic Bookshelf and the linking *g* device are trademarks of The Pragmatic Programmers, LLC.

Every precaution was taken in the preparation of this book. However, the publisher assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions, or for damages that may result from the use of information (including program listings) contained herein.

Our Pragmatic courses, workshops, and other products can help you and your team create better software and have more fun. For more information, as well as the latest Pragmatic titles, please visit us at

<http://www.pragmaticprogrammer.com>

Copyright © 2009 The Pragmatic Programmers LLC.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior consent of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN 0-9776166-0-6

Printed on acid-free paper with 85% recycled, 30% post-consumer content.

P3.0 printing, October 2007

Version: 2009-1-8

Contents

Introduction	viii
What Makes a Good Recipe Book?	viii
Who's It For?	ix
Rails Version	ix
Resources	ix
Acknowledgments	x
Tags and Thumb tabs	xii
Part I—User Interface Recipes	1
1. In-Place Form Editing	2
2. Making Your Own JavaScript Helper	8
3. Showing a Live Preview	15
4. Autocomplete a Text Field	18
5. Creating a Drag-and-Drop Sortable List	21
6. Update Multiple Elements with One Ajax Request	27
7. Lightning-Fast JavaScript Autocompletion	32
8. Cheap & Easy Theme Support	37
9. Trim Static Pages with Ajax	38
10. Smart Pluralization	39
11. Debugging Ajax	40
12. Creating a Custom Form Builder	42
13. Make Pretty Graphs	46
Part II—Database Recipes	50
14. Rails without a Database	51
15. Connecting to Multiple Databases	57
16. Integrating with Legacy Databases	65
17. DRY Up Your Database Configuration	68
18. Self-referential Many-to-Many Relationships	70
19. Tagging Your Content	73

20.	Versioning Your Models	80
21.	Converting to Migration-Based Schemas	85
22.	Many-to-Many Relationships with Extra Data	91
23.	Polymorphic Associations—has_many :whatevers	96
24.	Add Behavior to Active Record Associations	101
25.	Dynamically Configure Your Database	105
26.	Use Active Record Outside of Rails	106
27.	Perform Calculations on Your Model Data	107
28.	DRY Up Active Record Code with Scoping	109
29.	Make Dumb Data Smart with composed_of()	110
30.	Safely Use Models in Migrations	114
Part III—Controller Recipes		116
31.	Authenticating Your Users	117
32.	Authorizing Users with Roles	124
33.	Cleaning Up Controllers with Postback Actions	129
34.	Monitor Expiring Sessions	130
35.	Rendering Comma-Separated Values from Your Actions	132
36.	Make Your URLs Meaningful (and Pretty)	134
37.	Stub Out Authentication	139
38.	Convert to Active Record Sessions	140
39.	Write Code That Writes Code	141
40.	Manage a Static Site with Rails	146
Part IV—Testing Recipes		147
41.	Creating Dynamic Test Fixtures	148
42.	Extracting Test Fixtures from Live Data	153
43.	Testing Across Multiple Controllers	158
44.	Write Tests for Your Helpers	164
Part V—Big-Picture Recipes		166
45.	Automating Development with Your Own Generators	167
46.	Continuously Integrate Your Code Base	174
47.	Getting Notified of Unhandled Exceptions	179
48.	Creating Your Own Rake Tasks	183
49.	Dealing with Time Zones	189
50.	Living on the Edge (of Rails Development)	195
51.	Syndicate Your Site with RSS	199
52.	Making Your Own Rails Plugins	207

53.	Secret URLs	211
54.	Quickly Inspect Your Sessions' Contents	215
55.	Sharing Models between Your Applications	217
56.	Generate Documentation for Your Application	219
57.	Processing Uploaded Images	220
58.	Easily Group Lists of Things	224
59.	Keeping Track of Who Did What	225
60.	Distributing Your Application As One Directory Tree	230
61.	Adding Support for Localization	233
62.	The Console Is Your Friend	239
63.	Automatically Save a Draft of a Form	241
64.	Validating Non-Active Record Objects	244
65.	Easy HTML Whitelists	247
66.	Adding Simple Web Services to Your Actions	250
 Part VI—Email Recipes		255
67.	Send Gracefully Degrading Rich-Content Emails	256
68.	Testing Incoming Email	260
69.	Sending Email with Attachments	268
70.	Handling Bounced Email	271
 Part VII—Appendix		278
A Resources		279
A.1	Bibliography	279
A.2	Source Code	279

The Pragmatic Bookshelf

The Pragmatic Bookshelf features books written by developers for developers. The titles continue the well-known Pragmatic Programmer style and continue to garner awards and rave reviews. As development gets more and more difficult, the Pragmatic Programmers will be there with more titles and products to help programmers stay on top of their game.

Visit Us Online

Rails Recipes Home Page

pragmaticprogrammer.com/titles/fr_rr

Source code from this book, errata, and other resources. Come give us feedback, too!

Register for Updates

pragmaticprogrammer.com/updates

Be notified when updates and new books become available.

Join the Community

pragmaticprogrammer.com/community

Read our weblogs, join our online discussions, participate in our mailing list, interact with our wiki, and benefit from the experience of other Pragmatic Programmers.

New and Noteworthy

pragmaticprogrammer.com/news

Check out the latest pragmatic developments in the news.

Buy the Book

If you liked this PDF, perhaps you'd like to have a paper copy of the book. It's available for purchase at our store: pragmaticprogrammer.com/titles/fr_rr.

Contact Us

Phone Orders:	1-800-699-PROG (+1 919 847 3884)
Online Orders:	www.pragmaticprogrammer.com/catalog
Customer Service:	support@pragmaticprogrammer.com
Non-English Versions:	translations@pragmaticprogrammer.com
Pragmatic Teaching:	academic@pragmaticprogrammer.com
Author Proposals:	proposals@pragmaticprogrammer.com