

What you need to use this book

To use this book you need to have a computer that is using Windows 95 or greater. It would be better to have Windows 98 or greater. Access to the Internet and a website or the use of a website.

You need a good web site that has the proper directory setup. Free web site hosts don't have the professional directories for you to use that are necessary for good CGI/Perl programming. Most of the really cheap ones don't either. You get what you pay for. The server that your website is on should be running Unix as its server software. If your web site doesn't have a path to Perl that looks like the below example,

```
#!/usr/bin/perl
```

or

```
#!/usr/local/bin/perl
```

it may not work. If you don't know where your path to Perl is ask your system administrator or Webmaster of your web site to email you the exact path to Perl. If your not sure your path to Perl will work you can email me with a copy of it and ask me if it will work or not. Go to my web site at <http://www.beginnerscgi.com> and click on the 'email us' button. If you have an email filter turned on from your Internet provider please turn it off or I will not be able to email you back.

Make sure that your web site lets you have access to a directory named *CGI-BIN*. If your web site doesn't have this it will not work and you need to get a CGI ready web site.

Next, you will need a good text editor and a good FTP program. The text editor must produce pure text. Don't use notepad. Some say they are pure text editors but they leave marks in your programming every time you press the return key and the FTP program must be high enough quality so it has all the functions to load your CGI/Perl programs to the server. I will explain in other pages what all this means. To get the FTP program go to <http://www.cuteftp.com> and download the shareware program CuteFTP. Next, to get the text editor go to <http://www.crimsoneditor.com> and download the free text editor, Crimson Editor. If you already have two programs you are sure will work correctly you can ignore this advice for now.

Install the two programs by following the instructions that are provided with them then start the programs and play around with them so you are familiar with how they work. Practice using your FTP program by logging into your website and using your passwords.

AOL Users

If you are a AOL user and you experience problems using CuteFTP here are the ways to solve the problem.

1. Make sure that you are fully connected to AOL before you launch CuteFTP. If you are still having problems like your computer crashes every time you try to use CuteFTP go to step two.
2. The reason CuteFTP 32-bit version is not connecting to any sites is because AOL uses a 16-bit winsock (standard on Win 3.x) in older versions. If you use AOL as your dial-up ISP (Internet Service Provider), you will need to either use the 16-bit version of CuteFTP or get a newer version of AOL. (NOTE: Newer versions of AOL do supply a 32-bit winsock.) To get a 16 bit version of CuteFTP go to <ftp://ftp.agoron.com/pub/win31/ftp/16cftp18.exe> and download the file, 16cftp18.exe. It should start automatically.

Next, you need to know how to gain FTP access to your web site. Your system administrator or Webmaster of your web site should have emailed you instructions on how to gain access to your site and given you the passwords. If you don't have this information you must get it and practice entering your site. This is very important so don't ignore this information.

Then you need to know how to use Windows Explorer. You must find this and get familiar with finding files and finding folders. If you don't know how to open Windows Explorer it should be on your start menu. Remember this is Windows Explorer not Internet Explorer. You must know how to use this to save files and locate files.

Different servers need different file extensions for CGI/Perl to work. Some use .cgi or .pl or .cgi? or something else. You need to email you system administrator and ask him/her what file extension you should use. If you don't know what this means just send them these two questions. What file extension do I need to use for files in my CGI-BIN directory? Is it .cgi or .cgi? or .pl?

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