

SYMPHONY

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

**HOW TO
BUILD
QUALITY
FAST!**

**"I just wish this
book had existed
5 years ago"**

Tomáš Votruba

Creator of Rector

KERRIAL NEWHAM

Symfony 6

A Practical Guide

Kerrial Beckett Newham

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for a little pickle

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Preface

For those of you that are more observant, you will have probably figured out the objective of this book is to have a practical guide for developing Symfony projects.

The reason I deemed this book necessary was the frustration due to the lack of practical resources available when I started learning programming with the Symfony framework.

I find the Symfony documentation too theoretical and more importantly, without real world examples of how to build common web application features quickly.

However, let's not be overly negative. If you don't like something, either change it or shut up! I decided to write this book and thus, I hope to change the situation.

My name is Kerrial Newham, nice to meet you curious readers. I've been developing for just under a decade, I taught myself programming via various online and offline resources.

I'm a fastidiously practical chap. I've worked with some of the largest and smallest companies in the world, developing Symfony applications. I'm not part of the official Symfony Team, I am not an expert, but merely sharing my experience of developing with this framework.

So enough with the jibber-jabber, bring on the code.

Acknowledgement

If there is any vague sense of value one derives from this book, it'll be due to the many people I have been fortunate enough to have learnt from over an extended period of time. We all stand on the shoulders of giants.

Shan Newham: For editing support and providing insight and knowledge of the English language and for your valued input in discussions.

Sheyla Newham: For your unequivocal positivity and support from the outset of this endeavour and for being the best, most patient, unwilling duck in the world.

Tomas Votruba: For his friendship and valuable input in both the beginning and end phases of the book, and for being an unbearably positive and intensely inspirational person to be around.

I'd like to also thank all my other friends for their patience for putting up with many of our conversations being dominated by the topic of this book.

Introduction

This book has been written to reflect the real world of a development process that I have experienced over the years. but, keep in mind there is no objectively right way of doing this, the world is your code oyster and if it works for you, who cares. Alas, that being said, I have attempted to add practicality, quality, and simplicity within these pages.

I'm not going to focus on technical theory or how Symfony internals work, to find this information check the documentation and other resources. As much as possible, I'm going to show you how to do 'stuff' that I find practically useful, hopefully you will too.

I find in the world of programming, more often than not, that there is a certain level of intellectual snobbery and the gate keepers of knowledge get rather angry at questions not thought through.

In my opinion there is no such thing as a bad question. Even if one asks a stupid question (I have asked many stupid questions), if this allows one to progress their knowledge by the realisation of what is a good question, then it's worth it. The road to mastery is pathed with failure, bad questions and mistakes.

However, intellectual snobbery and gate keeping creates an atmosphere of uncondusive for learning, cooperation and general curiosity.

Therefore, I'm a big advocate of the Feynman Technique of learning. The Feynman Technique often involves explaining complex topics as if you were teaching them to a child, using simple language and clear explanations.

Here are the steps in the technique:

1. Concept: Choose a concept you want to learn.
2. Teach It to a Child: Pretend you are teaching the chosen topic to a child. Use simple language and clear explanations. This step helps you break down complex ideas into easily digestible parts.
3. Identify Gaps: As you explain the topic in simple terms, you may encounter areas where your understanding is not as clear as you thought. Take note of these gaps in your knowledge.
4. Simplify: Simplify, repeat step two & three and create analogies.

Try not to hide your lack of knowledge no matter how 'advanced' you become. Celebrate and credit others who coming up with better, more effective solutions than your own. Be the fool and ask the dumb questions and you might see behind the facade of complexity.

Prerequisites

Ideally, if you're new to Symfony, you'll probably get the most out of this book. That being said, seasoned developers could also find this book useful as a resource to gain inspiration, explore different approaches, and, hopefully, boost creativity, productivity, and quality.

The minimum amount of knowledge assumed in this book is that you know OOP (Object-oriented programming) basics, in this case, PHP syntax and simple terminal commands.

How to use this book

Most programming books follow the development of a project, which is all good and grand. However, we will be doing it a little differently. This book is a collection of features, which is what any project consists of.

Use this book like a cheat sheet, e.g. you want to know how to send emails. Go to “Email Service Feature” in the Features section and find out quickly how it can be done, remembering that there are many, many approaches to building any feature, but even if you use this book as inspiration to come up with your own, better solutions, then great!



If you see something wrapped in double angle brackets, yours should replace this value; this is called a placeholder for example: “<<replace with your value>>” or “<>”



In every single relevant code snippet, you will see a comment at the top, this will tell you the relative path (from the project root directory) of the snippet file.



You may notice in the code snippets I have left out the use statements, this was difficult decision, as I know how useful that can be sometimes, but unfortunately, it would just clutter the book too much.

What is Symfony?

Symfony is an open-source PHP web application framework that follows the MVC(Model-View-Controller) architectural pattern.

It provides a set of reusable components and libraries that help developers build robust and scalable web applications.

Basically, that's a fancy way of saying we can build websites and console commands using the framework.

Symfony was initially released in 2005 and has since gained significant popularity in the PHP community. It aims to simplify the development process by promoting reusable code, maintainability, and scalability.

The Basics

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Coding Standards

So before we start on this saga. We must establish some coding conventions that we will be following. This may seem obvious to some of you, but not to others.

The following tools will be used for ensuring coding standards and quality:

- [Rector](#)¹
- [Easy Coding Standard](#)²
- [Php stan](#)³

Rector

from the docs “Rector instantly upgrades and refactors the PHP code of your application. It can help you in 2 major areas: Instant Upgrades and Automated Refactoring” we will be using it for automated refactoring, meaning that it’ll fix our code automatically.

- `run composer require rector/rector --dev`
- `run vendor/bin/rector init`

This should create a configuration file in the root directory called “rector.php” let’s update it to look something like this:

¹<https://github.com/rectorphp/rector>

²<https://github.com/symplify/easy-coding-standard>

³<https://github.com/phpstan/phpstan>

```
1  <?php
2
3  // ./rector.php
4
5  declare(strict_types=1);
6
7  return static function (ContainerConfigurator $containerConfigurator): void {
8
9      $parameters = $containerConfigurator->parameters();
10     $parameters->set(Option::AUTO_IMPORT_NAMES, true);
11     $parameters->set(Option::PHPSTAN_FOR_RECTOR_PATH, __DIR__ . './phpstan.neon');
12
13     $parameters->set(Option::PATHS, [
14         __DIR__ . '/src',
15         __DIR__ . '/config',
16         __DIR__ . '/tests'
17     ]);
18
19     $containerConfigurator->import(SetList::CODE_QUALITY);
20     $containerConfigurator->import(SetList::TYPE_DECLARATION);
21     $containerConfigurator->import(SymfonySetList::SYMFONY_60);
22     $containerConfigurator->import(SetList::DEAD_CODE);
23
24 };
```

“This is all self-explanatory”, probably the most common phrase amongst bad communicators. So let’s break this down quickly.

- `Option::AUTO_IMPORT_NAMES` will auto import the class instead of using the full qualified class name.
- `Option::PHPSTAN_FOR_RECTOR_PATH` will enable phpstan inside Rector to determine types more accurately.
- `Option::PATHS` notice we are checking the `/src`, `/config` and `/tests`, this will run rector in those directories.

I strongly recommend you run each rule or rule set individually and [commit](https://www.atlassian.com/git/tutorials/saving-changes/git-commit)⁴ it. It makes reverting bad changes back much quicker and less of a headache.

Now, let’s update the `./composer.json`

⁴<https://www.atlassian.com/git/tutorials/saving-changes/git-commit>

```

1 {
2     "scripts": {
3         "rector-dry": "vendor/bin/rector p --dry-run --ansi",
4         "rector": "vendor/bin/rector p --ansi"
5     }
6 }

```

Now we can run `composer rector-dry` or `composer rector` instead of writing out the whole command, the `--ansi` flag will enable ANSI color output in the terminal.

let's check it's working, run `composer rector-dry`

Easy Coding Standard

Easy Coding Standard fixes how our code looks. let's install it:

run `composer require symplify/easy-coding-standard --dev`

create a file called `./esc.php` in the root directory, now let's update it:

```

1  <?php
2
3  // ./esc.php
4
5  declare(strict_types=1);
6
7  return static function (ECSCConfig $containerConfigurator) {
8      $parameters = $containerConfigurator->parameters();
9      $parameters->set(Option::PATHS, [
10         __DIR__ . '/src',
11         __DIR__ . '/config',
12         __DIR__ . '/tests',
13     ]);
14
15     $containerConfigurator->sets([SetList::COMMON, SetList::PSR_12, SetList::SYMP\
16 Y]);
17
18     $ruleConfigurations = [
19         [
20             IncrementStyleFixer::class,
21             ['style' => 'post'],
22         ],
23         [
24             CastSpacesFixer::class,

```

```
25     ['space' => 'none'],
26 ],
27 [
28     YodaStyleFixer::class,
29     [
30         'equal' => false,
31         'identical' => false,
32         'less_and_greater' => false,
33     ],
34 ],
35 [
36     ConcatSpaceFixer::class,
37     ['spacing' => 'one'],
38 ],
39 [
40     CastSpacesFixer::class,
41     ['space' => 'none'],
42 ],
43 [
44     OrderedImportsFixer::class,
45     ['imports_order' => ['class', 'function', 'const']],
46 ],
47 [
48     NoSuperfluousPhpdocTagsFixer::class,
49     [
50         'remove_inheritdoc' => false,
51         'allow_mixed' => true,
52         'allow_unused_params' => false,
53     ],
54 ],
55 [
56     DeclareEqualNormalizeFixer::class,
57     ['space' => 'single'],
58 ],
59 [
60     BlankLineBeforeStatementFixer::class,
61     ['statements' => ['continue', 'declare', 'return', 'throw', 'try']],
62 ],
63 [
64     BinaryOperatorSpacesFixer::class,
65     ['operators' => ['&' => 'align']],
66 ],
67 ];
```

```

68
69     array_map(static fn($parameters) => $containerConfigurator->ruleWithConfiguratio\
70 n(...$parameters), $ruleConfigurations);
71 };

```

I think you can figure out that this will give your code a specific style, I won't explain everything in to configuration, but you can adapt it to what you like. Now, let's update the `./composer.json`

```

1  {
2    "scripts": {
3      "check-cs": "vendor/bin/ecs check --ansi",
4      "fix-cs": "vendor/bin/ecs check --fix --ansi"
5    }
6  }

```

Let's check it's working, run `composer check-cs`

Phpstan

PHPStan focuses on finding errors in your code without actually running it. you run it, it gives you a list of problem you have to fix manually.

run `composer require phpstan/phpstan --dev`

create a new configuration file called `phpstan.neon` (yes, neon. personally I find this a strange choice, but I'm sure there is good reason for it... I hope)

```

1  # ./phpstan.php
2  parameters:
3    level: 8
4    paths:
5      - ./src
6      - ./config
7      - ./tests

```

Now, let's update the `./composer.json`

```

1    "scripts": {
2      "phpstan": "php -d memory_limit=256M vendor/bin/phpstan analyze"
3    }
4  }

```

Let's check it's working, run `composer phpstan`

Entities

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Enums

What is an enum?

short for “enumeration” is a data type that represents a set of predefined, named values.

Introduced in version 8.1, enums are very useful. Here is how we can use them in an entity:

```
1  <?php
2
3  // ./src/Entity/Product.php
4
5  namespace App\Entity;
6
7  #[ORM\Entity(repositoryClass: ProductRepository::class)]
8  class Product
9  {
10     #[ORM\Id]
11     #[ORM\GeneratedValue(strategy: 'CUSTOM')]
12     #[ORM\Column(type: 'uuid', unique: true)]
13     #[ORM\CustomIdGenerator(UuidGenerator::class)]
14     private Uuid $id;
15
16     #[ORM\Column(type: 'string', length: 255, enumType: ProductTypeEnum::class)]
17     private ProductTypeEnum $productType;
18
19     public function __construct()
20     {
21         $this->createdAt = new DateTimeImmutable();
22     }
23
24     public function getId(): null|Uuid
25     {
26         return $this->id;
27     }
28
29     public function getProductType(): ProductTypeEnum
30     {
```



```

31         return $this->productType;
32     }
33
34     public function setProductType(ProductTypeEnum $productType): static
35     {
36         $this->productType = $productType;
37
38         return $this;
39     }
40
41 }

```

and then the ProductTypeEnum file:

```

1  <?php
2
3  // ./src/Enum/ProductTypeEnum.php
4
5  namespace App\Enum;
6
7  enum ProductTypeEnum : string
8  {
9      case AUTOMOTIVE = 'AUTOMOTIVE';
10     case ELECTRONICS = 'ELECTRONICS';
11     case CLOTHING = 'CLOTHING';
12     case FURNITURE = 'FURNITURE';
13     case BEAUTY = 'BEAUTY';
14 }

```

Now when we access the \$productType in a twig template like so `{{ product.productType }}` it'll return an object of ProductTypeEnum type. you can access the name or value like so respectively. `{{ product.productType.name }}` and `{{ product.productType.value }}`.

Routing

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Controllers

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Forms

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Factories

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Repositories

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Configuration Format

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Data Transfer Objects

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Messenger

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Scheduler (cron)

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Event Listeners & Subscribers

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Testing

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Creating an API

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Console Commands

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Doctrine

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ArrayCollections

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First & Last

These are both pretty obvious, and return the first or last element respectively. Annoyingly, both these methods returns either an object or false, in my option would be better if it was an object or null, but oh well.

```
1  <?php
2
3  // ./src/Entity/Product.php
4
5  public function getFirstReview() : Review|false
6  {
7      $firstReview = $this->getReviews()->first();
8  }
```



This will also set the internal iterator to the first element.

```
1  <?php
2
3  // ./src/Entity/Product.php
4
5      public function getLastReview() : Review|false
6      {
7          $lastReview = $this->getReviews()->last();
8      }
```



This will also set the internal iterator to the last element.

Just a note on the collection order, `first()` or `last()` returns the element based on the order of the collection, which by default is insertion order.

FindFirst

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ForAll

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Filter

Want to filter out elements based on some criteria?

Let's say we want to get only the 5-star reviews of a product, inside the `Product` entity add a method like this:

```
1  <?php
2
3  // ./src/Entity/Product.php
4      public function getFiveStarReviews() : ArrayCollection
5      {
6          return $this->getReviews()->filter(function (Review $review) : bool
7          {
8              return $review->getRating() === 5;
9          });
10     }
```

and to use this method the twig template:

```
1  {% block body %}
2  <div>
3      {% for review in product.fiveStarReviews %}
4          <div>
5              some beautiful product review..
6          </div>
7      {% endfor %}
8  </div>
9  {% endblock %}
```

Holy sh*t, That's cool!

matching (criteria)

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exists

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Reduce

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Association Mapping

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One-To-One (Unidirectional):

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One-To-One (Self-referencing):

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One-To-Many (Bidirectional):

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One-To-Many (Self-referencing):

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Many-To-Many (Unidirectional):

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Many-To-Many (Bidirectional):

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Many-To-Many (unidirectional Self-referencing):

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Many-To-Many (bidirectional Self-referencing):

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Association Patterns

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Collection Default Pattern

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Many With More Pattern

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QueryBuilder

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Reusable queries

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Uuid

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In

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Between

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MemberOf

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andHaving

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Features

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Init Feature

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Docker-ising Feature

What is Docker?

Docker is a platform for developing, shipping, and running applications in isolated containers, making it easier to deploy and manage software across different environments.

Basically, you have a container to run PHP, a container to run your database, a container to compile your Javascript, etc. You can add as many containers as you like.

If we don't use docker, I'd have to explain how to install every single service we need like database, web server on each operating system, whereas if we use docker, it'll work on all operating systems, making it a much better development environment.



Before we get into dockerising our application, I'd strongly recommend installing [Docker Desktop](#)¹. My suggestion is so strong I'm begging you, it'll make your life much easier, as containers can feel a bit invisible if you can only access them via the command line.

Symfony comes with a docker setup but in my opinion it's pretty much useless, I think they must be aware of this because it's even suggested in the documentation to use the docker set up we will be using.

Go to: <https://github.com/dunglas/symfony-docker/>

Clone the repo and copy the following files and directories to your projects root directory (the folder that contains your project):

- docker-compose.override.yml

¹<https://www.docker.com/products/docker-desktop/>

- `docker-compose.prod.yml`
- `docker-compose.yml`
- `.dockerignore`
- `Dockerfile`
- `docker/`

run `composer config --json extra.symfony.docker 'true'` to enable the Docker support of Symfony Flex. Now when ever you install supported package the docker configuration files will be updated automatically. Check out the [Support for Extra Services](#)²

If you look in the `./docker-compose.yml` file, you'll notice, that the database configuration is missing, this is because it's not included by default.

If you need a database, install doctrine if you don't already have it installed, run `composer require symfony/orm-pack`

Next run `rm symfony.lock` then `composer symfony:sync-recipes --force --verbose`



There is a slight problem here, because Symfony flex doesn't support PHP config files, you might get the last command above generating a bunch of YAML files in your config directory. Not much we can do about this but copy the respective and relevant data from the yaml to PHP files and hope that Symfony pull their finger out and introduce PHP config support. Crazy, I know! a PHP framework that uses PHP configs! But, I'm sure there is good reason it's not yet supported.

Now go to your `./.env.local` file and update the database URL:

```
1 DATABASE_URL="postgresql://app:!ChangeMe!@database:5432/app?serverVersion=13&charset\
2 =utf8"
```

Okie dokie, now build the docker containers `docker compose build --no-cache` and then finally start the application with `docker compose up -d`

Open the Docker Desktop application and you should see under the “Containers” section your application, go to the PHP container, probably called “php-1” or something like this.

Go to the PHP containers “logs” and you should see an output “ready to handle connections” if you do then we are ready to tango.

Go to the PHP containers “terminal” and run `bin/console d:s:u -f` this will update your database schema. If you make any changes to your Entity directory, you will have to run this command to update your database.

Now finally go to `https://localhost/` in your browser and you should see a Symfony welcome page.

If you need to stop the application run `docker compose down`

²<https://github.com/dunglas/symfony-docker/blob/main/docs/extra-services.md>

UserInterface Feature

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