NEWS · FEBRUARY 20, 2026

Book Review: Apps and Services with .NET 10 (Third Edition) by Mark J. Price

By Dr. Holger Flick

Mark J. Price has done it again. After his excellent *C# 14 and .NET 10 – Modern Cross-Platform Development Fundamentals*, I could hardly wait for this third edition of *Apps and Services with .NET 10* to be released — and it absolutely does not disappoint. This is the third book in Mark's four-volume .NET 10 learning quartet, and it is exactly where the series hits its stride: broad in scope, practical in approach, and packed with real-world examples for every single topic it covers.

If you are a .NET developer looking to move beyond the fundamentals and into the technologies that actually power modern applications and services, this book belongs on your desk.

What the Book Covers

The book is organized into four major areas, which together paint a remarkably complete picture of the modern .NET ecosystem.

App User Interface Technologies

The first three content chapters cover building graphical user interfaces across all major platforms:

- **Chapter 2 – .NET MAUI** introduces cross-platform mobile development for Android and iOS, covering XAML, data binding, navigation, and shared resources.
- **Chapter 3 – Avalonia** is a highlight for desktop developers. Avalonia is the framework behind JetBrains Rider and is the go-to choice for cross-platform desktop apps that also need to run on Linux. The coverage of layouts, styling, and the MVVM pattern is thorough and practical.
- **Chapter 4 – Blazor** covers building web UI components using C# and .NET, including server-side rendering and interactive components, with hands-on walkthroughs building real UI elements step by step.

Specialized Libraries

Two chapters act as practical cookbooks for commonly needed functionality:

- **Chapter 5** covers popular third-party libraries including Humanizer (text and number formatting), ImageSharp (image manipulation), Serilog (structured logging), AutoMapper (object mapping), FluentAssertions (unit testing), FluentValidation (data validation), and QuestPDF (PDF generation). Every library gets a working code example.
- **Chapter 6** dives deep into dates, times, time zones, globalization, and localization — including the excellent third-party Noda Time library. This is a topic that trips up many developers, and Mark treats it with the depth it deserves.

Data Access

- **Chapter 7** covers relational data management with SQL, including ADO.NET for low-level, high-performance access, Dapper for developer-friendly query mapping, and a solid foundation in T-SQL with SQL Server.
- **Chapter 8** goes deeper with Entity Framework Core, covering model configuration using conventions, annotations, and the Fluent API, as well as entity tracking strategies and all three inheritance mapping strategies (TPH, TPT, and TPC).

Service Technologies

This is where the book truly shines for modern backend developers:

- **Chapter 9** is a timely addition: building LLM-based chat services using Microsoft's Agent Framework and OpenAI integration, building a **Model Context Protocol (MCP) server**, and running local models with Ollama and LM Studio. This chapter alone makes the third edition worth upgrading to.
- **Chapter 10** covers ASP.NET Core Minimal API web services, including OpenAPI/Scalar documentation, CORS, rate limiting, JWT authentication, and native AOT publishing for smaller, faster deployments.
- **Chapter 11** tackles service architecture concerns: in-memory and distributed caching, hybrid caching, HTTP response caching, fault tolerance with Polly (retry and circuit breaker patterns), message queuing with RabbitMQ, and long-running background services using both worker services and Hangfire.
- **Chapter 12** introduces SignalR for real-time broadcast communication — ideal for dashboards, notifications, and live data feeds.
- **Chapter 13** covers GraphQL using the ChilliCream platform (Hot Chocolate, Nitro, Strawberry Shake), including paging, filtering, sorting, mutations, and subscriptions.
- **Chapter 14** rounds things out with gRPC microservices: `.proto` file contracts, protobuf serialization, native AOT publishing, interceptors, fault handling, and gRPC JSON transcoding for browser compatibility.

What Makes This Book Stand Out

Every Topic Gets an Example

This is not a reference manual. Every concept is accompanied by working, step-by-step code. You build real things — not toy snippets, but actual components you would recognize from production applications. That approach, combined with Mark's philosophy of learning by doing, makes even complex topics feel approachable.

Excellent Scope and Sequencing

The book is remarkably well-scoped. It covers a huge amount of ground without feeling scattered. The four-part structure (UI, Libraries, Data, Services) gives it a logical flow, and the consistent use of the Northwind sample database across chapters creates a sense of continuity.

Up to Date with What Actually Matters in 2026

The inclusion of LLM integration, MCP servers, and local AI model runners (Ollama, LM Studio) puts this book firmly in the present. Too many .NET books still ignore AI-adjacent tooling entirely. Mark has integrated it naturally and practically.

Part of a Thoughtfully Designed Series

This book sits at the perfect point in the four-volume quartet. The fundamentals book (*C# 14 and .NET 10*) gets you up to speed. The second book (*Real-World Web Development with .NET 10*) covers mature MVC and controller-based API patterns. This third book expands the horizon significantly. If you have been following the series, this is the most exciting volume yet.

Who Should Read This Book

- .NET developers who have a solid grasp of C# and want to move into modern app and service development
- Developers coming from desktop backgrounds (WPF, WinForms, Delphi) who want to understand the full modern .NET landscape
- Backend developers looking to add GraphQL, gRPC, SignalR, and AI service integration to their skillset
- Anyone who read Mark's fundamentals book and wants to continue the journey

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Verdict

Apps and Services with .NET 10 is an exceptional book. The depth, breadth, and consistent hands-on approach make it one of the most practically useful .NET books available today. The third edition is particularly timely with its LLM and MCP coverage. I can hardly recommend it highly enough — and I will be keeping it close at hand as a reference long after I've worked through it cover to cover.

Author: Mark J. Price **Publisher:** Packt Publishing **Edition:** Third Edition (February 2026) **ISBN:** 978-1835462201 **Rating: P**

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