

Bird's Eye View of Perl

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About us

- **Perl training since 1995**
- **Perl consulting**
- **Best selling books on Perl**
 - *Learning Perl*
 - *Intermediate Perl*
 - *Mastering Perl*

What is Perl?

- **High-level computer language**
- **Created by Larry Wall**
- **Dynamic language**
- **Open source**
- **Make the easy things easy and the hard things possible**

Dynamic Languages

- **High level concepts**
- **Program information, not computers**
- **Don't know things ahead of time**
- **Flexible solutions for hard problems**

Open Source

- **Every one gets the source**
- **Not treated as intellectual property**
- **Anyone can fix a defect**
- **Anyone can analyze the source**

Coverity Scan

- **Dept. of Homeland Security**
 - **Identify and Remediate Existing Vulnerabilities**
 - **Develop Systems with Fewer Vulnerabilities and Assess Emerging Technologies for Vulnerabilities**
- **“Of the LAMP stack, Perl had the best defect density”**

Freely available

- **No secret developer networks**
- **No delayed public releases**
- **Provided gratis**
- **Larry Wall holds the copyright**
 - **Keep free, available, useful**

Nothing to buy

- **Code is normal text files**
- **No tools to buy**
- **Free tools available**
- **No support contracts necessary**

History of Perl

- **Created by Larry Wall**
- **Perl 1.0 released in 1987**
 - **system administration**
- **Perl 5.0 released in 1994**
 - **Web, retail, science**
- **CPAN created in 1995**

Where is Perl?

● **Science**

● **Education**

● **Finance**

● **Retail**

● **Government**

● **IT**

ADP Rockwell Automation
America Online Arco **Boeing**
Cisco Systems **Cray Research**
Dow Chemical Genentech **HP**
Intel **Lehman Bros.**
Morgan Stanley Motorola **NASA**
Nokia **Qualcomm** Silicon Graphics
State Farm Insurance Texaco
Union Bank of Switzerland **US Army**
State of New York **World Bank**

Why not use Perl?

- **Air traffic control, nuclear reactors, medical equipment**
- **Real-time operating systems**
- **Because someone told you to**
- **It worked for something else**

Why use Perl?

- **Extremely easy text processing**
- **Report generation**
- **“Glue” language, tool chains**
- **Application prototyping**
- **Application development**

**“Unlike lots of other
freely available
software, Perl is
useful, and it works.”**

**“Electric metre”,
The Economist, July 1, 1995**

Cross-Platform

- **Platform-independent**
- **Runs on over most platforms**
- **Windows, Linux, Unix, Mac**

One Implementation

- **Works on most platforms**
- **Maintained by perl5-porters**
- **Core group of about 30 people**
- **ActiveState handles Windows support**
- **Rigorously tested**

Rapid Prototyping

- **Go from coding to running quickly**
- **Make proof-of-concept**
- **Quickly implement changes**
- **Often good enough for production**

Perl Mongers

- **Conferences & Hackathons**
- **Key community members meet often**
- **Although distributed, a lot of people know each other personally**

CPAN

- **C**omprehensive **P**erl **A**rchive **N**etwork
- Perl's killer feature
- Started in 1995
- Over 10,000 modules
- Module maintenance process

Issue tracking

- <http://rt.cpan.org>
- RT from Best Practical
- Perl module issue tracker
- Automatically configured for all modules

Current state

- **In active development**
- **Maintenance track**
- **Experimental track**
- **Currently at Perl 5.8.8**
- **Perl 5.10 around the corner**

Future plans

- **Perl 6 in development**
- **A language for the next 20 years**
- **Completely new language**
- **Perl 5 is not disappearing**

CPAN Testers

- <http://testers.cpan.org>
- Every CPAN upload automatically tested
- Different Perl versions, platforms
- Hundreds of tests each day

Kwalitee

- <http://cpants.perl.org>
- Distribution quality
- Dependency tracking
- Friendly competitiveness

Conclusion

- **Perl is useful**
- **It's widely used**
- **It's actively supported**
- **It has a committed community**
- **Perl might be right for the problem**