

perl Rulz!

- Small “p”
- Not an acronym originally
- Lately: “practical extraction & report language”

Brief History

- Developed by Larry Wall in 1987
- Mixes: C, sh, AWK, sed
- Glue language
- Admin & hacker language

Linux Needs perl

- Distros historically highly dependent
- Trend towards python
- yum remove perl = ?

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- Remove 1 package (+518 dependents)
- On a 2000 package Fedora 17 system
- 25% depend on perl

My Obsession

- My epiphany: 1992
- Fun with stats:
- I've written 768 perls on my system
- 79,000+ lines
- Use at least 100 regularly

Tangent: OO

- Yes, Gracie, you don't need OO
- No OO == No global warming
- perl inherently procedural
- OO tacked on (well)
- ->
- Use OO when it helps, not hinders

perl Strengths

- C UNIX function affinity
- Flat namespace
- Just type the function name
- Like PHP
- No remembering `Java.Swing.Text.Insert`
- Modules / CPAN exception
 - `$DBI->connect()`

Regex

- Regex: perl does it best
- So good everybody uses perl's regex
- Syntax is so clean, easy
- /it's a search/
- Php would require:
 - `preg_match('/it'. "" .'s a search/', $s)`
 - Nested quoting hell

Regex

- `($name1,$name2)=$in=~/(\\w+) hit (\\w+)/`
 - `$in='Yesterday Adam hit Brad';`
- `($page)=$in=~m#(\\d+) / \\d+#`
 - `$in='Page 33 / 100'`
- Magic voodoo: negative width look-behinds
- Extends regex beyond DFA

CPAN

- Pre-existing user-contributed modules
- For everything!
- Beats PHP Pear, Ruby Gems, etc
- rpms vs. CPAN
- Turn off recursion!

Terse

- perl: terse, compact, expressive
- A little code does a lot of work
- Default variables & args: \$_
 - // et al assumes \$_
 - shift assumes @_

Clean, Creative Syntax

- Multi-variable returns:
 - sub Fn { return 'a','b','c' }
 - (\$x,\$y,\$z)=&Fn;
- foreach \$x (@myarray) { ++\$x }
- @myarray=(1,2,3)
- print \$myarray[0]
- @newarray=grep /e/,@myarray

> 1 Way

- Famous or infamous?
- Usually 3+ ways to do one thing
 - `if ($x==0) { ... }`
 - `if (!$x) { ... }`
 - `$x or ...`
 - `... if !$x`
 - `... unless $x`

Downsides

- Confusing multi-dimensional array syntax
- Must think pointers (“references”)
- Syntax madness:
 - `%myhash=%{$db->selectrow_hashref()}`
- Head banging time
- Then it “clicks”
- PHP better