PERL - INTRODUCTION

Perl is a general-purpose programming language originally developed for text manipulation and now used for a wide range of tasks including system administration, web development, network programming, GUI development, and more.

What is Perl?

- Perl is a stable, cross platform programming language.

- Though Perl is not officially an acronym but few people used it as **Practical Extraction and Report Language**.

- It is used for mission critical projects in the public and private sectors.

- Perl is an *Open Source* software, licensed under its *Artistic License*, or the *GNU General Public License GPL*.

- Perl was created by Larry Wall.

- Perl 1.0 was released to usenet's alt.comp.sources in 1987

- At the time of writing this tutorial, the latest version of perl is 5.16.2

- Perl is listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

PC Magazine announced Perl as the finalist for its 1998 Technical Excellence Award in the Development Tool category.

Perl Features

- Perl takes the best features from other languages, such as C, awk, sed, sh, and BASIC, among others.

- Perls database integration interface DBI supports third-party databases including Oracle, Sybase, Postgres, MySQL and others.

- Perl works with HTML, XML, and other mark-up languages.

- Perl supports Unicode.

- Perl is Y2K compliant.

- Perl supports both procedural and object-oriented programming.

- Perl interfaces with external C/C++ libraries through XS or SWIG.

- Perl is extensible. There are over 20,000 third party modules available from the Comprehensive Perl Archive Network (CPAN).

- The Perl interpreter can be embedded into other systems.

Perl and the Web

- Perl used to be the most popular web programming language due to its text manipulation capabilities and rapid development cycle.

- Perl is widely known as " the duct-tape of the Internet".

- Perl can handle encrypted Web data, including e-commerce transactions.

- Perl can be embedded into web servers to speed up processing by as much as 2000%.

- Perl's mod_perl allows the Apache web server to embed a Perl interpreter.

- Perl's [DBI](#) package makes web-database integration easy.

Perl is Interpreted

Perl is an interpreted language, which means that your code can be run as is, without a compilation stage that creates a non portable executable program.

Traditional compilers convert programs into machine language. When you run a Perl program, it's first compiled into a byte code, which is then converted $as the program runs$ into machine instructions. So it is not quite the same as shells, or Tcl, which are **strictly** interpreted without an intermediate representation.

It is also not like most versions of C or C++, which are compiled directly into a machine dependent format. It is somewhere in between, along with *Python* and *awk* and Emacs .elc files.

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