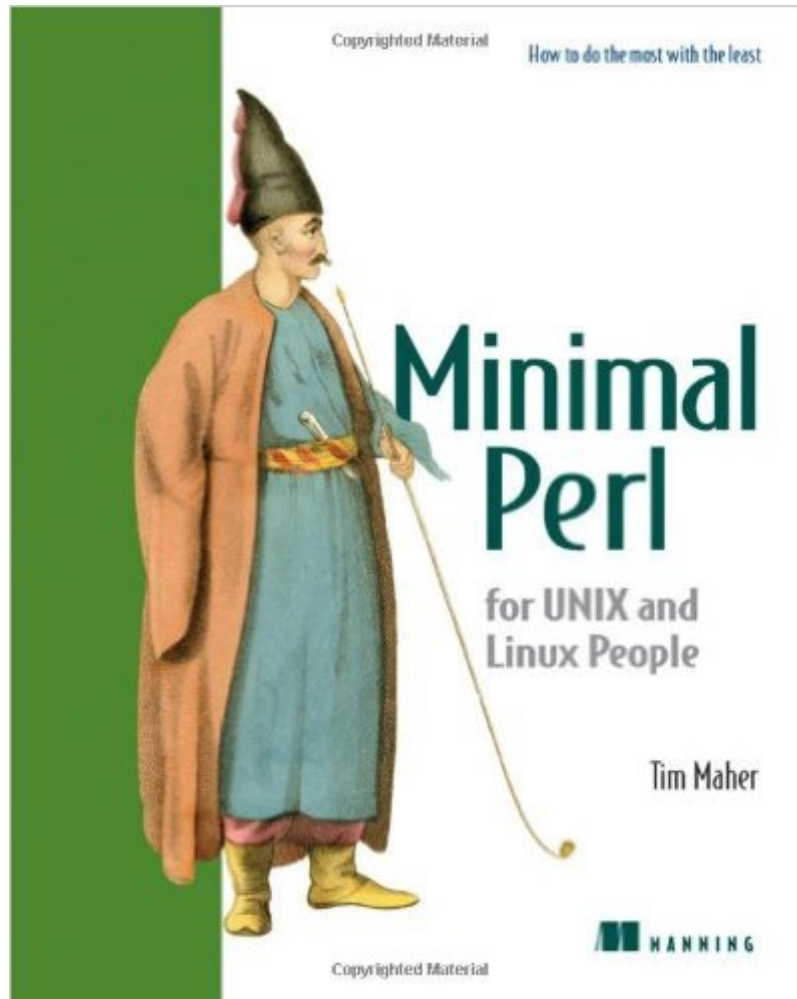# Minimal Perl: For Unix And Linux People

Synopsis

No-nonsense and practical, yet with wit and charm. A joy to read."" -Dan Sanderson, Software Developer, .com ""Shows style, not just facts-valuable."" -Brian Downs, former Training Director, Lucent Technologies ""Brilliant, never tedious-highly recommended!"" -Jon Allen, Maintainer of perldoc.perl.org ""You could have chosen no better primer than this book."" -Damian Conway, from the Foreword Perl is a complex language that can be difficult to master. Perl advocates boast that ""There's More Than One Way To Do It,"" but do you really want to learn several ways of saying the same thing to a computer? To make Perl more accessible, Dr. Tim Maher has over the years designed and taught an essential subset of the language that is smaller, yet practical and powerful. With this engaging book you can now benefit from ""Minimal Perl,"" even if all you know about Unix is grep. You will learn how to write simple Perl commands-many just one-liners-that go far beyond the limitations of Unix utilities, and those of Linux, MacOS/X, etc. And you'll acquire the more advanced Perl skills used in scripts by capitalizing on your knowledge of related Shell resources. Sprinkled throughout are many Unix-specific Perl tips. This book is especially suitable for system administrators, webmasters, and software developers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Minimal Perl concerns itself with Perl one liners and quick scripts used to find, alter, and display data on Unix systems. The many examples show how Perl can both work with and exceed the existing Unix tools, and show a wide range of tasks: log scanning, finding and replacing data in

multiple files, calculations to prove Seattle receives less rain than New York, and more. I consider myself adept on the Unix command line, though learned several new commands and best practices from this text.The text includes many helpful tables. These illustrate Perl features and syntax, often in comparison to the Unix utilities grep, sed, and awk. The comparison tables also detail the different flavors of these utilities (classic, POSIX, and GNU). The text discusses commands used in the 1970s, and how the utilities have improved with the introduction of awk, Perl, and the GNU tools, which in turn borrow features from Perl. Other tables show problem solving commands, illustrating how different problems would be solved with grep, sed, awk, or Perl.Recommended to those who do or want to spend time wrangling data on Unix. The text assumes a fair amount of Unix knowledge. If weak on Unix, first read "Learning the bash Shell" to learn a Unix shell. The second part of Minimal Perl covers Perl programming, which may obviate the need for "Learning Perl" or similar introductory Perl text.

This book is being promoted as a Perl introduction for those who are already familiar with other popular shell tools such as grep, sed, and awk. I can't vouch for how useful it is in that context, although the quality of material and delivery style probably make it a good resource.I came at the book from a different angle. Perl is familiar, but the other shell tools aren't. I started exploring Linux and UNIX when the GUI shells were starting to become useful in their own right and find/grep/sed/awk didn't seem as important. Perl has largely been an application programming language for me, so I never learned more than the barest hint of its scripting power. There is a huge "shell scripting tool" shaped hole in my Perl and UNIX knowledge."Minimal Perl" has been rapidly filling that gap. Even the first 20 pages were enlightening - they showed information on some of the more useful command-line options to Perl along with plentiful examples. Remember that for the last nine years "perl" eq "application language" in my head. The only command line options I cared about were -w and -T, and I stopped caring about -w when 5.6 was released. My new understanding of -l, -n, and -p meant that I could suddenly whip out a quick one-liner for a simple task, rather than write too many lines of C-style code for the same job.I have been bouncing through the book as I find one of my needs matched by a chapter subject, but the rest of the book has been more of the same. You practice using Perl in combination with other shell tools and then as a complete replacement for those tools. The concepts from this book have saved my [...] a few times already, as I was able to combine them with my existing knowledge of Perl to find and fix code issues quickly.The writing style is enjoyable. "Minimal Perl" is written in a relaxed, light-hearted manner which still manages to convey thoughts very clearly. You will learn a lot about the differences

between Perl and the shell tools, even if you weren't that familiar with the shell tools in the first place. You will learn about the author's almost unhealthy love of AWK before he discovered Perl. More importantly, you'll learn how to use Perl as more than an awkward replacement for C++.The physical layout of the book is first-rate, which I have come to expect from Manning. The font is large and readable. The book is printed on good thick paper, which matters more than I would have thought. The tables and code samples are easy to find, although I would have appreciated a table listing in the table of contents. After double-checking through this book while writing the review, that's the only complaint I was able to come up with: a table listing would be nice. [...]I recommend this book to anyone who knows Perl but hasn't used it to do any dirty work in the shell. This will have an impact on when and how you use Perl.

Like some others, I abandoned Perl years ago, in part because I objected to its lack of object orientation.This book has brought be back, but only for certain purposes. The author shows how one-line Perl commands can perform tasks for which one might otherwise use sed or grep. In many cases the Perl command includes additional features not always found in the equivalent Unix command.I have found this book invaluable in helping me to automate maintenance tasks on my website.Yes, Perl 6 (object oriented Perl running in a virtual machines) is five or six years late, but when you are writing one-liners you don't need objects anyway.Perhaps the world has gone overboard on this object-oriented thing. If you are like me and had abandoned Perl consider returning to it for certain tasks with the aid of Minimal Perl.

One thing I really loved about this book is that it is short and sweet, well written, clear. It covers extremely popular functionality (text search, text manipulation, column/field manipulation, file search) in Perl as it compares to the popular tools: grep, sed, awk, and find (including extended and GNU varieties). It documents how to do the equivalent in Perl, but also covers the advantages and disadvantages in doing these chores Perl. The coverage is really well written.What really struck me personally, is that for a long time, I was baffled about why there was no simple way to extract columns or fields from fixed-width data. I used regular expression or split in Perl, which I thought was overkill. Unix has simple mechanisms using cut and awk for this, and after many hours scouring the net and published books, I couldn't find any coverage of a simple solution, until I came across this book.If you do any automation on Unix (or even Windows) that requires extracting or manipulating text data, this book is an ultimate resource for your library. Anyone serious about Perl and/or system administration type of chores, should not pass this book up.

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