

NAME

perlcommunity - a brief overview of the Perl community

DESCRIPTION

This document aims to provide an overview of the vast perl community, which is far too large and diverse to provide a detailed listing. If any specific niche has been forgotten, it is not meant as an insult but an omission for the sake of brevity.

The Perl community is as diverse as Perl, and there is a large amount of evidence that the Perl users apply TMTOWTDI to all endeavors, not just programming. From websites, to IRC, to mailing lists, there is more than one way to get involved in the community.

Where to Find the Community

There is a central directory for the Perl community: <<http://perl.org>> maintained by the Perl Foundation (<<http://www.perlfoundation.org/>>), which tracks and provides services for a variety of other community sites.

Mailing Lists and Newsgroups

Perl runs on e-mail; there is no doubt about it. The Camel book was originally written mostly over e-mail and today Perl's development is co-ordinated through mailing lists. The largest repository of Perl mailing lists is located at <<http://lists.perl.org>>.

Most Perl-related projects set up mailing lists for both users and contributors. If you don't see a certain project listed at <<http://lists.perl.org>>, check the particular website for that project. Most mailing lists are archived at <<http://nntp.perl.org/>>.

There are also plenty of Perl related newsgroups located under `comp.lang.perl.*`.

IRC

The Perl community has a rather large IRC presence. For starters, it has its own IRC network, <<irc://irc.perl.org>>. General (not help-oriented) chat can be found at <<irc://irc.perl.org/#perl>>. Many other more specific chats are also hosted on the network. Information about irc.perl.org is located on the network's website: <<http://www.irc.perl.org>>. For a more help-oriented #perl, check out <<irc://irc.freenode.net/#perl>>. Perl 6 development also has a presence in <<irc://irc.freenode.net/#perl6>>. Most Perl-related channels will be kind enough to point you in the right direction if you ask nicely.

Any large IRC network (Dalnet, EFnet) is also likely to have a #perl channel, with varying activity levels.

Websites

Perl websites come in a variety of forms, but they fit into two large categories: forums and news websites. There are many Perl-related websites, so only a few of the community's largest are mentioned here.

News sites

<http://perl.com/>" -P "< 4 Originally run by O'Reilly Media (the publisher of the Camel Book, this site provides quality articles mostly about technical details of Perl.

<http://blogs.perl.org/>" -P "< 4 Many members of the community have a Perl-related blog on this site. If you'd like to join them, you can sign up for free.

<http://perlsphere.net/>" -P "< 4 Perlsphere is one of several aggregators of Perl-related blog feeds.

<http://perlweekly.com/>" -P "< 4 Perl Weekly is a weekly mailing list that keeps you up to date on conferences, releases and notable blog posts.

<http://use.perl.org/>" -P "< 4 use Perl; used to provide a slashdot-style news/blog website covering all things Perl, from minutes of the meetings of the Perl 6 Design team to conference announcements with (ir)relevant discussion. It no longer accepts updates, but you can still use the site to read old entries and comments.

Forums

<http://www.perlmonks.org/>" -P "< 4 PerlMonks is one of the largest Perl forums, and describes itself as "A place for individuals to polish, improve, and showcase their Perl skills." and "A community which allows everyone to grow and learn from each other."

<http://stackoverflow.com/>" -P "< 4 Stack Overflow is a free question-and-answer site for programmers. It's not focussed solely on Perl, but it does have an active group of users who do their best to help people with their Perl programming questions.

<http://prepan.org/>" -P "< 4 PrePAN is used as a place to discuss modules that you're considering uploading to the CPAN. You can get feedback on their design before you upload.

User Groups

Many cities around the world have local Perl Mongers chapters. A Perl Mongers chapter is a local user group which typically holds regular in-person meetings, both social and technical; helps organize local conferences, workshops, and hackathons; and provides a mailing list or other continual contact method for its members to keep in touch.

To find your local Perl Mongers (or PM as they're commonly abbreviated) group check the international Perl Mongers directory at <http://www.pm.org/>.

Workshops

Perl workshops are, as the name might suggest, workshops where Perl is taught in a variety of ways. At the workshops, subjects range from a beginner's introduction (such as the Pittsburgh Perl Workshop's "Zero To Perl") to much more advanced subjects.

There are several great resources for locating workshops: the websites mentioned above, the calendar mentioned below, and the YAPC Europe website, <http://www.yapceurope.org/>, which is probably the best resource for European Perl events.

Hackathons

Hackathons are a very different kind of gathering where Perl hackers gather to do just that, hack nonstop for an extended (several day) period on a specific project or projects. Information about hackathons can be located in the same place as information about workshops as well as in <irc://irc.perl.org/#perl>.

If you have never been to a hackathon, here are a few basic things you need to know before attending: have a working laptop and know how to use it; check out the involved projects beforehand; have the necessary version control client; and bring backup equipment (an extra LAN cable, additional power strips, etc.) because someone will forget.

Conventions

Perl has two major annual conventions: The Perl Conference (now part of OSCON), put on by O'Reilly, and Yet Another Perl Conference or YAPC (pronounced yap-see), which is localized into several regional YAPCs (North America, Europe, Asia) in a stunning grassroots display by the Perl community. For more information about either conference, check out their respective web pages: OSCON <http://conferences.oreilynet.com/>; YAPC <http://www.yapc.org/>.

A relatively new conference franchise with a large Perl portion is the Open Source Developers Conference or OSDC. First held in Australia it has recently also spread to Israel and France. More information can be found at: <http://www.osdc.com.au/> for Australia, <http://www.osdc.org.il/> for Israel, and <http://www.osdc.fr/> for France.

Calendar of Perl Events

The Perl Review, <http://www.theperlreview.com> maintains a website and Google calendar (http://www.theperlreview.com/community_calendar) for tracking workshops, hackathons, Perl Mongers meetings, and other events. Views of this calendar are at <http://www.perl.org/events.html> and <http://www.yapc.org>.

Not every event or Perl Mongers group is on that calendar, so don't lose heart if you don't see yours posted. To have your event or group listed, contact brian d foy (brian@theperlreview.com).

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