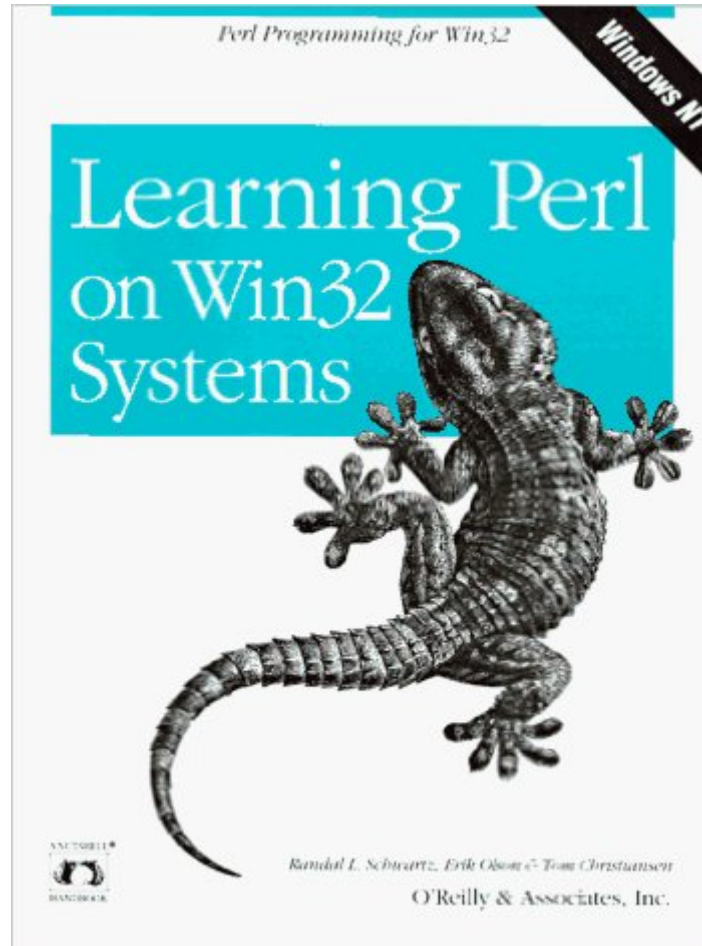The book was found

# Learning Perl On Win32 Systems

## Synopsis

In this smooth, carefully paced course, leading Perl trainers and a Windows NT practitioner teach you to program in the language that promises to emerge as the scripting language of choice on NT. With a foreword by Larry Wall, the creator of Perl, this book is the "official" guide for both formal (classroom) and informal learning. Based on the "llama book,"Learning Perl on Win32 Systems features tips for PC users and new NT-specific examples.Perl for Win32 is a language for easily manipulating text, files, user and group profiles, performance and event logs, and registry entries, and a distribution is available on the Windows NT Resource Kit. Peer-to-peer technical support is now available on the perl.win32.users mailing list.The contents include:An introduction to "the Perl way" for Windows usersA quick tutorial stroll through Perl in one lessonSystematic, topic-by-topic coverage of Perl's broad capabilitiesInnumerable, brief code examplesProgramming exercises for each topic, with fully worked-out answersAccess to NT system functions through PerlDatabase access with PerlCGI programming with PerlErik Olson is director of advanced technologies for Axiom Technologies, LC, where he specializes in providing Win32 development solutions. Randal L. Schwartz and Tom Christiansen have also written Programming Perl, co-authored with Larry Wall and published by O'Reilly & Associates. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

## Book Information

Paperback: 306 pages

ISBN-10: 1565923243

ASIN: B00007FYAG

Average Customer Review:  3.4 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (28 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

This is a pretty weak introductory book. Don't' buy it with your own money (corporate funds are probably OK if the book is discounted more than 20% ;-). The authors definitely do not understand the Win32 environment well enough. The language is explained as an isolated phenomenon without reference to existing scripting tools (VBA, VBScrit, Rexx, etc.). The main use of Perl in Win32 environment is CGI progammining and here the book does not have enough value for beginners. Generally this book looks like an attempt to adapt the original Randal Schwartz book to the Win32

environment (second edition for UNIX also is not the best introductory book available, but at least it was one of the first books on Perl). The adaptation attempt failed and the results are pretty disappointing. Neither the examples, nor style are very suitable to Win32. For example "Standard Perl distribution" (page 6) contains recommendations like: nmake ( Build all of Perl) nmake Test (test your distribution) nmake install (Install to the target dir. In the Makefile) These recommendations can be considered a joke for Win32 beginners, who get used to prepackaged software. Chapters are very uneven in length and quality. The Chapter 1 is disappointing. The secret word guesser introduced in the Chapter 1 is definitely far from the best introductory example for Win32 audience. The number of unexplained concepts introduced here would scare novices. Probably more simple examples of a couple of UNIX-style filters (head, tail, and maybe unique) would be more appropriate. Chapter 2 is OK. Chapter 3 does not provide a clear description of Perl syntactical and semantical achievements and pitfalls. For example, Perl considers a negative subscript on the array as a count back from the end. So each element has two indexes (from the beginning and from the end). The last element has an index -1 that is very convenient. BTW Perl use the same approach in the substr built-in function. Chapter 4 seems to be written by "structured programming diehards" and is very weak. Rich Perl control structures are not covered. Neither continue, next, break operator (they really simplify construction of non-trivial loops), nor the short-circuit semantics of || && operators in if statements (not apparent for people who never programmed in C) was not discussed. Chapter 5 (hashes) is only 4 pages long for such an important subject as associative arrays. Strangely enough it does not mention the %ENV - probably the most important associative array for novices. Chapter 6 (Basic I/O) is very short. Perl after all was designed to process logs and such a chapter definitely should be more than four pages long and should contain more examples. Chapter 7 fails to recognize the different mentality of Win32 users. Basically there are two approaches to the regular expressions in Win32 environment. One is to use it only when necessary and the second is to use them whenever possible. The first camp (partially represented by former REXX users and VB users) prefer more procedural way of text manipulations and tend to rely more on substr, index, length, split and join functions in text manipulations, while the second is the regular expression addicts. The authors definitely belong to the second camp ;-). IMHO non-greedy (minimal) matching is often more convenient that a regular one, especially for novices, but it was never mentioned in the book. Chapter 15 is probably one of the few things that were done right in the book. The index and substr built-in functions are covered adequately. I would like to mention that the authors cover a very important use of the substr in the left part of the assignment function (the idea borrowed from the PL/1). Chapter 16 is just OK.

Chapter 17 is a joke as DBM is the Unix-only beast. Only the last page ("Win32 Database interfaces") can be considered relevant for Win32 users. It's really depressing to see such a blunder in an O'Reilly book. Chapter about CGI is somewhat superficial. At the same time it is the main application area for Perl, especially in Win32 environment. The only subject covered in this book that was not covered in the "Cross Platform Perl" is the coverage of OLE2 (Chapter 19). It uses a rather interesting example of MAPI. Win32 is not UNIX. Strangely enough for such a book the discussion of pitfalls of Win32 environment is completely absent. For example the authors fail to stress the difference between chop and chomp function. Even the most annoying difference between UNIX-style and Win32 style directory paths syntax (with "\" instead of "/") was never mentioned. I believe O'Reilly should do better reviewing and editing job if it want to preserve its reputation of publisher of consistently well written and edited books. - Nikolai Bezroukov BASF Corp. Advanced Technology Group. Standard disclaimer applies.

This book is extremely difficult to rate because it has some major strengths and also some major weaknesses. I could pretty much give this book a rating anywhere between 1 and 5 stars and justify it. That being said, I have learned a lot of perl through reading the book & doing the excellent exercises that are provided (with answers), therefore it deserves a decent rating despite its faults.The book is an overview of the language, not a reference. It's a tutorial that takes you through the major language features. Some of the chapters are regular expressions, filehandles, formats, hashes, functions, etc. The writing is generally clear and accessible and the examples are very well done. Most people should feel comfortable using perl after working through this book.The real failing of the book is that it is pitched as a Win32 book but it is full of UNIX-centric examples and idioms. The chapter on DBM is likely to go unused by almost every Windows programmer and there is not much coverage of OLE automation/COM/ActiveX, which is key to Windows. The book would also have benefitted from a look at Windows system administration tasks and how to automate these with perl.Another minor frustration is the "Topics We Didn't Mention" appendix. This book is only 220 pages + appendices, index, forewords and there could easily have been room for discussing those topics (like basic networking, security, the compiler).In short, it's a good book to learn perl with if you're stuck using NT at work like me. That being said, the book is rough around the edges and could be polished significantly in a future edition.

I concur with the bulk of the reviews here: This is a shallow book, especially given Perl's scope. But it WILL help Windows folks understand many of the key Perl concepts that otherwise go

unmentioned.And that's the major point here. The book may be a trivial intro to Perl, but at least it doesn't assume you're a *NIX weenie. After getting annoyed reading the 3rd edition of the camel book, I bought this book. It was helpful in clearing up all those references to the weird stuff that *NIX dudes apparently are born knowning, and got me quickly into writing simple Perl scripts.You want heavy details of the Win32 or NT-specific functions? Go read the POD embedded in those modules. Or get a different book.This is "LEARNING Perl on Win32 Systems"... I read it in about 6 hours, total, cover to cover. And in that time it provided just about as good an intro as I could hope for.

Clear, concise and to the point examples back up a well thought through and sensibly paced book.I liked the way that win32 issues were clearly dealt with - no'more trying to work out why your UNIX based examples dont work.This book is excellent value for the $$ - you'll easily recoup in saved time the cover price.Tom

If you do not use a Unix system, and are interested in Perl, this is the book you should go for. It provides an entertaining and thorough stroll through the language. There are a lot of little differences between this book and the other 'Learning Perl'. If you want to make special use of the Windows GUI, you should check this book out. Combined with the reference work 'Programming Perl', you will have everything you need to become proficient at the language. Highly recommended for both amateur and professional programmers.

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