

An Undergraduate Course in Perl: An All Purpose Programming Language

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Perl programming is a skill that students will not fully appreciate until they have mastered it. Perl is best known as a scripting language. Even people who know how to program in Perl generally only think about using it for automating other processes. Perl is also known for its powerful text manipulation capabilities through the use of regular expressions. However, Perl's greatest strength is its versatility. This versatility allows for students to learn about web-development through Common Gateway Interface (CGI) scripts, Object Oriented Practices, and regular expressions all in the context of one language. All of this flexibility allows for past existing assignments of students to be combined into one application. One of the assignments later on in the class described here is to parse in different sports teams rosters from their web pages. Once the rosters are parsed in, the program must allow the user to search for different players by name, height, weight, team, or number. Former students have found their Perl programming skills extremely useful not only in other Computer Engineering courses but in Business classes and industry. This paper will examine this course from the perspective of student, teaching assistant, and professor.