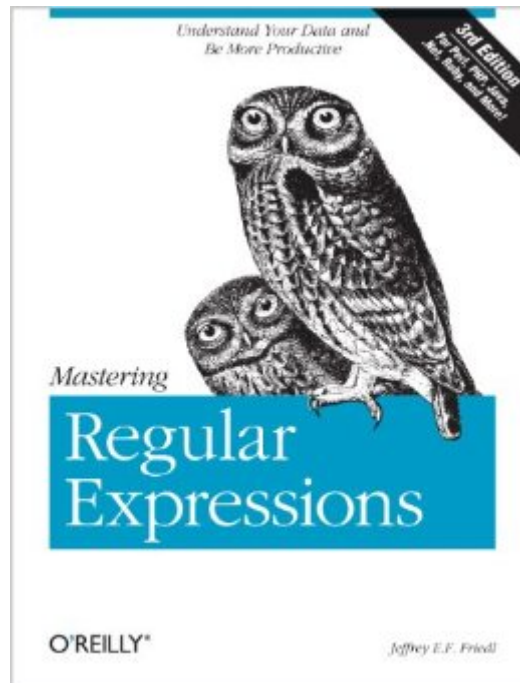# Mastering Regular Expressions

Synopsis

Regular expressions are an extremely powerful tool for manipulating text and data. They are now standard features in a wide range of languages and popular tools, including Perl, Python, Ruby, Java, VB.NET and C# (and any language using the .NET Framework), PHP, and MySQL.If you don't use regular expressions yet, you will discover in this book a whole new world of mastery over your data. If you already use them, you'll appreciate this book's unprecedented detail and breadth of coverage. If you think you know all you need to know about regularexpressions, this book is a stunning eye-opener.As this book shows, a command of regular expressions is an invaluable skill. Regular expressions allow you to code complex and subtle text processing that you never imagined could be automated. Regular expressions can save you time and aggravation. They can be used to craft elegant solutions to a wide range of problems. Once you've mastered regular expressions, they'll become an invaluable part of your toolkit. You will wonder how you ever got by without them.Yet despite their wide availability, flexibility, and unparalleled power, regular expressions are frequently underutilized. Yet what is power in the hands of an expert can be fraught with peril for the unwary. Mastering Regular Expressions will help you navigate the minefield to becoming an expert and help you optimize your use of regular expressions. Mastering Regular Expressions, Third Edition, now includes a full chapter devoted to PHP and its powerful and expressive suite of regular expression functions, in addition to enhanced PHP coverage in the central "core" chapters. Furthermore, this edition has been updated throughout to reflect advances in other languages, including expanded in-depth coverage of Sun's java.util.regex package, which has emerged as the standard Java regex implementation.Topics include:A comparison of features among different versions of many languages and toolsHow the regular expression engine worksOptimization (major savings available here!)Matching just what you want, but not what you don't wantSections and chapters on individual languagesWritten in the lucid, entertaining tone that makes a complex, dry topic become crystal-clear to programmers, and sprinkled with solutions to complex real-world problems, Mastering Regular Expressions, Third Edition offers a wealth information that you can put to immediateuse.Reviews of this new edition and the second edition:"There isn't a better (or more useful) book available on regular expressions."--Zak Greant, Managing Director, eZ Systems"A real tour-de-force of a book which not only covers the mechanics of regexes in extraordinary detail but also talks about efficiency and the use of regexes in Perl, Java, and .NET...If you use regular expressions as part of your professional work (even if you already have a good book on whatever language you're programming in) I would strongly recommend this book to you."--Dr. Chris Brown, Linux Format"The author does an outstanding job leading the reader from regexnovice to master.

The book is extremely easy to read and chock full ofuseful and relevant examples...Regular expressions are valuable toolsthat every developer should have in their toolbox. Mastering RegularExpressions is the definitive guide to the subject, and an outstandingresource that belongs on every programmer's bookshelf. Ten out of TenHorseshoes."--Jason Menard, Java Ranch

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Customer Reviews

For many savvy computer users, regular expressions embody the perfect utility: a well defined, documented, and designed tool that makes complicated and arduous jobs short and easy. That being said, the craft of regular expressions (hereafter, `regex') makes about as much sense as a foreign language to the uninitiated or novice. Regex have no immediately apparent meaning to those unfamiliar with them, and are so enigmatic in appearance that many users do not even attempt to understand them - writing them off as a tool only for experts. "Mastering Regular Expressions" sets out to not only make regex understandable, but easy to apply to a wide range of situations.Stylistically and structurally, this is one of the most unique O'Reilly publications I have read. The author even says in the early chapters to think of the book as a novel, and not as a

reference (the book's structure doesn't really lend itself to being a reference book anyways). The mindset that the author applies to his writing makes a discernable difference in how the book reads, and it feels more like a chronological story and less like a textbook as a result. Even the quizzes that the author scatters throughout the book are treated as part of the "story", and the solutions are on the very next page rather than in the back of the book or at the end of the chapter. As a result, the book is very easy to read, and flows extremely well. It feels much less like a textbook and more like a narrated lesson from an enjoyable professor.With a topic as muddy and potentially confusing as regex, I was worried that the text would be just as confusing to follow. However, I was pleasantly surprised. The text itself is very well written, and very clear.

I've corresponded personally with Jeffrey Friedl several times over the last few years, and I remember being at once impressed with his attention to detail and his focus. I was invited to be one of the technical review editors for this third edition of his authoritative book on Regular Expressions, but had to pass due to time constraints.However, I am pleased to state that whoever the tech reviewers were, they did a thorough job on this one from O'Reilly. This book has matured over these three editions to become what I would consider the most detailed and valuable book about Regex on the planet - and that means whatever your favorite programming language or platform is.You see, Regular Expressions is in itself a language, and transcends programming languages and platforms because the concepts are basically the same across all languages - whether it be Perl, JAVA, C#, Visual Basic, Javascript, PHP, Ruby, Python, TCL - you name it.And this book focuses on the mastery of regex, not being a reference tool. Though each language has a different syntax for handling objects and methods, the underlying objects and methods are the same with Regex, so even complex examples shown in one language directly translate to the other languages. Suffice to say that there are basic concept chapters that are really language - agnostic, and then specific sections on PHP, .NET, JAVA, and Perl. The book covers practical Regex techniques and most importantly, it gets you to the conceptual level where you can begin constructing Regex patterns on your own, without having to look for "examples".For .NET developers, Jeffrey provides a complete table-based overview of .NET's Regular Expression flavor, with a focus on the new features available in .NET 2.

Regular Expression Pocket Reference: Regular Expressions for Perl, Ruby, PHP, Python, C, Java and .NET (Pocket Reference (O'Reilly)) Mastering Regular Expressions Java: Regex Crash Course - The Ultimate Beginner's Course to Learning Java Regular Expressions in Under 12 Hours

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