

Fishing for Perl - The New Perl User Experience

Erez Schatz

April 5, 2010

...follow me, and I will show you how to fish
for people - Matthew 4:19

Marketing

Everyone think Perl is Dead.

Everyone think Perl is Dead.
Everyone think Ruby is on the rise.

Everyone think Perl is Dead.
Everyone think Ruby is on the rise.
Real-life wise, neither is 100% true.

Everyone think Perl is Dead.
Everyone think Ruby is on the rise.
Real-life wise, neither is 100% true.
Marketing wise, both are 100% correct.

Everyone think Perl is Dead.
Everyone think Ruby is on the rise.
Real-life wise, neither is 100% true.
Marketing wise, both are 100% correct.
200% even.

Ruby's killer app is Ruby on Rails.

Ruby's killer app is Ruby on Rails.
Actually, Ruby's killer app is Ruby on Rails' marketing.

The Perl Foundation Marketing Committee

The Perl Foundation Marketing Committee
Create a bait for many users to try Perl

The Perl Foundation Marketing Committee
Create a bait for many users to try Perl
May reel in many new users

The Perl Foundation Marketing Committee
Create a bait for many users to try Perl
May reel in many new users
But...

How do we want to be seen?

DWM - dwm.suckless.org

DWM - `dwm.suckless.org`

“Because dwm is customized through editing its source code, its pointless to make binary packages of it. This keeps its userbase small and elitist. No novices asking stupid questions.”

DWM - `dwm.suckless.org`

“Because dwm is customized through editing its source code, its pointless to make binary packages of it. This keeps its userbase small and elitist. No novices asking stupid questions.”

Is this Perl?

Context

Context dictate attitude.

Context

- Meeting

Context

- Meeting
- Presentation

Context

- Meeting
- Presentation
- Convention Talk

Context

- Meeting
- Presentation
- Convention Talk
- Chat

Context

- Meeting
- Presentation
- Convention Talk
- Chat
- Mailing List

New User Experience

New User Experience

Give a man a fish; you have fed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime.

New User Experience

Give a man a fish; you have fed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime.

Can you teach a starving man?

New User Experience

Give a man a fish; you have fed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime.

Can you teach a starving man?
Will he be willing to listen?

New User Experience

Build a man a fire, and he'll be warm for a day.
Set a man on fire, and he'll be warm for the rest
of his life - Terry Pratchett

New User Experience

Build a man a fire, and he'll be warm for a day.
Set a man on fire, and he'll be warm for the rest
of his life - Terry Pratchett

You can only make a first impression once

New User Experience

- “This isn’t a Perl question”

New User Experience

- “This isn’t a Perl question”
- “This doesn’t belong in this forum/list”

New User Experience

- “This isn’t a Perl question”
- “This doesn’t belong in this forum/list”
- “Your code fragment is useless”

New User Experience

- “This isn’t a Perl question”
- “This doesn’t belong in this forum/list”
- “Your code fragment is useless”
- “You should work on your Spelling/Grammar”

New User Experience

- “Use strictures”

New User Experience

- “Use strictures”
- “Don’t use C for-loops”

New User Experience

- “Use strictures”
- “Don’t use C for-loops”
- “Your code isn’t formatted/indented right”

New User Experience

- “Use strictures”
- “Don’t use C for-loops”
- “Your code isn’t formatted/indented right”
- “Use a module”

New User Experience

You can't just make shit up and expect the computer to know what you mean, Retardo! -
Mark Jason Dominus

New User Experience

- How To Ask Questions The Smart Way
catb.org/~esr/faqs/smart-questions.html

New User Experience

- How To Ask Questions The Smart Way
`catb.org/~esr/faqs/smart-questions.html`
- What is a minimal working example?
`minimalbeispiel.de/mini-en.html`

New User Experience

- How To Ask Questions The Smart Way
`catb.org/~esr/faqs/smart-questions.html`
- What is a minimal working example?
`minimalbeispiel.de/mini-en.html`
- XY Problem
`perlmonks.org/index.pl?node_id=542341`

RTFM

RTFM

Read The Fathomless Manual

Read The Fathomless Manual

- `LWP::UserAgent` ↓

Read The Fathomless Manual

- `LWP::UserAgent` ↓
 - `HTTP::Response` ↓

Read The Fathomless Manual

- `LWP::UserAgent` ↓
 - `HTTP::Response` ↓
 - `HTTP::Message` ↓

Read The Fathomless Manual

- `LWP::UserAgent` ↓
 - `HTTP::Response` ↓
 - `HTTP::Message` ↓
 - `HTTP::Headers`

RTFM

Read The Furtive Manual

RTFM

Read The Furtive Manual

```
perldoc -f open ↓
```

Read The Furtive Manual

```
perldoc -f open ↓
```

```
open(FH, "<$filename")
```

```
open(my $fh, '<', "input.txt")
```

```
open(my $tmp, "+>", undef)
```

```
open(my $dbase, '+<', 'dbase.mine')
```

```
open(ARTICLE, '-|', "caesar <$article")
```

```
open my $oldout, ">&STDOUT"
```

```
open OLDERR, ">&", *STDERR
```

```
open(FILEHANDLE, "<&=", $fd)
```

```
open(FH, ">>&=", OLDFH)
```

Read The Furtive Manual

```
perldoc -f open ↓
```

```
open(FH, "<$filename")
```

```
open(my $fh, '<', "input.txt")
```

```
open(my $tmp, "+>", undef)
```

```
open(my $dbase, '+<', 'dbase.mine')
```

```
open(ARTICLE, '-|', "caesar <$article")
```

```
open my $oldout, ">&STDOUT"
```

```
open OLDERR, ">&", *STDERR
```

```
open(FILEHANDLE, "<&=", $fd)
```

```
open(FH, ">>&=", OLDFH)
```

There are So Many Different Ways of Doing it!

Read The Full-featured Manual

Read The Full-featured Manual

Read The Faithful Manual

RTFM

Another form of RTFM:

RTFM

Another form of RTFM:

Q: What does this line mean?

```
$_ **= $_ , / {$_} / for 2 .. 42;
```

RTFM

Another form of RTFM:

Q: What does this line mean?

```
$_ **= $_ , / {$_} / for 2 .. 42;
```

A: `perldoc perlvar`

RTFM

Another form of RTFM:

Q: What does this line mean?

```
$_ **= $_ , / {$_} / for 2 .. 42;
```

A: perldoc.perl.org/perlvar.html

The Socratic Method

The Socratic Method

Programmers are required to think

The Socratic Method

Programmers are required to think

Programming is finding answers to questions

The Socratic Method

Programmers are required to think

Programming is finding answers to questions

Are we doing them harm by giving them the answers they ask for?

The Socratic Method

Socrates used only oral communication

The Socratic Method

Socrates used only oral communication

With very few students

The Socratic Method

Socrates used only oral communication

With very few students

Who were philosophers like Plato and Xenophon

The Socratic Method

Socrates used only oral communication

With very few students

Who were philosophers like Plato and Xenophon

And was executed by drinking Hemlock.

What to do?

What to do?

Give them the bloody answer.

What to do?

Give them the bloody answer.

Then give guidance for future reference.

What to do?

Sell the solution.

Be Positive

Be Positive.

Be Positive

Be Positive.

Don't use `XML::Simple`

Be Positive

Be Positive.

Use XML::Twig

Be Positive

Be Positive.

Use XML::Twig

Don't use Regex to parse HTML

Be Positive

Be Positive.

Use XML::Twig

Use an HTML parser

Idioms

Be Idiomatic.

Idioms

Be Idiomatic.

But not Enigmatic.

Idioms

Be Idiomatic.

But not Enigmatic.

Idioms are good.

Idioms

Be Idiomatic.

But not Enigmatic.

Idioms are good.

Mnemonics less good.

What to do?

Treat them as peers.

What to do?

Treat them as peers. Treat them as beginners.

What to do?

Treat them as peers. Treat them as Perl learners.

What to do?

“...don't hesitate to be be kind to them, and help them connect ... so that they can grow and bloom into experienced wielders of Perl.”

What to do?

“...don't hesitate to be be kind to them, and help them connect ... so that they can grow and bloom into experienced wielders of Perl.”

“But don't hesitate to call them insane, either, when the situation calls for it.” - Carl Masak

<http://use.perl.org/~masak/journal/40110>

Perl and the newcomer

Perl is not intuitive

Perl and the newcomer

Perl is not intuitive at first.

Perl and the newcomer

- Context

Perl and the newcomer

- Context
- CPAN

Perl and the newcomer

- Context
- CPAN
- References

Perl and the newcomer

- Context
- CPAN
- References
- TIMTOWTDI

Principle of Least Astonishment

Principle of Least Astonishment

“Any language that doesn’t occasionally surprise the novice will pay for it by continually surprising the expert” - Larry Wall

Where to go?

Where to go?

- `learn.perl.org`

Where to go?

- `learn.perl.org`
- `nntp.perl.org/group/perl.beginners`

Where to go?

- `learn.perl.org`
- `nntp.perl.org/group/perl.beginners`
- `perlmonks.org`

Where to go?

- `learn.perl.org`
- `nntp.perl.org/group/perl.beginners`
- `perlmonks.org`
- `strawberryperl.com`

Where to go?

- `learn.perl.org`
- `nntp.perl.org/group/perl.beginners`
- `perlmonks.org`
- `strawberryperl.com`
- `perldoc.perl.org`

Where to go?

- `learn.perl.org`
- `nntp.perl.org/group/perl.beginners`
- `perlmonks.org`
- `strawberryperl.com`
- `perldoc.perl.org`
- `search.cpan.org`

Thank You