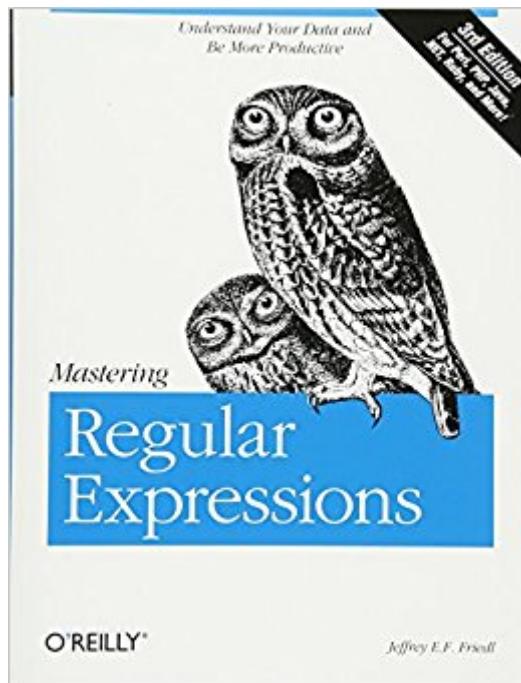


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# Mastering Regular Expressions



## 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 regular expressions, 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 tools
- How the regular expression engine works
- Optimization (major savings available here!)
- Matching just what you want, but not what you don't want
- Sections and chapters on individual languages
- Written 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 of information that you can put to immediate use.

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 regex novice to master."

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

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Indispensable for text processing wizards and regex newcomers alike." - Paul Hudson, Linux Format, February 2007 "In addition to the sheer volume of information, one thing that sets this book apart is that the author uses "real-world" rather than contrived examples. A few of the examples were situations that I have yet to come across, but many were either "been there, done that" or things that I had to go out and try." - James Mohr, Linux Magazine, April 2007

Jeffrey Friedl was raised in the countryside of Rootstown, Ohio, and had aspirations of being an astronomer until one day he noticed a TRS-80 Model I sitting unused in the corner of the chem lab (bristling with a full 16K of RAM, no less). He eventually began using Unix (and regular expressions) in 1980, and earned degrees in Computer Science from Kent (BS) and the University of New Hampshire (MS). He did kernel development for Omron Corporation in Kyoto, Japan for eight years before moving in 1997 to Silicon Valley to apply his regular-expression know-how to financial news and data for a little-known company called "Yahoo!" When faced with the daunting task of filling his copious free time, Jeffrey enjoys playing Ultimate Frisbee and basketball with friends at Yahoo!,

programming his house, and feeding the squirrels and jays in his back yard. He also enjoys spending time with his wife Fumie, and preparing for the Fall 2002 release of their first "software project" together.

This is NOT a "cookbook" for regular expressions, but can be a very good reference when you lose your mind with them. I took this on work travel when I got it, and read it on the plane. The tips for working your way through interpreting regular expressions are very good, and easier to understand than the expressions themselves. It is NOT language specific, so you need to deal for yourself, with differences between say, how Python does it, and how Perl does it. This should probably be in most programmers' libraries.

A useful, but verbose regex backgrounder that may come in handy from time to time. It does have a Perl centric focus and uses an obscure and confusing markup system to delineate regexes in the text. Wish it had a more generalized approach to the topic of constructing regexes.

This book kicked off my research in textual analysis. The book is easy to understand and you can apply it immediately. This book saved me so much time and got my research going!

This book is the best regular expression book out there. I've been writing software for several years and my practical experience didn't scratch the surface of what regular expressions can do and how they work. If you want to decipher complex regular expressions and write your own, this is THE book to read. Friedl never glosses over important points and he never makes assumptions that you already understand regular expressions. The fact is, most of us just don't. Although regular expressions is mostly a pretty dry topic, Friedl does a good job lightening things up here and there (enough to prevent the topic from being too dry, but not so much that we forget the serious nature of the subject matter). The typographic conventions are nothing short of groundbreaking, and I believe there is no other volume out there, on the web, or written that does as good of a job walking you through regular expressions, explaining how all the various parts work together and how to do things in your own practical way. This book teaches you to THINK in regular expressions. Those once cryptic symbols will become powerful tools for you to manipulate and get the results you need. For me, regular expressions were a bit of stumbling block and a possible security risk (since I couldn't decipher really complex regular expressions). Aside from that, I didn't know the difference between NFA, DFA, and Posix NFA or how to optimize regex for these various engines (or whether

optimization is even needed). I strongly recommend this book for both beginners and veterans of regular expressions. It might not change your life, but it will change the way you read and write regular expressions.

In the past I had read a few other books on Regular Expressions. Some of them were bad some less bad. I picked this one, hoping it would help me with JavaScript Regular Expressions, in relation with my Postgraduate Thesis. To be honest, it didn't directly help me with JavaScript, but it really helped me understand the mechanics and internals of regex engines, which, finally, enabled me write regexes for what ever tool around. It is highly recommended if you really want to do what the title says. "Master Regular Expressions". On the other hand, light reading and browsing through "heavy" stuff can just get you started, if mastering is not in your interests.

Probably the best single book I've personally encountered on regular expressions. It is dated, yes, most of the information is still good and more importantly, the explanations are still good. Will be very useful to someone trying to break in to regex.

thank you, thank you, thank you. i've been using Regex for years, especially in Notepad++ . Even though i had learned some rather complex queries this book gave me my first hope that someday i'll move beyond being a googling hack. if you want or need to learn regular expressions, its a big help. if you're just trying to get through a project. become a googling hack. someone's probably already written it for you.

Friedl does an excellent job. His treatment on the subject of Regular Expressions, especially from the standpoint of Perl, is very thorough. It's a no-brainer that he does so since Perl regular expressions tend to be regarded as the de-facto standard for regex - other languages are just starting to catch up and yet he goes into regex as it is used in other languages (i.e. Python, Ruby, VB, etc.). I use this book frequently as I write my Perl scripts and need to find a solution to a complex problem. Friedl's writing style makes this an easy read and, hence, the concepts are understandable and accessible without having to be verbose and unnecessarily techy. It's worth every penny if you're a developer, programmer or the occasional script writer.

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