

If you face reluctance to upgrading from an older version of perl, then point out that version 4 is utterly unmaintained and unsupported by the Perl Development Team. Another big sell for Perl5 is the large number of modules and extensions which greatly reduce development time for any given task. Also mention that the difference between version 4 and version 5 of Perl is like the difference between awk and C++. (Well, OK, maybe it's not quite that distinct, but you get the idea.) If you want support and a reasonable guarantee that what you're developing will continue to work in the future, then you have to run the supported version. As of December 2003 that means running either 5.8.2 (released in November 2003), or one of the older releases like 5.6.2 (also released in November 2003; a maintenance release to let perl 5.6 compile on newer systems as 5.6.1 was released in April 2001) or 5.005_03 (released in March 1999), although 5.004_05 isn't that bad if you **absolutely** need such an old version (released in April 1999) for stability reasons. Anything older than 5.004_05 shouldn't be used.

Of particular note is the massive bug hunt for buffer overflow problems that went into the 5.004 release. All releases prior to that, including perl4, are considered insecure and should be upgraded as soon as possible.

In August 2000 in all Linux distributions a new security problem was found in the optional 'suidperl' (not built or installed by default) in all the Perl branches 5.6, 5.005, and 5.004, see <http://www.cpan.org/src/5.0/sperl-2000-08-05/>. Perl maintenance releases 5.6.1 and 5.8.0 have this security hole closed. Most, if not all, Linux distribution have patches for this vulnerability available, see <http://www.linuxsecurity.com/advisories/>, but the most recommendable way is to upgrade to at least Perl 5.6.1.

17.2 AUTHOR AND COPYRIGHT

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