Whither Perl?

The Problem

- Perl has clearly lost a lot of market share over the last 10 years

- This pattern can clearly be seen by PAUSE activity
    - PAUSE activity essentially peaks in 2012 and starts to drop off in 2013
    - See http://neilb.org/2022/02/07/cpan-report-2022.html

- 10 years on, there are no signs that the trend is changing

Let's Take a Step Back

The last TPRC in Toronto was in 2005. It was then called YAPC::NA. What was going on then?

- PAUSE was now at least 10 years old, according to
  https://pause.perl.org/pause/query?ACTION=pause_06history
- There had already been 5 editions of the Perl Advent Calendar
  - First edition: Dec 2000
- Perl 5.8.1 had been released 2 years earlier (Sept 2003)
- It would be another 2 years until the release of 5.10.0 (Dec 2007)
- Dave Rolsky was at the conference, talking about Mason
  - "Embedding Perl in HTML with Mason", a 318 page book by Ken Williams abd Dave Rolsky had been released by O'Reilly in October 2002 (about 2.5 years prior)
- "Perl Testing: A Developer's Notebook" by Ian Langworth and Chromatic was just days from publication (July 2005)

Where are we today?

- Declining activity on CPAN

- PerlMongers groups are disappearing

- Companies are rewriting some or all of their Perl in more fashionable languages

- "Important" web assets in various states of neglect

Perl.com

- Last article was published more than 1 year ago
  - Mar 29, 2022
- At this point, the site appears to have no clear ownership or direction
- perl.com doesn't actually belong to TPRF. It appears to be on loan
- The site is powered by Hugo (a modern static site generator). It would be easy to revive, if there's the will to do this.

learn.perl.org

- This could be a good starting point for people new to Perl
  - No obvious mention of modern web frameworks

- https://learn.perl.org/books/
  - No books after October 2016
  - Learning Perl, 8th edition was published in August 2021

pm.org

- The calendar of upcoming events is empty

- Every monger group in Canada links to a site which is either oudated or missing
    - This includes Toronto.pm. I guess our hosting disappeared and we didn't notice.

- I suspect some PM group sites have been replaced via meetup.com pages

perladvent.org

- First publication in Dec 2000

- Has published every year since then

- 2021 hit a bump in the road, with no articles beyond Dec 1

- In 2022 the calendar roared back to live with 27 articles

- The 2023 Call for Papers is now open
  - https://cfp.perladvent.org/
  - If you're interested in writing an article or editing articles (or both), please open an issue at https://github.com/perladvent/Perl-Advent/

Low Bus Numbers

Some key parts of the Perl ecosystem are effectively being run by one or two people. What happens if the are no longer able to contribute?

CPAN Testers

- Doug Bell took this projecdt over from Barbie.

- We have tried to get more volunteers to help Doug, but with no lasting success

Devel::Cover / cpancover.com

- Paul Johnson

- If you use Coveralls or codecov.io, you probably use Devel::Cover

Some Key Problems

- It looks like there's a lack of clear ownership for various community resources
  - perl.com has no editor
  - learn.perl.org is maintained by the Perl NOC (two busy people) who also maintain infrastructure.

Can We Do More with Less?

- Figure out which resources are worth saving and which could be archived

- Move more code and site ownership into GitHub organizations

- Switch to static site generators which can auto-deploy to GitHub pages (Jekyll/Hugo) rather than requiring people to jump through hoops to locally deploy and edit source code