IT 240
Shell Scripting for Administrators

Chapter 8
Matching

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Matching

- The way we've been matching with /pattern/ is actually a shortcut to the m// operator

- Just as with shell scripting, you can use anything you want for the delimiter:

  m?fred? or m/fred/ or m<fred>

Option Modifiers

- To remove case sensitivity, use the /I qualifier

- To match any pattern over multiple lines, use the /s qualifier

- The /x modifier allows you to add arbitrary whitespace to a pattern; tabs or spaces inside a pattern are ignored

Anchors

- Patterns typically start at the beginning of a string and proceed to the end of no match is found

- We can specify however where in the string we want to start the search and where we want to finish

- The ^ marks the beginning of the search area and the $ marks the end

More Anchors

- The /b anchor is used to specify a hard beginning and ending to a word we wish to match

- Words are made up of letters, digits and the underscore character (/w)

The Binding Operator

- The =~ operator tells Perl to match the pattern on the right against the string on the left

- It overrides the default assignment of $_ and allows another string to be used instead (otherwise $_ is used)

Match Variables

- Parenthesis may be used to cause Perl to store the part of the string matched by the pattern in it's expression engine memory

- These memory locations are called $1, $2, etc, where each variable holds it's corresponding parenthesis match

Memory Persistence

- Match variables stay available to the next successful pattern match

- An unsuccessful match will not reset them, but a successful one will

- Don't count on them being available for long in your program

More Automatic Variables

- $& - contains the part of the string that matched the pattern (the entire section, not just words like in $1)

- $` - contains whatever came before the matched section

- $' - contains whatever came after the matched section