What is Perl?

History

- Created in 1987 by Larry Wall, since Awk wouldn't do what he wanted
- Rapid development until Perl4 in 1991 and first release of The Camel
- Larry started work on Perl5 in 1993, with first release in 1994
- Perl5 has been active version ever since

History

- In 1995 the CPAN was created
- Jan 2011 – over 19,000 modules by over 8,000 authors
- Perl6 has been in development since 2000, but has stalled to a degree
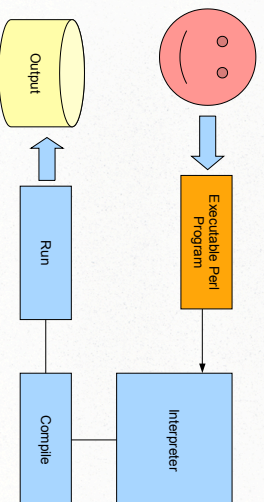- Perl5 now has yearly update, 5.12 released in 2010, 5.14 was released this year

What does it mean?

- Backronym
  - Practical Extraction and Report Language
- Others have been suggested, including Larry's own
  - Pathologically Eclectic Rubbish Lister

Language

- Perl is an Interpreted language
  - It needs to run through an interpreter to be compiled before execution
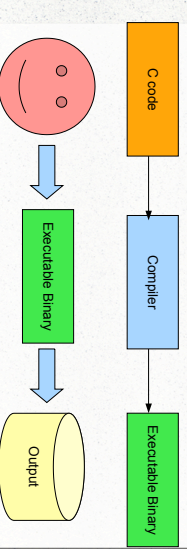
Language

- Perl is a Dynamic language
  - Easy to change
  - Run code during compilation
  - Embed other languages within it
  - Can be embedded into other language

Language

- Perl is a Procedural language
  - Series of statements top to bottom - fast
- Perl is Dynamically typed
  - Variables checked at runtime, not compile time

Perl Program

C program

Language

- Perl supports multiple programming paradigms
  - Object Oriented and Functional styles

Slogans

- There is more than one way to do it
  - TIMTOWTDI (TimToady)
- Easy things should be easy, and hard things should be possible

Licensing

- Open Source
- Free
- Encouraged to release useful code as Open Source (but not required)

Applications

- Sysadmin support, GUI's, Web Apps, BioInformatics
- Plethora of reusable code on the CPAN to help with all of these
  - CGI for websites (as well as frameworks)
  - BioPerl (a multitude of Tools)