

# Technologies For Data Manipulation And Analysis

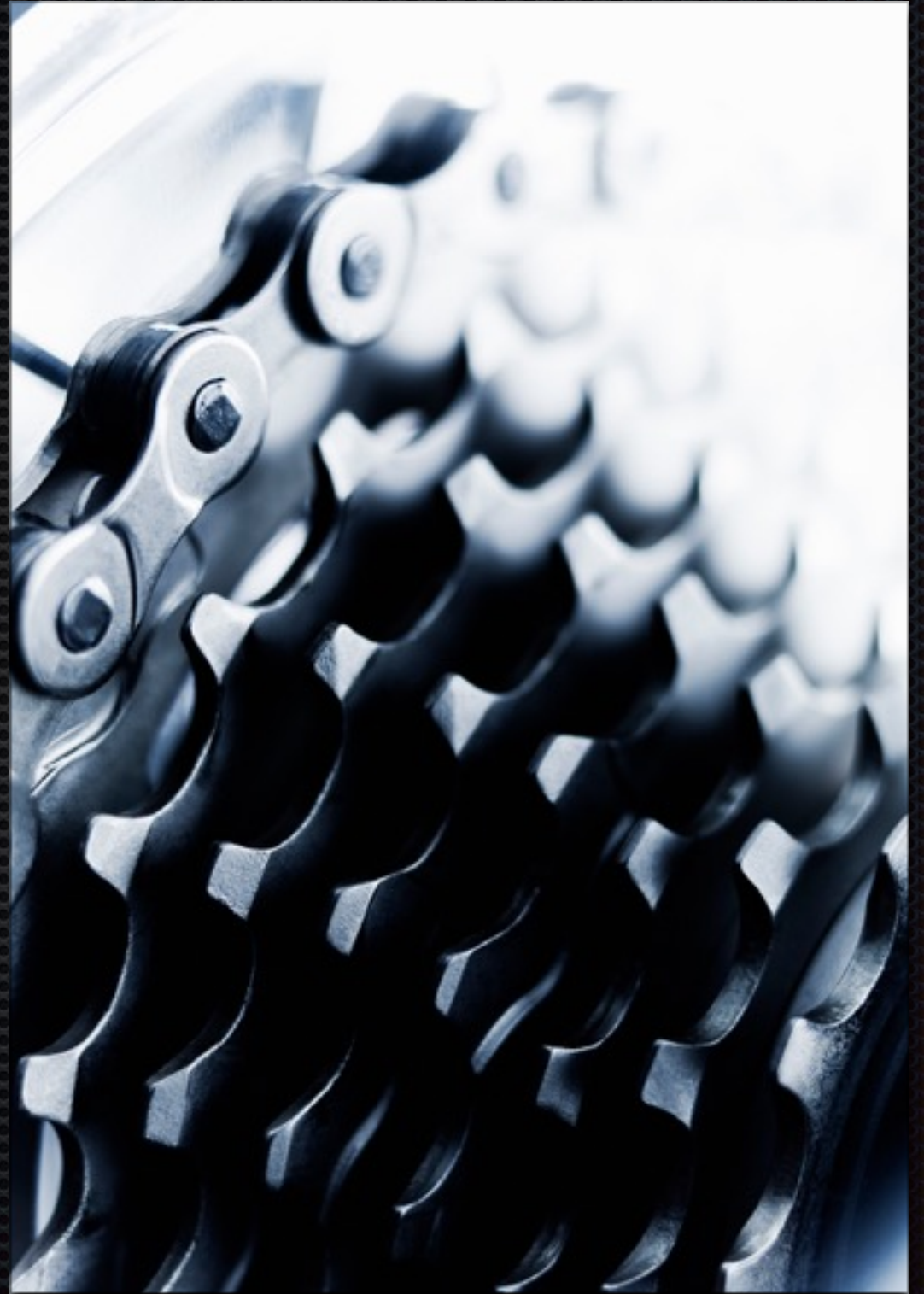
There's More than One Way to Groom a Cat(alog)

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# Tools

Regular Expressions





# What are regular expressions? ("regex" or "regexp")

- Powerful search and replace
- Rather than just searching for specific things, you can search for kinds of things
- Symbols define a search pattern (similar to "wildcards")
- This pattern may match your data
- Data may be modified or rearranged based on that matching

# Examples:

## Regex for finding data

- Find all the lines that start with “2016”
- Find all 10- or 13-digit numbers
- Find all the fields like “Includes biblio ... something something ... references.” (but not “bibliographical”)

# Examples:

## Regex for modifying data

- Reformat all phone numbers from ###-###-#### to (###) ###-####
- Re-order names from LastName, FirstName -> FirstName LastName
  - Handling “Jr.” or “Sr.” correctly

# Some common software in tech services has regex support

- MARCEdit
- Vendor-specific: Voyager's Global Data Change, etc.
- Google Sheets
- Text/XML Editors: vim, Sublime, EditPad, Oxygen
- Programming languages
- Databases like Oracle, MySQL
- Command line tools: grep, sed, awk

## Find and replace

Find

Replace with

Search

All sheets

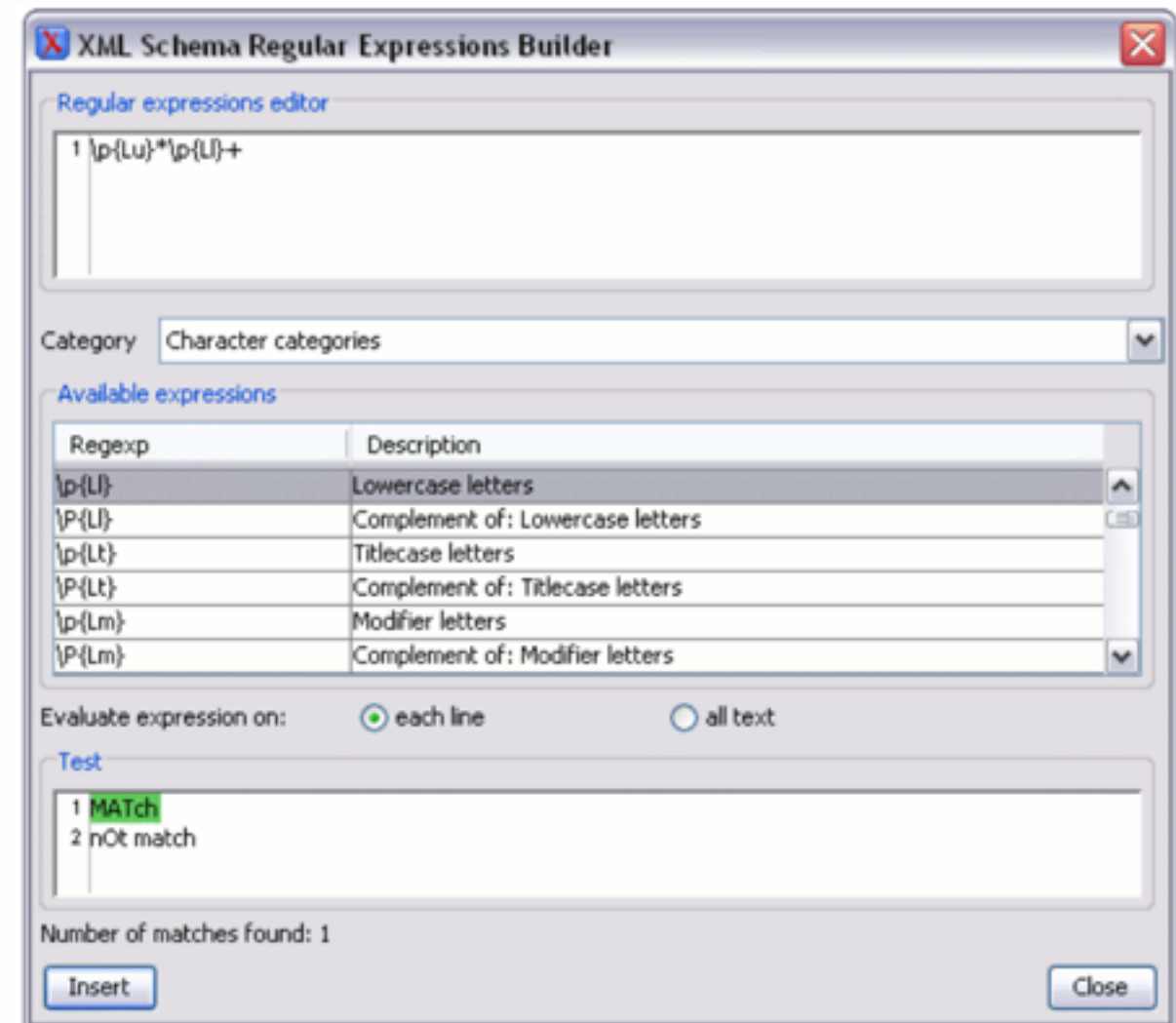
- ☐ Match case
- ☐ Match entire cell contents
- ☐ Search using **regular expressions** [Help](#)
- ☐ Also search within formulas

Find

Replace


Replace all








Done



`sed -e "s/now/meow/" file1 > file2`

# A nice learning tool: regex101.com

 regular expressions 101

 @regex101  donate  contact  bug reports & feedback  wiki  

REGULAR EXPRESSION

no match

/

insert your regular expression here

/ g

TEST STRING

insert your test string here

SWITCH TO UNIT TESTS >

EXPLANATION

An explanation of your regex will be automatically generated as you type.

MATCH INFORMATION

Detailed match information will be displayed here automatically.



# There are different “flavors” of regex

- Depends on software or language you’re using
  - e.g. Language with PCRE support, vim text editor
- Different features available
- Slightly different syntax to invoke some features
- BUT there is a common core
  - Once you know this, can look up details for your specific application

Forward slashes (/) are often used to indicate a regex

/ Regular  
Expression /



Forward slashes (/) are often used to indicate a regex

**/** What does  
this pattern  
match? **/**

Literal characters:  
the simplest regex!

**/cat/**

Matches:

**cat**

**cat**aloging

sc**at**ter

wild**cat**



Literal characters:  
the simplest regex!

**/cat/**

Does not match:

cart

CAT

act

c a t

# Unless specified otherwise...

- Matching is case-sensitive
  - To match, the capitalization in your data must match the capitalization in your pattern
- Matching only part of the data is fine
  - It doesn't have to be the whole word or line



BACK OF YOUR SHEET

/cat/

# Regex Bingo!

- I will put a regex search pattern on the slide
- Search the indicated column (like B, I, N, G, O) – does the regex match any of those strings?
- If so, mark that space off!
- If you get five in a line, shout “BINGO!”

N

/FREE/



# Meta-characters

\ ^ \$ | ( ) . [ ] ? \* + { }

- These are what give regular expressions their power.
- If the word or phrase you're searching for has punctuation, it may not match as you intend

# But what if I want to search for those?!

- You can “escape” such characters by preceding them with a backslash
- For example, if you wanted to search for a literal carat, include this in your regex: `\^`

Carat    ^

Start of line anchor

**/^dog/**

Matches:

**dog**

**dog**wood

**dog** house

**dog**ma



Carat    ^

Start of line anchor

**/^dog/**

Does not match:

bulldog

What a cute dog!

dog

dooooooog

B

/^app/

|

/^rad/



Dollar sign \$

End of line anchor

**/ugh\$**

Matches:

**ugh**

to**ugh**

do**ugh**

la**ugh**

Dollar sign \$

End of line anchor

/ugh\$

Does not match:

taught

ugh, that's gross

UGH

upright

N

/one\$/



G

/per\$/

# Vertical bar

## This or that?

/ab|c/

Matches:

**ab**dicat**e**

**cab**aret

**lab**oratory

Jack

# Vertical bar

## This or that?

**/ab|c/**

Does not match:

rad

blue

band

Canada

○

/ash|rr/

B

/DA|BB/



# Dot (period):

It matches any character

**/m.t.e/**

Matches:

**matte**

**mother**

per**mitted**

to**mat**atoes

Dot (period):

It matches any character

**/m.t.e/**

Does not match:

smote

tempted

motormen

Mister

|

/t..ch/

N

/a.i.o/

# Character classes

## Square brackets – [ ]

- This part of the expression only matches one character
- Matches any character that appears in the brackets (but no others)

# Character classes

Square brackets – [ ]

/m[ai]n/

Matches:

**man**

**mine**

w**oman**

swim**ming**



# Character classes

## Square brackets – [ ]

**/m[ai]n/**

Does not match:

main

chimney

women

am not

G

/s[oa]r/

○

/t[hr]o/

# Character classes: some shorthand

- `[a-z]` instead of `[abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz]`
- `[a-zA-Z]` – any letter
- `\d` instead of `[0123456789]`
- `\s` – any whitespace like `<space>`, `<tab>`
- `\w` – any letter, number, or underscore

# Character classes (excluding) - carat in square brackets [^]

- You can use similar notation to match any character EXCEPT what you specify
- This is the same carat character as used in the left anchor, but there should be no confusion

Character classes (excluding) -  
carat in square brackets [^ ]

Matches:

/o[^ao]r/

**your**  
aut**o**graph  
co**br**a  
**ou**rselfs



Character classes (excluding) -  
carat in square brackets [^ ]

Does not match:

/o[^ao]r/

oar  
poor  
or  
coder

B

/z[ʌek]/

|

/Qu[Λa]/

# Quantifiers:

## How many of a thing?

- These most recent patterns we've looked at have each matched exactly ONE character
  - But what if it is optional?
  - Or you can / must have more than one?
- These metacharacters directly follow patterns to specify such things

Question mark ? (zero or one time)

Thing before it is optional

/do?r/

Matches:

ard**or**

**dor**sal

**dr**one

And**dr**ew

Question mark ? (zero or one time)

Thing before it is optional

**/do?r/**

Does not match:

door

dOr

and

Lando



N

/ang?e/

G

/din?e/

Star (asterisk): (zero, one, or more!)  
Thing before is optional, repeatable

**/il\*e/**

Matches:

pumpkin **pie**

bibliophile

**Miller**

**gill**ess

Star (asterisk): (zero, one, or more!)  
Thing before is optional, repeatable

**/il\*e/**

Does not match  
fills  
fire  
dinner  
tilted

○

/lan\*c/

B

/smar\*/

Plus sign: (one or more times)  
Thing before is required, repeatable

**/an+/**

Matches:

**an**

**ann**otate

ma**nn**er

**annnnnnn**

Plus sign: (one or more times)

Thing before is required, repeatable

**/an+/**

Does not match:

apple

minnow

Andover

nasty



|

$/iS+iv/$


N








/ban+/

All of these can be used together

- `/^(dog|raccoon) ?fo+d$/`
- `/[A-Z][a-z]* [A-Z][a-z]+/`

# Visit regex101.com

 regular expressions 101

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# Going back to this example

**/cat/**

Matches:

**cat**

**cat**aloging

sc**at**ter

wild**cat**

# Search and replace

## REGULAR EXPRESSION

:/ cat

Search

## TEST STRING

My cats are the best

The text we're doing  
search / replace on

## SUBSTITUTION

fuzzy beast

Replace

My fuzzy beasts are the best

The result!

# Search and replace

## flexibility in searching

### REGULAR EXPRESSION

`/ cat | horse | dog`

### TEST STRING

My dogs are the best

### SUBSTITUTION

`fuzzy beast`

My fuzzy beasts are the best

# Parentheses ( )

## Capturing patterns

- As you match patterns, you can “capture” parts of your data and rearrange them
- In the replacement pattern, refer to these parts by their “back references” like \$1, \$2, \$3, ... in order of parentheses in the pattern



# Simple example: reformatting names

## REGULAR EXPRESSION

```
:/ ([A-Z]+) ([A-Z]+)
```

## TEST STRING

KATHRYN LYBARGER

## SUBSTITUTION

\$2, \$1

LYBARGER, KATHRYN

What does this match

**/.\***

What does this match

`/(.*) (.*)/`

# What does this do?

## REGULAR EXPRESSION

`:(.*) (.*)`

## TEST STRING

JAMES EARL JONES

## SUBSTITUTION

`$2, $1`

What is the  
result?

# Regular expressions are “greedy”

- That first “capture group” (.\*?) has two choices:
  - Capture “James” and leave “Earl Jones” for the second
  - Capture “James Earl” and leave “Jones” for the second
- “Greedy” means it will capture as much as it can

# Greedy capture

## REGULAR EXPRESSION

`(.*) (.*)`

## TEST STRING

JAMES EARL JONES

**\$1 = JAMES EARL**

## SUBSTITUTION

`$2, $1`

JONES, JAMES EARL

# Think about this:

## How to remove all GMD?

- Data: (lots of records like this)
  - =100 1\_ \$a Sachar, Louis, \$e author.
  - =245 00 \$a Holes \$h [electronic resource] / \$c Louis Sachar.
  - =264 \_1 \$a New York : \$b Random House, \$c 2015.
- Goal:
- Remove 245 \$h

# References

- Regex101
  - <http://www.regex101.com/>
- Regular-Expressions.info
  - <http://www.regular-expressions.info/>
- Documentation for your particular software / application
  - Where to use regex
  - Which features are available
  - How to invoke them