

# The Year in Perl, 2007

by brian d foy  
brian.d.foy@gmail.com



The previous year was a big one for Perl. Not only did we get a new version of Perl with many new features, but several completely new Perl books hit the shelf, and there was only one month in the year that didn't have an event of some sort. Looking back, here's what I picked out as the most significant happenings from last year.

## Perl 5.10 -----

On December 18, The Perl 5 Porters released Perl 5.10.0 on Perl's 20th birthday. The full details of the changes are in `perldelta`, but I'm particularly excited about:

- \* The regex engine is no longer recursive, so it's faster
- \* The regex syntax now supports grammars, named captures, relative back references, and several other features
- \* Subroutines can have static variables
- \* The smart match operator
- \* The given-when construct that everyone else calls `switch`
- \* `Module::Build` is now core
- \* There's a Perl Unicode FAQ added to the standard docs as `perlunifaq`.

Ricardo SIGNES put his "Perl 5.10 for People Who Aren't Totally Insane" slides online to show off most of the new language-level features.

On December 18, ActiveState announces that they have a 5.10.0 build of ActivePerl for Windows (including Vista), Linux, Mac OS X, Solaris, AIX, and HP-UX. They still support the 5.8 line of ActivePerl too.

Strawberry Perl has a complete Perl/C Compiler/CPAN solution in a single download for Windows XP and earlier. Strawberry Perl is waiting on the Vista compatibility for the MinGW compiler tools.

Jon Allen updated `perldoc.perl.org` with the latest Perl 5.10 documentation, although you can still get to the 5.8 documentation

In October, Leon Brocard released the latest Perl 5.005\_05, a new maintenance version of Perl 5.005 (Google Code project) that compiles on the latest versions of everything. This release is not yet on CPAN.

## Perl 5 Notables -----

Throughout the year, Sam Vilain worked on converting the Perforce history of perl commits into a git history of perl, which he discussed in his *Use.Perl* journal. The Perl perforce repository has been hosted by ActiveState since 1997 when

Gurusamy Sarathy chose it during his reign as pumping.

In January, Bryne Reese, the maintainer of `SOAP::Lite`, wrote a "State of the SOAP" message to the module's mailing list. He outlined the current situation with development and the technical challenges of keeping up with modern SOAP developments. He's looking for a new maintainer that has more time than he does to devote to the project.

In January, several teams using Perl competed in the 2007 Platform Forms competition, which tries to compare web development platforms. The official results noted that the three Perl solutions needed less code, and required fewer changes to deal with database changes, but lacked web service functionality and were susceptible to HTTP spoofing. Team 1, using Catalyst, published their post-mortem, noting that their problems came mostly from their unfamiliarity with the tools.

In March, eBay uploaded to CPAN an official eBay Perl developer's kit, called `eBay::API`.

In March, brian d foy updated `Business::ISBN-2.0` to handle the new ISBN-13 format. He was only a couple months late in supporting a format he should have supported a year earlier.

On March 13, Curtis "Ovid" Poe announced that `TAPx::Parser`, the Perl module to parse the Test Anywhere Protocol (TAP) output, would become `TAP::Parser`. The new `TAP::Parser` eventually made it into the `Test::Harness 3.0` distribution as the official Perl test output parser.

In April, Chris Dolan received a \$2,000 grant from The Perl Foundation to implement the remaining 20 policies needed for `Perl::Critic` to support all of the recommendations in Damian Conway's Perl Best Practices. In October, he announced that he was finished with all 20 policies.

In April, Michael Peters received a \$750 grant from The Perl Foundation to improve Smolder, a web-based test result aggregator, to use the Test Anywhere Protocol.

In June, David Landgren uploaded a new version of `Crypt::SSLeay` to fix compilation and portability issues. This was the first release of the module in four years. David had taken over maintenance of the module from Joshua Chamas in December 2006.

On June 6, the Open Source Initiative approved the Artistic License 2 for inclusion in its list of approved licenses.

On July 7, Gabor Szabo noted that `CPAN::Forum` has a tag especially for modules seeking a maintainer.

On July 29, Ricardo SIGNES uploaded `MIME::Lite 3.01_06`, the first developer release since December 2005, fixing many of the bugs in its RT queue. On August 28th, he uploaded