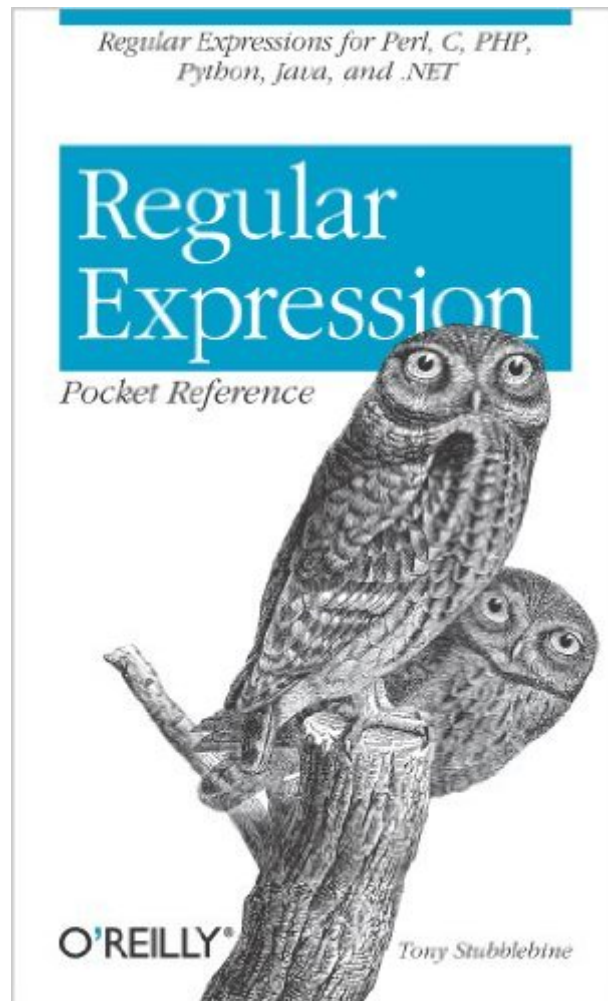


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# Regular Expression Pocket Reference



## Synopsis

Regular expressions are such a powerful tool for manipulating text and data that anyone who uses a computer can benefit from them. Composed of a mixture of symbols and text, regular expressions can be an outlet for creativity, for brilliant programming, and for the elegant solution. While a command of regular expressions is an invaluable skill, all there is to know about them fills a very large volume, and you don't always have time to thumb through hundreds of pages each time a question arises. The answer is the Regular Expression Pocket Reference. Concise and easy-to-use, this little book is the portable companion to Mastering Regular Expressions. This handy guide offers programmers a complete overview of the syntax and semantics of regular expressions that are at the heart of every text-processing application. Ideal as an introduction for beginners and a quick reference for advanced programmers, Regular Expression Pocket Reference is a comprehensive guide to regular expression APIs for C, Perl, PHP, Java, .NET, Python, vi, and the POSIX regular expression libraries. O'Reilly's Pocket References have become a favorite among programmers everywhere. By providing a wealth of important details in a concise, well-organized format, these handy books deliver just what you need to complete the task at hand. When you've reached a sticking point and need to get to a solution quickly, the new Regular Expression Pocket Reference is the book you'll want to have.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One of the most difficult things when working with regular expressions -- at least for me -- is dealing with different implementations (i.e., Perl, Java, Python, PHP, UNIX tools, etc.) The basics of regexes and pattern matching don't vary all that much, but each implementation is just different enough that the same line of code can yield different results. If you work with more than one of these implementations, keeping track of differences in metacharacters and metasequences can be nearly impossible. This is especially true when -- as is the case with me -- you deal with regexes somewhat intermittently. This is one of the main reasons why the "Regular Expression Pocket Reference" was written and this is why I keep it close at hand. This book will not really teach you how to use regexes, nor will it tell you how to use, say, Perl. If, however, you use Perl and you know how to use regexes but just can't remember whether you can disallow backtracking for text matched by a subpattern, then this book will save you quite a bit of time and effort. If you're wondering what it means to "disallow backtracking for text matched by a subpattern," or when you would want to use it, buy "Mastering Regular Expressions" or a similar title. The "Regular Expression Pocket Reference" is designed to be a quick reference tool, and it serves this purpose very well. I would recommend it especially for those who work with regular expressions intermittently or who work with several different implementations.

I love this series of books (the C#, C++ and STL pocket refs are my favorite), but the Regular Expression pocket ref tries to cover too many implementations. You only get about 10 pages for each language so, unless you use multiple implementations (e.g. C#/.NET, Perl, JavaScript, etc), this just isn't good value for money. I returned my copy and printed out a quick reference from one of the many Internet programming sites.

The editorial blurb on this book suggests that it can be used as a tutorial by those new to regular expressions. That's not the case. This book is strictly a reference, albeit a very good one. I bought O'Reilly's "Mastering Regular Expressions" to learn the area, and I use this book as a quick reference. It serves that purpose very well.

It's nearly impossible to memorize all the minutiae of regular expressions, especially over multiple language implementations. Tony Stubblebine's book *Regular Expression Pocket Reference* by O'Reilly is a nice way to help you out without digging through endless pages. Chapter List: About This Book; Introduction To Regexes And Pattern Matching; Perl 5.8; Java (java.util.regex); .NET And C#; Python; PCRE Lib; PHP; vi Editor; JavaScript; Shell Tools; Index Like most pocket references, this book is small (93 pages), but there's a lot of information packed into a small space. Each implementation chapter covers the metacharacters and metasequences that are supported in the language's implementation of regular expressions. This is followed by the language functions, examples of regular expressions, and a list of additional resources the reader can use to learn more about regular expressions in that language. If you don't know anything about the subject, this book (in my opinion) isn't going to help you out much. It assumes that you already understand the material and you're looking for a reference guide to find quick answers. And that's fine. This book has a definite purpose and target audience, and I think it does a very nice job of hitting the mark. For me, this would be a perfect companion book to *Mastering Regular Expressions* (also by O'Reilly). *Mastering* is considered one of the definitive volumes on the subject, and having this pocket guide on hand to jog your memory on lesser-used points would be perfect.

If you've ever picked up a copy of O'Reilly's *Mastering Regular Expressions*, then you'll feel right at home with this book. The *Pocket Reference* is all about usability, and this book is no exception. If you've never seen *Mastering Regular Expressions*, then this book takes the most important aspects of that book into about 80 pages. This book is basically divided into various languages (Perl, C, Java, C#) with examples on how to use regular expressions with each language. In addition to discussing the built-in language specific functions that you should use, there is discussion on the differences and nuances to using regular expressions in the specific language. If you need a desktop quick reference on regular expressions, then I would highly recommend this book. I have it next to my desk with the .NET section bookmarked. If you need something with a little more depth and explanation, then I would suggest picking up a copy of O'Reilly's *Mastering Regular Expressions*.

I recommend getting this book if you feel comfortable with regular expressions and regular expressions are important to you. As one expects from an O'Reilly *Pocket Reference*, this book is compact but still covers a lot of ground. For a whole bunch of applications, it provides: \* tables of various groupings of regex metacharacters, summarizing their syntax and meaning; \* summaries of

other regex related features, but not in tabular form;\* examples;\* a few references in case you need to go deeper. The information is concise and well chosen. This is a reference, but in applications where you use regular expressions less, it may also be useful for expanding your knowledge significantly. It was for me. If you wish, take a look at my more detailed review on Oakland Perl Mongers.

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