

What's new in Perl 5.8.5

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Updated Modules

- Perl 5.8.5 updates a large number of core modules, including:
 - CGI 3.05
 - Digest 1.08
 - Encode 2.01
 - FileCache 1.04
 - libnet 1.19
 - Pod::Parser 1.28
 - Pod::Perldoc 3.13
 - Pod::Latex 0.57

Updated Modules

- Scalar-List-Utills 1.14
 - Test 1.25
 - Test::Harness 2.42
 - Unicode::Collate 0.40
 - Unicode::Normalize 0.30
- The compressed tarball source for Perl is now 200k smaller.
 - This is because unicode character classes are created at build-time, and are not bundled with the Perl source code.

Improved Debugger

- Perl's debugger can now step backwards!
- Well, it can give the appearance of stepping backwards.
- The debugger can re-execute everything but the last statement.
- This is great for debugging deterministic code.

Better sort

- In 5.8.4, Perl's sort was optimized for in-place sorting:

```
@a = sort @a;
```

- Unfortunately, the optimizer was sometimes a little too aggressive:

```
@a = sort ($b, @a); # Bye bye $b
```

- This bug has now been fixed.

Unicode Improvements

- The regexp engine now supports matching the intersection of two unicode character classes.
- The 'chardnames' pragma no longer clobbers `$_`
- Perl better understands UTF-16 scripts (both big endian and little endian)
- `substr()` works better with unicode.

Bugfixes

- Carp no longer causes problems when running in a Safe compartment.
- Perl no longer produces warnings when using the result of optimized-away assignments.

```
my @foo = @bar = ();
```

- Threads used with weak-references no longer causes warnings at shutdown.

Bugfixes

- glob() no longer halts prematurely when trying to access directories which it does not have permission to view.
- Thread start-up time is much more consistent.
 - Previously creation time could vary widely.
 - This was caused by a poor hashing algorithm.

Other changes

- Perl 5.8.5 builds cleanly on LynxOS
- h2ph can now understand a limited number of C inline functions.
- Perl -V provides more information and features.
- The Shell module is better documented and tweaked.

Any questions?



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- Photography by Paul Fenwick and Jacinta Richardson (Castle Rock, Port Phillip Bay, Australia, approx 18m underwater).