

Re: Wait for background processes to complete

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/Perl/comp.lang.perl.misc/2008-01/msg00758.html>

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On 2008-01-18 17:47, pgodfrin <pgodfrin@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

This was a lot of fun. I would like to respond to the various observations, especially the ones about the Perl Documentation being misleading.

[...]

To restate the original task I wanted to solve:

To be able to execute commands in the background and wait for their completion.

The documentation I am referring to is <http://perldoc.perl.org/>.

If you search on the concept of "background processes" this documentation points you to the following in the Language reference > `perlipc` > Background Process :

<begin quote>

You can run a command in the background with:

```
system("cmd &");
```

The command's STDOUT and STDERR (and possibly STDIN, depending on your shell) will be the same as the parent's. You won't need to catch SIGCHLD because of the double-fork taking place (see below for more details).

<end quote>

There is no further reference to a "double fork" (except in the `perlfaq8` and only in the context of zombies, which it says are not an issue using `system("cmd &")`). This is confusing.

I find it more confusing that this seems to be in the section with the title "Using `open()` for IPC". I fail to see what one has to do with the other.

There is a general problem with perl documentation: Perl evolved in the Unix environment, and a lot of the documentation was written at a time

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when the "newbie perl programmer" could be reasonably expected to have already some programming experience on Unix (in C, most likely) and know bas