

What language to manipulate text files

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/Python/comp.lang.python/2005-06/msg01649.html>

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I want to do some tricky text file manipulation on many files, but have only a little programming knowledge.

What are the ideal languages for the following examples?

1. Starting from a certain folder, look in the subfolders for all filenames matching *FOOD*.txt Any files matching in each folder should be copied to a new subfolder within the current folder called EATING with a new name of *FOOD*COPY.txt

2. Process each file as follows:

Here is a simplified example of what I want as input and output.

```
----- input
..... 'several unknown lines of text file
Get apples from apples shop
Get oranges from oranges shop
Get plums from plums shop
Get pears from pears shop
Eat from apples, oranges,
plums, pears 'whitespace at start of line is unimportant
..... 'more unknown lines of text file
Chapter 1
Several lines of text about apples in here
Chapter 2
Several lines of text about oranges in here
Chapter 3
Several lines of text about plums in here
Chapter 4
Several lines of text about pears in here

----- output
..... 'several unknown lines of text file
Get apples from apples shop
Get oranges from oranges shop
Get plums from plums shop
Get pears from pears shop
Get bagels from bagels shop 'the Get lines...
Get donuts from donuts shop 'can be in any order
```

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Eat from apples, bagels, oranges,
plums, donuts, pears 'whitespace at start of line is unimportant
..... 'more unknown lines of text file

Chapter 1

Several lines of text about apples in here

Chapter 2

Several lines of text about bagels in here

Chapter 3

Several lines of text about oranges in here

Chapter 4

Several lines of text about plums in here

Chapter 5

Several lines of text about donuts in here

Chapter 6

Several lines of text about pears in here

Summary:

I have added two new items to Get;

I have put them into the comma-delimited list after searching for a particular fruit to put each one after;

The Chapters are renumbered to match their position in the comma-delimited list.

The "several lines of text" about each new item can be pulled from a new_foods.txt file (or a bagels.txt and a donuts.txt file).

My first objective is to process the files as described.

My second objective is to learn the best language for this sort of text manipulation. The language should run on Windows 98, XP and Linux.

Would Python be best, or would a macro-scripting thing like AutoHotKey work?

I thought about Perl, but think I would learn bad habits and have hard to read code.

Thanks, Ross

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• *Follow-Ups:*

- ◆ ***Re: What language to manipulate text files***

- ◇ *From:* Dan Christensen

- ◆ ***Re: What language to manipulate text files***

- ◇ *From:* Michael Hoffman

- ◆ ***Re: What language to manipulate text files***

- ◇ *From:* Roose

- ◆ ***Re: What language to manipulate text files***

- ◇ *From:* Terry Hancock

- Prev by Date: ***Re: What is different with Python ?***

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- Next by Date: ***Re: Tkinter -- '<Destroy>' event executing more than once?***
- Previous by thread: ***Re: How to receive events (eg. user mouse clicks) from IE***
- Next by thread: ***Re: What language to manipulate text files***
- Index(es):
 - ◆ ***Date***
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