

3. EXAMPLES 1

Examples with the Vertical Bar

Introduction

We will remember that the vertical bar metacharacter *is used to choose from a list of alternatives, where any will be a match*. And we saw that if we want to match with the Strings "Damian" or "Damien", we can use the following:

```
Regex_Pattern = "Damian|Damien"
```

This Regular Expression matches with EITHER "Damian" OR "Damien". And we saw that the same thing can be done as follows:

```
Regex_Pattern = "Dami(a|e)n"
```

And we noted that sometimes when people are emailing me, instead of "Damian" they type "Damain"; they swap around the "l" and "a", and we used this RegEx:

```
Regex_Pattern = "Dam. .n"
```

However, we could also do the same as follows (and get a more *precise solution*):

```
Regex_Pattern = "Dam(ia|ai)n"
```

And if we wanted to take in account both the people who confuse the spelling of the name, and those who confuse the order of letters, we could do the following:

```
Regex_Pattern = "Dam(ia|ai|ie|ei)n"
```

This Regular Expression matches with any of the following four Strings, EITHER "Damian" OR "Damain" OR "Damien" OR "Damein".

Clear Regexes

It is really important that we make our Regular Expressions as clear as possible, so that if we have to modify them in a few months, or someone else has to, it will be easy to understand the purpose of the RegEx. This is not an exact science because something that is very clear to you might be less so to others, but it is important to be aware that we should try to make our RegExes as easy to understand as possible. If we can add comments in to explain to purpose of the RegEx, that will help a lot, but we should also think about how we present the RegEx. As an example, we'll look at searching for a Period or a Vertical Bar character.

So, if we are looking for the Period character, we put two slashes in front of it:

```
Regex_Pattern = "\\."
```

And it's the same for a Vertical Bar character:

```
Regex_Pattern = "\\|"
```

So to search for one or the other of them, we can express it in one of two ways, either as Vertical Bar character or Period character ("|" OR "."):

```
Regex_Pattern = "\\|\\|\\. "
```

Or as Period character or Vertical Bar character (". " OR "|"):

```
Regex_Pattern = "\\.|\\|\\|"
```

I, personally, find the second of these Regexes easier to read, the first one (slash, slash, bar, bar, slash, slash, period) is harder for me to find the OR symbol, than the second one (slash, slash, period, bar, slash, slash, bar), but it really is a matter of perspective, and it is always worth getting someone else to check if your Regexes are clear to them.

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