

NAME

Pod::Checker, podchecker() - check pod documents for syntax errors

SYNOPSIS

```
use Pod::Checker;

$num_errors = podchecker($filepath, $outputpath, %options);

my $checker = new Pod::Checker %options;
$checker->parse_from_file($filepath, \*STDERR);
```

OPTIONS/ARGUMENTS

`$filepath` is the input POD to read and `$outputpath` is where to write POD syntax error messages. Either argument may be a scalar indicating a file-path, or else a reference to an open filehandle. If unspecified, the input-file defaults to `*STDIN`, and the output-file defaults to `*STDERR`.

podchecker()

This function can take a hash of options:

-warnings => *val*

Turn warnings on/off. *val* is usually 1 for on, but higher values trigger additional warnings. See *Warnings*.

DESCRIPTION

podchecker will perform syntax checking of Perl5 POD format documentation.

Curious/ambitious users are welcome to propose additional features they wish to see in **Pod::Checker** and **podchecker** and verify that the checks are consistent with *perlpod*.

The following checks are currently performed:

- Unknown '=xxxx' commands, unknown 'X<...>' interior-sequences, and unterminated interior sequences.
- Check for proper balancing of `=begin` and `=end`. The contents of such a block are generally ignored, i.e. no syntax checks are performed.
- Check for proper nesting and balancing of `=over`, `=item` and `=back`.
- Check for same nested interior-sequences (e.g. `L<...L<...>...>`).
- Check for malformed or non-existing entities `E<...>`.
- Check for correct syntax of hyperlinks `L<...>`. See *perlpod* for details.
- Check for unresolved document-internal links. This check may also reveal misspelled links that seem to be internal links but should be links to something else.

DIAGNOSTICS

Errors

* empty `=headn`

A heading (`=head1` or `=head2`) without any text? That ain't no heading!

* `=over` on line *N* without closing `=back`

The `=over` command does not have a corresponding `=back` before the next heading (`=head1` or `=head2`) or the end of the file.

- * =item without previous =over
- * =back without previous =over
 - An =item or =back command has been found outside a =over/=back block.
- * No argument for =begin
 - A =begin command was found that is not followed by the formatter specification.
- * =end without =begin
 - A standalone =end command was found.
- * Nested =begin's
 - There were at least two consecutive =begin commands without the corresponding =end. Only one =begin may be active at a time.
- * =for without formatter specification
 - There is no specification of the formatter after the =for command.
- * Apparent command =foo not preceded by blank line
 - A command which has ended up in the middle of a paragraph or other command, such as

```
=item one
=item two <-- bad
```
- * unresolved internal link *NAME*
 - The given link to *NAME* does not have a matching node in the current POD. This also happened when a single word node name is not enclosed in " ".
- * Unknown command "*CMD*"
 - An invalid POD command has been found. Valid are =head1, =head2, =head3, =head4, =over, =item, =back, =begin, =end, =for, =pod, =cut
- * Unknown interior-sequence "*SEQ*"
 - An invalid markup command has been encountered. Valid are: B<>, C<>, E<>, F<>, I<>, L<>, S<>, X<>, Z<>
- * nested commands *CMD*<...*CMD*<...>...>
 - Two nested identical markup commands have been found. Generally this does not make sense.
- * garbled entity *STRING*
 - The *STRING* found cannot be interpreted as a character entity.
- * Entity number out of range
 - An entity specified by number (dec, hex, oct) is out of range (1-255).
- * malformed link L<>
 - The link found cannot be parsed because it does not conform to the syntax described in *perlpod*.
- * nonempty Z<>
 - The Z<> sequence is supposed to be empty.
- * empty X<>
 - The index entry specified contains nothing but whitespace.
- * Spurious text after =pod / =cut

The commands `=pod` and `=cut` do not take any arguments.

* Spurious `=cut` command

A `=cut` command was found without a preceding POD paragraph.

* Spurious `=pod` command

A `=pod` command was found after a preceding POD paragraph.

* Spurious character(s) after `=back`

The `=back` command does not take any arguments.

Warnings

These may not necessarily cause trouble, but indicate mediocre style.

* multiple occurrence of link target *name*

The POD file has some `=item` and/or `=head` commands that have the same text. Potential hyperlinks to such a text cannot be unique then. This warning is printed only with warning level greater than one.

* line containing nothing but whitespace in paragraph

There is some whitespace on a seemingly empty line. POD is very sensitive to such things, so this is flagged. **vi** users switch on the **list** option to avoid this problem.

* file does not start with `=head`

The file starts with a different POD directive than `head`. This is most probably something you do not want.

* previous `=item` has no contents

There is a list `=item` right above the flagged line that has no text contents. You probably want to delete empty items.

* preceding non-item paragraph(s)

A list introduced by `=over` starts with a text or verbatim paragraph, but continues with `=item` s. Move the non-item paragraph out of the `=over/=back` block.

* `=item` type mismatch (*one* vs. *two*)

A list started with e.g. a bullet-like `=item` and continued with a numbered one. This is obviously inconsistent. For most translators the type of the *first* `=item` determines the type of the list.

* *N* unescaped `<>` in paragraph

Angle brackets not written as `<lt>` and `<gt>` can potentially cause errors as they could be misinterpreted as markup commands. This is only printed when the `-warnings` level is greater than 1.

* Unknown entity

A character entity was found that does not belong to the standard ISO set or the POD specials `verbar` and `sol`.

* No items in `=over`

The list opened with `=over` does not contain any items.

* No argument for `=item`

`=item` without any parameters is deprecated. It should either be followed by `*` to indicate an unordered list, by a number (optionally followed by a dot) to indicate an ordered (numbered) list or simple text for a definition list.

- * empty section in previous paragraph

The previous section (introduced by a `=head` command) does not contain any text. This usually indicates that something is missing. Note: A `=head1` followed immediately by `=head2` does not trigger this warning.

- * Verbatim paragraph in NAME section

The NAME section (`=head1 NAME`) should consist of a single paragraph with the script/module name, followed by a dash '-' and a very short description of what the thing is good for.

- * `=headn` without preceding higher level

For example if there is a `=head2` in the POD file prior to a `=head1`.

Hyperlinks

There are some warnings with respect to malformed hyperlinks:

- * ignoring leading/trailing whitespace in link

There is whitespace at the beginning or the end of the contents of `L<...>`.

- * (section) in '\$page' deprecated

There is a section detected in the page name of `L<...>`, e.g. `L<passwd (2)>`. POD hyperlinks may point to POD documents only. Please write `C<passwd (2)>` instead. Some formatters are able to expand this to appropriate code. For links to (builtin) functions, please say `L<perlfunc/mkdir>`, without `()`.

- * alternative text/node '%s' contains non-escaped | or /

The characters `|` and `/` are special in the `L<...>` context. Although the hyperlink parser does its best to determine which `"|"` is text and which is a delimiter in case of doubt, one ought to escape these literal characters like this:

```
/      E<sol>
|      E<verbar>
```

RETURN VALUE

podchecker returns the number of POD syntax errors found or -1 if there were no POD commands at all found in the file.

EXAMPLES

See *SYNOPSIS*

INTERFACE

While checking, this module collects document properties, e.g. the nodes for hyperlinks (`=headX`, `=item`) and index entries (`X<>`). POD translators can use this feature to syntax-check and get the nodes in a first pass before actually starting to convert. This is expensive in terms of execution time, but allows for very robust conversions.

Since PodParser-1.24 the **Pod::Checker** module uses only the **poderror** method to print errors and warnings. The summary output (e.g. "Pod syntax OK") has been dropped from the module and has been included in **podchecker** (the script). This allows users of **Pod::Checker** to control completely the output behavior. Users of **podchecker** (the script) get the well-known behavior.

```
Pod::Checker->new( %options )
```

Return a reference to a new Pod::Checker object that inherits from Pod::Parser and is used for calling the required methods later. The following options are recognized:

`-warnings => num` Print warnings if `num` is true. The higher the value of `num`, the more warnings are printed. Currently there are only levels 1 and 2.

`-quiet => num` If `num` is true, do not print any errors/warnings. This is useful when Pod::Checker is used to munge POD code into plain text from within POD formatters.

`$checker->poderror(@args)`

`$checker->poderror({%opts}, @args)`

Internal method for printing errors and warnings. If no options are given, simply prints "@_". The following options are recognized and used to form the output:

`-msg`

A message to print prior to `@args`.

`-line`

The line number the error occurred in.

`-file`

The file (name) the error occurred in.

`-severity`

The error level, should be 'WARNING' or 'ERROR'.

`$checker->num_errors()`

Set (if argument specified) and retrieve the number of errors found.

`$checker->num_warnings()`

Set (if argument specified) and retrieve the number of warnings found.

`$checker->name()`

Set (if argument specified) and retrieve the canonical name of POD as found in the `=head1 NAME` section.

`$checker->node()`

Add (if argument specified) and retrieve the nodes (as defined by `=headX` and `=item`) of the current POD. The nodes are returned in the order of their occurrence. They consist of plain text, each piece of whitespace is collapsed to a single blank.

`$checker->idx()`

Add (if argument specified) and retrieve the index entries (as defined by `X<>`) of the current POD. They consist of plain text, each piece of whitespace is collapsed to a single blank.

`$checker->hyperlink()`

Add (if argument specified) and retrieve the hyperlinks (as defined by `L<>`) of the current POD. They consist of a 2-item array: line number and Pod::Hyperlink object.

AUTHOR

Please report bugs using <http://rt.cpan.org>.

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Based on code for **Pod::Text::pod2text()** written by Tom Christiansen <tchrist@mox.perl.com>

Pod::Checker is part of the Pod-Checker distribution, and is based on *Pod::Parser*.