

## Re: Need help correcting this Bash function

**Source:** <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.unix.shell/2004-10/0294.html>

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**Date:** 10/09/04

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Tavis Ormandy wrote:

> *On 2004-10-09, Chris F.A. Johnson <cfajohnson@gmail.com> wrote:*

>

>>> *Re-read the thread, I was asking why is it necessary to add extra code*

>>

>> *Who said anything about adding extra code?*

>

>

> *What do you think we are discussing here?*

He appears to think, as I do, that we're discussing whether or not to use bash-specific constructs when the equivalent generally-available constructs could be used for about the same amount of code and efficiency. If that's not what's being discussed, please enlighten us!

>

>>> *so that some antiquated implementations don't get confused in some rare*

>>> *situation that is never going to happen anyway, as he's WRITING A BASH*

>>> *SCRIPT.*

>>

>> *Why is it better to write a bash script than a script that runs*

>> *equally well in bash, ksh, ash, and other POSIX shells?*

>>

>

>

> *Stop. Read Thread. Think.*

>

> *You seem to think I'm advocating non-portability. I'm saying why should*

> *extra code be added to my conditions to support antiquated, broken*

> *shells? \_especially\_ as this script is a bash script.*

Because there are plenty of people out there running ksh88 and other older shells. I use ksh88 because I often have to run scripts on machines that don't have bash or other more recent shells installed and, since I don't own or administer those machines, I don't want to waste my time installing them or correcting my scripts for the brief period when I'm using those machines.

## comp.unix.shell: Re: Need help correcting this Bash function

As for the OP asking for help with a "bash script" – that doesn't mean he wants or should only get a bash-specific solution. Plenty of people post questions here about one tool only to be told that either:

- a) they're using the tool the wrong way, or
- b) the correct solution is to use a different tool.

```
>
>>>> Pattern matching is available with case; [[..]] is not necessary (I
>>>> have NEVER used it in a script).
>>>
>>> Well, your scripts must be needlessly complex and long.
>>
>> No, they are usually not any longer than a less portable script.
>
>
> Well then, you're lucky that you only ever have to do simple operations.
```

I very much doubt that's the case, but I suspect that most people would use awk or perl for most complex operations anyway.

```
<snip>
> So...what is your point?
>
> a) Everyone should write 100% POSIX sh compliant code.
> b) Everyone should write 100% POSIX sh compliant code, unless it's easier not to.
```

I believe it's:

- c) Everyone should write 100% POSIX sh compliant code, unless it's significantly beneficial not to.

I do use gawk instead of old awk. That means I couldn't run my awk scripts on some of those older machines I mentioned BUT there's such a huge difference in capabilities between gawk and old awk that it's worth it in that case and I never actually have had to use a gawk script on one of the older machines anyway since I could just ship the data files to a newer machine, run gawk, and ship the results back. This falls into "c" above – it's significantly beneficial to use gawk over oawk so I do it. In the shell cases we're discussing there's little or no benefit so I can't imagine why you'd do it.

Ed.