

DIFFERENT PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES

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The rise of BASIC is very much a phenomenon of the mid 70's and early 80's. It comes as something of a surprise to discover that it was actually born in the 60's. BASIC was designed by John Kemeny and Thomas Kurtz at Dartmouth College, in the USA.

The aims of the BASIC system were:

- 1) to develop a system and language that was friendly, easy to learn and use;
- 2) to introduce computing as addition to other courses;
- 3) to operate an open access policy.

A little after BASIC was developed, Niklaus Wirth was thinking the same sort of thoughts as Kemeny and Kurtz. He wanted to produce a language suitable for teaching but for teaching computer science. This meant that his new language had to be simple enough to work on a mini-computer but it also had to embody the ideals of the computer science community. In 1972 he produced the language Pascal, named after French mathematician Blaise Pascal. The pressure to adopt Pascal in preference to BASIC took on the nature of a holy war.

CPL (Combined Programming Language) was developed with the purpose of creating a language that was capable of both machine-independent programming and would allow the programmer to control the behavior of individual bits of information.

The popularity of the personal computer and the perceived drawback of BASIC sent people in search of the ideal language. This was a time of enthusiasm. Well known languages such as BASIC were modified into languages such as COMAL. There was even personal computer realization of Fortran 66.

The development of computer languages was not fast and easy, as it may seem. The ideas which were offered gave a push in the developing and improving of computer science!

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