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## PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES AT THE VERGE OF DYING

-Tania Aggarwal

It is generally and very truly said that "Nothing lasts forever", and programming languages are no exception. No matter how 'cool' or 'hyped up' a programming language is, eventually the better ones take over and today's 'favourite' fades away.

Since the beginning, there have been hundreds of programming languages, of which some have faced the test of time pretty well and are still widely used while the others didn't fare very well. They just came, ruled, and faded away. Among all the various possible reasons for this inevitable decline, one can be attributed to the fact that with time, new generations of developers embrace the languages and frameworks they find easier to work with.

Given below are the few programming languages, in no particular order, that are mostly dead or are likely to die in the coming few years.

### Objective-C

Developed by Brad Cox in 1983, Objective-C is a superset of the C programming language and provides object-oriented capabilities and a dynamic runtime. The language follows the Smalltalk-derived syntax and is notable for being the primary language used by Apple for both iOS and macOS. Objective-C continued to be the only language used for developing Apple software until 2014 when Swift arrived. Since then, the preference of Swift over Objective-C by the developers due to its various remarkable features like robustness and better memory management has led Objective-C to find a place in the list of dying programming languages.

Having said that, it has been 36 years since Objective-C came around, and the language still has some occupancy in the market. Hence, it will probably take a few more years for Swift to completely take over.

### Perl

Perl is a high-level programming language used for a wide range of tasks such as web development, text manipulation, GUI development, network programming, and many more. Originally developed by Larry Wall in 1987, Perl has numerous features that ease the task of a programmer, but it comes at the expense of significant CPU and memory requirements. These factors resulted in its increasing disuse.

The latest sister version of Perl - Perl 6 (also known as Raku) was released in December 2015. This release did revive the language somewhat, but by then, the advent of several other prominent programming languages especially Python made it difficult for Perl to regain control over the market.

### Pascal

Pascal is a general-purpose, procedural programming language that was specifically developed for teaching programming practices in a structured manner. Created by Niklaus Wirth, Pascal is a descendent of ALGOL 60. It is named after the French mathematician Blaise Pascal, who invented the first mechanical calculator.

Pascal led to the development of Delphi (Object Pascal), which in general can be considered as an object-oriented derivation of Pascal language.

Because of its various features like easy-to-learn, extensive error checking, strongly typed, etc Pascal used to be a fairly popular and in-demand language. But Delphi soon took the place of Pascal, condemning it to the list of dead programming languages. However, considering its growth and demand in the current scenario, Delphi itself is on the verge of vanishing now.

### Haskell

Haskell is a general-purpose language supporting features like statical typing, functional programming, type inference, lazy evaluation. Designed for handling symbolic computations and list processing applications, it held more relevance to the research and industrial application domain.

Also, it supports various features such as better reliability, shorter lead times, etc. which has earned it a preference in several big-tech companies like Facebook, GitHub and IBM in the past.

However, the TIOBE popularity index shows a consistent decline in its demand and usage in the past 8-10 years. This decline could be attributed to various factors like difficulty to learn, static typing, etc. These factors have led to expect it to die in coming years.

#### VB.NET

Visual Basic .NET (VB.NET), as the name suggests, is implemented on the .NET Framework. Visual Basic was developed by Microsoft as a variant of BASIC and then VB.NET was launched in 2002 as the successor to Visual Basic. It is a multi-paradigm, object-oriented programming language.

VB.NET has lived its fair share of popularity for a long time but the latest TIOBE Index reports show that VB.NET is now losing its charm against its competitor language C# and that C# is taking over in terms of demand and popularity.

However, due to its strong command over the programming world in the past, VB.NET still has adequate occupancy in the market and will probably take years to die out.

There is nothing wrong with the programming languages which make them disappear. It's just that with evolving technology, developers find alternative languages to catch up with the trend. The truth is that programming languages seldom really die, they just become outdated. As a developer, it is our responsibility to analyze the trends, to understand the demand of the tech market, to know the current and future scope of the languages in the IT world, and adapt accordingly.

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