

# Brief history of Javascript

## Relevant links

- <http://www.yuiblog.com/crockford/> volume 1. Watch if you have time.
  - First hour is an enlightening history of computing showing how some trends were created.
  - Programming Language history starts 58 minutes into the video. Javascript in last 20 minutes.
  - Here's the “mother of all demos”<sup>1</sup> mentioned there. (optional)
  - Morale of the story: Programmers have always resisted change to better systems in favor of systems that they are more used to.
- <http://www.yuiblog.com/crockford/> volume 2. At least watch the first 20 minutes of this video if you do nothing else.
- An older lecture<sup>2</sup>. Watch at least the first 20 minutes.

Optional:

- <http://dailyjs.com/2010/05/24/history-of-javascript-1/>
- <http://dailyjs.com/2010/05/24/history-of-javascript-1/><sup>3</sup>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JavaScript#History><sup>4</sup>

## History of Javascript

- 1993
  - Mosaic Web Browser developed in UIUC. First popular web browser (image tag).
  - Part of that group created Netscape. Another part created Explorer.
- 1995
  - Javascript designed within 2 weeks by Brendan Eich at Netscape. Goal was to add interactivity to web pages.
  - Initially named Mocha, then LiveScript.
  - Influenced by other languages: Self (prototype objects), Scheme (function model), Java (syntax).
  - Was originally meant to also run on the server (LiveWire).
  - Netscape and Sun team up to fight Microsoft.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJDv-zdhzMY>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2ifWcnQs6M>

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.w3.org/community/webed/wiki/A\\_Short\\_History\\_of\\_JavaScript](https://www.w3.org/community/webed/wiki/A_Short_History_of_JavaScript)

<sup>4</sup><http://dailyjs.com/2010/05/24/history-of-javascript-1/>

- Netscape licensed the name Javascript from Sun (who had trademark on Java), to capitalize on Java's popularity at the time. Java was supposed to be the web language back in 1995.
  - Sun/Oracle still holds the trademark on "Javascript".
- 1996
  - Microsoft reverse-engineers "JScript" in 1996 for IE 3 to compete with Netscape. Named so to avoid trademark disputes.
  - Netscape asked W3C to standardize the language. W3C said no.
  - In November 1996 they asked ECMA<sup>5</sup>. First standard adopted in June 1997. It is called ECMAScript. (Because noone else was allowed to call it JavaScript).
- Browser wars (1996-1999)
  - Netscape and Microsoft start introducing new and slightly incompatible features
  - Webpage writers want to use these features. Browser detection.
  - As other browsers start supporting features, they need to bypass browser detection.
  - A lot of old code still maintains some of these ugly hacks.
- 1999
  - ECMAScript 3 standard (baseline for modern JS) released.
  - Era of standardization begins.
  - Still many legacy sites out there.
  - Still many users using old browsers.
- 2005
  - Ajax introduced: A set of (existing) technologies that allows web applications to load data in the background.
- 2009
  - ECMAScript 3.1 renamed to ECMAScript 5. Essentially the current standard.
  - ES5 has "default" and "strict" mode.
  - Node is released. Server-side Javascript.
- Work on ES6, codenamed Harmony, ongoing.

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<sup>5</sup><http://www.ecma-international.org/>