



Meetup

Structure and  
Interpretation  
of Computer  
Programs

Second Edition



Harold Abelson and  
Gerald Jay Sussman  
with Julie Sussman

# Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs

## Chapter 1.1



Friendly Environment Policy

# About Me (Conor Hoekstra)

- I'm a Senior Library Software Engineer for



- Working on the **RAPIDS** AI team (<http://rapids.ai>)

- I am a programming language enthusiast
- Most of experience in C++
- On the ISO C++  National Body
- I love algorithms and beautiful code
- I have a  **YouTube** channel  
[youtube.com/codereport](https://youtube.com/codereport)
- My online alias is `code_report`



# Goal of PLVM

- Work through books on programming languages together
- Grow knowledge on PLs and PL:
  - principles
  - design
  - implementation
- This ultimately will lead to ability to write **code** that is more:
  - readable & expressive
  - maintainable & scalable
  - beautiful & idiomatic

# Format of PLVM

- One hour meeting once a week
  - ~15 min presentation at beginning
  - ~45 of discussion afterwards
- 
- I will pre-record presentation and upload to YouTube for those unable to attend

# Why SICP?



- SICP has been on my TO READ list for a long time
- Robert “Uncle Bob” Martin on Functional Geekery Episode 1

“It is pretty amazing. It was startling for me to read it,  
it has become a kind of bible for me”

- BAYPIGgies User Group Meeting Nov 15, 2018



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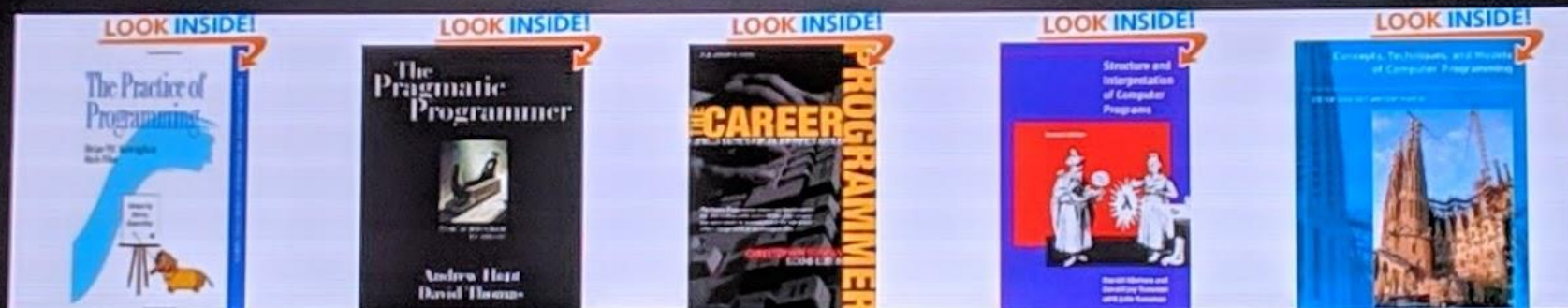
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Functional  
Geekery

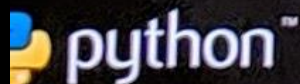
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## Useful Sources of Input



- The Practice of Programming
- The Pragmatic Programmer
- The Career Programmer: Guerilla Tactics for an Imperfect World

- Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs
- Concepts, Techniques, and Models of Computer Programming





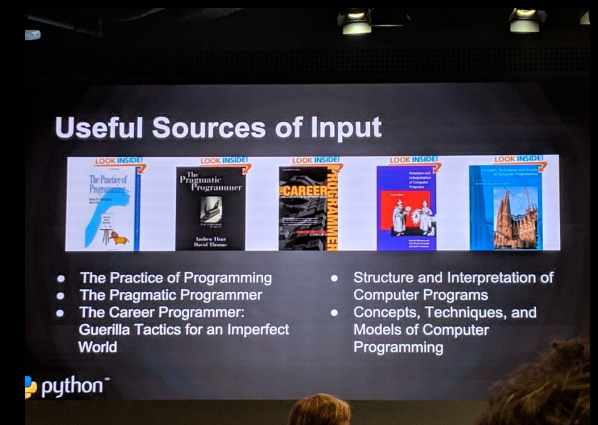
# Why SICP?



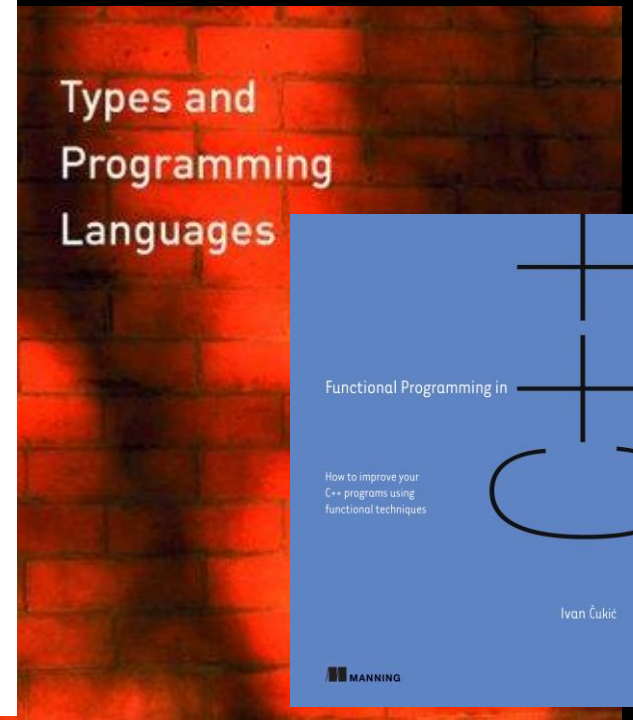
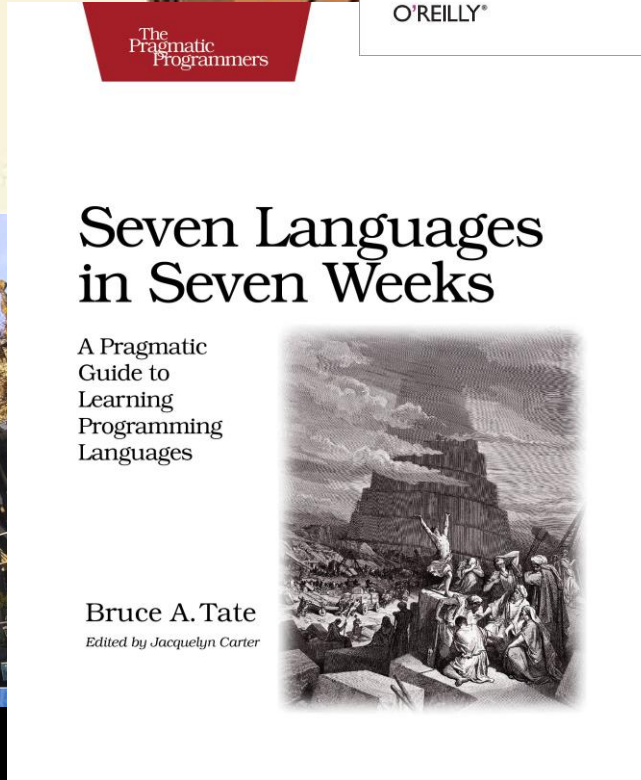
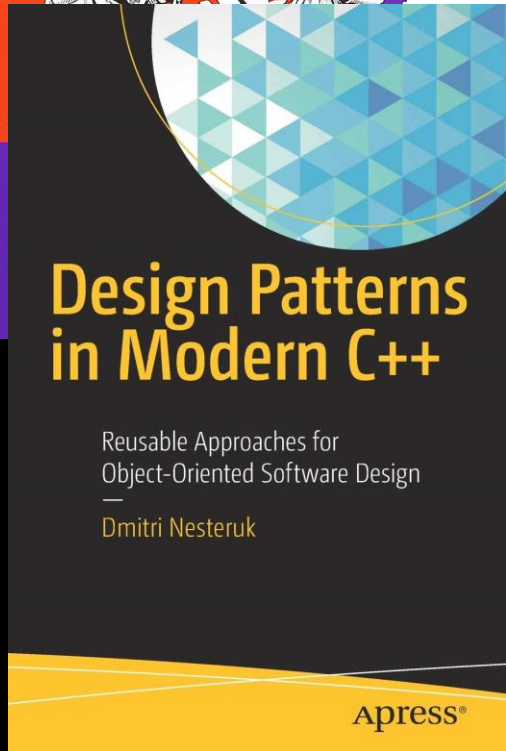
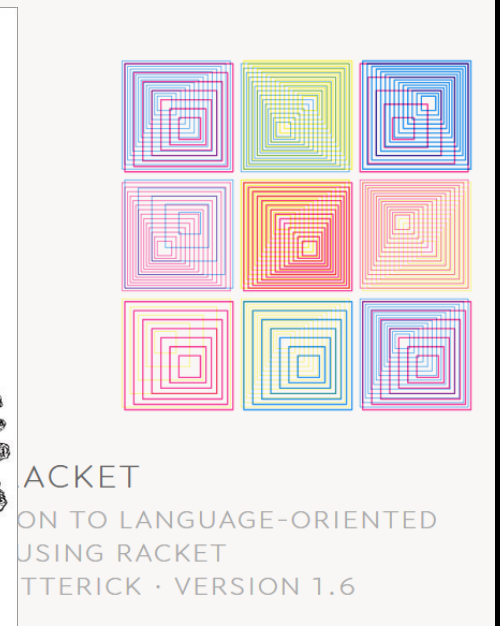
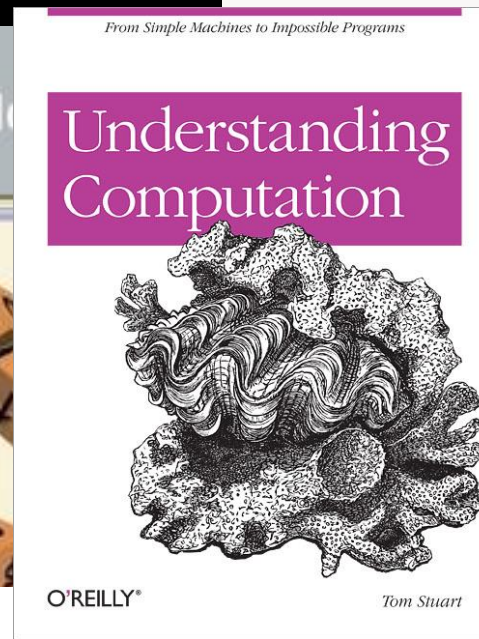
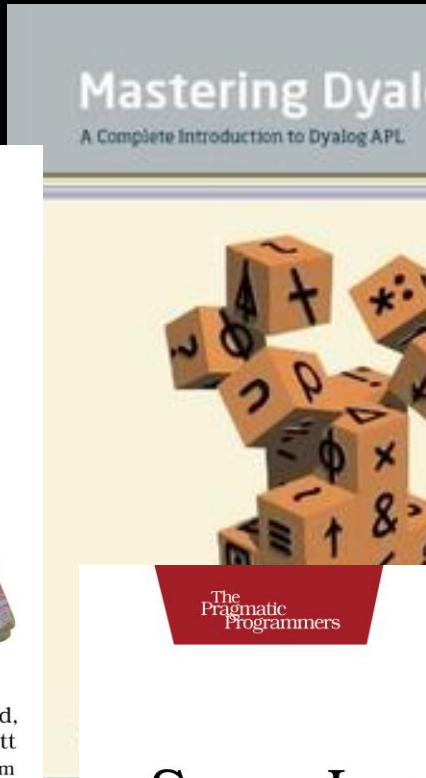
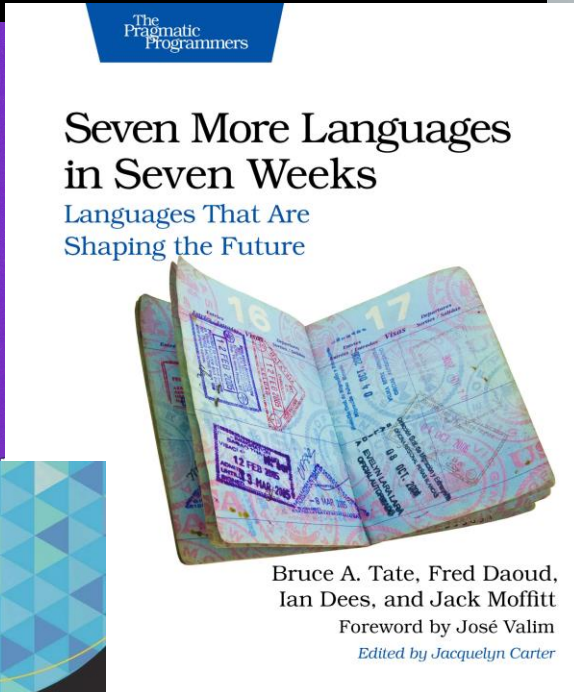
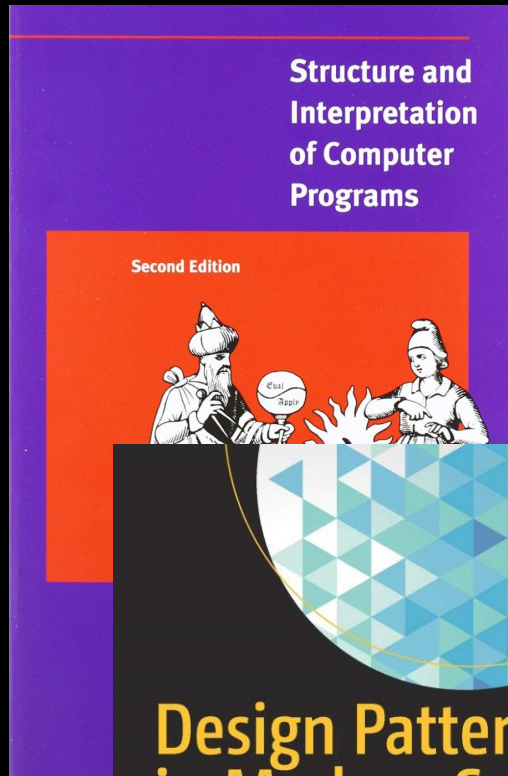
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# Books to read:





Structure and  
Interpretation  
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Second Edition



Harold Abelson and  
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# Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs

## Chapter 1.1

<b>Dedication</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Preface to the Second Edition</b>	<b>xix</b>
<b>Preface to the First Edition</b>	<b>xxi</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>xxv</b>
<b>1 Building Abstractions with Procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 The Elements of Programming . . . . .	6
1.1.1 Expressions . . . . .	7
1.1.2 Naming and the Environment . . . . .	10
1.1.3 Evaluating Combinations . . . . .	12
1.1.4 Compound Procedures . . . . .	15
1.1.5 The Substitution Model for Procedure Application	18
1.1.6 Conditional Expressions and Predicates . . . .	22
1.1.7 Example: Square Roots by Newton's Method . .	28
1.1.8 Procedures as Black-Box Abstractions . . . . .	33

**“I think that it’s extraordinarily  
important that we in computer  
science keep fun in computing.”**

**Alan J. Perlis**  
**Dedication, SICP**

# Who is Alan. J Perlis?

- First recipient of the **Turing Award**
- Member of the team that developed (one of the most influential PLs ever)
- First president of the ACM
- Professor at Purdue, CMU and Yale
- Wrote “*Epigrams on Programming*”
  - “A LISP programmer knows the value of everything, but the cost of nothing.”
  - “It is better to have 100 functions operate on one data structure than 10 functions on 10 data structures.”
- *In Praise of APL: A Language for Lyrical Programming*





**“A programmer should acquire  
good **algorithms** and **idioms**.”**

**Alan J. Perlis**

**Forward, SICP**

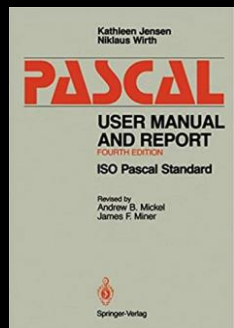
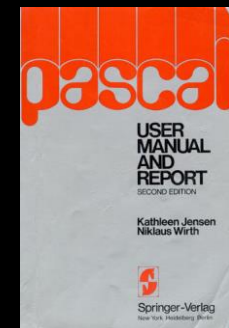
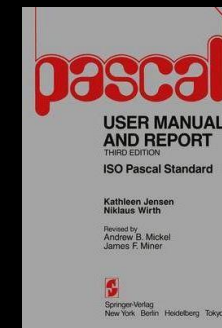
**“So you have all these algorithms  
at your disposal, learn them –  
that’s very important.”**

**Sean Parent**  
**C++ Seasoning, 2013**

**“The discretionary exportable  
functionality entrusted to the  
individual **Lisp** programmer is  
more than an **order of magnitude**  
greater than that to be found  
within **Pascal** enterprises.”**



**Alan J. Perlis**  
**Forward, SICP**



**“Lisp changes. The **Scheme** dialect used in this text has evolved from the original Lisp and differs from the latter in several important ways, including static scoping for variable binding and permitting functions to yield functions as values. In its semantic structure Scheme is as closely akin to **Algol 60** as to early **Lisps**.”**

**(1/3)**

**“Algol 60, never to be an active language again, lives on in the genes of Scheme and Pascal. It would be difficult to find two languages that are the communicating coin of two more different cultures than those gathered around these two languages.”**

**(2/3)**

**“Pascal is for building pyramids – imposing, breathtaking, static structures built by armies pushing heavy blocks into place. Lisp is for building organisms – imposing, breathtaking, dynamic structures built by squads fitting fluctuating myriads of simpler organisms into place.”**

**(3/3)**

**Alan J. Perlis**

**Forward, SICP**



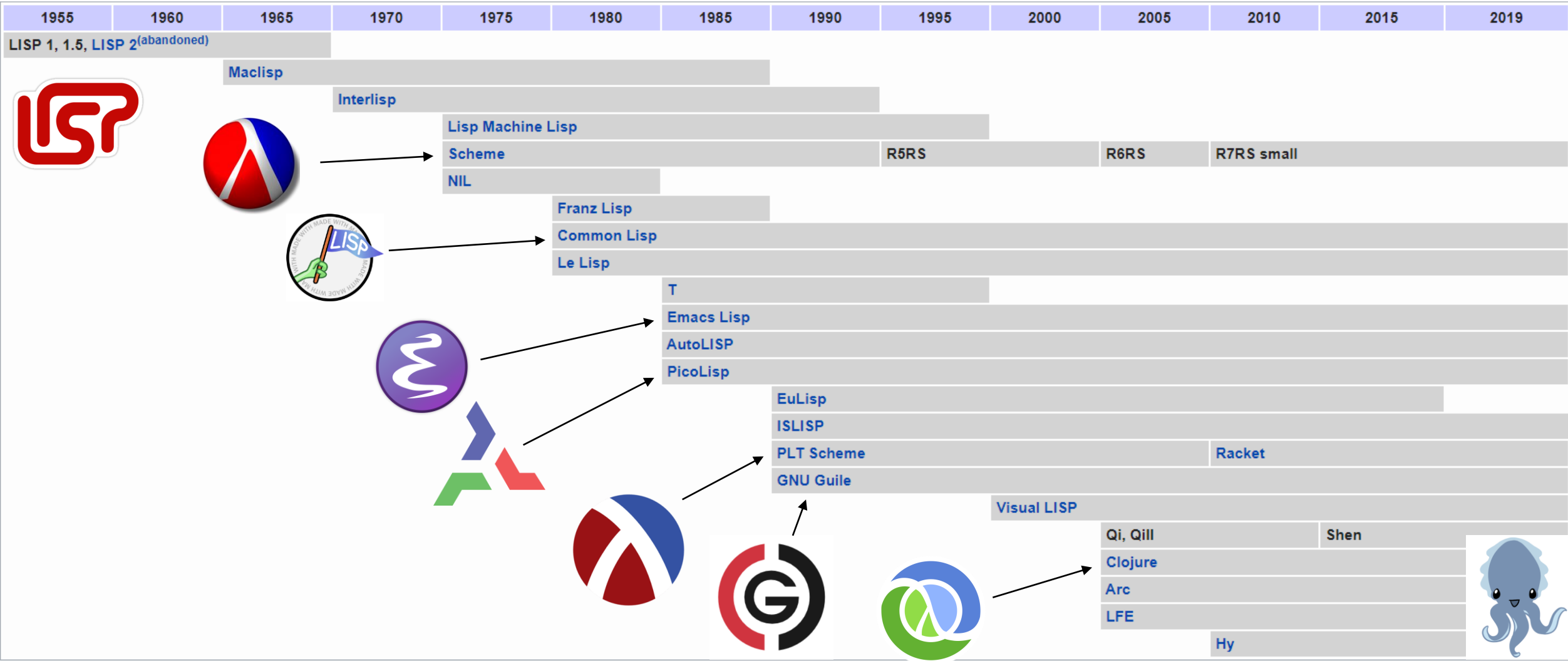
**“Scheme, the dialect of Lisp that we use, is an attempt to bring together the power and elegance of Lisp and Algol.”**

**Preface to the First Edition, SICP**

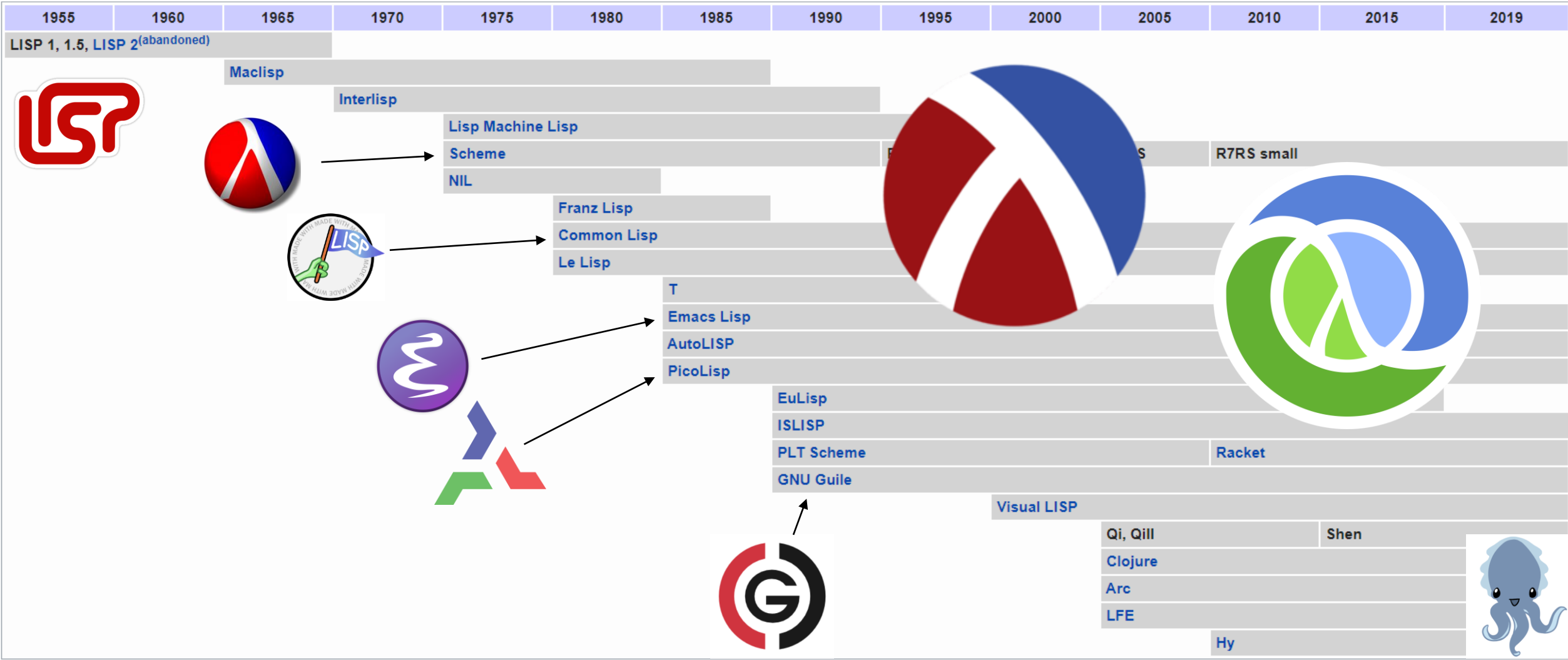
**“The dialect of **Lisp** used in this  
book is called **Scheme**.”**

**Chapter 1, SICP**

Timeline of Lisp dialects<sup>(edit)</sup>



Timeline of Lisp dialects<sup>(edit)</sup>





**Late 50s**



**McCarthy**

**ALGOL**

**Algol Committee  
(incl. Perlis)**

**Mid 70s**

**Scheme**



**Sussman &  
Steele**

**90s**

**Racket**  
(originally  
PLT Scheme)



**PLT  
Research  
Group**



Racket (programming language)

Common Lisp

Scheme (programming language)

Lisp (programming language)

+1



## How are Racket and Scheme different from each other?



Answer



Follow · 5



Request



1



### 2 Answers

**Shriram Krishnamurthi**, Racketeer since the day it was born.

Answered September 19, 2016

Racket was originally a Scheme. We began a variant of Scheme, called PLT Scheme, because we wanted to have a quality open source implementation that interfaced well with graphical libraries, so that we could build the DrScheme programming environment.

As we built that environment and more things, we slowly realized a growing set of weaknesses in Scheme that prevented us from building better software. These led to a series of research innovations, all of which fed back into the language and into programs written in the language.

Eventually, we realized that we had grown a significantly bigger language on top of Scheme. It was proving problematic to call it a “Scheme” because this name was unfair both to Racket—making it look like a tiny language when it was a large one—and to the Scheme community, which may have felt the new language violated “Schemeness”. Furthermore, even though the core of Racket is Scheme, it’s not *exactly*: one of the changes was to make the language functional by default (specifically, **cons** produces immutable, not mutable, data). This last change was actually a non-backward-compatible change, and meant that many Scheme programs would fail to work as written.

It’s difficult to explain more in the short span of a Quora post. I recommend looking at the article that explained the name change [[From PLT Scheme to Racket](#)] as well as our article that explains the identity of Racket (as different from other languages): [The Racket Manifesto](#).

Racket (programming language) Common Lisp Scheme (programming language)

Lisp (programming language) +1

## How are Racket and Scheme different from each other?

Answer Follow · 5 Request

2 Answers

**Shriram Krishnamurthi**, Racketeer since the day it was

Answered September 19, 2016

Racket was originally a Scheme. We began a variant of Scheme because we wanted to have a quality open source implementation of graphical libraries, so that we could build the DrScheme program.

As we built that environment and more things, we slowly realized weaknesses in Scheme that prevented us from building better. A series of research innovations, all of which fed back into the language written in the language.

Eventually, we realized that we had grown a significantly bigger language than Scheme. It was proving problematic to call it a "Scheme" because both to Racket—making it look like a tiny language when it was not—and to the Scheme community, which may have felt the new language was a betrayal. Furthermore, even though the core of Racket is Scheme, it's not Scheme. One change was to make the language functional by default (specifically, immutable, not mutable, data). This last change was actually a big change, and meant that many Scheme programs would fail to run.

It's difficult to explain more in the short span of a Quora post. I wrote an article that explained the name change [From PLT Scheme to Racket] and another article that explains the identity of Racket (as different from other languages). See the [Manifesto](#).

## The Racket Manifesto

**Matthias Felleisen, Robert Bruce Findler, Matthew Flatt, Shriram Krishnamurthi, Eli Barzilay, Jay McCarthy, Sam Tobin-Hochstadt****Summit on Advances in Programming Languages, 2015**

### Abstract

The creation of a programming language calls for guiding principles that point the developers to goals. This article spells out the three basic principles behind the 20-year development of Racket. First, programming is about stating and solving problems, and this activity normally takes place in a context with its own language of discourse; good programmers ought to formulate this language as a programming language. Hence, *Racket is a programming language for creating new programming languages*. Second, by following this language-oriented approach to programming, systems become multi-lingual collections of interconnected components. Each language and component must be able to protect its specific invariants. In support, *Racket offers protection mechanisms to implement a full language spectrum*, from C-level bit manipulation to soundly typed extensions. Third, because Racket considers programming as problem solving in the correct language, *Racket also turns extra-linguistic mechanisms into linguistic constructs*, especially mechanisms for managing resources and projects. The paper explains these principles and how Racket lives up to them, presents the evaluation framework behind the design process, and concludes with a sketch of Racket's imperfections and opportunities for future improvements.

### Comment

See also the updated, [journal version](#) of this paper.

### Paper

### PDF

**POPL**

**– Principles of Programming Languages**

**HOPL**

**– History of Programming Languages**

**PLDI**

**– Program Language Design and Implementation**

**SNAPL**

**– Summit on Advances in Programming Languages**

## Organizing Committee HOPL IV



**Richard P. Gabriel** Co-chair  
Dream Songs, Inc. & HPI



**Guy L. Steele Jr.** Co-chair  
Oracle Labs  
United States

**“From **Lisp** we take the metalinguistic power that derives from the simple syntax, the uniform representation of programs as data objects, and the garbage-collected heap-allocated data. From **Algol** we take lexical scoping and block structure, which are gifts from the pioneers of programming-language design who were on the Algol committee.”**

**Preface to the First Edition, SICP**

**“Lisp, whose name is an acronym  
for LIST Processing”**

**Chapter 1, SICP**



**“The thing to be multiplied is  
given a local name,  $x$ , which  
plays the same role that a  
**pronoun** plays in natural  
language.”**

**Chapter 1, SICP**

**“... the formal **parameters** are  
replaced by the actual **arguments**  
to which the procedure is  
applied”**

**Chapter 1, SICP**

(+ 137 349)  
486

(/ 10 5)  
2

(- 1000 334)  
666

(+ 2.7 10)  
12.7

(\* 5 99)  
495

### 1.1.1 Expressions

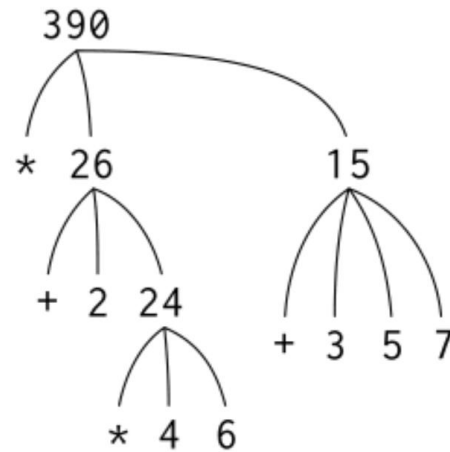
|  
(+ (\* 3 (+ (\* 2 4) (+ 3 5))) (+ (- 10 7) 6))

(+ (\* 3  
|       (+ (\* 2 4)  
|       |       (+ 3 5)))  
|       (+ (- 10 7)  
|       6)))

### 1.1.1 Expressions

```
(define pi 3.14159)
(define radius 10)
(* pi (* radius radius))
314.159
(define circumference (* 2 pi radius))
circumference
62.8318
```

### 1.1.2 Naming and the Environment



**Figure 1.1:** Tree representation, showing the value of each subcombination.

```
(* (+ 2 (* 4 6))  
  (+ 3 5 7))
```

### 1.1.3 Evaluating Combinations

```
(define (square x) (* x x))
```

```
(define (sum-of-squares x y)  
  (+ (square x) (square y)))
```

```
(sum-of-squares 3 4)
```

```
25
```

### 1.1.4 Compound Procedures

```
(f 5)
(sum-of-squares (+ a 1) (* a 2))
```

*;; substitute*

```
(sum-of-squares (+ 5 1) (* 5 2))
(+ (square 6) (square 10))
(+ (* 6 6) (* 10 10))
(+ 36 100)
136
```

### 1.1.5 The Substitution Model for Procedure Application



```
(f 5)
(sum-of-squares (+ a 1) (* a 2))
```

*:: substitute*

```
(sum-of-squares (+ 5 1) (* 5 2))
(+ (square 6) (square 10))
(+ (* 6 6) (* 10 10))
(+ 36 100)
136
```

**Applicative order versus normal order**

### **1.1.5 The Substitution Model for Procedure Application**

```
(define (abs x)
  (cond ((> x 0) x)
        ((= x 0) 0)
        ((< x 0) (- x))))
```

```
(define (abs x)
  (if (< x 0)
      (- x)
      x))
```

### 1.1.6 Conditional Expressions and Predicates

**Exercise 1.3:** Define a procedure that takes three numbers as arguments and returns the sum of the squares of the two larger numbers.

```
(define (sum-square-two-largest lst)
  (~> lst
       (sort >)
       (take 2)
       (map (λ (x) (* x x)) _)
       (foldl + 0 _)))
```

### 1.1.6 Conditional Expressions and Predicates

# Structure & Interpretation of Computer Programs

Harold  
Abelson

Gerald Jay  
Sussman



**“magical language called Lisp”**

**“become Master Programmers”**

**“the constraints imposed in building large software systems are the limitations of our own minds”**

**“you want to suppress detail”**

**Lecture 1: Overview and Introduction to Lisp**

	PROCEDURES	DATA
PRIMITIVE ELEMENTS	+ * < = K	23 1738
MEANS OF COMBINATION	( ) composition COND IF	
MEANS OF ABSTRACTION	DEFINE	

## Lecture 1: Overview and Introduction to Lisp



meetup