

CMSC 124 Final Project

Tumulak, Patricia Lexa U., and Valles, Oscar Vian L.

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1 Javascript

1.1 Purpose and Motivations

JavaScript or JS was first made to provide a lightweight programming language for NetScape that would make web development more accessible instead of requiring deeper training. Today, it is now one of the most widely used programming languages and is mainly used to build websites and web-based applications. This is because it allows the creation of interactive elements for web pages that enhances the user experience. While HTML and CSS give web pages structure, JavaScript gives it responsiveness that engages the user. It is also not limited to just web technology but is also used in game development and mobile applications.

1.2 History

1.2.1 Mocha

JavaScript was developed by Brendan Eich in September 1995 when he was tasked to develop a “Scheme for the web browser” - a simple, dynamic, lightweight, and powerful scripting language with syntax that resembled Java for NetScape. It would be accessible to non-developers such as designers. The first version of JavaScript was made in only just 10 days. JavaScript was originally named Mocha, then called LiveScript, and finally renamed to JavaScript in December 1995 to make it sound closer to Java and was presented as a scripting language for client-side tasks in the browser.

1.2.2 ES1 and 2

With Microsoft’s development of their own web browser, Internet Explorer, they developed their own language similar to Javascript called JScript. With the rapid growth of the internet, the need to standardize JavaScript was realized. NetScape tapped the European Computer Manufacturers Association (ECMA) to make a standardized language. In June 1997, the first version of the ECMAScript, labelled ECMA-262, was released. Due to trademark reasons, ECMA could not use JavaScript for the name of the standardized language and so, JavaScript is its commercial name.

ECMAScript 2 or ES2 was released in June 1998 with relatively no new features to the language and only fixed a few inconsistencies between the ECMA

and ISO standard for JavaScript.

1.2.3 ES3

ECMAScript 3 (or ES3) was released in December 1999 with changes to features were made such as regular expressions, exceptions and try/catch blocks, do-while block, the operators in and instanceof, and more.

It was also during this time that AJAX (asynchronous JavaScript and XML) was born which was a technique that allowed pages to be updated asynchronously using JavaScript and browser built-in XMLHttpRequest object. The term AJAX was coined by Jesse James Garrett.

1.2.4 ES3.1 and ES4

As soon as ES3 was released in 1999, work on ES4 had already begun. The goal for this version of ECMAScript was to design features that allowed JavaScript to be used on the enterprise scale. However, conflict within the committee that worked on it (with representatives from Adobe, Mozilla, Opera, Microsoft, and Yahoo) started to arise. Some parties within expressed concern that ES4 was beginning to get “too big and was out of control”. These were words by Douglas Crockford, an influential JavaScript developer from Yahoo. Microsoft also supported Doug’s concerns and eventually, the group split off to work on ES4 and another separate idea called ES3.1 which was a simpler proposal with no new syntax and only practical improvements. ES4 ended up being too complex and was finally scrapped in 2008. Eventually ES4 found its way into the market as ActionScript developed by Adobe which was the scripting language supported by Flash.

jQuery is a JavaScript library that was initially released in August 2006. Created by John Resig, it allows developers to add extra functionality to web-pages. According to W3Techs, 74.4

NodeJS, a server-side runtime for JavaScript, was introduced in May 2009 by Ryan Dahl. This was built on Chrome’s V8 engine and it included an event loop. This helped build real-time web applications that scale. This also enabled developers to build a web app stack using only one programming language. This paradigm is called JavaScript Everywhere.

1.2.5 ES5

ECMAScript 3.1 was completed and released in December 2009, exactly 10 years after ES3. ECMAScript 3.1 was renamed ECMAScript 5 by the committee to avoid confusion. It was supported by Firefox 4, Chrome 19, Safari 6, Opera 12.10, and Internet Explorer 10. ES5 featured updates to the language such as getter/setters, reserved words, new methods for Object, Array, and Date, JSON support, among others. This did not require any changes to syntax.

Another iteration of ES5 called ECMAScript 5.1 was released in 2011. However, this did not provide new features but only clarified ambiguous points.

1.2.6 ES6 (ES2015) and ES7 (ES2016)

2015 introduced a huge leap forward for JavaScript with the release of ES6 or ES2015 with the introduction of features such as promises, let and const bindings, generators, classes, arrow functions, spread syntax, among others.

It was also during 2015 that ReactJS, the framework that solidified modern day declarative UI patterns, was introduced. It took some of the concepts of AngularJS with declarative UI but improved them unidirectional data flow, immutability, and the use of the virtual DOM.

June 2016 saw the release of the 7th edition of ECMAScript - ES2016. This was a smaller release with few new features introduced such as the exponential operator (**), keywords for asynchronous programming and the Array.prototype.includes function.

1.2.7 ES8, 9, 10 (ES2017, 2018, 2019)

For the next three years, more features were added in subsequent editions of ECMAScript. This included but not limited to features such as functions for easy Object manipulation, rest/spread operators for object literals, asynchronous iteration, and changes to Array.sort and Object.fromEntries.

1.2.8 ES11 (ES2020)

Published in June 2020, ECMAScript 2020 included new functions, the primitive type BigInt for integers that were arbitrarily sized, the nullish coalescing operator, and the globalThis object.

1.3 Language Features

1.3.1 Java-like syntax

JS shares syntax with Java such as the use of brackets, semicolons to end statements, return statements, if and do..while statements

1.3.2 Dynamic typing

JS supports dynamic typing, allowing a variable's type to be determined/defined based on the value stored

1.3.3 Prototypal Inheritance

JS uses prototypes instead of classes or inheritance. Unlike Java where we create a class then the objects for those classes, in JS, an object prototype is defined and then more objects can be made using the prototype.

1.3.4 Interpreted Language

JS script is interpreted by the JavaScript interpreter - a built-in component of the web browser. In recent years however, just in time compilation is used for JS code such as in Chrome's V8 engine.

1.3.5 Client-side validations

JS is a client-side scripting language. This means that JS functions can run even after the webpage has been loaded without communication with the server because the source code is processed by the client's web browser instead of the web server. This makes JS very useful for things such as forms with the capability to validate errors in user input before sending the data to the server.

1.3.6 Let/Const

Unlike var which can be accessed outside of the function it was initialized in, let and const are blocked scope so they can only be accessed in the block they were defined in.

1.3.7 Arrow functions

Useful light-weight syntax that further simplified and shortened function syntax and lessened the number of lines of code

1.4 Paradigms

JavaScript is a multi-paradigm language. It supports both object-oriented programming as well as functional programming. With prototypal inheritance and object prototypes, this makes it object-oriented. The use of first-class functions, arrow functions (which are basically lambdas), and closures make the language functional (aka declarative) as well.