

Programmable devices have existed for centuries. In 1206, the Arab engineer Al-Jazari invented a programmable drum machine where a musical mechanical automaton could be made to play different rhythms and drum patterns, via pegs and cams. Assembly languages were soon developed that let the programmer specify instruction in a text format (e.g., ADD X, TOTAL), with abbreviations for each operation code and meaningful names for specifying addresses. For example, COBOL is still strong in corporate data centers often on large mainframe computers, Fortran in engineering applications, scripting languages in Web development, and C in embedded software. Whatever the approach to development may be, the final program must satisfy some fundamental properties. The first computer program is generally dated to 1843, when mathematician Ada Lovelace published an algorithm to calculate a sequence of Bernoulli numbers, intended to be carried out by Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine. Code-breaking algorithms have also existed for centuries. Trade-offs from this ideal involve finding enough programmers who know the language to build a team, the availability of compilers for that language, and the efficiency with which programs written in a given language execute. Many applications use a mix of several languages in their construction and use. After the bug is reproduced, the input of the program may need to be simplified to make it easier to debug. For example, COBOL is still strong in corporate data centers often on large mainframe computers, Fortran in engineering applications, scripting languages in Web development, and C in embedded software. However, Charles Babbage had already written his first program for the Analytical Engine in 1837. However, readability is more than just programming style. Proficient programming usually requires expertise in several different subjects, including knowledge of the application domain, details of programming languages and generic code libraries, specialized algorithms, and formal logic. Also, specific user environment and usage history can make it difficult to reproduce the problem. In the 1880s, Herman Hollerith invented the concept of storing data in machine-readable form. Also, specific user environment and usage history can make it difficult to reproduce the problem. Computer programmers are those who write computer software. Many programmers use forms of Agile software development where the various stages of formal software development are more integrated together into short cycles that take a few weeks rather than years. The academic field and the engineering practice of computer programming are both largely concerned with discovering and implementing the most efficient algorithms for a given class of problems. FORTRAN, the first widely used high-level language to have a functional implementation, came out in 1957, and many other languages were soon developed—in particular, COBOL aimed at commercial data processing, and Lisp for computer research. The first step in most formal software development processes is requirements analysis, followed by testing to determine value modeling, implementation, and failure elimination (debugging). Unreadable code often leads to bugs, inefficiencies, and duplicated code. In the 9th century, the Arab mathematician Al-Kindi described a cryptographic algorithm for deciphering encrypted code, in A Manuscript on Deciphering Cryptographic Messages.