

A study found that a few simple readability transformations made code shorter and drastically reduced the time to understand it. The following properties are among the most important: In computer programming, readability refers to the ease with which a human reader can comprehend the purpose, control flow, and operation of source code. New languages are generally designed around the syntax of a prior language with new functionality added, (for example C++ adds object-orientation to C, and Java adds memory management and bytecode to C++, but as a result, loses efficiency and the ability for low-level manipulation). Normally the first step in debugging is to attempt to reproduce the problem. Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability. 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. Languages form an approximate spectrum from "low-level" to "high-level"; "low-level" languages are typically more machine-oriented and faster to execute, whereas "high-level" languages are more abstract and easier to use but execute less quickly. Provided the functions in a library follow the appropriate run-time conventions (e.g., method of passing arguments), then these functions may be written in any other language. Ideally, the programming language best suited for the task at hand will be selected. Various visual programming languages have also been developed with the intent to resolve readability concerns by adopting non-traditional approaches to code structure and display. The Unified Modeling Language (UML) is a notation used for both the OOAD and MDA. Compilers harnessed the power of computers to make programming easier by allowing programmers to specify calculations by entering a formula using infix notation. In the 1880s, Herman Hollerith invented the concept of storing data in machine-readable form. A similar technique used for database design is Entity-Relationship Modeling (ER Modeling). After the bug is reproduced, the input of the program may need to be simplified to make it easier to debug. For this purpose, algorithms are classified into orders using so-called Big O notation, which expresses resource use, such as execution time or memory consumption, in terms of the size of an input. For example, when a bug in a compiler can make it crash when parsing some large source file, a simplification of the test case that results in only few lines from the original source file can be sufficient to reproduce the same crash. Trial-and-error/divide-and-conquer is needed: the programmer will try to remove some parts of the original test case and check if the problem still exists. Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability. Their jobs usually involve: Although programming has been presented in the media as a somewhat mathematical subject, some research shows that good programmers have strong skills in natural human languages, and that learning to code is similar to learning a foreign language. Many applications use a mix of several languages in their construction and use. 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. Unreadable code often leads to bugs, inefficiencies, and duplicated code. Also, specific user environment and usage history can make it difficult to reproduce the problem. In the 9th century, the Arab mathematician Al-Kindi described a cryptographic algorithm for deciphering encrypted code, in A Manuscript on Deciphering Cryptographic Messages.