

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. Computer programmers are those who write computer software. Ideally, the programming language best suited for the task at hand will be selected. However, Charles Babbage had already written his first program for the Analytical Engine in 1837. 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. 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. 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. Normally the first step in debugging is to attempt to reproduce the problem. Scripting and breakpointing is also part of this process. Some text editors such as Emacs allow GDB to be invoked through them, to provide a visual environment. This can be a non-trivial task, for example as with parallel processes or some unusual software bugs. 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. Techniques like Code refactoring can enhance readability. 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. Auxiliary tasks accompanying and related to programming include analyzing requirements, testing, debugging (investigating and fixing problems), implementation of build systems, and management of derived artifacts, such as programs' machine code. It is usually easier to code in "high-level" languages than in "low-level" ones. Programs were mostly entered using punched cards or paper tape. However, Charles Babbage had already written his first program for the Analytical Engine in 1837. Debugging is often done with IDEs. Standalone debuggers like GDB are also used, and these often provide less of a visual environment, usually using a command line. 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. Methods of measuring programming language popularity include: counting the number of job advertisements that mention the language, the number of books sold and courses teaching the language (this overestimates the importance of newer languages), and estimates of the number of existing lines of code written in the language (this underestimates the number of users of business languages such as COBOL). Debugging is a very important task in the software development process since having defects in a program can have significant consequences for its users. Allen Downey, in his book *How To Think Like A Computer Scientist*, writes: Many computer languages provide a mechanism to call functions provided by shared libraries. After the bug is reproduced, the input of the program may need to be simplified to make it easier to debug.