

Common Lisp: An Elusive Language

When I was beginning my journey with Common Lisp, I was puzzled by the amount of various implementations and the fact that the Lisp community seemed very... split.

I actually wondered: how did such a diaspora occur, to begin with? How did it begin and how did it grow? Most importantly for me at the time – what would Lisp look like if it wasn't so fragmented? What would Lisp logotypes look like in such a case?

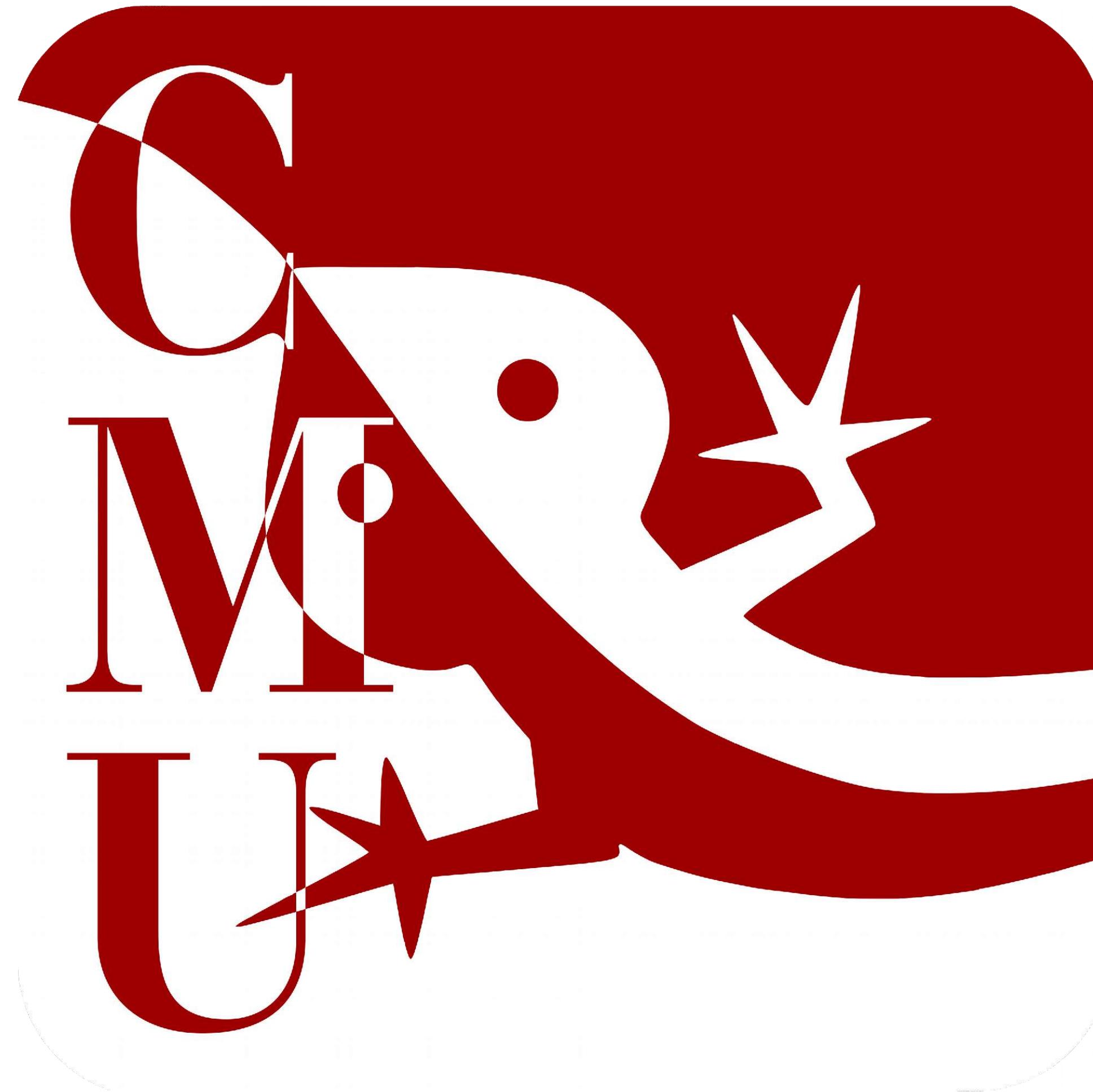
As time passed, I came to accept this fragmentation as a matter of fact. But the question about logotypes kept on pressing me – and I decided to let my wonders turn into

This is what I would like to share with you on Lisp's 60th birthday – a set of seventeen graphics with one of the logotypes – a lizard by Manfred Spiller – as a common factor.



Allegro Common Lisp

The original image – or font, in particular – of Allegro Common Lisp gives me an impression of the old Superman comics from the United States. The font used had gentle gradients and thick outlines on each letter – something I attempted to simulate here on the parens originally present in the ACL logo and the Lisp lizard that I added.



Carnegie Mellon University Common Lisp

The original colors and lettering of the logo of the CMU were just begging me to employ XOR on the initials from the original font and the Lisp lizard.



Armed Bear Common Lisp

Here is one of the first logotypes that I have decided to do from scratch. While this is not meant as an insult to bears, *especially* the armed ones, I have had this logo on my mind for a long time. Lizards love warmth – so there is hardly a place better for a Lisp lizard than a cup of hot, tasty Java.



mocl

When I saw the logo for mocl, which is the square-like wave in the background, I immediately thought – this would look good on some mobile device. And once I saw it like that – I imagined the lizard on top of it, that you can carry around and poke on your touchscreen.



JavaScript Common Lisp

The sad trend is – everything that is running on our computers is slowly migrating to the virtual machines called web browsers. The JSCL project aims to provide us Lispers with our favorite language available there as well – and so the Lisp lizard is embedded in the shield used as a JavaScript logo.



Clasp Common Lisp

I remember talking to Christian Schafmeister about the logo for Clasp. I remember him telling me that he imagined it like an actual, physical clasp – something that you can attach to something and it holds two objects together. There's a clasp here – and the plus marks, hinting for the fact that Clasp bridges a pair of very different languages – Lisp, and C++.



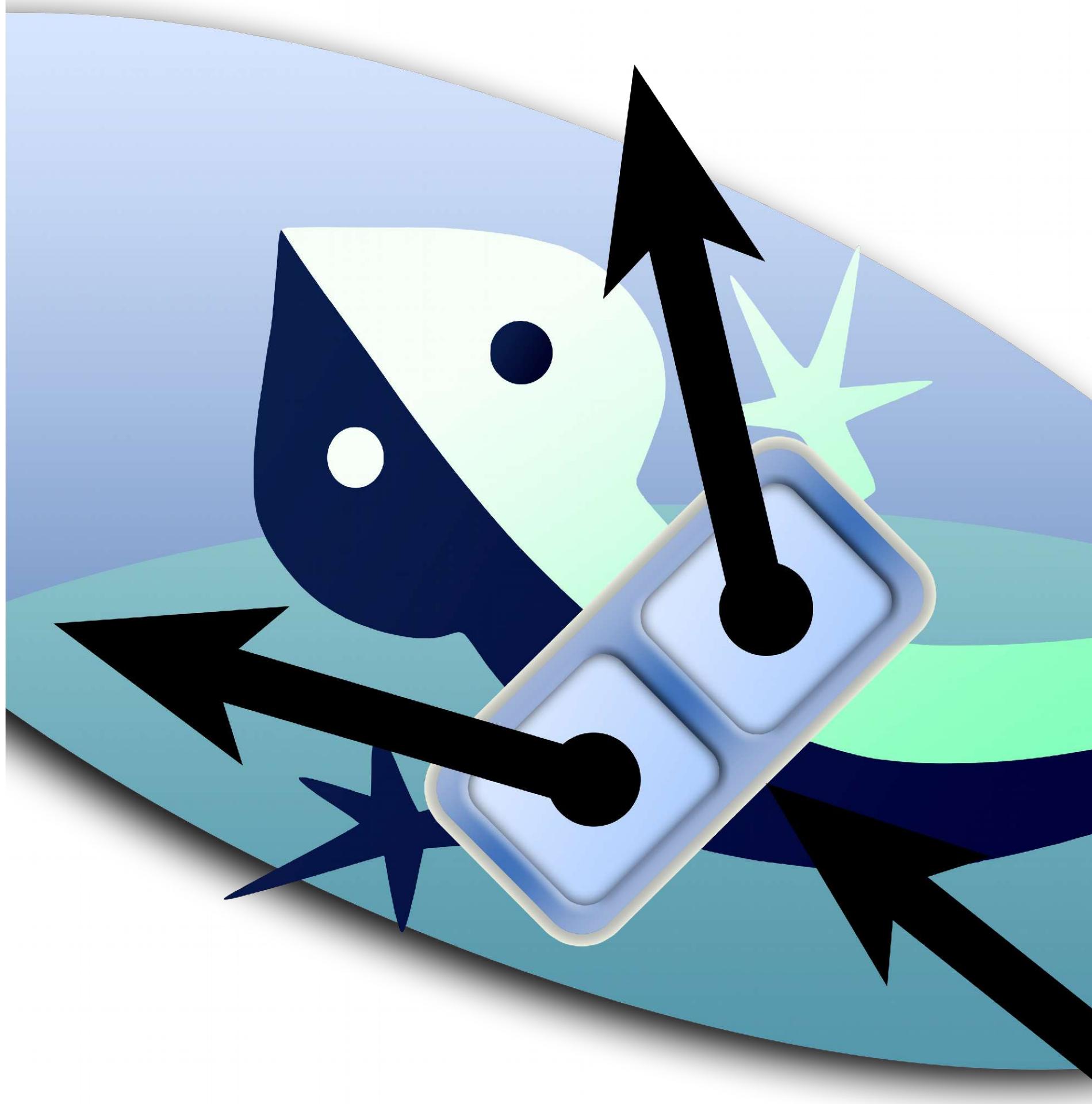
Mezzano

Mezzano is an amazing project that is somewhere between a Common Lisp implementation written on bare metal and a working proof-of-concept operating system that is a modern Lisp Machine OS. Literally a Lisp lizard sticking its paws at you out of your screen.



Clozure Common Lisp

Clozure Common Lisp has a very pleasant logo with the letters CCL embedded in a blue arc with a gradient behind. I've attempted to recreate the arc while replacing the letters with a blue-tinted Lisp lizard.



Scieneer Common Lisp

The original logo for SCL features one of the most iconic features of Lisp – a cons cell. I imagined the Lisp lizard carrying this cell on its shoulders while walking on something – and there we have it.



LispWorks

LispWorks has a logo I consider beautiful – the new, circular loops and their gradients simply amaze me.



CLISP

The logo of CLISP is a menorah, which „probably reflects the authors' affection toward the Jewish people, Judaism or the State of Israel”, to quote the online CLISP manual. I found it hard to utilize the menorah and the Lisp lizard in a single logotype, so instead I have decided to go for a different traditional Jewish symbol - *chai*, the word that means *living*.



京都市日本～
桜の木は、毎年春に咲き誇ります。

ManKai
Common Lisp

MKCL, a fork of ECL, has allowed me to think of what is commonly associated with Japanese sakura trees in full bloom... and to embed a little bit of Japanese poetry in a Lisp logo. How sweet.



Embeddable Common Lisp

This was a pretty darn hard logotype to get decently. The original purple color and the lambda were not the only factors here – I also wanted this logo to be similar to the one for Clasp, as much of ECL's code has been utilized in Clasp.



Steel Bank Common Lisp

SBCL already has its own logo, a four-colored flag whose colors faintly resembled me of somewhat rusty industrial metal. I followed this impression to create this double-teardrop piece of the Lisp lizard shining in the steel.



Parenscrip

With a surprisingly large amount of Common Lisp functionality working, PS is a subset of Common Lisp that compiles to JavaScript – one more bridge between the world of modern web browsers and Lisp.



Symbolics Common Lisp

The very first logotype that I made after creating the modified Lisp lizard logo that I used as a basis for all other ones; a tribute to both the Symbolics Common Lisp and the fascinating Genera operating system it ran upon.



Credits

ECL: The Embeddable Common Lisp logo which I remixed is licensed under LGPL2 or later.

ABCL: Coffee cup SVG by user Peewack of Wikipedia. Original photo by Julius Schorzman. Distributed under the CC BY-SA 2.0 license.

CMU CL: The logo of Carnegie Mellon University, the initials of which I used in my remix, belongs to the CMU.

JSCL: The JavaScript 5 logo that I remixed is distributed under CC BY 3.0.

CCL, ACL, LW, SCL, mocl: The original logos for Scieneer Common Lisp, Allegro Common Lisp, LispWorks, Clozure Common Lisp and mocl are properties of their respective companies and I am not affiliated with them.

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