

# A Brief History of JavaScript: from Netscape to Frameworks



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## Introduction

The standard and most popular scripting language for the web is JavaScript. Similarly, the main part of my [device detection API](#) uses JS. Therefore, I figured it was time to cover an overview of JavaScript in one of my blogposts. Thus, in this post I will present the most important aspects of JavaScript. We start with a short history lesson about JS. Subsequently, the popularity of JS in numbers is covered. The post ends with an overview about the most popular JS libraries and frameworks. Enjoy reading 😊

## JavaScript: a history overview

In 1989 the world wide web (WWW) was invented with the purpose to improve information sharing between universities and science institutes. One year later the first web-browser emerged simply named: 'WorldWideWeb'. However, the first commercial-like browser was introduced a few years later — in 1993 — by the [Netscape](#)

Communications Corporation. In the beginning of 1995 Netscape was one of the most popular web-browsers out there.



Screenshot of Netscape Navigator in 1994

Until that moment the WWW has been static with only HTML being available. To expand and further develop the WWW Netscape Communications Corporation created JavaScript (at that time called Mocha). The goal of JS was to create a more dynamic web with interactions. Even more important was the usability by designers in contrast to software developers. Thus, the code had to be small, simple, and easy!

To keep up with the competition (i.e. Internet Explorer by Microsoft) NetScape partnered with Sun Microsystems. Sun Microsystems was the creator of Java: a language for smart applications. However, Java did not suit this audience (web designers). More specifically, Java was too big and targeted at large corporations.

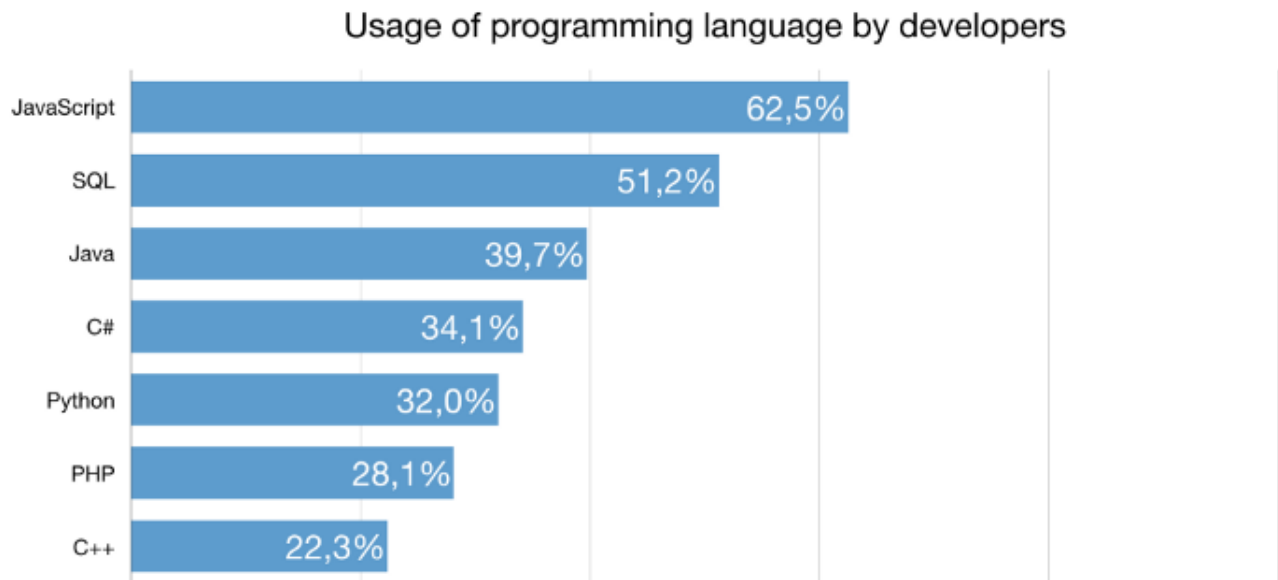
Nevertheless, Brendan Eich (head of JavaScript at Netscape) created a working prototype of JS. In a short period of time JavaScript was integrated in their web-browser. JavaScript was born to be a small client side scripting language.

Nowadays, JavaScript is still the standard scripting language for the WWW. All popular web browser integrated JS. Currently, several JS libraries and frameworks are available.

## JavaScript viewed with statistics

The numbers reflect the popularity of Javascript. Currently about 94% of the webpages use JavaScript. Similarly, JS is popular among developers. Stack Overflow conducted a

survey among 32000+ developers. They concluded that JS is the most popular programming language for the 5th year in a row. More specifically, over 62% of the 32000+ developers use JavaScript as coding language.



## jQuery

To make JavaScript even more simpler jQuery was created. In 2006 John Resig introduced jQuery to strip common and repetitive tasks out. jQuery simplifies CSS animation, event handling, and AJAX. Today jQuery is the most popular JavaScript library out there.

jQuery makes use of the DOM (document object model) structure of web pages. The DOM model represents the elements on a page (for example a `<h5>` element). With jQuery it is easy to select and manipulate these elements.

The difference between JS and jQuery is illustrated below. The first is in JavaScript and the second in jQuery.

### JavaScript

```
const loginbutton = document.getElementById("loginbutton");
const loginMenu = document.getElementById("login");

loginbutton.addEventListener("click", () => {
  if(loginMenu.style.display === "none"){
    loginMenu.style.display = "inline";
  }
  else {
```

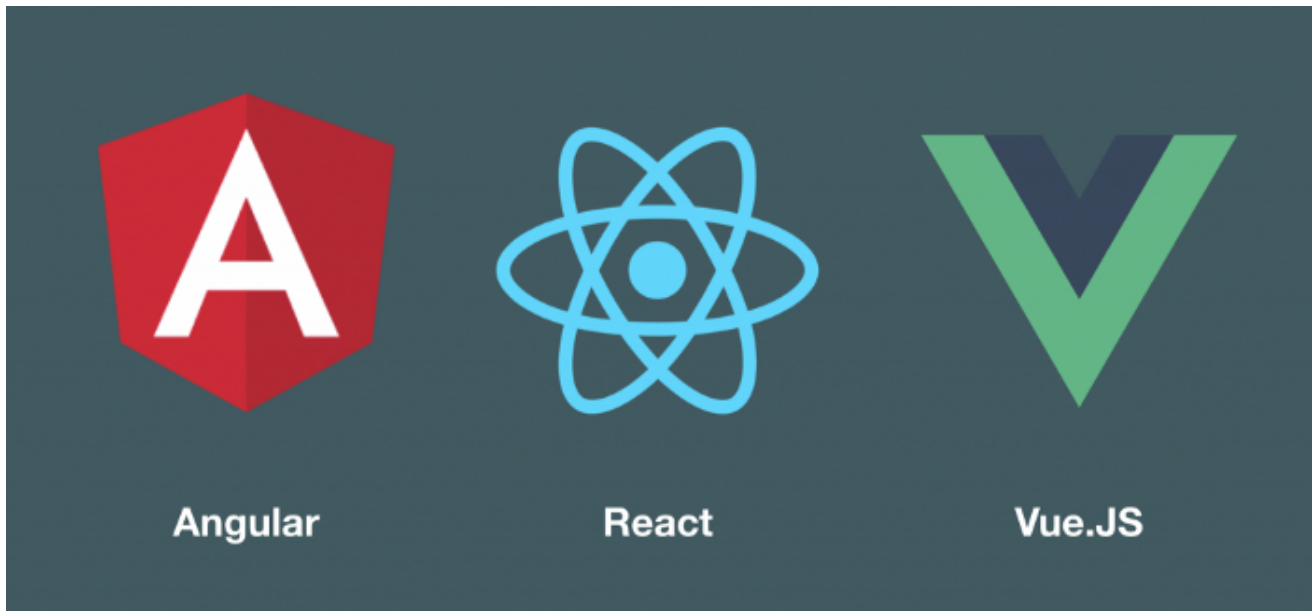
```
loginMenu.style.display = "none";  
});  
}
```

## jQuery

```
$("#loginbutton").click(() => {$("#login").toggle()});
```

## JavaScript Frameworks

Initially JavaScript is designed as a client side language. However, nowadays both the client and server side can be JS based. To give some structure in the development process JS frameworks were created. We will cover 3 of the most popular JS frameworks of today: Angular, React, and Vue.JS.



### Angular

AngularJS is developed by Google but is an open-source framework. After the first release in 2010 AngularJS was rewritten and renamed to Angular in 2016. Angular is a front-end framework targeted at single page applications. About 24% of JavaScript developers are currently using Angular. Even more interesting is the fact that the framework is ranked as 3rd among the frond-end JS frameworks.

### React

React was developed by Facebook in 2011. However, it is open-source framework and has over 1300 contributors on Github. This framework is very flexible and compatible

with other frameworks. React is designed for both client and server side. Over 65% of the JavaScript developers are currently using React. Currently, React ranks 1st among the front-end JS frameworks.

## Vue.JS

Vue.JS is the second most popular JS framework and used by over 64k websites worldwide. It is build on top of other frameworks like Angular. Vue.JS is a lightweight framework developed by Evan You (former employee of Google). Compared to React and Angluar this framework is easier to configure.

## Conclusion

It is obvious JavaScript is central to web development. More specifically, it is the most popular scripting language. More than 94% of the websites worldwide use JS. So if you want to become a web developer you should start by learning some JS. Looking into the future, new tools like Bit will make an impact and drive us to build more modular component-based applications. So, the web changes, JS changes, so it's always key to learn the foundations.

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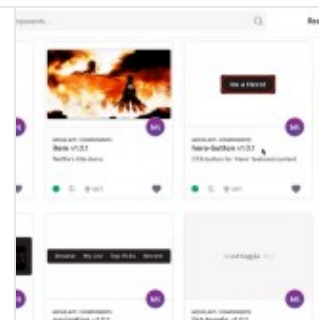
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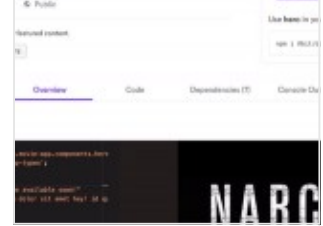
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