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About Edsger W. Dijkstra's GOTO Publication

Edsger starts out by stating a couple remarks about why the GOTO statement is detrimental to programmers and their resulting programs. His first remark states that the burden of a program that is completed is placed on the machine and not necessarily on the programmer. His second remark is that a program should be as trivial to understand as possible to shorten the conceptual gap between the static program and the dynamic process.

Dijkstra goes on to discuss how it becomes difficult to describe the process progress as a result of using a GOTO statement due to the nature of its' operation on how it functions. The statement itself is simply too primitive to be used in higher level languages due to how sloppy it can allow a programmer to write in higher level languages. It allows a programmer to describe processes in a way that is not helpful or manageable. Dijkstra goes on to mention that he was not influenced by Landin or Strachey instead that he agreed with Zemanek's statements during the pre-ALGOL meeting in 1959 where Zemanek expressed his doubts about whether the GOTO statement should be treated syntactically equal to the assignment statement. Dijkstra also states "I blame myself for not having then drawn the consequences of his remark". The affect a GOTO statement has on a flow diagram essentially ruins the process and makes a flow diagram difficult to translate.