Subject: Re: What does an optimal scientific programming language/environment need?
Posted by phil chastney on Thu, 25 Sep 2003 12:42:28 GMT

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"Duane Bozarth" <dp_bozarth@swko.dot.net> wrote in message
news:3F6F3CF4.8A52AE14@swko.dot.net...
> Duane Bozarth wrote:
>>
>> Richard Maine wrote:
>>>
>> Yes, I <did> intend that--hopefully it wasn't <too> unclear, but
>> undoubtedly wise to comment/amplify...
>>
>> I was, admittedly, making an implicit assumption that there really are
>> few pre-F77 compilers around, which is, not <necessarily> globally true,
>> but for a new language on what was specified to be for "Wintel/Lintel"
>> only platforms figured that wouldn't be a stretch.
>
> Although on re-reading Phil's posting, <maybe> the fairly substantial
> differences from pre- and post-F77 are specifically what he is referring
> to and my reading was perhaps(?) too narrow...

yup -- showing my age, I guess -- I started on Fortran IV

how about Perl as a better example of the value of occasionally making a break
with the past? -- when I first encountered Perl 4, I swore I'd never write
another shell script, but the language wasn't really what I'd call "industrial
strength" -- then along came Perl 5, which had all the facilities I wanted --
so many facilities, in fact, that the syntax was context-sensitive (although
Larry Wall claimed the compiler was pretty good at guessing what the programmer
meant) -- an ambiguous syntax isn't a good basis for development, so he's
taken the brave step of a redesign for Perl 6 -- good luck to him

one reason for the redesign is the desire (the need?) to base the thing on
Unicode from the ground up, as opposed to having an 8-bit language with
character routines for UTF-8 or UCS-2 -- I didn't see Unicode mentioned in the
OP at the head of this thread -- is it fair to take Unicode as a sine qua non
of any modern language? especially now that they've incorporated the AMS
extensions?

all the best   . . .   /phil