Michael Wallace wrote:
>>  To quote Michael from a previous post:
>>
>>  "I believe Java, C and sometimes C++ are the best languages to use
>>  when learning how to design software."
>>
>>  Given that IDL had its beginnings in <shock, gasp> Fortran, maybe
>>  that's why he doesn't grok how IDL handles structures. :o)
>
>
> Don't you know that computer scientists are supposed to hate Fortran?! I
> remember back in our "Theory of Programming Languages" or whatever the
> class was called, there were 10 rules for having a well-formed
> programming language, and Fortran broke about 7 or 8 of the rules!
> Besides, even before that class, we had been conditioned to hate Fortran
> and make fun of the poor engineering students that had to endure the
> class.  ;-)

Well, it does depend on your frame of reference. Given the time, and inclination, I could
come up with similar studies (i.e. does the theoretical well-formed-ness of a particular
language translate to increased productivity, lower incidence of bugs etc) that show
Fortran to be better in that respect than more popular languages (e.g. C, C++ etc). I
believe the DoD did a lot of those sorts of studies in the 70's (probably earlier too) and
that the development of Ada is somehow intertwined with that effort.[*]

I just finished reading the "Mismeasure of Man" by SJGould for me bookclub, so I'm newly
aware of how instilled prejudices can unconsciously affect people's decisions and general
outlook. With regards to your programming class, the question that first pops to mind is
who made up the rules? And for what applications? I could come up with 10 rules for a
well-formed programming language that Fortran statifies but other, more popular, languages
such as C/C++/Java/etc don't.

As you can probably tell, I'm still smarting from the disdain of the lecturer of my
"Programming in Fortran 251" class back in '86 (or '87?). He was a computer scientist type
and his dislike of Fortran and having to teach it was palpable. (Poor poor me... :o)

I'm going to retreat to the fartherest corner of my cubicle and sulk for a bit.... :oD

cheers,

paulv

[*] A bit of googling turned up:
[DoD 1978] U.S. Department of Defense. June 1978. ``Department Of Defense Requirements for

High Order Computer Programming Languages: "Steelman""

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