

THE ESOTERIC PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES

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An esoteric programming language is a programming language designed to test the boundaries of computer programming language design, as a proof of concept, or as a joke, for example:

Lolcode is designed to resemble the speech of lolcats. The following is the “hello world” example: in all *lolcode* programs, *hai* (“Hi!”) introduces the program. In many programming languages, one of the first statements will be a library inclusion for common functions such as input and output.

Befunge and its ilk allow the instruction pointer to roam in multiple dimensions through the code. The following program displays “Hello World” by pushing the characters in reverse order onto the stack, then printing the characters in a loop which circulates clockwise through the instructions.

Chef is based on the manipulation of data values in a number of stacks. Each program consists at minimum of the following: the title, the list of variables and their data values, the list of instructions for stack manipulation.

Shakespeare is designed to make programs look like Shakespearean plays, e.g. the following statement declares a point in the program which can be reached via a GOTO-type statement: A character list in the beginning of the program declares a number of stacks, naturally with names like “Romeo” and “Juliet”.

Malbolge (the 8th circle of Hell) was designed to be the most difficult and esoteric programming language. The peculiarity of *Malbolge* is that it was specifically designed to be impossible to write useful programs in. However, weaknesses in this design have been found that make it possible to write *Malbolge* programs in an organized fashion.

So, it is possible to say that usability is rarely a goal for esoteric programming language designers - often it is quite the opposite.

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