

Computer Programmer Encyclopedia Article

Computer Programmer

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Computer Programmer

Although a computer can do multiple tasks at high rates of speed, the computer is only as smart, quick, and capable as the person who programmed it. Behind every well-running computer is a series of programs (instructions) that tell the computer what to do and how to do it. Computer programmers write these programs, and the efficiency with which the program is written determines how quickly instructions can be executed.

A computer programmer must gather and assess numerous data before designing a computer solution specific to the needs of the end user.

Programmers cannot write programs in plain English but have to use a language that the computer will understand. There are many different computer languages—such as Basic, C++, Perl, Visual Basic, Pascal (named in honor of Blaise Pascal's [1623–1662] achievements in mathematics), and Fortran—used in developing programs. These languages differ in their capabilities and commands, but they can all be broken down into machine code, which is a series of symbols and text.

Along with computer languages, computer programmers must know and understand mathematical formulas and operations. Programs use these operations, but in order for a command to be executed, it must first be entered correctly. An example of specific concepts used in If-Then loops are variables, comparing two numbers, and consecutive numbers. Logic and sequencing is also used. Some programmers deal with graphics and use dimensions, perspective, and scale to create their work.

A career in computer programming can be exciting and lucrative, but remember that the computer is only as smart as the programmer allows it to be.

See Also

Computers and the Binary System.

Bibliography

Career Information Center, 8th ed. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2002.