

# Thomas Eugene Kurtz Encyclopedia Article

## Thomas Eugene Kurtz

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# Thomas Eugene Kurtz

**1928-**

American software engineer who, with John Kemeny, developed the computer language BASIC, an easy-to-learn language initially designed as a teaching tool for programming novices at Dartmouth College. Kurtz once commented that if FORTRAN was the lingua franca (common language) of the computer world, BASIC was the "lingua playpen." Available at no charge when developed in 1964, later versions of BASIC and its variants became standard computer languages used around the world.