

# **SIGPLANet**

**<http://www.acm.org/sigplan/sigplanet/>**

## **A Modest Proposal for SIGPLAN in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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### **Introduction**

SIGPLAN is the premier professional programming languages organization in the world. It supports five annual programming languages conferences (PLDI, POPL, ICFP, OOPSLA, and Java Grande), as well as many other conferences and workshops, a regular newsletter, etc. While SIGPLAN will continue to support such conferences and events as part of its mission, the dissemination of the publications from these events will, over time, become the purview of the ACM Digital Library (<http://www.acm.org/dl/>). The web also hosts a number of programming language and citation indices, as well as “laundry lists” of programming languages and tools (as well as programming languages researchers), some of which are:

[http://dir.yahoo.com/Computers\\_and\\_Internet/Programming\\_Languages/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Programming_Languages/)  
<http://www.dmoz.org/Computers/Programming/Languages/>  
<http://directory.google.com/Top/Computers/Programming/Languages/>  
<http://www.informatik.uni-trier.de/~ley/db/index.html>  
<http://www.idiom.com/free-compilers/>  
<http://users.erols.com/ziring/dopl.html>  
<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/mleone/web/language-people.html>

What is missing from the various WWW resources on programming languages is a sufficiently annotated index specifically tailored to programming languages. Ideally, its potential uses should include:

- Providing an overview to non-experts in a particular area of programming languages.
- Pointing experts at authoritative articles, and other web resources (including other web indices) pertinent to a particular subtopic.
- Providing a convenient index to standard web-based reference material likely to be needed by practitioners and researchers alike.

### **What is SIGPLANet?**

The idea of SIGPLANet is to leverage the vast expertise in the SIGPLAN community to create a living resource on the WWW that people around the world will go to when they have questions surrounding programming languages. We use the term “programming languages” to encompass not only the existing languages by which we program computers, but also topics such as language design, compilers and implementation techniques, optimization, program analysis, debugging, library design, applications of languages and different programming paradigms, type theory, etc.

A key concept behind SIGPLANet is to offer an index of programming languages topics from which will hang information and services (think of something like Yahoo!, but specific to programming languages). We envision that SIGPLANet, in its full glory, will provide the following services:

- A *searchable index* of the many programming languages resources available on the WWW and Internet. This will include journals, workshop and conference proceedings, books, tools and technologies, academic and industrial research and development projects, educational resources, conferences and workshops, etc.
- A *historical site* for material on programming languages. SIGPLANet will serve not only as a reference to topical material, but also will serve as a repository for historical information about the evolution of programming languages and related disciplines.
- An *encyclopedia*: SIGPLANet will be a resource that people can turn to when they have questions about programming languages, important ideas, inventions, etc.
- *Who's who?*: a listing of the people who contribute to the discipline with pointers to home pages.
- *FAQs*: responses to frequently asked questions (e.g., “What’s a good book for learning Java if I don’t already know an OO programming language?”, “What are the problems in instruction scheduling for DSPs?”, etc).

All these services will share the index in common. Other potential services include, but are not limited to, chat rooms organized by topics, programming contests, etc. We have created an initial index for SIGPLANet (see <http://www.acm.org/sigplan/sigplanet/>). This is a classification that will eventually be refined to include all the data in SIGPLANet.

## How Will SIGPLANet Happen?

SIGPLANet will not happen overnight. It is a long-term project that will take the effort of many individuals across the world. We believe that the time and energy of the SIGPLAN membership is crucial to get SIGPLANet off the ground. To start, we have proposed an index (see above). Furthermore, we are in the process of establishing a steering committee for SIGPLANet that will function as a “top-level” editor. Much as a steering committee for a conference (such as OOPSLA) is in charge of overseeing the high-level mechanisms that keep a conference strong and provides historical continuity, the SIGPLANet steering committee will ensure that SIGPLANet runs smoothly. It is our intent to create “lightweight” mechanisms that will make it easy for people to contribute to SIGPLANet and to guide the evolution of SIGPLANet. Editorship of SIGPLANet will rest with volunteers. Speaking of volunteers, we would like help with the following to get SIGPLANet off the ground:

- Suggestions for improving the top levels of the index.
- Pointers to important web resources on programming languages, particularly if they provide detailed information on particular subtopics.
- Short (1-3 paragraph?) “What is it?” encyclopedic articles for your areas of expertise, if they are not currently there. (“Better” replacements for existing ones will also be considered.)
- Getting the SIGPLANet site referenced from appropriate external web sites.

Please contact either Thomas Ball ([tball@microsoft.com](mailto:tball@microsoft.com)) or Hans Boehm ([Hans\\_Boehm@hp.com](mailto:Hans_Boehm@hp.com)) with your ideas.