

Reviving Your Favorite CS Books

Last October we announced a program to put 20 out-of-print books into ACM's Digital Library and to make print copies of these books available at a low price via a print-on-demand service (CACM, Oct. 2005, 15–16). We were overwhelmed by the response to the call for nominations, so it took a bit longer than expected to determine the actual titles, to confirm they were out of print, and to create an interface to vote for 20 books from 402 choices. In fact, we've renamed the program to "ACM Members' Favorite Books" since it reflects the process we followed.

To help you make an informed decision, we tried a 10-day campaign period where people could comment on books via a wiki set up for each title (see pd.acm.org/classics). You will find many testimonials about how a book changed a person's life, or noting the timelessness of a book despite the year it was written. Members made wiki-based comments on about 80% of the books. The entries certainly affected my vote and have suggested books that I now want to read.

The table here shows the top 25 books based on electronic ballots from thousands of members. More members voted electronically for favorite books than they did for candidates in the last ACM election! These finalists are certainly an impressive collection. ACM Fellows or ACM Turing Award laureates wrote the majority of the books; they cover many areas of computer science, and the publication dates range from 1958 to 1995. We are now in the process of contacting the holders of these copyrights. (If you know whom to contact, please send email to classicbooks@acm.org.) Once we've placed the books

	% ballots	Title	Authors	Year
1	28.9%	The Elements of Programming Style	Kernighan, B.W. and Plauger, P.J.	1982
2	13.4%	Classics in Software Engineering	Yourdon, E.	1979
3	13.0%	Theory of Parsing, Translation and Compiling	Aho, A.V. and Ullman, J.D.	1973
4	12.6%	Pascal User Manual and Report	Jensen, K. and Wirth, N.	1975
5	12.5%	Computer and the Brain	Von Neumann, J.	1958
6	11.1%	Selected Writings on Computing	Dijkstra, E.W.	1982
7	10.5%	Smalltalk-80: The Language and its Implementation	Goldberg, A. and Robson, D.	1983
8	10.3%	Compiler Construction	Bauer, F.L. and Eickel, J.	1976
9	10.2%	The Relational Model for Database Management: Version 2	Codd, E.F.	1990
10	10.0%	A Programming Language	Iverson, K.E.	1962
11	10.0%	Formal Languages and Their Relation to Automata	Hopcroft, J.E. and Ullman, J.D.	1969
12	9.1%	Writing Efficient Programs	Bentley, J.L.	1982
13	9.0%	Computation: Finite and Infinite Machines	Minsky, M.L.	1967
14	8.9%	The Multics System	Organick, E.I.	1972
15	8.8%	Operating System Principles	Brinch Hansen, P.	1973
16	8.5%	IBM System/360 Principles of Operation	IBM	1964
17	8.0%	Mindstorms	Papert, S.	1980
18	8.0%	The Architecture of Concurrent Programs	Brinch Hansen, P.	1977
19	7.9%	Structured Programming	Dahl, O.J.	1972
20	7.3%	201 Principles of Software Development	Davis, A.M.	1995
21	7.3%	Artificial Intelligence	Rich, E.	1983
22	7.1%	MacIntosh Human Interface Guidelines	Apple Computer Inc.	1992
23	7.0%	Cryptography and Data Security	Denning, D.E.	1982
24	7.0%	Essays in Computing Science	C.A. Hoare and C.B. Jones, Eds.	1989
25	6.9%	Anatomy of LISP	Allen, J.	1978

The top 25 (out of print) classic CS books as voted by ACM members.

in the DL and make arrangements with a books-on-demand publisher, we'll let you know the next step.

A few members have already written to say it's obvious that we need to expand the list. (I agree, since only half of the books I voted for made the cut!) Let's think of this round as a beta test. If the books prove to be popular, and members are happy with the process, I'm sure ACM will expand the offerings.

I'd like to thank everyone who participated in this inaugural project, especially ACM's Wayne Graves and Mark Mandelbaum, who were handed a much larger task than any of us anticipated.

—David A. Patterson