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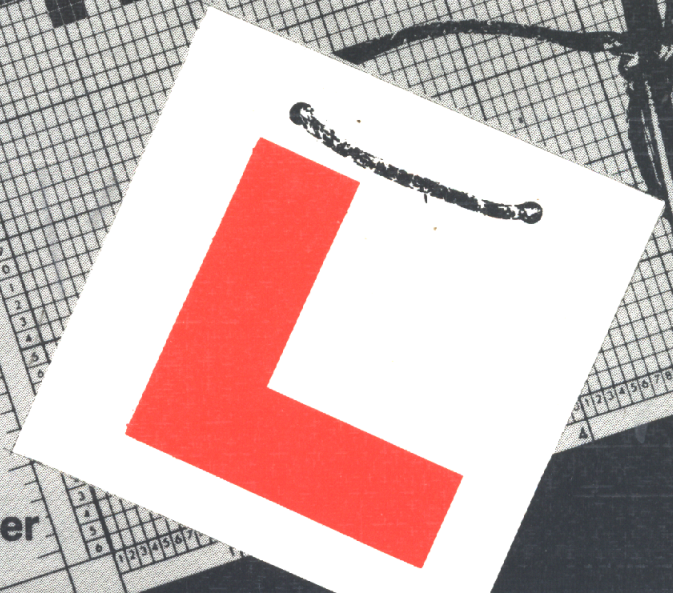
Programming Techniques and Practice



Alan Chantler

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Preface

The increasing use of computers of all sizes in a proliferation of application areas brings with it a need for more and more skilled and professional programmers. In order that the available personnel can be made more productive, it is necessary that they receive appropriate training and practice, involving the study and use of the most up-to-date, well proven techniques. No amount of training, however good it may be, will compensate for a lack of professionalism and of a dedication to perfection. For many years, there have been two identifiable and overlapping groups of persons associated with programming – those who write programs (the larger group) and programmers. This book is intended to help both groups to become synonymous. It may also help to encourage non-programmers to become programmers, by illustrating how a dedicated, systematic approach not only increases the chances of success, but also makes the job easier.

To gain most benefit from this text, the reader should have undergone some initial instruction in programming, including the production of some simple programs in BASIC or a similar language. Ideally, the text should be supported by the encouragement of a course leader, although much benefit can be gained by the 'self study' reader. All readers should attempt the suggested practical examples before comparing their answers with those given.

The techniques and practices described in this book are essentially practical in nature. They have been used by the author and others for a number of years, both in teaching students and in the production of real-life commercial software. By following them, it is possible to produce programs which work first time, continue to work and are easy to main-

tain. Thus, we can at last dispense with the myth, still widely taught, and even more widely believed, that 'you can't expect a program to work first time', an opinion which, I suggest, no-one would be prepared to accept about a surgical operation.

Alan Chantler
Yelvertoft
June 1981

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