Class 32: Why LISP?

Held: Wednesday, 20 April 2011

Summary: Today we consider reasons that people love (and hate) Lisp.

Related Pages:
- EBoard.

Notes:
- EC for Ginsburg convo, Thursday.
- EC for open discussion with Jane Ginsburg, Thursday, 9:00-10:30 in Mears Cottage.
- EC for open discussion with Jane Ginsburg, Thursday, 2:30-4:00 in Mears Cottage.
- No CS Extras this week. (What do you think of the prospective title of “Bites and Bits”?)
- EC for Friday’s CS Table.

Overview:
- Why LISP?
- Why not LISP?
- Graham’s differences: Then and Now
- Other issues.

Why Lisp?
- Sam’s claim: People who program in LISP are wild fanatics
  - Well, at least wild fanatics about the language.
- What makes people fanatic about LISP (and Scheme)?
  - Question to be answered by students and Sam in class.
Why Not Lisp?

- Sam’s other claim: People who don’t program in LISP are often significantly dismissive of LISP.
- What are the weaknesses of LISP that might offset some of those strengths?
  - Question to be answered by students and Sam in class.

What Made Lisp Different?

- Graham claims that LISP was significantly different than other languages of the time.
  - What do you see as important differences?

What Makes LISP Different?

- Graham claims that LISP remains significantly different than most other languages (other than LISP variants).
  - What do you see as important differences?