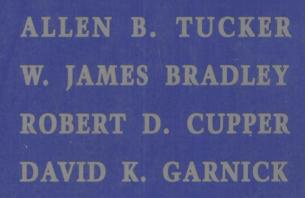
# FUNDAMENTALS OF COMPUTING 1



L O G I C
PROBLEM SOLVING
PROGRAMS
AND COMPUTERS





# FUNDAMENTALS OF COMPUTING I



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PROBLEM SOLVING
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AND COMPUTERS

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## FUNDAMENTALS OF COMPUTING I: LOGIC, PROBLEM SOLVING, PROGRAMS, AND COMPUTERS

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To Meg, Hope, Sandy, and Kathy

## FOREWORD

What is the computing profession? What is the discipline of computing? Our answers to these basic questions strongly influence our approaches to the content of computing curricula, the mix between theory and practice, our selection of research questions, our relations with other disciplines, our responses to complaints, our practices of design, and much more.

When I investigated these questions with the ACM Task Force on the Core of Computer Science beginning in 1986, I settled on definitions that are now widely accepted: the computing profession is people who make their livelihoods by working with computers and the phenomena surrounding computers. The core phenomena include algorithms and data structures, programming languages, architecture, numerical and symbolic computation, operating systems, databases and information retrieval, software methodology and engineering, artificial intelligence, and human—computer communication. These phenomena all concern representations of the world and efficient algorithmic transformations of those representations — commonly called information processing. In Europe the intellectual side of the profession is called "informatics" and in the U.S.A. people are beginning to call it the "discipline of computing."

By 1990 I had come to be profoundly dissatisfied with this definition. It offered no guidance on the relation of my research and teaching to the burgeoning world of people using computers in their daily work. It offered no sense of permanence, leaving me with the nagging question of whether the discipline is a fad that will one day be reabsorbed into applied mathematics or electrical engineering. My dissatisfaction drew me into the

question, "What is a profession?"

Underlying every profession is a permanent domain of human concern and human breakdown. By permanent, I mean concerns that affect every human being throughout civilization. By breakdown, I mean events that interrupt the normal flow of actions or work; these events may be the unanticipated failure of some person or system to deliver an expected result, or they may be the unexpected appearance of new challenges. The profession is the people, technologies, institutions, and practices for taking care of people's concerns and recurrent breakdowns in the domain.

Consider the medical profession as an example. Health is a permanent concern of human beings. Breakdowns in health are inevitable because

of disease, accident, or aging. Health care professionals take care of people's concerns and breakdowns in health and disease. Stethoscopes, X-rays, MRI scanners, surgical tools, heart—lung machines, and pacemakers are some of the technologies of the profession. Laboratories, hospitals, HMOs, and medical schools are some of the institutions of this profession. Licenses, basic texts, anatomy charts, and diagnostic and surgical procedures are some of the standard practices of the profession.

The legal profession, another example, deals with people's concerns and recurrent breakdowns about laws. These concerns are inevitable and permanent because we all live in societies with governments, constitutions, and laws. Lawyers, judges, and law enforcers are among the members of this profession. They do their work within the technologies, institutions,

and standard practices of this profession.

Now consider our profession. Calculation and coordination of action are ongoing concerns of all human beings. We live in a world of information and numbers, much of which are processed by machines. We live in a world with ubiquitous telephones, near-ubiquitous fax, and burgeoning computer networks and databases, all of which permit extending the distance and time over which we can successfully coordinate actions. Nearly everyone in every developed country is affected by telecommunications and computers, which open up new business and political opportunities; leaders in underdeveloped countries are considering informational infrastructures as ways of accelerating their countries' entries into world markets. Computation has become indispensable to the daily practices of finance, engineering, design, science, and technology. Word processing, accounting, database, design automation, and report writing software impact every other profession. This world offers many new kinds of breakdowns, ranging from failures of computers and communications to the challenge to install software that improves an organization's productivity. The computing profession, by analogy with other professions, is the people, technologies, institutions, and standard practices that take care of people's concerns in the domain of information processing, computation, and coordination over networks of computers.

These concerns are bigger than are implied by the phrase "phenomena surrounding computers". These concerns include, as is commonly understood, the design and analysis of hardware and software to perform new functions or to perform old functions in new ways. But these also include the installation, configuration, and maintenance of computer systems within organizations. They include standards for communication and information exchange. They include privacy and integrity of conversations, files, and documents in networks of computers. They include working with the customer to design computer systems that support the work of the customer's organization. They include the historical context of computing and communications, as well as the shared values of the people in the

professions that use computers and networks.

In other words, the concerns are not phenomena that surround computers. It is the other way around. The computers surround the concerns.

If computer scientists continue to talk in language focused on "phenomena surrounding computers", they will find themselves increasingly disconnected from the concerns people have about information processing and communications. Those people will turn elsewhere to get the help they need. There will be a computing profession, but it won't include computer

scientists as an important and vital part.

There need be no incompatibility between computer science research and people's concerns for information processing and communication. In fact, research is an essential part of every profession, for it is the practice of anticipating future breakdowns and future opportunities. What's missing is the skill of articulating the connection between research and people's concerns. In the medical profession, for example, there are plenty of esoteric, highly technical projects without an immediate payback. If one asks such a medical researcher why he's doing what he's doing, one is likely to get an answer like this: "Even though this stuff is pretty technical and hard to understand, if it works we'll one day be able to cure Altzheimer's disease." A computer science researcher might respond with, "I'm studying this because it is considered to be an open question among computer scientists." With such an answer it is no wonder that outsiders look elsewhere for the help they seek, and that the computer science researcher is left wondering whether anyone is interested.

This book is a sharp break with the tradition of treating the discipline of computing merely as a study of phenomena surrounding computers. Its authors offer an introduction not just to the discipline, but to the profession. There are three distinguishing aspects of this book.

First, throughout the book, the authors maintain awareness of the connection between the technologies of programming, machines, and net-

works and the human concerns that animate these technologies.

Second, the authors distinguish between theory and practice. They hold that both are essential for a professional computer scientist. The main text emphasizes the theory while the laboratory emphasizes the corresponding practices. Students who emerge from this form of study will find themselves with a great deal more practical competence than their colleagues who study under the traditional, theory—oriented curriculum. The renewed interest in practice does not detract from the rigor of the discipline. The authors advocate the formalisms and rigorous thinking needed to underpin the practices of good programming and design, and they boldly discuss the laws and professional standards that define the environment in which students of the discipline will one day work.

Third, the authors bring to clear view the three paradigms of thought that constitute the discipline: theory, abstraction, and design. The theory paradigm is rooted in the long tradition of mathematics and logic, whose legacy enables us to deal with complex and subtle algorithms. The abstraction paradigm is rooted in the long tradition of the scientific method, whose legacy enables us to formulate and test hypotheses about algorithms, machines, and models. The design paradigm is rooted in the long tradition of engineering, whose legacy enables us to design machines that calculate accurately and process information in all domains of human work. The authors argue that the professional computer scientist must become competent in all three modes of thought. We can, at last, put aside the debates of which tradition is the most fundamental and revel in the realization that our profession is a unique combination of the three.

Other authors may improve on what Tucker, Bradley, Cupper, and Garnick offer here. But those future authors will be followers of these four pioneers in the new approach to computing as a discipline and a profes-

sion.

Peter J. Denning

## PREFACE

The traditional introductory-level undergraduate courses in computer science and computer engineering (known simply as the discipline of computing) have received serious scrutiny over the past few years. These courses have been criticized for establishing the false notion that *computer* science = programming, thus leaving students with an inadequate view of the richness of the discipline. Many educators agree that we need serious changes in the way we organize and teach these courses.

This text, together with its accompanying laboratory manual and software tools, is the first in a four-volume series that aims to address this problem. This series presents the fundamental aspects of the discipline in a distinctive way; it uses an approach to the introductory curriculum that is

often called the "breadth-first approach."

Overview of the Series Fundamentals of Computing is a series of four texts and accompanying laboratory manuals that provide the basis for a four-semester breadth-first introduction to the discipline of computing. This series is motivated by both the comprehensive definition of the discipline and the pedagogical principles developed in the reports Computing as a Discipline and Computing Curricula 1991.2 This introduction to the discipline has the following themes:

A broad treatment of the nine major subject areas of the disci-

pline

A grounding in the mathematical, scientific, and engineering points of view on the discipline, known as theory, abstraction, and design, respectively

A responsible treatment of key social, ethical, and legal issues

that uniquely concern the discipline and the profession

A scheduled weekly laboratory experience, with separate accompanying laboratory manuals and software tools

A carefully developed methodology for algorithmic problem 5. solving (MAPS)

The major subject areas of computing are:

Algorithms and data structures Architecture Artificial intelligence and robotics Database and information retrieval Human-computer communication Numerical and symbolic computation Operating systems Programming languages Social, ethical, and professional issues Software methodology and engineering

The four volumes in this FUNDAMENTALS OF COMPUTING series are titled

Volume I: Logic, Problem Solving, Programs, and Computers

Volume II: Abstraction, Data Structures, and Large Software Systems

Volume III: Levels of Architecture, Languages, and Applications

Volume IV: Algorithms, Concurrency, and the Limits of Computation

In addition to its comprehensive treatment of the discipline, this series provides another important dimension for the introductory courses: an option to integrate the topics of discrete mathematics with those subjects in computing where they are used. While this series does not require discrete mathematics to be integrated in all courses that use it, many instructors will choose to include that material directly in those courses. Such a choice is mainly justified on the grounds that students can understand more clearly the fundamental mathematical dimensions of the discipline than they would if these topics were taught in a separate discrete mathematics course.

A more complete discussion of the entire series and its aims can be found in the publication, "A Breadth-First Introductory Curriculum in Computing."

Overview of this Text This text, along with its accompanying laboratory manual and software, is designed to cover an introductory course in computing, customarily known as CS1 and recently identified as C101 in the Report Computing Curricula 1991. These materials were first classroom-tested at Allegheny College and Bowdoin College during the 1990–1991 academic year. Following a round of revisions, they are currently in use again at Allegheny and Bowdoin, and are being classroom-tested for the first time at West Chester University and the University of Connecticut.

The content and organization of this text provide a broader view of computers, programs, problem solving, and their underlying theory than does the traditional approach to the first course. The integrated laboratory experience provides a rich experience in programming and problem solving, as in a traditional course. The laboratory component also provides hands-on experience with a von Neumann machine architecture and assembler by way of a simple simulator called MARINA.

The text has nine chapters and is organized for a one-semester course. Chapter 1 is brief and motivational in nature, concentrating on fundamental aspects of the history and nature of computing and its relationship to society. Chapters 2 and 3 cover topics of theory in the discipline—sets, functions, and an introduction to logic. These topics underlie two major

areas in the discipline, software methodology and architecture.

Chapters 4 through 6 develop fundamental principles of software methodology, using preconditions and postconditions for precise specification, problem solving, and program testing and verification. MAPS, a methodology for algorithmic problem solving, is developed and illustrated. Functions and logic provide fundamental support for these activities. The principle of software reuse is also introduced here, through the notion of a routine. Techniques of proof that were introduced in Chapter 3 are reinforced here, as students see its use in the verification of simple programs. Though theory is utilized in these chapters, their main purpose is to introduce students to the processes of abstraction and design—developing and exercising computational models of algorithmic problems using the MAPS methodology.

Chapter 7 reveals the strong influence of logic in an entirely different area of the discipline of computing—architecture. The chapter introduces principles of logic design and machine organization, so that students ultimately see the interconnection between the Pascal programs that they developed earlier in the course and the computers that execute these programs. The main focus of this chapter is on the process of design as it influences the architecture and functional characteristics of contemporary

computers.

Chapter 8 takes an entirely different point of view toward the discipline. It discusses two important aspects of the social context of the computing discipline—intellectual property and risks and liabilities. At this point, students are familiar enough with the ideas of software, correctness, error detection and correction, and architecture to think constructively

about these fundamental contemporary issues.

Finally, Chapter 9 provides a broader overview of the remaining areas in the discipline of computing. It discusses the areas of algorithms and data structures, numerical and symbolic computation, operating systems, database and information retrieval, artificial intelligence and robotics, and human-computer communication. It also presents some of the broad professional aspects of the computing discipline. Thus, students

confront subjects that they are likely to encounter if they decide to major or

minor in computer science or computer engineering.

It is important to note that this text can be used independently of Volumes II through IV. That is, the quality and range of its subject matter will provide excellent preparation for later courses in the curriculum, whether those courses have the organization of Volumes II-IV or more conventional course organizations. Finally, this text can also be used to introduce nonmajors to the discipline of computing in the setting of a service course. More discussion of these alternatives is given below.

Course Organization—The Integrated Breadth-First Path When classroom-tested in a 14-week one-semester introductory course, the topics in this text were covered as shown in the table below. We identify this particular path through the text as the Integrated Breadth-First Path. The weekly schedule required 3 hours of lectures and a separate 1-hour coordinated laboratory period. The laboratory itself can be equipped either with IBM PC (compatible) computers running Turbo Pascal or with Macintosh computers running THINK Pascal. Other configurations that support standard Pascal can also be used. Nevertheless, the instructor should prepare for 4 scheduled hours of student contact per week rather than 3.

| Week  | Topics   | Text<br>Chapters | Coordinated<br>Homework       |
|-------|--|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1     | History of computing, review of functions and sets, finite series                  | 1,2              | Exercises, chapter 2          |
| 2-3   | Introduction to logic, equivalences, quantifiers, methods of reasoning and proof   | 3                | Exercises, chapter 3          |
| 4     | Introduction to algorithmic problems and their solutions; specifications           | 4                | alexa (Be m                   |
| 5-6   | Methodology for algorithmic problem solving (MAPS); routines, libraries, and reuse | 5                | er 8 trapeda<br>Mangaria 8 ta |
| 7-9   | Using MAPS to solve text and graphics problems; correctness, testing, verification | 6                | Exercises, chapter 6          |
| 10-12 | Logic, circuits, and computer organization; machine language and assembly language | 7                | Exercises, chapter 7          |
| 13-14 | Social issues; software as intellectual property; overview of the discipline       | 8,9              | Short paper                   |

From our experience, an ideal laboratory size would have 20 or fewer students, with at least one computer for every two students; it is often pref-

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