

Toward An Iconic Forth

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Iconic languages, also known as visual programming languages, are beginning to appear, not just as academic experiments in computer science, but even as commercial products. Some will fade away, but the best will revolutionize all areas of computer programming -- in productivity, understandability, and in the numbers of people who do programming. Iconic language will become essential to expert systems, simulations, real-time control, database management, as well as general software development, both the quick and the sturdy.

This paper uses examples of innovative software for the Macintosh computer to explore interesting visual paradigms that could be adapted to an iconic programming language.

The author considers it an urgent priority to begin the free development of iconic interfaces built upon, built into, or grafted onto traditional text-based Forths.

The Forth language has much to gain from iconic expression, and it has much to contribute.