

Java™: An Overview

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Introduction by James Gosling

"Java™: An Overview" was written in early 1995, just as we were getting ready to release Java. By that time, Java had been used inside Sun for about 4 years by a small enthusiastic crew. I was looking forward to getting it out there so that others could enjoy it too. Being a pretty serious geek, I tended to think of it in pretty technical terms. This was a fairly serious problem since relatively few people could make sense of what I was babbling. My wife, Judy Borcz, is a very bright person but not a geek (she's a Wharton MBA type). When I would erupt in fits of techno-babble it didn't help her understanding at all. She pushed me very hard to write down, in terms that mattered to people like her, what was so cool about Java.

That put my head in a different place and got me thinking about Java from a different perspective. The title of the paper doesn't match the content of the paper — it isn't an overview of Java at all. A more appropriate title would have been "Java: Why Should Anyone Care?". It takes the perspective of someone looking in from the outside at the development of software products. It presents a series of vignettes in the life of a software product organization and explains how they could be impacted by the adoption of Java. The vignettes were chosen to be familiar to anyone who has been around the business.

The paper turned out to be quite important since it opened up the community of people we were talking to and made the technology more accessible to a wider audience. Many analysts and reporters got copies and used it as their first introduction to Java. It evolved over the years and became the standard Java whitepaper and is still up on the java.sun.com website.

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