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“Every good tree produces good fruit.”

Birth of C

C is very often referred as a “System Programming Language” because it is used for writing compilers, editors and even operating systems. C was developed and implemented on the UNIX operating system on the DEC PDP-11, by Dennis M. Ritchie. C was evolved during 1971-73 from B language of Ken Thompson, which was evolved (in 1969-70) from BCPL language of Martin Richards.



Dennis M. Ritchie,
Creator of C Language
Courtesy: Lucent Technologies

Timeline		
Year	Language/OS	Remarks
1956-63	Assembly Language	IBM developed Assembly language
1954-57	FORTRAN (FORmula TRANslation)	A team lead by John W. Backus developed a numerically orientated language called FORTRAN
1958	ALGOL(ALGORithmic Language)	An important structured programming language was developed by committee of European and American computer scientists
		FORTRAN & ALGOL's type structures later influenced many other languages including BCPL, B & C
1964	PL/I (Programming Language 1)	IBM developed a clean language intended for both business and scientific purposes
1965		The famous “Multics project” was started by MIT, Bell Labs & General Electric as a joint venture. Multics (Multiplexed Information and Computing Service) is an experimental Operating System. It was the first operating system written in a high level language namely PL/I
	TMG (TransMoGrifiers)	McClure developed TMG as a language for writing compilers

Year	Language/OS	Remarks
1967	BCPL (Basic Combined Programming Language)	Martin Richards wrote BCPL, while he was visiting MIT
		Dennis M. Ritchie joined Bell Labs
1969		Bell Labs pulled out of the Multics project because of lack of hardware support
		PL/I was proved to be inefficient with Multics project. Ken Thompson & Dennis M. Ritchie felt that BCPL was also inefficient, who were using BCPL in Multics project too.
	Unix	Ken Thompson wrote original Unix system in PDP-7 assembler
		McIlroy and Bob Morris used TMG to write PL/I compiler for Multics
1969-70	B	Challenged by McIlroy's feat in reproducing TMG, Ken Thompson wrote a system programming language called B
		B is a BCPL squeezed into 8k bytes of memory.
		One theory says that B's name is derived from BCPL. But other theory says B's name is a contraction of Bon , another language created by Ken Thompson during Multics days. Bon is thought to be named after Bonnie, Ken Thompson's wife.
		B compiler on PDP-7 did not generate machine code instructions, instead generated 'threaded code'
1971	NB (New B)	Dennis M. Ritchie began to rewrite B's compiler to generate PDP-11 machine instructions. He also added character types to B for brevity. At the early stage he called it as NB (New B)
1971-73	C	Dennis M. Ritchie added few more features to NB and C was born
1973(summer)		AT&T scientists rewrote Unix kernel in C. That incident added popularity to C
1978		Brian Kernighan & Dennis M. Ritchie wrote "The C Programming Language", the first authoritative book on C. This book is often nicked as "K&R" or "white book"
1977-1979		C has undergone few more changes when Unix system's popularity was demonstrated

6 A to Z of C

Year	Language/OS	Remarks
1983		ANSI established X3J11 committee to standardize C language
1979-1983	C++	Bjarne Stroustrup wrote C++, an object oriented language at AT&T Bell labs. C++ was early known as "C with Classes". It is <i>almost</i> backward compatible with C. The first version of C++ was used internally in AT&T in August 1983
October, 1985		First commercial implementation of C++ was released
		C++'s style, especially function prototype declaration influenced ANSI C
1989	ANSI C	ANSI X3J11 committee came out with a new and decent standard for C
1990		ANSI C standard was also accepted by ISO as ISO/IEC 9899-1990
March, 2000- November, 2001		K. Joseph Wesley & R. Rajesh Jeba Anbiah wrote the book you hold— A to Z of C , because of the dissatisfaction over existing C books

Important Notice

The date of introduction of many languages in the above table is merely a rough approximation. Experts have divided regarding the date of introduction of many languages. Even the creators of many languages are also not clear; especially Dennis M Ritchie didn't specify the exact release date of C. I think, those languages are developed for personal needs and not aimed for commercial hit, that's why they lack the clear release date.

So if you are a teacher, please don't ask the questions regarding the date of release of certain languages, as they are not clear. If you are a student and you're asked such questions, raise your voice for a better system of questioning.