

attempting to capture a feel for the quality of the compilers by providing a feedback area, in which existing users can give their opinions of the compilers (or other products) they use. Despite a large number of visits to the Website, the response to this section has, to date, been disappointing, and we'd welcome new feedback from readers of this article.

Conclusion

As might be expected, no single compiler excels in all areas. Users who must choose a single compiler will have to weigh the pros and cons of various alternatives against their individual requirements. Ideally, of course, users would have more than one compiler at their disposal – typically one for development, and another for producing optimized production code. An incidental benefit of this arrangement is that it highlights many potential portability problems early in development.

Fortran in the Heavens (contd.)

A further search on the keyword 'Fortran', this time at the on-line site of the UK bookseller *www.bookshop.co.uk*, has revealed the existence of the science fiction novel "Fortran Five" by Simon Leonard (price £6.95), published 31 October, 1991, by Malice Aforethought. Any volunteers to write a book review?

Also, Nelson H. F. Beebe (*beebe@math.utah.edu*) of University of Utah (*http://www.math.utah.edu/~beebe*) wrote:

Apropos ``Fortran in the Heavens' [Fortran Forum v19 n3 December 2000 p. 12]; here is what the online form of the Oxford English Dictionary has to say:

Fortran

Computers.

A high-level programming language used chiefly for scientific and mathematical calculations.

1956 Computers & Automation Nov. 9/2 More recently, John Backus' group at IBM has prepared FORTRAN (FORmula TRANslation) for the IBM-704 computer. FORTRAN will translate into computer language a program written very close [sic] the language of the mathematician or scientist.

1957 J. W. BACKUS et al. in Proc. Western Joint Computer Conf. Feb. 188 (heading) The FORTRAN automatic coding system. Ibid., The programmer attended a one-day course on FORTRAN and..then programmed the job in four hours using 47 FORTRAN statements.

Beebe's Fortran bibliographies are at

http://www.math.utah.edu/pub/tex/bib/index-table-f.html#fortran1

http://www.math.utah.edu/pub/tex/bib/index-table-f.html#fortran2

http://www.math.utah.edu/pub/tex/bib/index-table-f.html#fortran3

and

ftp://ftp.math.utah.edu/pub/tex/bib/fortran.**

In addition, Backus' original paper may be hard to find, but is reproduced on pages 29-47 of *Programming Systems and Languages*, Rosen S. (ed.), McGraw-Hill computer science series, 1966, LCCN QA76.5 .R53.