Eberhard Sturm

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The New PL/I

… for PC, Workstation and Mainframe

With 80 illustrations

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This book is the expanded and improved 7th edition of the German book "Das neue PL/I" (© Vieweg+Teubner I GWV Fachverlage GmbH, Wiesbaden 2008) now offered to the English speaking audience by the original author.

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Preface

The new Workstation Compiler from the IBM Corporation, originally available only for the OS/2 Operating System, has since made its way from Windows and AIX (IBM's version of Unix) to the mainframe z/OS Operating System, including the version Unix System Services.

This book claims to be a basis for certification as an “IBM PL/I Certified Programmer/Developer”. On IBM computers, there is now decimal floating-point hardware available, which PL/I supports via the well-known DECIMAL FLOAT attribute and a new compiler option. So in the 7th edition, the section on floating-point arithmetic has been substantially rewritten.

IBM has worked on a set of questions which enables one to become certified as a PL/I Certified Programmer as well as a PL/I Certified Developer. Since the author was honored to help in developing the questionnaire, I have modified the text to reflect this test.

A Certified Programmer is expected to have only two to three years of experience with IBM PL/I. The expectation of the PL/I Certified Developer is that he or she will have had five to six years experience with the programming language. I would go so far as to imply that anyone who has read and understood this book should not have any problems answering the PL/I related questions of the certification test.

This book offers a modern introduction to “Programming Language Number One”. Its aim is to provide beginners with material for self-study as well as to provide professionals with new ideas, particularly on the basis of its comprehensive presentation of the language. If an example should at first appear unintelligible to an experienced PL/I programmer, I hope that from its explanation he or she can pick up something new in the language.

You should expect no theoretical discussions of algorithms or structure diagrams, but instead a practical introduction which should allow you to solve real problems with the help of PL/I in a straightforward way. In contrast to a reference manual, I will always advise you which usage of the language is “good” and which is “bad”.

This book would not exist without the Internet. It's obvious that I could not inflict an English reader to read a book written by a non-native speaker. So I wrote a posting to the PL/I mailing list asking for proofreaders. It's a great honor for me to thank Richard Barrow, Francis Byrne, Peter Elderon, Peter Flass, John Gilmore, Tom Linden, Ray Mullins and Robin Vowels for undertaking the task to correct and improve the English created by a German who never lived more than three weeks in succession in an English speaking country.

An unexpected but inevitable side effect happened: many suggestions helped even improve the German version of this book. If you nevertheless find errors, then this is probably my fault when incorporating the proofreaders' comments into the final text.

All examples and the PARSE macro mentioned in the next to last section (similar to the REXX statement) can be found on the web under:

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http://www.uni-muenster.de/ZIV/Mitarbeiter/EberhardSturm.html
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Münster, August 2008 E. S.

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