

Stephen Taylor, London
(editor of Vector, the journal of the British APL Association)

APLs - PARALLEL PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES

Abstract:

- What is an APL: Exotic programming languages derived from a mathematical notation. Like math, designed for thinking rather than for driving machines.
- Brief history. Early popularity as medium for 'personal computing' before PCs. Persistence in scientific, and mathematical applications in finance and insurance.
Resurgence with vast data flows.
- Elements of the language: arrays as first-class objects, reduction of arrays, higherorder functions.
- An alternative tradition in software development. APL teams have always been tiny, agile and exploratory. In the last half century they have been highly valued in the fastchanging world of financial trading rooms. Renewed interest as Moore's Law ends and we use parallel processing to chew swelling datastreams. I forecast further interest in improvised and hand-crafted IT solutions as economies wobble and corporate IT budgets shrink