Lecture 11
Jargon
Programming

algorithm   A procedure used to solve a problem or perform a task. For example, Google's web search tool has an algorithm for searching webpages and ranking them by relevance.

application   A program meant for use by a person (*e.g.*, a word-processing application as opposed to system software).

argument   A parameter used to specify with greater precision how a function or method should behave.

branch   A point in a program where the next line of instruction might not be the next sequential line because of a condition that must be evaluated (*e.g.*, if *a* is true then do *b*, else do *c*).

bytecodes   Machine-independent, compiled code that is intended to be used by an intermediate rather than a CPU. For example, Java bytecodes are executable by the Java Virtual Machine.

C   A high-level programming language developed in the early 1970s by Ken Thompson and Dennis Ritchie for use on the UNIX operating system. It has become an industry standard used on many platforms.

C#   An object-oriented programming language developed by Microsoft and based on C and C++.

C++   An object-oriented programming language based on C.

code   A set of computer instructions written in a programming language.

compiler   A program that takes humanly readable code and converts it into machine code.

condition   A requirement or qualification, the value of which determines the branch of instructions to follow (*e.g.*, if *a* is true then do *b*, else do *c*).

decrement   To decrease the value of a variable (usually by 1).

event   An action (*e.g.*, "mouse down" in Scratchspeak) that must occur in order for some other action to happen.

function   A sequence of instructions that are part of a larger program. Functions can "call" (*i.e.*, execute) other functions. Typically, a function is dedicated to a particular task.

increment   To increase the value of a variable (usually by 1).

instruction   A statement that tells a computer what to do (*e.g.*, ADD).

interpreter   A program used to run other programs by ingesting uncompiled code in real-time rather than using compiled code.

Java   A platform-independent, object-oriented programming language developed by Sun Microsystems.

JavaScript   An interpreted language created by Netscape to add functionality and dynamism to web pages. JavaScript is *not* related to Java. At all. Not one bit. Please don't call JavaScript "Java"!

language   A set of "vocabulary" and rules with which a computer can be instructed to perform tasks.

library   A collection of "helper" programs called by an executable.

loop   A cycle of instructions in a program.

method   A named piece of code that is associated with a class or an object in object-oriented programming.

object   A conceptual entity in object-oriented programming that has associated with it data and/or actions.

object code   Machine-readable instructions generated by a compiler.

parameter   A mechanism with which the behavior of a function or method can be modified.

Perl   Practical Extraction and Reporting Language. A language commonly used in scripts and CGI applications.

program   A set of instructions that compels a computer (perhaps at a user's bidding) to perform some task(s).

programmer   One who writes programs.

programming   The act of writing a program.

pseudocode   A short-hand way of writing a program without the precise syntax of a formal programming language. Writing "plain English" pseudocode is a good way for new programmers to understand the logic behind their programs.

Scratch   A "programming language that lets you create your own animations, games, and interactive art" developed by the Lifelong Kindergarten Group at the MIT Media Lab.

script   A program written in an interpreted language. The term sometimes implies a short program.

software   See program.

source code   The textual form of a program as written by its programmer(s).

statement   An instruction in a program that compels the program to do something (*e.g.*, Scratch's "say ... " block).

thread   Part of a program that can execute simultaneously with other parts.

variable   A symbolic representation of or placeholder for an unknown value in a program.