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# TIOBE index

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**TIOBE programming community index** is a measure of popularity of programming languages, created and maintained by the TIOBE Company based in Eindhoven, the Netherlands.<sup>[1]</sup> TIOBE stands for *The Importance of Being Earnest*, the title of a comedy play by Oscar Wilde that was first performed in 1895.<sup>[2]</sup> The index is calculated from the number of search engine results for queries containing the name of the language.<sup>[3]</sup> The index covers searches in Google, Google Blogs, MSN, Yahoo!, Baidu, Wikipedia and YouTube. The index is updated once a month. The current information is free but the long term statistics over many years of observation is for sale. The index authors think that it may be valuable when accepting various strategic decisions. TIOBE focuses on Turing complete languages, so it does not provide information about the popularity of, for instance, HTML.

According to the site, TIOBE index is "not about the *best* programming language or the language in which *most lines of code* have been written".<sup>[4]</sup> However the site does claim that the number of web pages may reflect the number of skilled engineers, courses and jobs worldwide.

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## History

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TIOBE index is sensitive to the ranking policy of the search engines on which it is based. For instance, in April 2004 Google performed a cleanup action to get rid of unfair attempts to promote the search rank. As a consequence, there was a large drop for languages such as Java and C++, yet these languages have stayed at the top of the table. To avoid such fluctuations, TIOBE now uses multiple search engines.

In August 2016, C reached its lowest ratings score since the index was launched, but was still the second most popular language after Java,<sup>[5]</sup> and since then both languages have substantially gone down while still maintaining the top two positions.

The TIOBE *programming language of the year* award goes to the language with the biggest annual popularity gain in the index, e.g., Go was the programming language of the year in 2016.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Criticism

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Pierre Carbonnelle challenges TIOBE's naming of Objective-C as the "programming language of the year" in 2012, arguing that there may be many Objective-C pages on the web, but they are rarely read. It proposes its own PYPL index instead, based on Google Trends data.<sup>[7]</sup> It shows popularity trends since 2004, worldwide and for 5 different countries.

Tim Bunce, author of the Perl DBI, has been critical of the index and its methods of ranking.<sup>[8]</sup>

## References

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## External links

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- Official website (<https://www.tiobe.com/tiobe-index/>)

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