20 Years of Lua

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The Beginning of Lua: 1993

- Tecgraf - a partnership between PUC-Rio and Petrobras
  - strong culture of tool development
  - inheritance from the Brazilian market reserve

- Two programs with configuration problems, each with its own limited mini-language

- Idea: a generic configuration language
  - First version of Lua, baptized Lua 1.0 in retrospect
Lua at Tecgraf

• Good acceptance

• Language soon spread to several other applications
  • In one year, ~30 programmers

• No immediate impact outside Tecgraf
  • No big success case outside Tecgraf
  • “a language from PUC?”
This is the first public release of Lua.

* What is Lua?
Lua is a simple, yet powerful, language for extending applications. Lua has been developed by TeCGraf, the Computer Graphics Technology Group of PUC-Rio, the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Dozens of industrial products developed by TeCGraf use Lua.

[...]
First International Publications


Growth

• Cameron Laird, SunWorld Magazine, 1998:

  • “Its user base is also small; there might be only a few tens of thousands of Lua programmers in the world. They're very fond of this language, though, and the imminent explosion of ubiquitous embedded processing (computers in your car, in your plumbing, and in your kitchen appliances) can only work in favor of Lua.”

• Big use in embedded systems: Samsung (TVs), Cisco (routers), Logitech (keyboards), Olivetti (printers), Océ (printers), Ginga (Brazilian TV middleware), Verizon (set-top boxes), Texas Instruments (calculators Nspire), Huawei (cellphones), Sierra Wireless (M2M devices), …
Wikipedia

- Slashdot, Feb 1, 2012: “Wikipedia Chooses Lua As Its New Template Language”


- “As of this weekend, anyone on Earth can use Lua [...] to build material on Wikipedia and its many sister sites, such as Wikiquote and Wiktionary.”
Hi there...
After reading the Dr. Dobbs article on Lua I was very eager to check it out, and so far it has exceeded my expectations in every way! It's elegance and simplicity astound me. Congratulations on developing such a well-thought out language.

Some background: I am working on an adventure game for the LucasArts Entertainment Co., and I want to try replacing our older adventure game scripting language, SCUMM, with Lua.
Lua in “AAA” Games

• Lucas Arts, 1998: First AAA game to use Lua
What happened next

- Game of the year...almost
  - Half-Life relegated us the Adventure Game of the Year
- GDC 1999 (2000?)
  - Panel discussion of scripting languages
    - Rob Huebner on embedding Java
    - Kevin Bruner on interpreted C++
    - Seamus McNally on not using a scripting language
  - 200 miserable people
  - “Or you could just use Lua...”
  - Furious scribbling
Lua in Games

• The Engine Survey (Mark DeLoura, 03/02/09,Gamasutra)

• What script languages are most people using?

![Bar chart showing Lua as the most popular script language, followed by Custom Language, C/C++ Variant, Unreal Script, and Python.](chart.png)
Books
Programming Languages
of the World
Thanks

www.lua.org