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MASTERING COBOL PROGRAMMING

R. HUTTY

M
MACMILLAN
EDUCATION

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PREFACE

COBOL, the **COM**mon **B**usiness **O**rientated **L**anguage, is one of many computer programming languages. It differs from other languages by being the most widely used language, reflecting the fact that a majority of computing is of a commercial nature and COBOL was particularly designed for use in commercial/business applications.

Compared with most other programming languages COBOL has many facilities, some of which are quite sophisticated. It would be impossible for a single book to cover all the details of all the facilities of COBOL and do them justice. The facilities covered by this book approximate to the Level 1 s of the Nucleus, Table Handling and Sequential I-O of the COBOL 1974 standard. These facilities are sufficient to write COBOL programs for almost all applications.

This book is not only concerned with the rules of COBOL. There is an art to programming: it is not enough to know the rules of a language, it is equally important to develop intelligible programs which have style and use the best techniques. A professional approach to programming is encouraged at all times throughout the book.

As with a foreign language there is only one sure way to learn a programming language, and that is by plenty of practical experience. Several directed practical experiences are given at the end of each chapter.

This book is not presented in the normal manner of one or two COBOL features per chapter. Instead most features are spread over a few chapters, and each chapter covers parts of a few features. This approach enables more relevant programs to be written and tested earlier in the book, and, by making the text more interesting, helps the reader's concentration. **Additionally, because a feature is spread over two or more chapters, a reader has time to assimilate gradually the concepts contained within a feature.**

The order in which the COBOL features are presented in this book have been chosen so that COBOL programs can be written right from the start, from the first chapter onwards. At the end of each chapter some practical work is suggested. In most cases this work consists of two parts: *trainers*, which help the reader to become familiar with the topics included in the chapter, and *programs* to write and test. It is assumed that practical work for one chapter has been done before moving on to the next.

Although COBOL was originally designed as a language for a batch computer system (punched-card input and line-printer output) the language is being used more and more through a workstation (keyboard input and

display output) such as a terminal connected to a computer or a stand-alone microprocessor. This book takes account of COBOL's use in this new environment by assuming that input is from a keyboard, and output is to a display.

This book is suitable for COBOL courses in educational establishments (schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities) and for individuals who wish to learn the language by self-instruction.

R. HUTTY

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R.H.

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(from the **ANSI COBOL STANDARD**, X3.23-1974)

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