

SIGPLAN Scope and Tutorial Needs

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Background. We are exploring many paths to maintaining and strengthening our position as the premier organization for technical professionals in the programming languages field, primarily by providing the kinds of services and resources of greatest benefit to our membership. Although attempts to categorize our membership can be only approximate, SIGPLAN members tend to fall into the following categories:

Academics. These members are primarily responsible for teaching or research at four- and two-year institutions. For those engaged in research, membership in SIGPLAN is currently beneficial because of conference discounts, technical interchange, publication discounts, and the sense of support, belonging, and loyalty traditionally associated with SIGPLAN. Our conferences are very strong technically and span a diverse set of programming language topics. For our members at two-year institutions, SIGPLAN aspires to do more by providing expanded coverage of issues directly related to teaching, placement, advanced study, and software tools.

Practitioners. These members are primarily situated in industry, most of whom are responsible for developing or maintaining medium to large software systems. Many of these members join

to receive a specific language publication such as *OOPS Messenger*; many join to receive registration discounts for our sponsored and cosponsored conferences. Our membership is actually comprised mostly of this kind of person. As discussed in the following, we are continuing to broaden our appeal by providing benefits for these members.

Students. SIGPLAN has a large number of student members, most of whom enjoy registration advantages for conference attendance. We have a fund (PAC) that supports students who are presenting papers at participating conferences; we are currently working toward broadening the applicability of this fund. We have not yet focused on forming or supporting student (local) chapters.

Updated Publications. We are in the process of augmenting our primary publication, *SIGPLAN Notices*, to include material of wider interest. We will offer regular columns on software tools, Internet resources, books, and topics for professional development.

Tutorials and Workshops. These sorts of events traditionally take place around regularly scheduled conferences. Although our conferences change venue

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each year, they are rarely situated in cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, or Des Moines. There are probably audiences in such cities willing to receive tutorials scheduled at the local level that feature internationally prominent speakers. Workshops might also be feasible, though the “academic” kinds of workshops work very well when colocated with our popular conferences. However, workshops at the professional level would probably play well locally.

One characteristic that may set SIGPLAN apart from other SIGs is the per-

vasive role of “language” in software systems. Even more pervasive is the trend toward object-oriented systems, whose origins and thrust continue to be language-based. Thus, in the following shopping list, one sees topics that could very well be offered by other SIGs; in fact, such offerings should be cosponsored by relevant SIGs. These topics appear here because it is believed that our membership could benefit from them.

The table lists topics and an estimation of the relative interest of our membership in a tutorial covering each topic.

Topic	Academic		Professionals	Students
	Research	Teaching		
Compiler construction	weak	strong	strong	moderate
Program transformation	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate
Porting GCC compiler	moderate	moderate	strong	moderate
Language trends	strong	moderate	moderate	moderate
Programming environments	strong	moderate	strong	moderate
Run-time support	moderate	strong	strong	moderate
Project management	moderate	weak	strong	strong
Software engineering	moderate	strong	strong	strong
Parallel systems	moderate	moderate	strong	moderate
Network software	strong	moderate	strong	moderate
Object-oriented	strong	strong	strong	strong