

Jean David Ichbiah

(1940-2007)



Jean David Ichbiah (25 March 1940 – 26 January 2007) was a French computer scientist and the initial chief designer (from 1977–1983) of Ada, a general-purpose, strongly typed programming language with certified validated compilers.

At the time, he was a member of the Programming Research division at CII Honeywell Bull (CII-HB) in Louveciennes, France. He had previously designed an experimental system implementation language called LIS (1972–1974), based on Pascal and Simula (in fact, he had been chairman of the Simula User's Group), and was one of the founding members of IFIP WG 2.4 on Systems Implementation Languages.

Ichbiah's team submitted the language design labelled "Green" to the competition to choose the United States Department of Defense's embedded programming language. When Green was selected in 1978, he continued as chief designer of the language, named "Ada".

In 1980, Ichbiah left CII-HB and founded the Alsys Corporation in La Celle-Saint-Cloud, which continued language definition to standardize Ada 83, and later went into the Ada compiler business, also supplying special validated compiler systems to NASA, the US Army, and others. He later moved to the Waltham, Massachusetts subsidiary of Alsys.

Ichbiah designed the keyboard layout FITALY which is specifically optimized for stylus or touch-based input, and subsequently started the Textware company, which sells text entry software for PDAs and tablet PCs, as well as text-entry software for medical transcription on PCs.

In 1979, Jean Ichbiah was designated a "chevalier" (knight) of the French Legion of Honour and a "correspondent" of the French Academy of Sciences. He received a Certificate of Distinguished Service from the DoD for his work on Ada.

He was a descendent of Greek and Turkish Jews from Thessaloniki who emigrated to France.

Jean Ichbiah died from complications of a brain tumor on January 26, 2007.