

WEAK WORDS

William Bricken

October 1987

I'm in the unfortunate position of having to start off by contradicting myself. I want to speak out against words. The problem is that words are a degenerate form of expression. They are linear and sequential, squeezed into one dimensional lines. Their expressive power is weak.

We should seek to program with pictures rather than words. Pictures are two dimensional, and convey a deeper reality. Sculpture is even better, since it conveys three dimensional information. And actions, adding time to sculpture, is better still, for it is most closely aligned with the fullness of reality.

I'm an information and complexity seeker. Let's end the tyranny of one dimensional words and tokens. Let's favor action rather than words."

There are two ideas that I want to highlight. One is that words, being weaker than pictures, make sense only if they are aligned with stronger information, such as actions. The other is that there is no longer any technical (or mathematical) reason to program in words. We can do everything better in pictures and diagrams, augmented with words where convenient.

Freedom of expression is clearly based in the access and adoption of higher and higher dimensional representations (microscopes and telescopes of the Renaissance, fractal dimensions and pixel control of the Information Age). The future is non-linear.

"The lack of a picture is worth a thousand unspoken words."