InfoWorld

Ruby (finally) gains in popularity, but Go plateaus

No longer an up-and-comer, Ruby seems to be settling in as a mature language for the long term

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After falling out of the Tiobe language popularity index's Top 10 last year, the Ruby language has reversed course and is getting more popular lately. Meanwhile, in the separate, twice-yearly Redmonk Programming Language Rankings, the Google Go language (Golang) declined in popularity.

Ruby's move into maturity

In this month's Tiobe index, Ruby rose to the ninth spot and had a rating of 2.744 percent. Ruby was in tenth place last month, with a rating of rating of 2.534 percent. Before February 2018, the language had been out of the Top 10 for several months. It finished in 13th place in November. In October 2017, Ruby was in tenth place, with a 2.234 rating. Tiobe bases its ratings on a formula assessing searches on languages in popular search engines.

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Go (Golang):

Ruby historically benefitted from its ties to the Ruby on Rails framework, which made it easy to build webpages, software quality services vendor Tiobe said. But "hipsters"

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later began moving to other languages after Ruby peaked in 2008. Its gradual resurgence in popularity is a good sign, the company said. But the publisher of the index, Tiobe Managing Director Paul Jansen, sees Ruby simply getting mature as opposed to making a comeback. This maturity makes it a stable Top 10 language.

Also in this month's index, Kotlin and Julia both entered the top 40. Kotlin, which has benefitted from Google's endorsement of it for Android mobile application development, came in 38th place with a rating of 0.278 percent. Julia, in 37th place, rated at 0.301 percent, is used in scientific computing and burgeoning field of machine learning. Rust and Groovy, meanwhile, fell out of the index's Top 50 spots.

Google Go may have plateaued

Has Go plateaued in popularity? This winter's Redmonk Programming Language Rankings suggests it has. Redmonk offers developer-focused industry analysis. Redmonk's rankings are based on a formula examining pull requests in GitHub and discussions on Stack Overflow.

In the latest ranking, Go dropped one spot to 16th place from last June's rankings. This was the first time its ranking had diminished in Redmonk's semiannual assessment.

Perhaps best known as the language used for developing the Docker container system, the open source Go has been gaining in popularity fopr several years. But the trajectory shown in the latest rankings does not leave much hope that Go will continue that climb, Redmonk said. Go, despite its unquestioned reputation as a back-end language, lacks the versatility of comparable languages such as Java, thus limiting its access to new markets and stifling new growth, said Redmonk.

Go's Redmonk ranking is similar to its ranking in two other assessments of language popularity, the Tiobe and Pypl indexes, where Go is ranked 17th this month in both.

Redmonk's latest index also found Kotlin jumping from 46 in the June 2017 rankings to 27th in the current ranings. That makes Kotlin the second-fastest growing language Redmonk has seen, just behind Apple's Swift. Also moving up was TypeScript, the Microsoft-sponsored typed superset of JavaScript, which jumped three spots to a tie for 14th place with Scala, which dropped two places. Rust, meanwhile, made the Top 25 for the first time in Redmonk's rankings, coming in at 23rd place.

The Top 10s: How programming languages stack up

The Top 10 in the March 2018 Tiobe index were:

1. Java (14.941 percent)

2. C (12.76 percent)

3. C++ (6.452 percent)

4. Python (5.869 percent)

5. C# (5.067 percent)

6. Visual Basic .Net (4.085 percent)

7. PHP (4.01 percent)

8. JavaScript (3.916 percent)

9. Ruby (2.744 percent)

10. SQL (2.686 percent)

In the alternative PyPL Popularit of Programing Language index, which assesses popularity based on how often language tutorials are searched on in Google, the March 2018 Top 10 were:

1. Java (22.7 percent)

2. Python (21.69 percent)

3. JavaScript (8.53 percent)

4. PHP (8.33 percent)

5. C# (7.99 percent)

6. C (6.42 percent)

7. R (4.23 percent)

8. Objective-C (3.81 percent)

9. Swift (3 percent)

10. Matlab (2.39 percent)

And in the Redmonk index, the Top 10 was mostly unchanged, with Swifts tying Objective-C (which Swift replaces for iOS development) for tenth place as the lone differentiator from the June 2017 index. The Top 10 were:

1. JavaScript

2. Java

3. Python

4. PHP

5. C#

6. C++

7. CSS

8. Ruby

9. C

10. (tie) Swift, Objective-C

Paul Krill is an editor at large at InfoWorld, whose coverage focuses on application development.

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