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Just Because it is there ^[4]

J. Biit,

[Hans Berliner's](#) first chess program, written in the late 60s in [PL/I](#) to ran on an [IBM System/360 mainframe computer](#) ^[1]. It played the [First United States Computer Chess Championship](#) 1970 in [New York City](#), and won versus [Wita](#), lost from [Chess 3.0](#) and drew [Coko III](#).

Along with [Daly CP](#), J. Biit was one of the first chess programs operated through a [Graphical User Interface](#). The UI was written at [Columbia University](#) for the [IBM 2250 Display Unit](#), and later evolved along with J. Biit to become the [Columbia Computer Chess Program](#) dubbed CCCP ^[2].

J. Biit is the acronym of "Just Because it is there", probably in dependance of the famous quote ^[3] by English mountaineer [George Mallory](#), having replied to the question "Why do you want to climb [Mount Everest](#)?".

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Description

J. Biit was a selective search ([Shannon type B](#)) program ^[5] that places considerable emphasis on chess knowledge and restricting the number of positions to be examined, as it scored only 30-100 positions during a search using [alpha-beta](#) and [incremental board updating](#). The program was developed in [PL/I](#) on the [IBM 360/65](#) at [CMU](#), but was unable to use that system for the [1970 ACM tournament](#). Since the 360 line was supposedly compatable, Kenneth M. King ^[6] offered the services of [Columbia's](#) more powerful IBM 360/91. Unfortunately they discovered that it wasn't as compatable as expected and Berliner and assistants spent two rather frantic weeks making program changes. It used about 200 [Kibibyte](#) of [memory](#) and was about 3500 PL/I statements. The program searches a very small tree. Berliner claimed that, on average, only 30 nodes were examined for a move that required 65 seconds of computation. It used a "[free form of search which terminated in quiescent positions](#) ... (with) the only bound being the absolute depth limit of 14 ply." It searched two plies for begining and [middle games](#), and 4 plies for [end games](#) .

Quotes

[Hans Berliner](#) in his Oral History, March 2005 ^[7] :

And I wrote a program which actually played chess. And I did it in the way [Greenblatt](#) said it ought to be done ^[8] . It wasn't anywhere's near as good a [Greenblatt's program](#) and I wasn't really a very good programmer obviously, since that was the first time I had written a program...

So it played. Let's see, I've got to get the timeline right here. Now this was in 1970. Now in 1970 I had already left IBM. I left IBM in 1969, and went to [Carnegie Mellon](#) as a doctoral student.

And, of course, their attraction with [Newell](#) and [Simon](#) was they would like to find somebody to push their ideas further forward, and that was me. And so I had this program which, in retrospect, was pretty woesome.

See also

- [Acronym](#)

Publications

- [Hans Berliner](#) (1970). *Experiences Gained in Constructing and Testing a Chess Program*. [IEEE](#) Symposium System Science and Cybernetics, reprinted in [David Levy](#) (ed.) (1988). [Computer Games I](#).

External Links

Chess Program

- [Classic Computer Chess - ... The programs of yesteryear](#) by [Carey](#), hosted by the [Internet Archive](#)

Misc

- [Michael Hedges](#) - Because It's There ^[10], [YouTube](#) Video
July 1986 at the [Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts](#) in [Vienna, Virginia](#)

References

1. [^] [George Atkinson](#) (1998). [Chess and Machine Intuition](#). (Intellect Ltd.) pp 61
2. [^] [Recollections of CUCC 1968-70 -The CCCP Chess Program](#)
3. [^] [George Mallory - Because it is there - Wikiquote](#)
4. [^] Everest from [Kala Patthar](#) in [Nepal](#), [Mount Everest from Wikipedia](#)
5. [^] Description based on [Classic Computer Chess - ... The programs of yesteryear](#) by [Carey](#), hosted by the [Internet Archive](#)
6. [^] [The IBM 7090](#)
7. [^] [Oral History of Hans Berliner](#), Interviewed by: [Gardner Hendrie](#), Recorded: March 7, 2005, [The Computer History Museum](#), pdf, pp. 12-13
8. [^] [Richard Greenblatt](#), [Donald Eastlake](#) and [Stephen D. Crocker](#) (1967). *The Greenblatt Chess Program*. Proceedings of the AfiPs Fall Joint Computer Conference, Vol. 31, pp. 801-810.
9. [^] [Re: Old programs CHAOS and USC](#) by [Dann Corbit](#), [CCC](#), July 11, 2015
10. [^] [Naomi Uemura from Wikipedia](#)

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