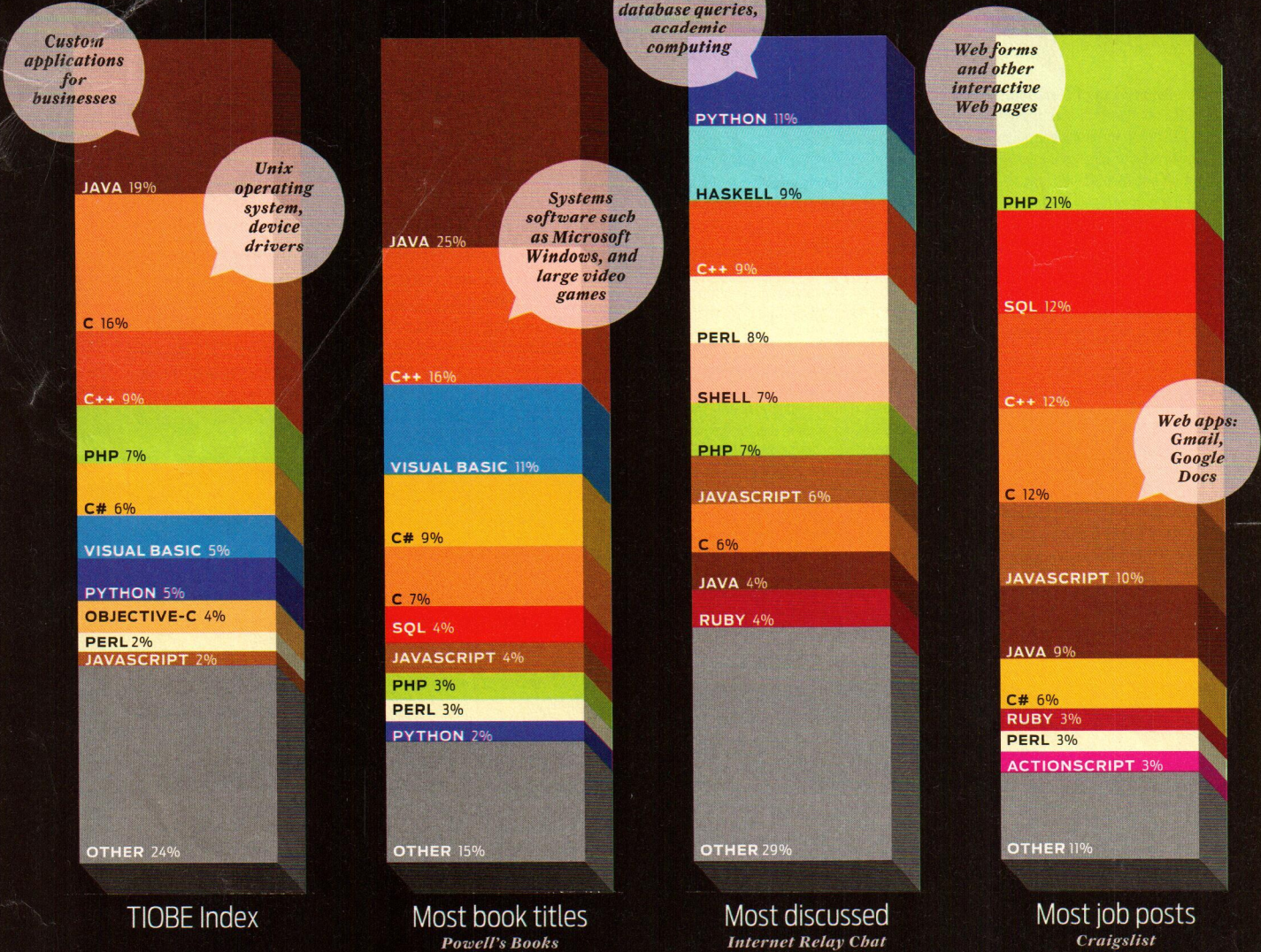


the data



The Top 10 Programming Languages

LISTING PROGRAMMING languages is easy—Wikipedia's page has more than 600 entries—but ranking them by popularity is hard. As David Welton, curator of the site LangPop.com, points out, you can't send out a horde of researchers to look over programmers' shoulders and note what languages they're coding in. So you have to get at it indirectly.

To do that, you can search the Web and find numbers to use as a proxy. And you can tailor the search to target different kinds of popularity: Which languages are the most sought after in the job market? Check a job site. Which are used by elite programmers? Look in on their chat sessions. How established is a language? Visit an online bookstore—new and

esoteric languages don't have many reference books dedicated to them.

The data here come in part from TIOBE, a software research firm based in Eindhoven, Netherlands. The analysts there produce an aggregate index each month. I also looked at Welton's LangPop.com, which shows the results of individual searches, such as on Craigslis, Internet Relay Chat, and Powell's Books.

Generally speaking, the languages being talked about by programmers online aren't quite the same as the ones at the top of the TIOBE Index or those that have spawned a lot of book titles (C++ is an exception). The most sought after by employers seem to be PHP, a language used in Web development, and SQL, which

is used for writing database queries. No surprises there.

What has been interesting in recent years is the rise of JavaScript for writing Web-based applications that connect users to databases—think Gmail. In fact, JavaScript's ascent is largely due to Google's creation of the V8 JavaScript engine, a speedy compiler that powers its Chrome browser.

And then there's Objective-C, which underlies Mac OS and iOS and was barely in TIOBE's top 40 in 2008. But since then, it's climbed rapidly in popularity because people have been using it to write apps for the iPhone and iPad. —Ritchie S. King

SOURCES: TIOBE, LangPop.com
Because of rounding, categories may not total 100 percent.