

Use of LSD-25 for Computer Programming

HERE IS A WAY I used LSD-25 for a complex programming project in 1975. I was working in New York developing a compiler for an application language called “MARLAN”. This application was for the then popular IBM 360 and was written in 360 Assembler Language. There were six large phases for this application, and I was the responsible chief architect and programmer for the project. There were approximately eight hundred subroutines in the entire system.



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At one point in the project I could not get an overall viewpoint for the operation of the entire system. It really was too much for my brain to keep all the subtle aspects and processing nuances clear so I could get a processing and design overview. After struggling with this problem for a few weeks, I decided to use a little acid to see if it would enable a breakthrough, because otherwise, I would not be able to complete the project and be certain of a consistent overall design. Overall design consistency was important to reduce program and design errors.

I used only seventy-five micrograms because I was not interested in tripping, as I had a specific, limited and definite purpose for the use of LSD. While stimulated by the LSD I was able to get the entire system wholly in my mind at the same time. I spent some time mentally visualizing various aspects of the compiler, the language and the processing which would take place. I did discover three or four design inconsistencies while being stimulated by the effect of the LSD, and I made notes for later checking.

After twenty-four hours when the effect of the LSD was completely gone, I went over my notes. I needed to have a measure of ‘faith’ that the design changes suggested by my notes would produce the beneficial effects they seemed to imply; that is, I was again in the condition of being not able to conceive of the entire system at the same time in my mind.

Once all the changes were made, I was able to successfully complete the programming of this huge system. The design changes I made reduced future program modification errors and contributed to the elegance of the design. The system was a commercial success for my employer and was used for many years by them. Although the use of LSD was an important component of the success of the system, no one knew of its use except me. •