DYALOG
Eastbourne 2026

Ten Years Without Workspaces

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DYALOG

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The Workspace is Dead! Long Live the Workspace!

Paul Mansouor

60 Years of the Workspace

```
      )LOAD 1 CLEANSPACE
SAVED 1966-11-27 17.53.58
```

The Workspace is Dead! 2018

- So...?

60 Years of the Workspace

- 1966: first CLEANSPACE
- 2006: SALT
- 2016: 50 years of APL
- 2018: Link
- 2026: 60 years after CLEANSPACE
- Workspace will remain central, but its role has changed

How the Language Evolved

- 1970s: System functions
- 1980s: Nested arrays
- 1990s: Leading axis, dfns, namespaces
- 2000s: Unicode
- 2010s: Source-centric tooling
- 2020s: Array notation and modules
- 2030s: ?

The Early Source Story

- Binary workspaces
- □OR or source in component files or databases
- Transfer files (ATF)
- Single-byte encodings

From Scripts to Source Control

- SALT put functions & scripted namespaces in .dyalog files
- User command integration
- SVN and other SCM systems
- Unscripted → scripted workflows

⎕FIX Changed the Game

⎕FIX evolved as text source became canonical:

- Read source directly from file (remembering whence)
- Define functions/operators (not just objects)
- Manage dependencies (including deferred resolve)
- Startup increasingly loaded code

The 2016-2026 Toolchain

- Acre & Dado
- Link
- SVN/Git
-]Get
- Cider & Tatin











The Interpreter Takes Over

- StartupSession in v19.0
- Launch directly from source
- No need for bootstrap .dws files
- Built-in source awareness

What Is the Workspace Still Good For?

- Interactive exploration
- Temporary state
- Application images
- Crash dumps and recovery
- Code cache

"The ability to load a crashed workspace and continue working remains hugely valuable."

Paul Mansour Was Right...

The workspace is secondary...

but an excellent runtime container

Looking Ahead

- Modules & IDE plug-ins written in APL
- Single-file source (.apls?)
- Interpreter-integrated source handling
- Consistent API
- Locations for tools on disk and in session

1966–2006: Workspaces roam

2006–2016: The SALT age

2016–2026: Workspaces go from primary to secondary

2026: Text source is now the source of truth

2026–: Workspaces retain some roles