CMSC 132: Object-Oriented Programming II

Effective Java II

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Effective Java

Collection of tips for programming in Java
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Quick look at 3 topics (out of 57)
1. Duplicate Object Creation
2. Defensive Copying
3. Immutable Classes

Slides borrowed from Bloch & adapted
1) Avoid Duplicate Object Creation

- Reuse existing object instead
- Simplest example
  ```java
  String s = new String("DON’T DO THIS!");
  String s = "Do this instead";
  ```
  - Since Strings constants are reused
- In loops, savings can be substantial
Object Duplication Example

```java
public class Person {
    private final Date birthDate;
    public Person(Date birthDate) {
        this.birthDate = birthDate;
    }

    // UNNECESSARY OBJECT CREATION
    public boolean bornBefore2000() {
        Calendar gmtCal = Calendar.getInstance(
            TimeZone.getTimeZone("GMT"));
        gmtCal.set(2000, Calendar.JANUARY, 1, 0, 0, 0);
        Date MILLENIUM = gmtCal.getTime();
        return birthDate.before(MILLENIUM);
    }
}
```
public class Person {
    ...
    // STATIC INITIALIZATION CREATES OBJECT ONCE
    private static final Date MILLENIUM;
    static {
        Calendar gmtCal = Calendar.getInstance(
            TimeZone.getTimeZone("GMT"));
        gmtCal.set(2000, Calendar.JANUARY, 1, 0, 0, 0);
        Date MILLENIUM = gmtCal.getTime();
    }
    public boolean bornBefore2000() { // FASTER!
        return birthDate.before(MILLENIUM);
    }
}
Object Duplication Summary

Don’t create unnecessary duplicate objects
- Reuse improves clarity and performance

But don't be afraid to create objects
- Object creation is cheap on modern JVMs
- Can enhance simplicity, power, robustness
2) Defensive Copying

- Java programming language is **safe**
  - Immune to buffer overruns, wild pointers, etc…
  - Unlike C, C++

- Makes it possible to write **robust** classes
  - Correctness doesn’t depend on other modules
  - Even in safe language, requires effort
Defensive Programming

Assume clients will try to destroy invariants
- May actually be true
- More likely – honest mistakes

Ensure class invariants survive any inputs
This Class is *Not* Robust!

// GOAL – PERSON’S BIRTHDAY IS INVARIANT
public class Person {

    // PROTECTS birthDate FROM MODIFICATION?
    private final Date birthDate;

    public Person(Date birthDate) {
        this.birthDate = birthDate;
    }

    // RETURNS birthDate
    public Date bday() { return birthDate; }
}

The Problem – Date is Mutable

 Constructors can allow invariant to be modified

// ATTACK INTERNALS OF PERSON
Date today = new Date();
Person p = new Person(today);
today.setYear(78);  // MODIFIES P’S BIRTHDAY!
public class Person {
    private final Date birthDate;

    // REPAIRED CONSTRUCTOR
    // DEFENSIVELY COPIES PARAMETERS
    public Person(Date birthDate) {
        this.birthDate =
            new Date(birthDate.getTime());
    }

    // RETURNS birthDate
    public Date bday() { return birthDate; }
}
An Important Detail

- First copy parameters, then check copy validity
  - Eliminate window of vulnerability...
  - ...between parameter check and copy
- Thwarts multithreaded attack

```java
public Person(Date birthDate) {
    // VULNERABLE, DON'T CHECK birthDate HERE
    this.birthDate =
        new Date(birthDate.getTime());
    // CHECK this.birthDate HERE INSTEAD
}
```
Another Important Detail

- Use constructor, not clone, to make copies
  - Necessary because Date class is nonfinal
- Attacker could implement malicious subclass
  - Records reference to each instance in list
  - Provides attacker with access to instance list
- ...and pass subclass to Person() constructor
More Defensive Copying

- Constructors are only half the battle
- Accessors can allow invariant to be modified

// ACCESSOR ATTACK ON INTERNALS OF PERSON
Date today = new Date();
Person p = new Person(today);
Date bday = p.bday();
bday.setYear(78);  // MODIFIES P’S BIRTHDAY!
More Defensive Copying

Solution – defensive copying in accessors

// REPAIRED ACCESSOR DEFENSIVELY COPY FIELDS

public class Person {

    // RETURNS CLONE (COPY) OF birthDate
    public Date bday() {
        return (Date) birthDate.clone();
    }

}

Now Person class is robust!
Defensive Copying Summary

- Don’t incorporate mutable parameters into object – make defensive copies
  - Constructors
  - Static factories
  - Pseudo-constructors
  - Mutators

- Return defensive copies of mutable fields
  - Accessors

- Real lesson – use immutable components
  - Eliminates the need for defensive copying
3) Immutable Classes

Class whose instances cannot be modified

Examples

- String
- Integer
- BigInteger

How, why, and when to use them
How to Write an Immutable Class

- Don’t provide any mutators
- Ensure that no methods may be overridden
- Make all fields final
- Make all fields private
- Ensure exclusive access to any mutable components
public final class Fval {
    private final float f;
    public Fval(float f) {
        this.f = f;
    }
    // ACCESSORS WITHOUT CORRESPONDING MUTATORS
    public float value() { return f; }

    // ALL OPERATIONS RETURN NEW Fval
    public Fval add(Fval x) {
        return new Fval(f + x.f);
    }
    // SUBTRACT, MULTIPLY, ETC. SIMILAR TO ADD
public boolean equals(Object o) {
    if (o == this) return true;
    if (!(o instanceof Fval))
        return false;
    Fval c = (Fval) o;
    return (Float.floatToIntBits(f) ==
            Float.floatToIntBits(c.f));
}
}
Distinguishing Characteristic

- Return new instance instead of modifying
- Functional programming
- May seem unnatural at first
- Many advantages
Advantage 1 – Simplicity

- Instances have exactly one state
- Easy to design, implement
- Constructors establish invariants
- Invariants can never be corrupted
- Requires no effort on the part of clients
Advantage 2 – Inherently Thread-Safe

- No need for synchronization
  - Internal or external
  - Since no writes to shared data
- Can’t be corrupted by concurrent access
- By far the easiest approach to thread safety
Advantage 3 – Can Be Shared Freely

// EXPORTED CONSTANTS
public static final Fval ZERO = new Fval(0);
public static final Fval ONE = new Fval(1);

// STATIC FACTORY CAN CACHE COMMON VALUES
public static Fval valueOf(float f) { ...
}

// PRIVATE CONSTRUCTOR MAKES FACTORY MANDATORY
private Fval (float f) {
    this.f = f;
}

Advantage 4 – No Copies

- No need for defensive copies
- No need for any copies at all!
- No need for clone or copy constructor
- Not well understood in the early days

    public String(String s);  // Should not exist
Advantage 5 – Composability

- Excellent building blocks
- Easier to maintain invariants
  - If component objects won't change
- Special cases
  - Map keys
  - Set elements
The Major Disadvantage

- Separate instance for each distinct value
- Creating these instances can be costly

```java
BigInteger moby = ...;  // A million bits
moby = moby.flipBit(0);  // Ouch!
```

- Problem magnified for multistep operations
  - Provide common multistep operations as primitves
  - Alternatively provide mutable companion class
When to Make Classes Immutable

- Always, unless there's a good reason not to
- Always make small “value classes” immutable
  - Examples
    - Color
    - PhoneNumber
    - Price
  - Date and Point (both mutable) were mistakes!
  - Experts often use long instead of Date
When to Make Classes Mutable

- Class represents entity whose state changes
  - Real-world
    - BankAccount, TrafficLight
  - Abstract
    - Iterator, Matcher, Collection
  - Process classes
    - Thread, Timer

- If class must be mutable, minimize mutability
  - Constructors should fully initialize instance
  - Avoid reinitialize methods
Effective Java Conclusion

- Reuse objects where appropriate
  - Improves clarity and performance
- Make defensive copies where required
  - Provides robustness
- Write immutable classes
  - Simple, thread-safe, sharable and reusable