Collection Abstractions & Java Collections

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Collection

• Programs represent and manipulate abstractions (chunks of information)
  • **Examples**: roster of students, deck of cards
• One of the most universal abstractions is a **collection**
  • Represents an aggregation of multiple objects
  • Plus, perhaps, a relation between elements
  • **Examples**: list, set, ordered set, map, array, tree
• Supporting different operations
Data Structures

• Data structure
  • A way of representing & storing information
• Choice of data structure affects
  • Abstractions supported
  • Amount of storage required
  • Which operations can be efficiently performed
• Collections may be implemented using many different data structures
Graph Abstractions

• Many-to-many relationship between elements
  • Each element has *multiple* predecessors
  • Each element has *multiple* successors
Graph abstractions

- Undirected graph
  - Undirected edges
- Directed graph
  - Directed edges
- Directed acyclic graph (DAG)
  - Directed edges, no cycles
Tree abstractions

• One-to-many relationship between elements
  • Each element has unique predecessor
  • Each element has multiple successors
Tree Abstractions

- Tree
  - Only one node (the root) that doesn’t have a parent
- Binary Tree
  - A tree where each node has at most 2 children
Sequence Abstractions

• One-to-one relationship between elements
  • Each element has unique predecessor
  • Each element has unique successor
Sequences or Ordered Collections

- List
  - A sequence of elements
  - The user of this interface has precise control over where in the list each element is inserted.
  - The user can access elements by their integer index (position in the list), and search for elements in the list.
Limited Sequences

- **Queue**
  - Can add only at the tail
  - Can only access or remove at the head
  - First-in, First-out (FIFO)

- **Stack**
  - Can add only at the top
  - Can only access or remove at the top
  - Last-in, First-out (LIFO)

- **Deque**: double ended queue
  - Can add, access or remove at either end
Set Data Structures

- No relationship between elements
  - Elements have **no** predecessor / successor
  - Only **one** copy of element allowed in set
Abstraction Taxonomy

• Classification scheme for data structures
  • Based on relationships between elements

• Category          Relationship
  • Graph            many ⇒ many
  • Hierarchical     one ⇒ many
  • Linear           one ⇒ one
  • Set              no explicit relationship
Desert Island Abstraction

- If you could have only one abstraction with you on a desert island…
- Graph is the most general
  - Can represent any of the other abstractions
    - E.g., A set is a graph with no edges
- But more specific abstractions have advantages
  - Some things are unique and well defined (e.g., first element)
  - Implementations for more specific abstractions can support more efficient operations
Java Collection Framework (JCF)

- Java provides several interfaces and classes for manipulating & organizing data
  - Example: List, Set, Map interfaces
- Java Collection Framework consists of
  - Interfaces
    - Abstract data types
  - Implementations
    - Reusable data structures
  - Algorithms
    - Reusable functionality
Collection Interface

- [http://download.oracle.com/javase/6/docs/api/java/util/Collection.html](http://download.oracle.com/javase/6/docs/api/java/util/Collection.html)

- Core operations
  - Add element
  - Remove element
  - Determine size (# of elements)
  - Iterate through all elements

- Additional operations supported by some collections
  - Find first element
  - Find $k^{th}$ element
  - Find largest element
  - Sort elements

- Collection vs. Collections
  - Collections is a class