

Lecture Set #14: Algorithms and Design

1. Algorithmic Design
2. Algorithmic Analysis
3. System Design



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Jan Plante (Adapted from Bonnie Dorr)

What is an algorithm?

- The method used to solve a particular problem is called an **algorithm**.
- **Example:** Make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich:
 - Get a loaf of bread
 - Remove two slices
 - Get a jar of peanut butter
 - Get a knife
 - Open the jar
 - Using the knife, get some peanut butter and spread it on one slice
 - ...blah, blah, blah
- There is essentially **one sequential process** being described.

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Low-Level Design: Pseudo-Code and Algorithms

- We have already talked about **pseudo-code** as a design technique
 - NOT English
 - NOT a program
 - Something in-between
 - Captures the logic, flow of desired code
 - Note that pseudo-code could be translated into any programming language (not just Java)
- Pseudo-code is used to represent **algorithms** = step-by-step solutions to problems
- Algorithms are often coded as single methods

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Concerns at the Algorithmic Level of Design



- **Correctness**
Does my algorithm correctly solve the problem?
- **Efficiency**
Is my algorithm fast enough for the job?
- **Clarity**
Is my algorithm understandable? and is it implementable?

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Putting all your eggs in one basket



- Problem: I have 16 baskets full of 12 eggs each; I want to "put all of my eggs in one basket". ☺
- Algorithm #1 ??
 - Combine #1 and #2
 - Combine result with #3
 - Combine result with #4; etc.
- Algorithm #2 ??
 - Combine #1, #2; combine #3, #4; combine #5, #6...
 - Combine <1,2> with <3,4>; Combine <5,6> with <7,8>...
 - Combine <1,2,3,4> with <5,6,7,8>
 - Combine last two ...

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Algorithmic Efficiency Analysis



- Measuring which is better for time.
- What if the time required for the merging machine is constant?
 - both have 15 calls to the merging machine when there are 16 baskets to merge
 - what if the number of baskets is another value?
- What if the time required for the merging machine is dependent on the number of eggs being merged?
 - for example 1 second per egg (i.e. merging two baskets of 12 each takes 24 seconds)
 - this takes more math when you want to generalize on the number of baskets

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Big-O Notation



- Categories of formulas
- What takes over as n approaches infinity
- $O(\log n)$
- $O(n)$
- $O(n * \log n)$
- $O(n^2)$
- $O(n^2 * \log n)$

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Coding vs. Software Design



- **Coding:** writing of (Java) code to implement classes, methods, etc.
 - Projects so far have been primarily coding
 - We have told you what to code
- **Design:** determination of what to code
 - What classes are needed?
 - How should classes interact?
 - What methods belong in each class?
 - How should method functionality be implemented?

High-level

Low-level

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Interfaces and Design



- Next level up the design hierarchy: what methods should go in classes?
- This information can be captured using **interfaces**
- These interfaces can also be used to identify opportunities for **polymorphism** (reusable code)
- Rules of Thumb
 - Keep interfaces small
 - Think carefully about operations needed "between classes"
 - Use interfaces to support polymorphism (and keep code size down)

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Upper Levels of Software Design



- Where do ideas for classes, interactions between classes come from?
 - Software development part of larger system design process
 - System design requires identifying what system users expect system to do
 - These user requirements often suggest system components and how they fit together
- First part of software design: understand system design

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System Design: What Is It?



- **System design** is concerned with:
 - coordinating a collection of entities...
 - ... to achieve a complex process
- Each entity has its own responsibilities to the others to achieve an overall objective
- E.g. Running a restaurant involves a coordinated interaction of many entities within one system:
 - Entities Chef, owners, waiters, etc.
 - System Restaurant

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Other Examples of Systems



Classroom environment: Lecturers, TAs, students, ...

Library: Circulation (checkout and return), indexing services (online catalogue), library users, book buyers, shelvees, ...

Pharmacy: Patients (and medical records), pharmacists, doctors, drug retailers, the pharmacy (products in stock), ...

Video game: Race cars, motorcycles, warriors, space ships, death squads, monsters, aliens, mutants, guns, swords, weapons of mass destruction, cute Japanese cartoon animals with huge eyes, ...



Pikachu visits Doom3

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Essential Questions



- **Challenges:** System design is very hard. Once the number of entities and interactions becomes large, it is very hard to foresee all the possible consequences of these interactions.
- **Essential Questions:**
 - What is the **desired behavior** of the program (as a whole)?
 - system design - overview
 - What are the **entities** that produce this behavior?
 - classes or objects
 - How do these entities **interact**?
 - API for each class
 - How does each one **work**?
 - algorithm for each task

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Behavior



- **Specifying Desired Behavior:** A **use case** is a description of the interaction of a user and the system. It includes:
 - **Prerequisites (pre-conditions):** What must hold for this use case to arise?
 - **Possible actions and interactions:** What happens?
 - **Effects (post-conditions):** What conditions hold, what changes have taken place, as a result of these actions.
- **Example:** Customer in a restaurant.
 - **Pre-conditions:**
 - Customer:** hungry and has money
 - Restaurant:** has food
 - **Actions:** get menu, order food, be served, eat, pay, leave
 - **Post-conditions:**
 - Customer:** less hungry and less money
 - Restaurant:** more money and less food.

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Principal Design Elements



- **Components:**
 - What are the **entities** that make up our system?
 - What are the **roles** they play?
 - How do we separate the system into **distinct units**?
- **State:** What is the current status/state of the units that define our system?
- **Contract:** What are the **responsibilities** and services associated with each component? What **guarantees** does it make?
- **Communication:** How do components request interactions with each other?
- **Example: Pharmacy Store System**
 - Components:** Pharmacist, customers, doctors, prescription, store stock.
 - State:** For a patient: Current prescriptions, number of times refilled, date of last refill, health insurance information.
 - Fill-prescription Contract:** A valid prescription is presented by the customer. Check patient records and inform of possible side-effects. Dispense the prescription. Update patient records. Deliver medication to patient.

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Relationship to Java



- **System**: A Java **program**
- **Components** (or **community members**): Java **class objects**
- **State**: Each object stores information about its current status. These are stored in class **instance variables**.
- **Contract** (or **specification**): This is called an **API** (Application Programmer Interface), or simply an **interface**. This is the **external** (class user) **view** of an object. It provides an abstraction of what the object does, without indicating how it is implemented. The interface provides the **signatures**, that is, details on how invoke, each action.

The contract is implemented by the object's class **methods**.

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