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Marco T. Morazán

Animated Program Design

Intermediate Program Design
Using Video Game Development

Springer

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To my students for educating me on how to teach problem solving and program design.

Marco

Preface

Everybody engages in problem solving, and this book is about the science of problem solving. It aims to teach its readers a new way of thinking about designing solutions to problems that takes them beyond trial-and-error thinking. Trial and error is, indeed, a fundamental problem-solving technique but must be tightly coupled with design to be effectively used. Trials or experiments must be thought out and planned. What does this mean? It means that problem solvers must engage in careful and thorough consideration of the different options they have to solve a problem. Problem-solving techniques must be used appropriately, and different solutions to a problem must be evaluated to choose the best one. The evaluation of a solution is done both mathematically and empirically. That is, theory and practice play a pivotal role in problem solving. Rest assured that the problem-solving and programming techniques you learn may be used to solve problems using any programming language.

This textbook continues the journey started in *Animated Problem Solving* and completes a year-long (two semesters) curriculum for first-year students. Readers of this book are likely to be familiar with writing expressions, defining data, divide and conquer, iterative design, designing functions using structural recursion, abstraction and abstract functions, and even distributed programming. Indeed, you are likely to already be very powerful problem solvers and programmers. Now it is time to become even more powerful programmers. How is this achieved? This book aids this quest by exploring with you new types of recursion, by introducing you to the use of randomness, by taking the first steps into experimental Computer Science and algorithm analysis, by taking a peek into Artificial Intelligence, and by presenting a disciplined approach to the use of mutation—also known as assignment which is routinely abused and misused every day giving rise to the majority of programming bugs today.

At the heart of this exploration is the *design recipe*—the steps to go from a problem statement to a working and tested solution. The new design recipes studied in this textbook are less prescriptive than those used for solutions

based on structural recursion. In this regard, they are akin to the design recipe for distributed programming found in *Animated Problem Solving*. One of the most attractive features of structural recursion is that it suggests how to divide and conquer a problem. For example, structural recursion suggests that solving a problem for a nonleaf binary tree is done by solving the same problem for the left and/or right subtrees. In contrast, heap sorting, an efficient sorting algorithm studied in this textbook, creates a new binary tree to solve the problem. In essence, there is no prescriptive design recipe for divide and conquer when structural recursion is not used. In such cases, a problem solver must rely on insights gained from problem analysis to perform divide and conquer. An interesting and powerful consequence is that a solution to a problem using structural recursion may be refined/improved based on insights gained to use other forms of recursion.

You may already have butterflies in your stomach anticipating a wealth of knowledge from the pages of this book. If that is the case, then you are on your way. Enthusiasm for knowledge and understanding is essential for a problem solver. Problem solving, however, can and ought to also be fun. To this end, this book promises to design and implement a video game using modern Artificial Intelligence techniques with you. To achieve this, however, there is a great deal about problem solving and programming you must learn. The game is developed using iterative refinement. That is, as your problem solving and programming knowledge grows, improved versions of the game are developed. Buckle up for fascinating and fun journey to expand your mind!

1 The Parts of the Book

The book is divided into four parts. Part I presents introductory material. It starts by reviewing the basic steps of a design recipe. It does so using a problem solved using structural recursion on a list. It then proceeds to review code refactoring—the restructuring of a function without changing its external behavior. Refactoring is a common technique used to refine programs when a better or more elegant way is found to solve a problem. For example, a problem involving a list may be solved using structural recursion and explicit use of `first` and `rest`. The solution may be refactored to eliminate low-level functions like `first` and `rest` by using a `match` expression. In turn, this solution may be refactored to eliminate recursive calls by using abstract functions like `map` and `filter`. Part I then moves to review abstract running time. In addition, this part introduces the N-Puzzle problem—the video game developed throughout the book—and introduces the use of randomness in problem solving.

Part II explores a new type of recursion called generative recursion. Instead of exploiting the structure of the data to make recursive calls, this

type of recursion creates new instances of the data to make recursive calls. The study of generative recursion navigates the reader through examples involving fractal image generation, efficient sorting, and efficient searching techniques such as binary, depth-first, and breadth-first search. This part concludes presenting two refinements to the N-Puzzle game using generative recursion and the problems that they have including the loss of knowledge. Throughout, complexity analysis and empirical experimentation are used to evaluate solutions.

Part III explores a new type of recursion called accumulative (or accumulator) recursion. Accumulative recursion introduces one or more accumulators to a function designed using structural or generative recursion. Accumulators are used to solve the loss of knowledge problem or to make programs more efficient. Examples used include finding a path in a graph, improving insertion sorting, and list-folding operations. The study of list-folding operations leads to new abstract functions with an accumulator: `foldl` and `foldr`. The expertise developed using accumulative recursion is used to refine the N-Puzzle game to perform a heuristic search using the A* algorithm—an algorithm used in Artificial Intelligence. Part III ends with a chapter introducing an important and powerful program transformation called continuation-passing style. Continuation-passing style allows programmers and compilers to optimize programs. Throughout, complexity analysis and empirical experimentation are used to evaluate solutions.

Part IV explores mutation. Mutation (or changing the value of a state variable) allows different parts of a program that do not call each other to share values. Interestingly enough, most textbooks on programming that use mutation fail to mention this. Abstracting over state variables leads to interfaces and object-oriented programming. The use of mutation, however, comes at a heavy price: the loss of referential transparency. That is, `(f x)` is not always equal to `(f x)`. This means programmers must be disciplined about the order in which mutations are done because knowing that a program works is suddenly much harder. To aid you in properly sequencing mutations, this part of the book teaches you about Hoare Logic and program correctness. In addition, it introduces vectors, vector processing, and in-place operations. Part IV ends by presenting a solution to the chicken or egg paradox in programming. Throughout, complexity analysis and empirical experimentation are used to evaluate solutions.

2 Acknowledgments

This book is the product of over 10 years of work at Seton Hall University building on the shoulders of giants in Computer Science and on the shoulders of Seton Hall undergraduate CS1 and CS2 students. A heartfelt thank you is offered to all the students that throughout the years helped me understand

what works and does not work when teaching program design. Many of the giants in Computer Science that have informed my teaching efforts are members of the PLT research group, especially those responsible for developing the student programming languages used in this textbook and for penning *How to Design Programs*—an inspiration for *Animated Problem Solving* and for *Animated Programming*. It is impossible not to explicitly express my heart-felt appreciation for Matthias Felleisen from Northeastern University and Shriram Krishnamurthi from Brown University for having my back, for debating with me, and for encouraging the work done at Seton Hall University—all of which led to this textbook.

There are many other professional colleagues that deserve credit for inspiring the lessons found in this textbook. Chief among them is Doug Troeger, my Ph.D. advisor, from City College of New York (CCNY). Together, we taught CCNY undergraduates about program correctness. Some of the material in Part IV of this textbook is inspired by those efforts. A great deal of the material in this textbook is based on my Computer Science Education peer-reviewed publications. I was mostly blessed with thoughtful and conscientious reviewers that offered honest feedback on the good and the bad, but that always made an effort to provide thought-provoking comments and suggestions for future work. Collectively, they have also influenced the lessons in this book. I am deeply appreciative to the venues that have published my articles such as the Trends in Functional Programming in Education Workshop, the Journal of Functional Programming , and the Trends in Functional Programming Symposium.

Finally, there is a gifted group of individuals that have been or still are invaluable in making the courses taught using the material in this textbook successful: my undergraduate research/teaching assistants. They have been responsible for making sure I explain the material clearly and for helping answer student questions using their own perspective on the material. This group includes: Shamil Dzhatdoyev, Josie Des Rosiers, Nicholas Olson, Nicholas Nelson, Lindsey Reams, Craig Pelling, Barbara Mucha, Joshua Schappel, Sachin Mahashabde, Rositsa Abrasheva, Isabella Felix, Sena Karsavran, and Julia "Ohio" Wilkins. Their feedback and the feedback they collected from enrolled students have influenced every topic presented. In closing, my appreciation goes out to Seton Hall University and its Department of Computer Science for supporting the development of the work presented in this textbook.

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