Generic Functions, Continued

A function might want to operate on multiple data types

Last time:
• Polymorphic functions using message passing
• Interfaces: collections of messages with a meaning for each
• Two interchangeable implementations of complex numbers

Today:
• An arithmetic system over related types
• Type dispatching instead of message passing
• Data-directed programming
• Type coercion

What's different? Today's generic functions apply to multiple arguments that don't share a common interface
The Independence of Data Types

Data abstraction and class definitions keep types separate.

Some operations need to cross type boundaries.

How do we add a complex number and a rational number together?

Rational numbers as numerators & denominators

Complex numbers as two-dimensional vectors

There are many different techniques for doing this!
Rational Numbers, Now with Classes

Rational numbers represented as a numerator and denominator

class Rational(object):
    def __init__(self, numer, denom):
        g = gcd(numer, denom)
        self.numer = numer // g
        self.denom = denom // g

    def __repr__(self):
        return 'Rational({0}, {1})'.format(self.numer, self.denom)

    def add_rational(x, y):
        nx, dx = x.numer, x.denom
        ny, dy = y.numer, y.denom
        return Rational(nx * dy + ny * dx, dx * dy)

    def mul_rational(x, y):
        return Rational(x.numer * y.numer, x.denom * y.denom)

Demo
class ComplexRI(object):
    def __init__(self, real, imag):
        self.real = real
        self.imag = imag

@property
def magnitude(self):
    return (self.real ** 2 + self.imag ** 2) ** 0.5

@property
def angle(self):
    return atan2(self.imag, self.real)

def __repr__(self):
    return 'ComplexRI({0}, {1})'.format(self.real, self.imag)

def add_complex(z1, z2):
    return ComplexRI(z1.real + z2.real, z1.imag + z2.imag)
Type Dispatching

Define a different function for each possible combination of types for which an operation (e.g., addition) is valid

```python
def iscomplex(z):
    return type(z) in (ComplexRI, ComplexMA)

def isrational(z):
    return type(z) == Rational

def add_complex_and_rational(z, r):
    return ComplexRI(z.real + (r.numer/r.denom), z.imag)

def add_by_type_dispatching(z1, z2):
    """Add z1 and z2, which may be complex or rational."""
    if iscomplex(z1) and iscomplex(z2):
        return add_complex(z1, z2)
    elif iscomplex(z1) and isrational(z2):
        return add_complex_and_rational(z1, z2)
    elif isrational(z1) and iscomplex(z2):
        return add_complex_and_rational(z2, z1)
    else:
        add_rational(z1, z2)
```

Demo

Converted to a real number (float)
Tag-Based Type Dispatching

Idea: Use dictionaries to dispatch on type

```python
def type_tag(x):
    return type_tag.tags[type(x)]


def add(z1, z2):
    types = (type_tag(z1), type_tag(z2))
    return add.implementations[types](z1, z2)

add.implementations = {}
add.implementations[('com', 'com')] = add_complex
add.implementations[('rat', 'rat')] = add_rational
add.implementations[('com', 'rat')] = add_complex_and_rational
add.implementations[('rat', 'com')] = add_rational_and_complex

lambda r, z: add_complex_and_rational(z, r)
```

Declares that ComplexRI and ComplexMA should be treated uniformly.
Type Dispatching Analysis

Minimal violation of abstraction barriers: we define cross-type functions as necessary, but use abstract data types.

Extensible: Any new numeric type can "install" itself into the existing system by adding new entries to various dictionaries.

```python
def add(z1, z2):
    types = (type_tag(z1), type_tag(z2))
    return add.implementations[types](z1, z2)
```

**Question:** How many cross-type implementations are required to support \(m\) types and \(n\) operations?

- integer, rational, real, complex
- \(m \cdot (m - 1) \cdot n\)
- add, subtract, multiply, divide
- \(4 \cdot (4 - 1) \cdot 4 = 48\)
Type Dispatching Analysis

Minimal violation of abstraction barriers: we define cross-type functions as necessary, but use abstract data types

Extensible: Any new numeric type can "install" itself into the existing system by adding new entries to various dictionaries

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Message Passing
Data-Directed Programming

There's nothing addition-specific about add_by_type

**Idea:** One dispatch function for (operator, types) pairs

```python
def apply(operator_name, x, y):
    tags = (type_tag(x), type_tag(y))
    key = (operator_name, tags)
    return apply.implementations[key](x, y)
```

Demo
Coercion

**Idea:** Some types can be converted into other types

Takes advantage of structure in the type system

```python
>>> def rational_to_complex(x):
    return ComplexRI(x.numer/x.denom, 0)

>>> coercions = {('rat', 'com'): rational_to_complex}
```

**Question:** Can any numeric type be coerced into any other?

**Question:** Have we been repeating ourselves with data-directed programming?
Applying Operators with Coercion

1. Attempt to coerce arguments into values of the same type

2. Apply type-specific (not cross-type) operations

```python
def coerce_apply(operator_name, x, y):
    tx, ty = type_tag(x), type_tag(y)
    if tx != ty:
        if (tx, ty) in coercions:
            tx, x = ty, coercions[((tx, ty)](x)
        elif (ty, tx) in coercions:
            ty, y = tx, coercions[((ty, tx)](y)
        else:
            return 'No coercion possible.'
    key = (operator_name, tx)
    return coerce_apply.implementations[key](x, y)
```

Demo

Monday, October 10, 2011
Coercion Analysis

Minimal violation of abstraction barriers: we define cross-type coercion as necessary, but use abstract data types

Requires that all types can be coerced into a common type

More sharing: All operators use the same coercion scheme

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