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CS61C : Machine Structures

Lecture 3 – Introduction to C (pt 2)

2010-06-23

C help session: Tonight 7:00-9:00pm @ 306 Soda

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The typical development cycle for a C programmer (cs61c student?)

http://xkcd.com/303/

Review

- All declarations go at the beginning of each function except if you use C99.
- Only 0 and NULL evaluate to FALSE.
- All data is in memory. Each memory location has an address to use to refer to it and a value stored in it.
- A pointer is a C version of the address.
  - * "follows" a pointer to its value
  - & gets the address of a variable

Common C Error

- There is a difference between assignment and equality
  - `a = b` is assignment
  - `a == b` is an equality test
  - if (x = 5) {…} // This builds, and costs sleep
- This is one of the most common errors for beginning C programmers!
  - One solution (when comparing with constant) is to put the var on the right! If you happen to use =, it won't compile.

```
if (3 == a) { ...
```


C Pointer Dangers

- Unlike Java, C lets you cast a value of any type to any other type <u>without</u> performing any checking.

```
int x = 1000;
int *p = x;          /* invalid */
int *q = (int *) x; /* valid */
```

- The first pointer declaration is invalid since the types do not match.
- The second declaration is valid C but is almost certainly wrong
  - Is it ever correct?

More C Pointer Dangers

- Declaring a pointer just allocates space to hold the pointer – it does not allocate something to be pointed to!
- Local variables in C are not initialized, they may contain anything.
- What does the following code do?

```
void f()
{
    int *ptr;
    *ptr = 5;
}
```


Pointers in C

- Why use pointers?
  - If we want to pass a huge struct or array, it's easier / faster / etc to pass a pointer than the whole thing.
  - In general, pointers allow cleaner, more compact code.
- So what are the drawbacks?
  - Pointers are probably the single largest source of bugs in software, so be careful anytime you deal with them.
  - Allocation issues (Discussed tomorrow)

Arrays (1/6)

- **Declaration:**

```
int arr[2];
```

declares a 2-element integer array. *An array is really just a block of memory.*

```
int arr[] = {795, 635};
```

declares <u>and fills</u> a 2-elt integer array.

- **Accessing elements:**

```
arr[num]
```

returns the `num`th element.

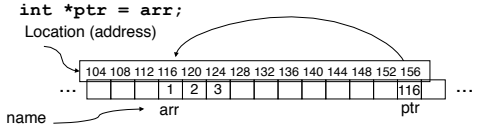
Arrays (2/6)

- **Arrays are closely tied with pointers**
  - **They differ in very subtle ways: incrementing, declaration of filled arrays, value**
  - **Pointers are frequently used to access arrays**
  - **Some pointer math can be used on arrays**
- **Key Concept: An array variable is a "pointer" to the first element.**

Arrays (3/6)

- **Arrays vs pointers**

```
int arr[] = {1,2,3};
int *ptr = arr;
```




```
Value of &ptr:  156     Value of &arr:  116
Value of ptr:   116     Value of arr:   116
Value of *ptr:   1      Value of *arr:   1
Legal: ptr = ptr + 1    Illegal: arr = arr + 1
Legal: Asgn to ptr      Illegal: Asgn to arr
```


Arrays (4/6)

- **Consequences:**
  - `arr` **is an array variable but looks like a pointer in many respects (though not all)**
  - `arr[0]` **is the same as** `*arr`
  - `arr[2]` **is the same as** `*(arr+2)`
  - **We can use pointer arithmetic to access arrays more conveniently.**
- **Declared arrays are only allocated while the scope is valid**

```
int *foo() {
   int arr[32]; ...;
   return arr;
}
```

is incorrect

Arrays (5/6)

- **Array size `n`; want to access from `0` to `n-1`, so you should use counter AND utilize a variable for declaration & incr**
  - **Wrong**

```
int i, arr[10];
for(i = 0; i < 10; i++){ ... }
```

  - **Right**

```
int ARRAY_SIZE = 10
int i, a[ARRAY_SIZE];
for(i = 0; i < ARRAY_SIZE; i++){ ... }
```

- **Why? SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH**
  - **You're utilizing indirection and <u>avoiding maintaining two copies</u> of the number 10**

Arrays (6/6)

- **Pitfall: An array in C does <u>not</u> know its own length, & bounds not checked!**
  - **Consequence: We can accidentally access off the end of an array.**
  - **Consequence: We must pass the array <u>and its size</u> to a procedure which is going to traverse it.**
- **Segmentation faults and bus errors:**
  - **These are VERY difficult to find; be careful! (You'll learn how to debug these in lab…)**

Administrivia

- Read K&R 6 by the next lecture
- Lab problems
  - Labs should be fixed by Thursday.
  - You can get Tuesdays lab checked off Thursday. Everyone gets 1 bonus point (for first hour checkoff).
- Homework expectations
  - Readers don't have time to fix your programs. They must run on lab machines.
  - Code that doesn't compile or fails all of the autograder tests ⇒ 0
- C Help session tonight! 7pm, 306 Soda
- HW1 due Friday!

Administrivia

- Slip days
  - You get 3 "slip days" to use for any homework assignment or project
  - They are used at 1-day increments. Thus 1 minute late = 1 slip day used.
  - They're recorded automatically (by checking submission time) so you don't need to tell us when you're using them
  - Once you've used all of your slip days, when a project/hw is late, it's … 0 points.
  - If you submit twice, we ALWAYS grade the latter, and deduct slip days appropriately
  - You no longer need to tell anyone how your dog ate your computer.
  - You should really save for a rainy day … we all get sick and/or have family emergencies!

Segmentation Fault vs Bus Error?

- `http://www.hyperdictionary.com/`
- Bus Error
  - A fatal failure in the execution of a machine language instruction resulting from the processor detecting an anomalous condition on its bus. Such conditions include invalid address alignment (accessing a multi-byte number at an odd address), accessing a physical address that does not correspond to any device, or some other device-specific hardware error. A bus error triggers a processor-level exception which Unix translates into a "SIGBUS" signal which, if not caught, will terminate the current process.
- Segmentation Fault
  - An error in which a running Unix program attempts to access memory not allocated to it and terminates with a segmentation violation error and usually a core dump.

Pointer Arithmetic (1/2)

- Since a pointer is just a mem address, we can add to it to traverse an array.
- `p+1` returns a ptr to the next array elt.
- `*p++` vs `(*p)++` ?
  - `x = *p++` ⇒ `x = *p ; p = p + 1;`
  - `x = (*p)++` ⇒ `x = *p ; *p = *p + 1;`
- What if we have an array of large structs (objects)?
  - C takes care of it: In reality, `p+1` doesn't add `1` to the memory address, it adds the <u>size of the array element</u>.

Pointer Arithmetic (2/2)

- C knows the size of the thing a pointer points to – every addition or subtraction moves that many bytes.
  - 1 byte for a char, 4 bytes for an int, etc.
- So the following are equivalent:

```
int get(int array[], int n)
{
    return  (array[n]);
    // OR...
    return *(array + n);
}
```


C Strings

- A string in C is just an array of characters.

```
char str[] = "abc";
```

- How do you tell how long a string is?
  - Last character is followed by null terminator character, denote '\0'

```
int strlen(char s[])
{
    int n = 0;
    while (s[n] != '\0') n++;
    return n;
}
```

C string.h Standard Functions

- `int strlen(char *string);`
  - compute the length of `string`.
- `int strcmp(char *s1, char *s2);`
  - return 0 if `s1` and `s2` are identical (how is this different from `s1 == s2`?).
- `char *s[illegible](char *dst, [illegible] *src);`
  - copy the contents of string `src` to the memory at `dst`. The caller must ensure that `dst` has enough memory to hold the data to be copied.
- But these functions aren't very safe:
  - What if no null terminator?

BAD

C string.h SAFE(R) Functions

- `int strnlen(char *string, int max_len);`
  - compute the length of `string`. Not standard.
- `int strncmp(char *s1, char *s2, int max_len);`
  - return 0 if `s1` and `s2` are identical (how is this different from `s1 == s2`?). Standard
- `char *strncpy(char *dst, char *src, int max_len);`
  - copy the contents of string `src` to the memory at `dst`. The caller must ensure that `dst` has enough memory to hold the data to be copied. Standard
- These functions are much safer, and recommended! See K&R Pg 249 for details
  - There are better functions still, but they are not as widely deployed. Come talk to Paul if interested

C Strings Headaches

- One common mistake is to forget to allocate an extra byte for the null terminator.
- More generally, C requires the programmer to manage memory manually (unlike Java or C++).
  - When creating a long string by concatenating several smaller strings, the programmer must insure there is enough space to store the full string!
  - What if you don't know ahead of time how big your string will be? Tomorrow!
  - Buffer overrun security holes!

Pointer Arithmetic Peer Instruction Q

- How many of the following are invalid?

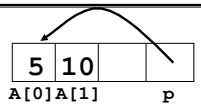
I. pointer + integer
II. integer + pointer
III. pointer + pointer
IV. pointer – integer
V. integer – pointer
VI. pointer – pointer
VII. compare pointer to pointer
VIII. compare pointer to integer
IX. compare pointer to NULL

#invalid
a) 1
b) 2
c) 3
d) 4
e) 5

Peer Instruction

```
int main(void){
 int A[] = {5,10};
 int *p = A;

 printf("%u %d %d %d\n",p,*p,A[0],A[1]);
 p = p + 1;
 printf("%u %d %d %d\n",p,*p,A[0],A[1]);
 *p = *p + 1;
 printf("%u %d %d %d\n",p,*p,A[0],A[1]);
 }
```



If the first `printf` outputs `100 5 5 10`, what will the other two `printf` output?

```
a) 101 10 5 10       then 101 11 5 11
b) 104 10 5 10       then 104 11 5 11
c) 101 <other> 5 10  then 101 <3-others>
d) 104 <other> 5 10  then 104 <3-others>
e) One of the two printfs causes an ERROR
```


"And in Conclusion…"

- Pointers and arrays are virtually same
- C knows how to increment pointers
- C is an efficient language, with little protection
  - Array bounds not checked
  - Variables not automatically initialized
- (Beware) The cost of efficiency is more overhead for the programmer.
  - "C gives you a lot of extra rope but be careful not to hang yourself with it!"

Reference slides

You ARE responsible for the material on these slides (they're just taken from the reading anyway) ; we've moved them to the end and off-stage to give more breathing room to lecture!

Arrays (one elt past array must be valid)

- Array size `n`; want to access from `0` to `n-1`, but test for exit by comparing to address one element past the array

```
int ar[10], *p, *q, sum = 0;
...
p = &ar[0]; q = &ar[10];
while (p != q)
    /* sum = sum + *p; p = p + 1; */
    sum += *p++;
```

  - Is this legal?
- C defines that one element past end of array must be a valid address, i.e., not cause an bus error or address error

Pointers & Allocation (1/2)

- After declaring a pointer:

```
int *ptr;
```

`ptr` doesn't actually point to anything yet *(it actually points somewhere - but don't know where!)*. We can either:

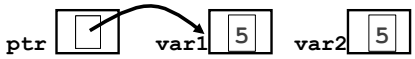
  - make it point to something that already exists, or
  - allocate room in memory for something new that it will point to… (next time)

Pointers & Allocation (2/2)

- Pointing to something that already exists:

```
int *ptr, var1, var2;
  var1 = 5;
  ptr  = &var1;
  var2 = *ptr;
```

- `var1` and `var2` have room implicitly allocated for them.



Pointer Arithmetic

- So what's valid pointer arithmetic?
  - Add an integer to a pointer.
  - Subtract 2 pointers (in the same array).
  - Compare pointers (<, <=, ==, !=, >, >=)
  - Compare pointer to `NULL` (indicates that the pointer points to nothing).
- Everything else is illegal since it makes no sense:
  - adding two pointers
  - multiplying pointers
  - subtract pointer from integer

Pointer Arithmetic to Copy memory

- We can use pointer arithmetic to "walk" through memory:

```
void copy(int *from, int *to, int n) {
    int i;
    for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
        *to++ = *from++;
    }
}
```

- Note we had to pass size (`n`) to `copy`

Pointer Arithmetic Summary

- `x = *(p+1)` ?
  ⇒ `x = *(p+1) ;`
- `x = *p+1` ?
  ⇒ `x = (*p) + 1 ;`
- `x = (*p)++` ?
  ⇒ `x = *p ; *p = *p + 1;`
- `x = *p++` ? `(*p++)` ? `*(p)++` ? `*(p++)` ?
  ⇒ `x = *p ; p = p + 1;`
- `x = *++p` ?
  ⇒ `p = p + 1 ; x = *p ;`
- Lesson?
  - Using anything but the standard `*p++`, `(*p)++` causes more problems than it solves!

Arrays vs. Pointers

- An array name is a read-only pointer to the 0th element of the array.
- An array parameter can be declared as an array or a pointer; an array argument can be passed as a pointer.

```
int strlen(char s[])
{
    int n = 0;
    while (s[n] != 0)
        n++;
    return n;
}
```

```
int strlen(char *s)
{
    int n = 0;
    while (s[n] != 0)
        n++;
    return n;
}
```

Could be written:
`while (s[n])`