inst.eecs.berkeley.edu/~cs61c

CS61C : Machine Structures

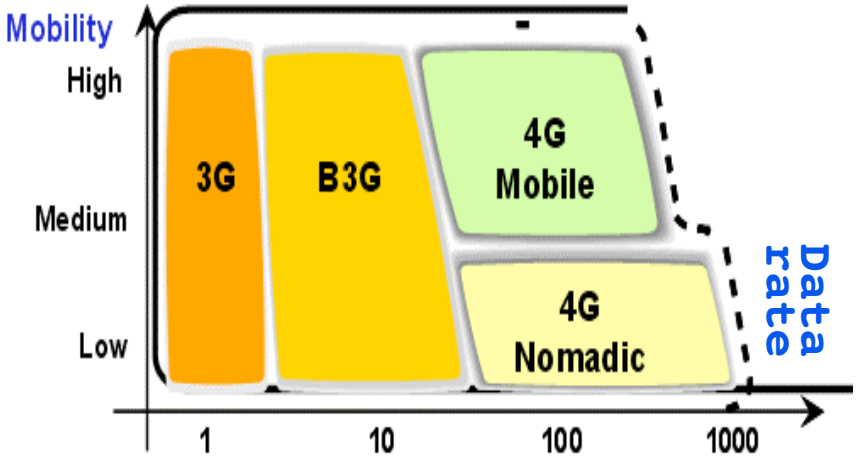
Lecture 4 – Introduction to C (pt 2)
C Pointers

2006-09-06

Lecturer SOE Dan Garcia

www.cs.berkeley.edu/~ddgarcia

WiBro demo ⇒ At Samsung's 4G forum, they demo-ed 4G technology (at 1 Gb/s, 50 times faster than 3G)! Hello, AirBears!!



weblog.infoworld.com/techwatch/archives/007741.html

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Review

- All declarations go at the beginning of each function.
- 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 value

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

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)

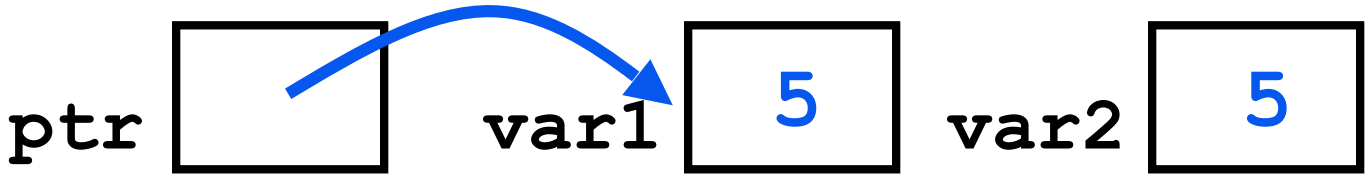
Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

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.



Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

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;
}
```


Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Arrays (1/6)

- **Declaration:**

```
int ar[2];
```

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

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

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

- **Accessing elements:**

```
ar[num];
```

returns the `num`th element.

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Arrays (2/6)

- Arrays are (almost) identical to pointers
  - `char *string` and `char string[]` are nearly identical declarations
  - They differ in very subtle ways: incrementing, declaration of filled arrays
- Key Concept: An array variable is a "pointer" to the first element.

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Arrays (3/6)

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

```
char *foo() {
    char string[32]; ...;
    return string;
}
```

is incorrect

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Arrays (4/6)

- 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

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Arrays (5/6)

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

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

  - Right

```
#define 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 avoiding maintaining two copies of the number 10

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

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…)

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

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.**

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Pointer Arithmetic (1/4)

- 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>.

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Pointer Arithmetic (2/4)

- 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

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Pointer Arithmetic (3/4)

- 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);
}
```


Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Pointer Arithmetic (4/4)

- 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++;
    }
}
```


Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Pointers in C

- Why use pointers?
  - If we want to pass a huge struct or array, it's easier 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.
  - Dangling reference (premature free)
  - Memory leaks (tardy free)

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

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?

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Administrivia

- Read K&R 6 by the next lecture
- There <u>is</u> a language called D!
  - `www.digitalmars.com/d/`
- Answers to the reading quizzes?
  - Ask your TA in discussion
- Homework expectations
  - Readers don't have time to fix your programs which have to run on lab machines.
  - Code that doesn't compile or fails <u>all</u> of the autograder tests ⇒ 0

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Administrivia

- **Slip days**
  - You get 3 "slip days" per year 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!

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

C Strings

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

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

- How do you tell how long a string is?
  - Last character is followed by a 0 byte (null terminator)

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


Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

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 <u>or</u> 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])`

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

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?
  - Buffer overrun security holes!

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Common C Error

- There is a difference between assignment and equality

  `a = b` is assignment

  `a == b` is an equality test

- This is one of the most common errors for beginning C programmers!

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

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 0
X. compare pointer to `NULL`

#invalid
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
(1) 0

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Pointer Arithmetic Peer Instruction Ans

- How many of the following are invalid?

I.	pointer + integer	ptr + 1
II.	integer + pointer	1 + ptr
III.	pointer + pointer	ptr + ptr
IV.	pointer – integer	ptr - 1
V.	integer – pointer	1 - ptr
VI.	pointer – pointer	ptr - ptr
VII.	compare pointer to pointer	ptr1 == ptr2
VIII.	compare pointer to integer	ptr == 1
IX.	compare pointer to 0	ptr == NULL
X.	compare pointer to NULL	ptr == NULL

#invalid
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
(1) 0

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

"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!"

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

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!**

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

C String Standard Functions

- `int strlen(char *string);`
  - compute the length of `string`
- `int strcmp(char *str1, char *str2);`
  - return 0 if `str1` and `str2` are identical (how is this different from `str1 == str2`?)
- `char *strcpy(char *dst, char *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.

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB

Kilo, Mega, Giga, Tera, Peta, Exa, Zetta, Yotta

1. Kim's melodious giddiness terrifies people, excepting zealous yodelers
2. Kirby Messed Gigglypuff Terribly, (then) Perfectly Exterminated Zelda and Yoshi
3. Killed meat gives teeth peace except zebra yogurt
4. Kind Men Give Tense People Extra Zeal (for) Yoga
5. Killing melee gives terror; peace exhibits Zen yoga
6. Killing messengers gives terrible people exactly zero, yo
7. Kindergarten means giving teachers perfect examples (of) zeal (&) youth
8. Kissing mediocre girls/guys teaches people (to) expect zero (from) you
9. Kinky Mean Girls Teach Penis-Extending Zen Yoga
10. Kissing Mel Gibson, Teddy Pendergrass exclaimed: "Zesty, yo!"

Garcia, Fall 2006 © UCB