Designing and Writing a Program

- Don’t sit down at the terminal immediately and start hacking
- Design stage — THINK first
  - about the data you are working with
  - about the operations you will perform on it
  - about data structures you will use to represent it
  - about how to structure all the parts of your program so as to achieve abstraction and encapsulation
- Coding stage — code in small bits
  - test as you go
  - understand preconditions and postconditions
  - insert sanity checks (assert statements in Java are good)
  - worry about corner cases
- Use Java API to advantage

The Design-Code-Debug Cycle

- Design is faster than debugging (and more fun)
  - extra time spent designing reduces coding and debugging
- Which is better?

```
design  code  debug
design  code  debug
```

- Actually, should be more like this:

```
design  code  debug
```

Divide and Conquer!

- Break program into manageable parts that can be implemented, tested in isolation
- Define interfaces for parts to talk to each other — develop contracts (preconditions, postconditions)
- Make sure contracts are obeyed
  - Clients use interfaces correctly
  - Implementers implement interfaces correctly (test!)
- Key: good interface documentation

Pair Programming

- Work in pairs
- Pilot/copilot
  - pilot codes, copilot watches and makes suggestions
  - pilot must convince copilot that code works
  - take turns
- Or: work independently on different parts after deciding on an interface
  - frequent design review
  - each programmer must convince the other
  - reduces debugging time
- Test everything

Documentation is Code

- Comments (esp. specifications) are as important as the code itself
- determine successful use of code
- creation/maintenance = 1/10
- Documentation belongs in code or as close as possible
  - Code evolves, documentation drifts away
  - Put specs in comments next to code when possible
  - Separate documentation? Code should link to it.
- Avoid useless comments
  - \( x = x + 1; // add one to \( x \) — Yuck!
  - Need to document algorithm? Write a paragraph at the top.
  - Or break method into smaller, cleaner pieces.
Javadoc

- An important Java documentation tool
- Extracts documentation from classes, interfaces
  - Requires properly formatted comments
- Produces browsable, hyperlinked HTML web pages

How Javadoc is Produced

Some Useful Javadoc Tags

- @return description
  - Use to describe the return value of the method, if any
  - E.g., @return the sum of the two intervals
- @param parameter-name description
  - Describes the parameters of the method
  - E.g., @param i the other interval
- @author name
- @deprecated reason
- @see package.class#member
- {@code expression}
  - Puts expression in code font

Developing and Documenting an ADT

1. Write an overview – purpose of the ADT
2. Decide on a set of supported operations
3. Write a specification for each operation

1. Writing an ADT Overview

- Example abstraction: a closed interval [a,b] on the real number line
  - [a,b] = \{x | a ≤ x ≤ b\}
- Example overview:

```java
/**
 * An interval represents a closed interval [a,b]
 * on the real number line.
 */
```
2. Identify the Operations

- Enough operations for needed tasks
- Avoid unnecessary operations – keep it simple!
- Don’t include operations that client (without access to internals of class) can implement

3. Writing Method Specifications

- Include
  - Signature: types of method arguments, return type
  - Description of what the method does (abstractly)
- Good description (definition)
  - /** Add two intervals. The sum of two intervals is...
  - * a set of values containing all possible sums of...
  - * two values, one from each of the two intervals.
  - *
  - public Interval plus(Interval i);
- Bad description (operational)
  - /** Return a new Interval with lower bound a+i.a, upper bound b+i.b.
  - */
  - public Interval plus(Interval i);

3. Writing Specifications (cont’d)

- Attach before methods of class or interface

```java
/** Add two intervals. The sum of two intervals is...
 * a set of values containing all possible sums of...
 * two values, one from each of the two intervals.
 * @param i the other interval
 * @return the sum of the two intervals
 */
public Interval plus(Interval i);
```

Know Your Audience

- Code and specs have a target audience
  - the programmers who will maintain and use it
- Code and specs should be written
  - With enough documented detail so they can understand it
  - While avoiding spelling out the obvious
- Try it out on the audience when possible
  - design reviews before coding
  - code reviews

Consistency

- A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds – Emerson
- Pick a consistent coding style, stick with it
  - Make your code understandable by “little minds”
- Teams should set common style
- Match style when editing someone else’s code
  - Not just syntax, also design style

Simplicity

- The present letter is a very long one, simply because I had no time to make it shorter. –Blaise Pascal
- Be brief. –Strunk & White
- Applies to programming… simple code is
  - Easier and quicker to understand
  - More likely to be correct
- Good code is simple, short, and clear
  - Save complex algorithms, data structures for where they are needed
  - Always reread code (and writing) to see if it can be made shorter, simpler, cleaner
Choosing Names

- Don’t try to document with variable names
  - Longer is not necessarily better

```java
int searchForElement(
    int[] array_of_elements_to_search,
    int element_to_look_for);
int search(int[] a, int x);
```

- Names should be short but suggestive
- Local variable names should be short

Avoid Copy-and-Paste

- Biggest single source of program errors
  - Bug fixes never reach all the copies
  - Think twice before using edit copy-and-paste function

- Abstract instead of copying!
  - Write many calls to a single function rather than copying the same block of code around

But sometimes you have no choice

- Example: SWING or SWT GUI code
  - Realistically, you simply have to use cut-and-paste!

- In such situations, do try to understand what you copied and “make it your own”
  - They wrote it first
  - But now you’ve adopted it and will love it and care for it... maybe even rewrite it...

Avoid Premature Optimization

- Temptations to avoid
  - Copying code to avoid overhead of abstraction mechanisms
  - Using more complex algorithms & data structures unnecessarily
  - Violating abstraction barriers
- Result:
  - Less simple and clear
  - Performance gains often negligible
- Avoid trying to accelerate performance until
  - You have the program designed and working
  - You know that simplicity needs to be sacrificed
  - You know where simplicity needs to be sacrificed

Design vs Programming by Example

- Programming by example:
  - copy code that does something like what you want
  - hack it until it works
- Problems:
  - inherit bugs in code
  - don’t understand code fully
  - usually inherit unwanted functionality
  - code is a bolted-together hodge-podge
- Alternative: design
  - understand exactly why your code works
  - reuse abstractions, not code templates

Avoid Duplication

- Duplication in source code creates an implicit constraint to maintain, a quick path to failure
  - Duplicating code fragments (by copying)
  - Duplicating specs in classes and in interfaces
  - Duplicating specifications in code and in external documents
  - Duplicating same information on many web pages
- Solutions:
  - Named abstractions (e.g., declaring functions)
  - Indirection (linking pointers)
  - Generate duplicate information from source (e.g., Javadoc!)
- *If you must duplicate:*
  - Make duplicates link to each other so can find all clones
Maintain State in One Place

- Often state is duplicated for efficiency
- But difficult to maintain consistency
- Atomicity is the issue
  - if the system crashes while in the middle of an update, it may be left in an inconsistent state
  - difficult to recover

Error Handling

- It is usually an afterthought — it shouldn’t be
- User errors vs program errors — there is a difference, and they should be handled differently
- Insert lots of “sanity checks” — the Java assert statement is good way to do this
- Avoid meaningless messages

Avoid Meaningless Messages

![Application Error](image)

- Design Patterns
  - Introduced in 1994 by Gamma, Helm, Johnson, Vlissides (the “Gang of Four”)
  - Identified 23 classic software design patterns in OO programming
  - More than 1/2 million copies sold in 14 languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Patterns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Factory groups object factories that have a common theme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Builder constructs complex objects by separating construction and representation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Factory Method creates objects without specifying the exact class to create.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prototype creates objects by cloning an existing object.</td>
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<td>Singleton restricts object creation for a class to only one instance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adapter allows classes with incompatible interfaces to work together by wrapping its own interface around that of an already existing class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridge decouples an abstraction from its implementation so that the two can vary independently.</td>
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<td>Composite composes one-or-more similar objects so that they can be manipulated as one object.</td>
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<td>Decorator dynamically adds/overrides behaviour in an existing method of an object.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Façade provides a simplified interface to a large body of code.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flyweight reduces the cost of creating and manipulating a large number of similar objects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proxy provides a placeholder for another object to control access, reduce cost, and reduce complexity.</td>
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<td>Chain of responsibility delegates commands to a chain of processing objects.</td>
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<td>Command creates objects which encapsulate actions and parameters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpreter implements a specialized language.</td>
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<td>Iterator accesses the elements of an object sequentially without exposing its underlying representation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mediator allows loose coupling between classes by being the only class that has detailed knowledge of their methods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memento provides the ability to restore an object to its previous state (undo).</td>
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<td>Observer is a publish/subscribe pattern that allows a number of observer objects to see an event.</td>
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<td>State allows an object to alter its behavior when its internal state changes.</td>
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<td>Strategy allows one of a family of algorithms to be selected on-the-fly at runtime.</td>
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<td>Template method defines the skeleton of an algorithm as an abstract class, allowing its subclasses to provide concrete behavior.</td>
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<td>Visitor separates an algorithm from an object structure by moving the hierarchy of methods into one object.</td>
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Design Patterns

- Chain of responsibility delegates commands to a chain of processing objects.
- Command creates objects which encapsulate actions and parameters.
- Iterator accesses the elements of an object sequentially without exposing its underlying representation.
- Mediator allows loose coupling between classes by being the only class that has detailed knowledge of their methods.
- Observer is a publish/subscribe pattern that allows a number of observer objects to see an event.
- State allows an object to alter its behavior when its internal state changes.
- Strategy allows one of a family of algorithms to be selected on-the-fly at runtime.
- Template method defines the skeleton of an algorithm as an abstract class.
- Visitor separates an algorithm from an object structure by moving the hierarchy of methods into one object.

Observer Pattern

- Observable
  - Changes from time to time
  - Is aware of Observers, other entities that want to be informed when it changes
  - But may not know (or care) what or how many Observers there are
- Observer
  - Interested in the Observable
  - Want to be informed when the Observable changes

Observer Pattern

- Issues
  - Does the Observable push information, or does the Observer pull it? (e.g., email vs newsgroup)
  - Whose responsibility is it to check for changes?
  - Publish/subscribe paradigm

Visitor Pattern

- A data structure provides a generic way to iterate over the structure and do something at each element
- The visitor is an implementation of interface methods that are called at each element
- The visited data structure doesn’t know (or care) what the visitor is doing
- There could be many visitors, all doing different things
No Silver Bullets

- These are all rules of thumb; but there is no panacea, and every rule has its exceptions.

- You can only learn by doing – we can't do it for you.

- Following software engineering rules only makes success more likely!