Computer Programming: Skills & Concepts (INF-1-CP)
Functions and Pointers
Kenneth Heafield

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Last time:
- Functions
- return

This time:
- Global variables
- Motivation for Pointers
- Addresses aka Pointers

Aside: You can mix types

Good Code:

float Round(double numerator, int decimal_places);

Global Variables

/* Declare a global variable. */
/* Notice this is outside a function. */
int i;

void print_i() {
    /* i is accessible from any function */
    printf("%d", i);
}

int main() {
    /* i is accessible from any function */
    i = 1;
    print_i();
    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
Global Variables Are Bad

```c
int day;

int GetMonth() {
    int month;
    printf("Enter a day and month: ");
    scanf("%d %d", &day, &month);
    return month;
}

int main() {
    day = 1;
    GetMonth();
    /* What does this print? */
    printf("%d", day);
    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
```

Global Variables Are Evil

- Global variables can be read/written from any system module
  - In contrast, local variables only seen from a particular software module
- Excessive use of globals tends to compromise modularity
  - Changes to code in one place affect other parts of code via the globals
  - Think of it as data flow spaghetti

```
11,528 global variables make Toyota cars unsafe
...what alternatives are there?
```

ReadDate function

```c
int ReadDate() {
    int day = ReadValue(31);
    int month = ReadValue(12);
    return /* Problem: we can't return both day and month. */ ;
}
```

Problem

We can't return two ints.
Bad Code:

```c
void ReadDate(int day, int month) {
    day = ReadValue(31);
    month = ReadValue(12);
}
```

Remember: arguments are copies. They won’t impact the caller.

**Addresses** are one way around this...

Addresses (also known as Pointers)

Computers keep variables at numbered addresses:

```
(int main() {
    int i;
    /* Print the address of i (the number on its box) */
    printf("%p\n", &i);
    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
```

New notation:

- `&i` Address of `i`
- `%p` Formatting for pointers aka addresses

Addresses can be Stored

```
int i;
/* This stores the address of i */
int* address_of_i = &i;
/* Print the same value (the address of i) twice: */
printf("%p\n", &i);
printf("%p\n", address_of_i);
```

Notation:

- `&i` Address of `i`
- `%p` Formatting for addresses
- `int*` Type of an address to an int
Address Types

int* means an address to an int.
double* means an address to a double.
etc.

Good Code:
int i;
int* address_of_i = &i;

Good Code:
double value;
double* address_of_value = &value;

Bad Code:
double value;
double address_of_value = &value; /* Missing asterisk */

Using Addresses: *

Use * to access a variable at an address.

int i = 2;
int* address_of_i = &i;
Now i and *address_of_i are interchangeable (aliases).

/* Both print 2. */
printf("%d\n", *address_of_i);
printf("%d\n", i);

/* This is the same as i = 3. */
*address_of_i = 3;
/* Prints 3. */
printf("%d\n", i);

Another Example

int i = 2;
/* & takes the address of i. Then * goes there. */
*(&i) = 3;
/* prints 3 */
printf("%d\n", i);
Not terribly useful, but instructive.

Summarizing

Variables live in memory. Memory is like a bunch of post boxes.
⇒ Every variable has a numbered address.

To get that address, we use &.
To access the value at an address, we use *.
We can remember addresses. int* stores an address to an int.

Three uses of the * symbol:

*address_to_i Access a variable at an address
int* Type of an address
i * j Multiply i by j
Useful for Multiple Values

Good Code:

```c
void ReadDate(int* address_of_day, int* address_of_month) {
    *address_of_day = ReadValue(31);
    *address_of_month = ReadValue(12);
}
int main() {
    int day, month;
    ReadDate(&day, &month);
    printf("You entered %d of %d", day, month);
    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
```

Question: Aren’t Arguments Copied?
Answer: yes, the addresses are copied.

Dangling Addresses

Bad Code:

```c
int *Dangerous() {
    int i;
    return &i;
}
```

Remember from Lecture 7:
When a function returns, its environment is destroyed, \textit{including i}.

Told the postman the box is unused, but somebody still has the address.

Addresses: Reach Into Another Environment

The program has one giant set of post boxes.
A function can access any of them... but needs the address.

Summary: Escaping the Environment

Global Variables
Easy to use initially
Hard to know what a function does:

```c
void ReadDate();
```

Addresses
Requires thinking about postboxes.
Explicitly documents what a function can do:

```c
void ReadDate(int* day, int* month);
```
Following Up

For Functions in general:
‘A Book on C’, Sections 5.1-5.6
(please ignore the comments on ‘traditional C’ and C++)

For pointers:
‘A Book on C’, Sections 6.1-6.3