CS 247: Software Engineering Principles

Value vs. Entity Objects,
Information Hiding

Readings: Eckel, Vol. 1
   Ch. 5 Hiding the Implementation
Entity vs. Value Objects

Entity Object

- computer embodiment of real-world entity
- each object has a distinct identity
- object with the same attribute values are NOT equal
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Entity ADT Examples

- **physical objects**: airplane, runway, taxiway, ...
- **people**: passenger, booking agent, ...
- **records**: customer information, boarding pass, flight schedule, ...
- **transactions**: reservations, cancellations, receipts, ...

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Value ADT Examples
• mathematical types: rational numbers, polynomials, matrices, ...
• measurements: size, distance, weight, mass, energy, duration, ...
• other quantities: money
• other properties: colour, location, date, time, ...
• restricted value sets: names, addresses, postal codes, number ranges, ...
Design of Entity ADTs

An operation on an entity object should reflect a real-world event:

- Copying an entity is not meaningful; program no longer reflects reality; operations on copies are uncoordinated and can be lost (when copies disappear)
  - prohibit copy constructor
  - prohibit assignment
  - prohibit type conversions
  - avoid equality
  - clone operation may be useful

- Computations on entities are not meaningful.
  - Think twice before overloading operators except new and delete.
  - operator< is useful if overloaded to apply to entity's name or unique id.

- Entities referred by pointers/references (a consequence of the no-copy rule).
Design of Value-based ADTs

Equality is important in value types:
- equality and other comparison operators
- copy constructor
- assignment operator

Computations involving values may make sense.
- Consider overloading arithmetic operators.

Virtual functions and inheritance are uncommon.
Mutable Objects

Mutable Value-based ADTs (e.g., Date) are problematic when they can be referenced from two variables.

```cpp
Person myPerson ( "David O'Leary", new Date(1, "May", 1990) );
// name, DOB
cout << myPerson.DOB() << endl;

Date myDate = myPerson.DOB();
myDate.monthIs( myDate.month() + 1 );
cout << myPerson.DOB() << endl;
```
Entity Objects are **mutable**:  
- their objects can change value via mutators, other functions

Value-based Objects are usually **immutable**:  
- their objects cannot change value  
- instead, variables of the ADT are assigned a different object

Implications:  
- no mutators  
- member functions cannot be overridden (non virtual)  
- copy/assignment operations are deep copies  
- all data members are private  
- all data members are of primitive or immutable types, else  
  - make a copy of any (mutable) attribute parameter value  
  - make a copy of any output (mutable) attribute return value
Singleton Design Pattern

Ensures that exactly one object of our ADT exists.

class Egg {
    static Egg e; // singleton instance
    int i; // data member
    Egg(int ii) : i(ii) {} // private constructor

public:
    static Egg* instance() { return &e; }
    int val() const { return i; }
    Egg(const Egg&) = delete; // prevent copy
    Egg& operator=(const Egg&) = delete; // prevent assign
};

Egg Egg::e(42); // initialization of singleton
class Rational {
public:
    Rational (int numer = 0, int denom = 1);
    int numerator() const;
    int denominator() const;
private:
    int numerator_;  
    int denominator_;  
};
Encapsulate the data representation in a nested private structure (which can be in a separate file).

```cpp
class Rational {
    public:
        Rational (int numer = 0, int denom = 1);
        int numerator() const;
        int denominator() const;

    private:
        class Impl;
        Impl* rat_;

    public:
        ~Rational();
        Rational (const Rational&);
        Rational& operator= (const Rational&);
};
```