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CSE 331  
Software Design & Implementation

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Data Abstraction: Abstract Data Types (ADTs)

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# Outline

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This lecture:

1. What is an Abstract Data Type (ADT)?
2. How to specify an ADT?
3. Design methodology for ADTs

Very related next lectures:

- Representation invariants
- Abstraction functions

Two distinct, complementary ideas for reasoning about ADTs

# Procedural and data abstractions

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*Procedural* abstraction:

- Abstract from details of *procedures* (e.g., methods)
- Specification is the abstraction
  - Abstraction is the specification
- Satisfy the specification with an implementation

*Data* abstraction:

- Abstract from details of *data representation*
- Also a specification mechanism
  - A way of thinking about programs and design
- Standard terminology: [Abstract Data Type](#), or [ADT](#)

# Why we need Data Abstractions (ADTs)

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Organizing and manipulating data is pervasive

- Inventing and describing algorithms is less common

Start your design by **designing data structures**

- How will relevant data be organized
- What operations will be permitted on the data by clients
- Cf. CSE 332

Potential problems with choosing a data abstraction:

- Decisions about data structures often made too early
- Duplication of effort in creating derived data
- Very hard to change key data structures (modularity!)

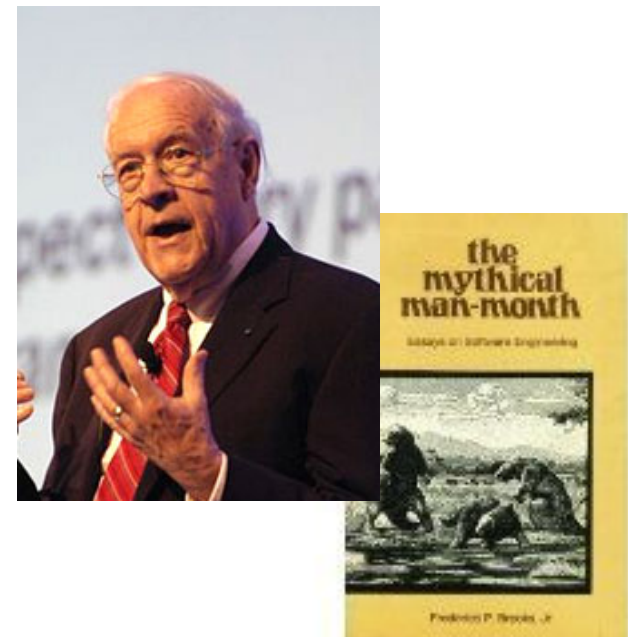
*Bad programmers worry about the code. Good programmers worry about data structures and their relationships.*

-- Linus Torvalds



*Show me your flowcharts and conceal your tables, and I shall continue to be mystified. Show me your tables, and I won't usually need your flowcharts; they'll be obvious.*

-- Fred Brooks



# An ADT is a set of operations

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- ADT abstracts from the *organization* to *meaning* of data
- ADT abstracts from *structure* to *use*
- Representation should not matter to the client
  - So hide it from the client

```
class RightTriangle {  
    float base, altitude;  
}
```

```
class RightTriangle {  
    float base, hypot, angle;  
}
```

Instead, think of a type as a **set of operations**

**create, getBase, getAltitude, getBottomAngle, ...**

Force clients to use operations to access data

# Are these classes the same?

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```
class Point {           class Point {
    public float x;      public float r;
    public float y;      public float theta;
}                       }
```

*Different:* cannot replace one with the other in a program

*Same:* both classes implement the concept “2-d point”

Goal of ADT methodology is to express the sameness:

- Clients depend only on the concept “2-d point”

# Benefits of ADTs

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If clients “respect” or “are forced to respect” data abstractions...

- For example, “it’s a 2-D point with these operations...”
- Can delay decisions on how ADT is implemented
- Can fix bugs by changing how ADT is implemented
- Can change algorithms
  - For performance
  - In general or in specialized situations
- ...

We talk about an “*abstraction barrier*”

- A good thing to have and not *cross* (also known as *violate*)



# Concept of 2-d point, as an ADT

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```
class Point {  
    // A 2-d point exists in the plane, ...  
    public float x();  
    public float y();  
    public float r();  
    public float theta();  
  
    // ... can be created, ...  
    public Point(); // new point at (0,0)  
    public Point centroid(Set<Point> points);  
  
    // ... can be moved, ...  
    public void translate(float delta_x,  
                          float delta_y);  
    public void scaleAndRotate(float delta_r,  
                               float delta_theta);  
}
```

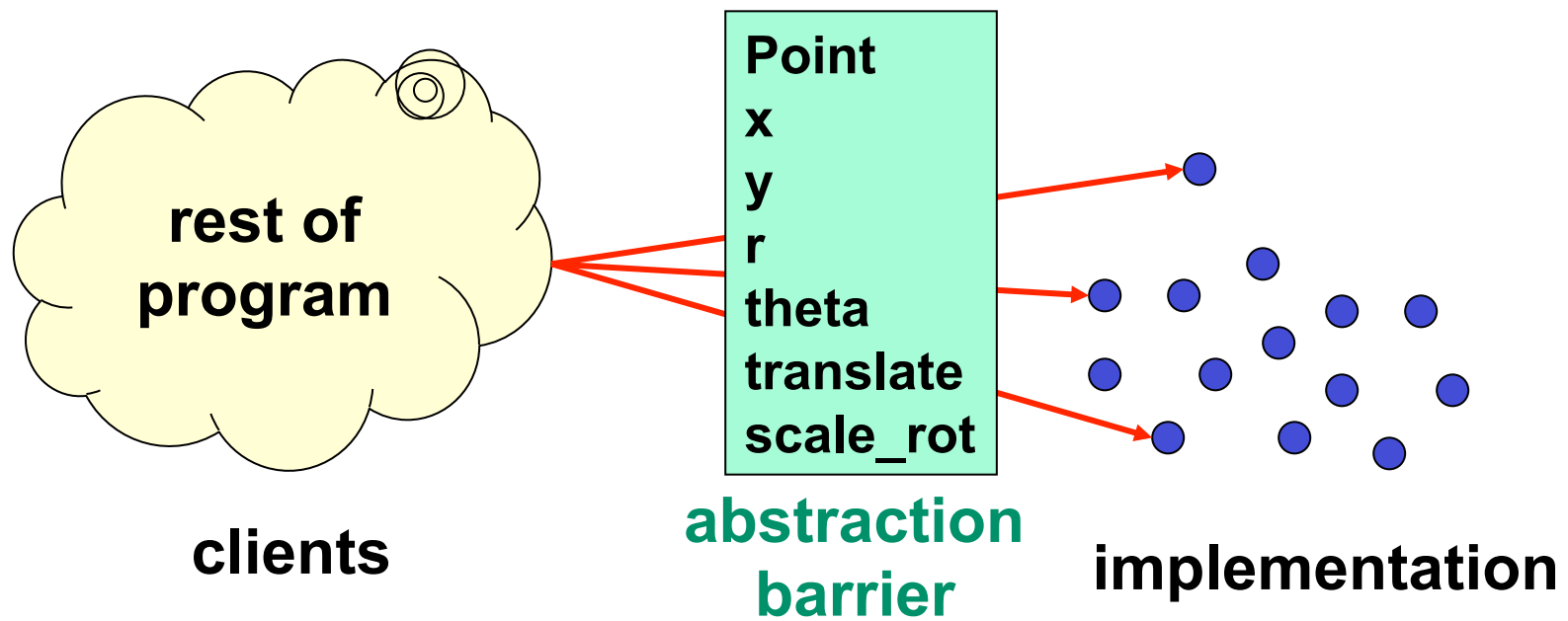
Observers

Creators/  
Producers

Mutators

# Abstract data type = objects + operations

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- Implementation is hidden
- The only operations on objects of the type are those provided by the abstraction

# Specifying a data abstraction

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- A *collection* of procedural abstractions
  - Not a collection of procedures
- An *abstract state*
  - Not the (concrete) representation in terms of fields, objects, ...
  - “Does not exist” but used to specify the operations
  - Concrete state, not part of the specification, implements the abstract state
    - More in upcoming lecture
- Each operation described in terms of “creating”, “observing”, “producing”, or “mutating”
  - No operations other than those in the specification

# Specifying an ADT

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## Immutable

1. overview
2. abstract state
3. creators
4. observers
5. producers
- ~~6. mutators~~

## Mutable

1. overview
2. abstract state
3. creators
4. observers
5. producers (rare)
6. mutators

- Creators: return new ADT values (e.g., Java constructors)
- Producers: ADT operations that return new values
- Mutators: Modify a value of an ADT
- Observers: Return information about an ADT

# Implementing an ADT

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To implement a data abstraction (e.g., with a Java class):

- See next two lectures
- This lecture is just about specifying an ADT
- *Nothing* about the concrete representation appears in the specification

# Poly, an immutable datatype: overview

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```
/**  
 * A Poly is an immutable polynomial with  
 * integer coefficients.  A typical Poly is  
 *  $c_0 + c_1x + c_2x^2 + \dots$   
 **/  
class Poly {
```



Abstract state (specification fields)

Overview:

- State whether mutable or immutable
- Define an abstract model for use in operation specifications
  - Difficult and vital!
  - Appeal to math if appropriate
  - Give an example (reuse it in operation definitions)
- State in specifications is *abstract*, not concrete

# Poly: creators

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```
// effects: makes a new Poly = 0  
public Poly()
```

```
// effects: makes a new Poly =  $cx^n$   
// throws: NegExponent if  $n < 0$   
public Poly(int c, int n)
```

## Creators

- New object, not part of pre-state: in **effects**, not **modifies**
- Overloading: distinguish procedures of same name by parameters (Example: two **Poly** constructors)

Footnote: slides omit full JavaDoc comments to save space; style might not be perfect either – focus on main ideas

# Poly: observers

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```
// returns: the degree of this,  
//   i.e., the largest exponent with a  
//   non-zero coefficient.  
//   Returns 0 if this = 0.  
public int degree()  
  
// returns: the coefficient of the term  
//   of this whose exponent is d  
// throws: NegExponent if d < 0  
public int coeff(int d)
```



# Notes on observers

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## Observers

- Used to obtain information about objects of the type
- Return values of other types
- Never modify the abstract value
- Specification uses the abstraction from the overview

### **this**

- The particular `Poly` object being accessed
- *Target* of the invocation
- Also known as the *receiver*

```
Poly x = new Poly(4, 3);  
int c = x.coeff(3);  
System.out.println(c);    // prints 4
```

# Poly: producers

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```
// returns: this + q (as a Poly)
public Poly add(Poly q)
```

```
// returns: the Poly equal to this * q
public Poly mul(Poly q)
```

```
// returns: -this
public Poly negate()
```

# Notes on producers

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- Operations on a type that create other objects of the type
- Common in immutable types like `java.lang.String`
  - `String substring(int offset, int len)`
- No side effects
  - Cannot change the abstract value of existing objects

# IntSet, a mutable datatype: overview and creator

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```
// Overview: An IntSet is a mutable,  
// unbounded set of integers.  A typical  
// IntSet is { x1, ..., xn }.  
class IntSet {  
  
    // effects: makes a new IntSet = {}  
    public IntSet()  
  
}
```

# IntSet: observers

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```
// returns: true if and only if  $x \in$  this  
public boolean contains(int x)
```

```
// returns: the cardinality of this  
public int size()
```

```
// returns: some element of this  
// throws: EmptyException when size()==0  
public int choose()
```

# IntSet: mutators

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```
// modifies: this  
// effects:  thispost = thispre ∪ {x}  
public void add(int x)
```

```
// modifies: this  
// effects:  thispost = thispre - {x}  
public void remove(int x)
```

# Notes on mutators

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- Operations that modify an element of the type
- Rarely modify anything (available to clients) other than **this**
  - List **this** in modifies clause (if appropriate)
- Typically have no return value
  - “Do one thing and do it well”
  - (Sometimes return “old” value that was replaced)
- Mutable ADTs may have producers too, but that is less common