

CSC 347 - Concepts of Programming Languages

Surprising Design Decisions

Instructor: Stefan Mitsch



Learning Objectives

- Identify and revisit PL concepts in the JavaScript programming language



Expressions and Statements

- Numbers, characters, strings: `1`, `'c'`, `"str"`
- Expressions: `1 + 2`
- Arrays: `[1, 2, 3]`
- `undefined`, `NaN`, `null`
- Objects: `{ x: 1, text: "Hello", }`
- Functions:
`function(x,y) { return x+y; }`
- Side-effecting expressions, result in `undefined`, e.g., `console.log("Test")`
- Statements: `;` turns expressions into statements
- Function declarations need `return` statements (else implicit `return undefined`)

```
1 function f (x) {  
2   console.log ("Called with " + x);  
3   return x + 1;  
4 }
```



Example

- Builtin support for manipulating document object model (DOM, tree structure of page)
- Builtin support for functional programming (callback functions to handle events)

```
1 <input id="a"  
2     type="text"  
3     value="empty"/>  
4  
5 <div id="b">  
6   <p>Hello</p>  
7 </div>  
8  
9 <div id="c">  
10  <p>World</p>  
11 </div>  
12  
13 <script  
14   type="text/javascript"  
15   src="demo.js">  
16 </script>
```

```
1 function main () {  
2   // statically scoped, mutable variables  
3   var count = 0;  
4  
5   // global storage  
6   var a = document.querySelector('input#a');  
7   var b = document.querySelector('div#b');  
8   var c = document.querySelector('div#c');  
9  
10  // iterators  
11  for (var x of [b,c]) {  
12    // functions are values  
13    x.onclick = function (e) {  
14      e.target.innerHTML += "<p>Again! " + (count++) + "</p>";  
15    } }  
16  
17  // object properties  
18  a.value = 1 + 2;  
19 }  
20 document.addEventListener("DOMContentLoaded", main);
```



Dynamically Typed

```
1 function f (x) {  
2   console.log ("1: " + x);  
3   console.log ("2: " + x.data);  
4   console.log ("3: " + x.data.length);  
5 }
```

- Output on an object with `data` array

```
1 > f ({ data: [11,21,31] });  
2 1: [object Object]  
3 2: 11,21,31  
4 3: 3
```

- Output on a string

```
1 > f ("pizza");  
2 1: pizza  
3 2: undefined  
4 Uncaught TypeError: Cannot read  
5 property 'length' of undefined
```



Dynamically Typed

```
1 function f (x) {  
2   console.log ("1: " + (x / 2));  
3   console.log ("2: " + (x[0]));  
4 }
```

- Output on an array

```
1 > f ([11,21,31]);  
2 1: NaN  
3 2: 11
```

- Output on a number

```
1 > f (8);  
2 1: 4  
3 2: undefined
```

- Output on undefined

```
1 > f (undefined);  
2 1: NaN  
3 Uncaught TypeError:  
4 Cannot read property  
5 '0' of undefined
```



Expressions and Statements

- Object literals: `{}`, array literals: `[]`

- Unexpected type conversions

```
1 [] + [] /* '' */
2 [] + {} /* [object Object] */
3 {} + [] /* VS8: 0, Node.js: [object Object] */
4 {} + {} /* VS8: NaN, Node.js: [object Object][object Object] */
```

- Dynamic types and optional arguments create surprising results

```
1 xs = ["10", "10", "10"];
2 xs.map(parseInt) /* [10, NaN, 2] */
3 [1,5,20,10].sort() /* [1, 10, 20, 5] */
```

- `parseInt`, `map`, `sort`



Expressions and Statements

- `undefined`, `NaN`, and `Infinity`

```
1 undefined + 1 /* NaN */
2 false + 1    /* 1 (someone liked C) */
3 5/0          /* Infinity */
4 -1/0         /* -Infinity */
```


[illegible]

10



Static (Lexical) Scope with Hoisting

Variables `var` are function-scoped

- *Hoists* variable declarations to top of nearest enclosing function
- Initialization code is not hoisted
- Equivalent code: variable declared at top of function
- Initialization code remains in place

```
1 var a = 1;
2 function f () {
3
4     console.log ("f1: a = " + a); // a=undefined
5     { var a = 2;
6       console.log ("f2: a = " + a); // a=2
7     }
8 }
9 function main() {
10    console.log ("m1: a = " + a); // a=1
11    f ();
12    console.log ("m2: a = " + a); // a=1
13 }
```

```
1 var a = 1;
2 function f () {
3     var a; /* = undefined */
4     console.log ("f1: a = " + a); // a=undefined
5     { a = 2;
6       console.log ("f2: a = " + a); // a=2
7     }
8 }
9 function main() {
10    console.log ("m1: a = " + a); // a=1
11    f ();
12    console.log ("m2: a = " + a); // a=1
13 }
```



Scope: Hoisting (Block Scope)

- ES6 introduced block-oriented scope in addition to function scope
 - `let` : mutable
 - `const` : immutable

```
1 var a = 1;
2 function f () {
3     console.log ("f1: a = " + a);    // a=1
4     { let a = 2;
5         console.log ("f2: a = " + a); // a=2
6     }
7 }
8 function main() {
9     console.log ("m1: a = " + a);    // a=1
10    f ();
11    console.log ("m2: a = " + a);    // a=1
12 }
```



Scope: Hoisting

- Hoisting of `var` to top of function happens everywhere

```
1 var a = 1;  
2 function f (b) {  
3   a = 2;  
4   if (b) {  
5     var a;  
6     a = a + 1;  
7   }  
8   console.log (" f: a = " + a);  
9 }
```

```
1 function main() {  
2   f (true);  
3   console.log ("m1: a = " + a);  
4   f (false);  
5   console.log ("m2: a = " + a);  
6 }
```

```
1 f: a = 3  
2 m1: a = 1  
3 f: a = 2  
4 m2: a = 1
```

- ! Even when variable is already used "above" `var` declaration



Functional Programming

- Functions and objects are first-class citizens
 - create at runtime
 - pass as args, return, store in data structures
- Nested functions (and objects) are commonplace: callbacks, collections processing
- JS uses static (lexical) scoping, see [here](#)



Recursion: Tail-Call Optimization

- JavaScript standard includes tail-call optimization, but only Safari implements it
- Can still make sense to think about alternative implementations, see Fibonacci

```
1 function fib(n) {  
2   if (n==0) return 0;  
3   else if (n==1) return 1;  
4   else return fib(n-2) + fib(n-1);  
5 }
```

```
1 function fibtail(n) {  
2   // nested function, inner n shadows outer n  
3   function fibtail(n, r1, r2) {  
4     if (n===0) return r1;  
5     else if (n===1) return r2;  
6     else return fibtail(n-1, r2, r1+r2);  
7   }  
8   return fibtail(n, 0, 1);  
9 }
```



Argument Passing and Pattern Matching

- Call by value, but objects and arrays are references (changes to fields or elements)

- Pattern matching for arrays

```
1 function swaparray(a) {  
2   const [x,y] = a; // deconstruct array  
3   a[0] = y;  
4   a[1] = x;  
5 }
```

- Swap array

```
1 let a = [1, 2, 3, 4];  
2 swaparray(a); // a === [2, 1, 3, 4]
```

- Swap in place

```
1 let x = 1, y = 2;  
2 [y,x] = [x,y];
```

- Pattern matching for objects

```
1 const person = {  
2   name: "Alice",  
3   age: 50,  
4   addr: "243 S Wabash"  
5 }
```

```
1 const { name, _, addr } = person
```

```
1 const { name } = person
```

```
1 const { n, _1, _2, o } = person
```



Higher-order Functions

- Map, filter, and fold built into modern JS
- With lambda expressions (`=>`)

```
1 var xs = [ 11, 21, 31 ];  
2  
3 xs.map (x => (2 * x));  
4 xs.filter (x => x%7===0);  
5 xs.reduce ((z,x) => z+x, 0);
```

- With functions

```
1 var xs = [ 11, 21, 31 ];  
2  
3 xs.map (function(x) { return (2 * x); });  
4 xs.filter (function(x) { return x%7===0 });  
5 xs.reduce (function(z,x) { return z+x; }, 0);
```

- Beware: `return` mandatory, outer `this` not closed



Closures

- Recall: Java requires effectively-final `i` from enclosing scope
- JS allows shared `i`; unwanted effect with `var`

```
1 for (int i = 0; i < 5; i++) {  
2     int x = i; /* accepted: x effectively final */  
3     new Thread (new Runnable () {  
4         public void run () {  
5             while (true) { System.out.print (i); }  
6         }  
7     }).start ();  
8 }
```

```
1 var funcs = [];  
2 for (var i = 0; i < 5; i++) {  
3     funcs.push (function () { return i; });  
4 }  
5 funcs.map (f => f());  
6 // [ 5, 5, 5, 5, 5 ]
```

- ! Closure stores reference to shared mutable variable `i`



Closures

- Fix with `var` similar to Java?

```
1 var funcs = [];  
2 for (var i = 0; i < 5; i++) {  
3   var x = i;  
4   funcs.push (function () { return x; });  
5 }  
6 funcs.map (f => f());  
7 // [ 4, 4, 4, 4, 4 ]
```

❗ Beware: hoisting!

- Use block-scoped `let` or `const`

```
1 let funcs = [];  
2 for (var i = 0; i < 5; i++) {  
3   const x = i; /* block scope */  
4   funcs.push (function () { return x; });  
5 }  
6 funcs.map (f => f());  
7 // [ 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 ]
```

- Use `let` directly in `for`

```
1 let funcs = [];  
2 for (let i = 0; i < 5; i++) {  
3   funcs.push (function () { return i; });  
4 }  
5 funcs.map (f => f());  
6 // [ 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 ]
```



Summary

- JavaScript standardized as ECMAScript, ECMA-262
 - [New Editions released regularly](#)
 - [Mozilla](#) has the best documentation
 - [ECMAScript Compatibility](#)
 - Bad parts eventually [fixed](#)
- Book Recommendations
 - [You Don't Know JS](#) by Kyle Simpson
 - [Speaking JavaScript: An In-Depth Guide for Programmers](#) by Axel Rauschmayer
 - [Exploring ES6: Upgrade to the next version of JavaScript](#) by Axel Rauschmayer