

Class 47: Object Basics

Held: Tuesday, 21 November 2006

Summary: Today we consider how to make *objects* that encapsulate values and provide capabilities for manipulating those values.

Related Pages:

- EBoard.
- Reading: Objects in Scheme.

Due

- HW16.

Notes:

- Exam 3 will be distributed tomorrow.

Overview:

- Representing Compound Values.
- Introduction to Objects.
- Procedures as Objects.
- Adding State.

Extending Records

- As we've seen in our experiments with representing compound values, there are strengths and weaknesses to simply choosing a representation and writing procedures to work with that implementation.
- Strengths: Access parts by procedure; Relatively easy to use.
- Weaknesses: Not fully encapsulated; hard to separate core operations from external operations (since they're called the same way); hard to limit access.
- In the late 1960's, some computer scientists decided to extend the notion of record further into something they called an *object*
- Objects group data.
- Objects can also do things.
- You can't directly access the parts of an object.
- Rather, you ask the object to do things or tell you things.
- The requests you send to objects are called *messages*.
- Traditional objects also provide a number of other advantages. We'll focus on encapsulation.

Objects in Scheme

- Scheme doesn't include objects as a built-in type. Hence, we have to implement them ourselves.
- The trick that we recommend is that you implement objects as procedures that take a *message* as a parameter.
- Traditionally, the messages begin with a colon.
- Here's a simple object that will respond when you greet it or leave it.

```
(define greeter
  (lambda (message)
    (cond
      ((eq? message ':enter) (display "Hello") (newline))
      ((eq? message ':leave) (display "Goodbye") (newline))
      (else (error "Unknown Message")))))
```

- Here's how we use it

```
> (greeter ':enter)
Hello
> (greeter ':leave)
Goodbye
> (greeter ':sleep)
Unknown Message
```

Adding State

- But how do we have an object keep track of information about itself?
- We build a local symbol table that is only accessible to the procedure.
- We can build such a table by putting a *let* *outside* the *lambda* for the procedure.

```
(define fixed-value
  (let ((value 5))
    (lambda (message)
      (cond
        ((eq? message ':get) value)
        (else (error "fixed-value:" "unknown message"))))))
```

- Typically, we use vectors to encapsulate our state because we know how to mutate vectors.

```
(define incrementable-value
  (let ((value (vector 0)))
    (lambda (message)
      (cond
        ((eq? message ':get) (vector-ref value 0))
        ((eq? message ':add1!)
         (vector-set! value 0
                      (+ 1 (vector-ref value 0))))
        (else (error "fixed-value:" "unknown message"))))))
```

- And an example of its use

```
> (incrementable-value ':get)
0
> (incrementable-value ':add1!)
> (incrementable-value ':get)
1
```

Lab

- Begin the lab on object-oriented programming.
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