

Class 21: Naming Local Values

Held: Monday, March 1, 2010

Summary: We consider why and how you name values within a procedure. We also consider why and how you limit access to those names to within the procedure.

Related Pages:

- EBoard.
- Lab: Local Bindings.
- Reading: Local Bindings.

Notes:

- I'm way behind on grading, as you can tell. Hopefully, I'll have time soon.
- What questions are there on Assignment 5?

Overview:

- Why name things.
- Naming things with `let`.
- Naming things with `let*`.
- Naming procedures.
- Lab.

The Problem: Naming Values

- As we've seen in many problems, it helps to name the values that we use within our procedure. Why?
 - It can make the code more readable because the name tells us something about the role the value plays.
 - It can make the code more efficient, because it allows us to avoid recomputing a value.
- Another reasons to name things is that we might want to create helper procedures and only make them available to the current procedure.

Naming Things with `let`

- You name things with `let`.
- `let` has the form

```
(let ((name1 exp1))
```

```
(name2 exp2)
...
(namen expn)
body)
```

- `let` has the meaning:
 - Evaluate all the expressions.
 - Update the binding table to associate each name with the corresponding value.
 - Evaluate *body* using the updated binding table.
 - Eliminate all the bindings just created.
- You can use `let` in a simple expression:

```
(define values (list 1 4 2 4 1 5 9))
(let ((largest (max values))
      (smallest (min values)))
  (/ (+ largest smallest) 2))
```

- More frequently, we use `let` within a procedure.

Sequencing Bindings with `let*`

- If we want to bind some things in sequence, we need to use `let*` rather than `let`.
- `let*` has the form

```
(let* ((name1 exp1)
      (name2 exp2)
      ...
      (namen expn))
  body)
```

- `let*` has the meaning:
 - Evaluate *exp*₁.
 - Update the binding table to associate *name*₁ with that value.
 - Evaluate *exp*₂.
 - Update the binding table to associate *name*₂ with that value.
 - ...
 - Evaluate *exp*_n.
 - Update the binding table to associate *name*_n with that value.
 - Evaluate *body* using the updated binding table.
 - Eliminate all the bindings just created.

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