

Class 19: Naming Local Values

Held: Friday, 22 February 2008

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

Related Pages:

- EBoard.
- Lab: Local Bindings.
- Reading: Local Bindings.
- Due: Quiz 4.

Notes:

- Instructions for running DrFu remotely on a Mac are available on the DrFu web site.
- We'll spend a few minutes making sure that everyone has partners for the homework.
- Does anyone have questions on the homework?
- Reading for Monday: Transforming RGB Colors. Amazingly, that reading is already ready.
- I will be here for my morning office hours, but not my afternoon hours.

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.

Naming Helper Procedures

- You can also use this technique to name helper procedures.
- Here's an example of the use of a procedure that uses a non-recursive helper procedure that checks whether a value of any type is exact

```
;;; Procedure:
;;;   exact-average
;;; Parameters:
;;;   num1, an exact number
;;;   num2, an exact number
;;; Purpose:
;;;   Average the two numbers.
;;; Produces:
;;;   average, an exact number
;;; Preconditions:
;;;   num1 is an exact number [Verified]
;;;   num2 is an exact number [Verified]
;;; Postconditions:
;;;   Guess.
(define exact-average
  (lambda (num1 num2)
    (let ((verify?
          (lambda (val) (and (number? val) (exact? val)))))
      (cond
        ((not (verify? num1))
         (throw "exact-average" "first parameter is a non-number"))
        ((not (verify? num2))
         (throw "exact-average" "second parameter is a non-number"))
        (else (/ (+ num1 num2) 2)))))))
```

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