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CSE 331  
Software Design & Implementation

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Abstract Data Types (ADTs)

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# Outline

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Previously looked at writing specifications for methods.  
The situation gets more complex with object-oriented code...

This lecture:

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

Next lecture(s):

- Documenting an *implementation* of an ADT

# Why we need Data Abstractions (ADTs)

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Manipulating and presenting data is pervasive

- choosing how to organize that data is key design problem
- inventing and describing algorithms is less common

Often best to start your design by [designing data...](#)

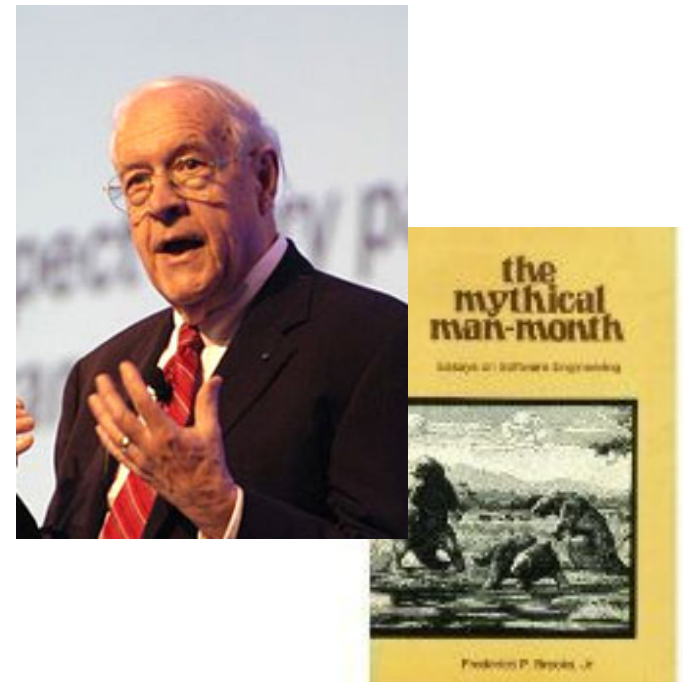
*Bad programmers worry about the code. Good programmers worry about data structures and their relationships.*

-- 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



# Designing Around Data

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Brooks says it is enough to decide what your data looks like

- (don't even need to say how it is organized)
- can figure out the data structures & code from that

In fact, even that is possibly too detailed...

- all we really need to know is what operations we need to perform with the data

An *abstract data type* defines a class of abstract objects which is completely characterized by the operations available on those objects ...

When a programmer makes use of an abstract data object, he [sic] is concerned only with the behavior which that object exhibits but not with any details of how that behavior is achieved by means of an implementation...

*Programming with Abstract Data Types*  
by Barbara Liskov and Stephen Zilles



# Why we need Data Abstractions (ADTs)

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Manipulating and presenting data is pervasive

- choosing how to organize that data is key design problem
- inventing and describing algorithms is less common

Often best to start your design by designing data

- first, what **operations** will be permitted on the data (for clients)
- next, decide how data be organized (data structures)
  - see CSE 332 & CSE 344
- lastly, write the code

# Why we need Data Abstractions (ADTs)

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Manipulating and presenting data is pervasive

- choosing how to organize that data is key design problem

Hard to always choose the right data structures ahead of time:

- hard to know ahead of time what will be too slow
- programmers are “notoriously” bad at this (Liskov)

ADTs give us the freedom to **change** data structures later on

- data structure details are hidden from the clients



# Procedural and data abstractions

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*Procedural* abstraction:

- abstract from implementation details of *procedures* (methods)
- specification is the abstraction
- satisfy the specification with an implementation

*Data* abstraction:

- abstract from details of *data representation*
- also a specification mechanism
- way of thinking about programs and design

Abstract Data Type (ADT)

- invented by Barbara Liskov in the 1970s
- one of the fundamental ideas of computer science

# Is everything an ADT?

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- Purpose of an ADT is to abstract the representation details
- Not every class is trying to hide its representation details
  - some classes expose *every* field via getters
  - some representations are very unlikely to change
  - some classes do not have a representation
    - they are more “processes” than data
    - client may give it data but no data is exposed
- Example: `Pair` with fields `first` and `second`
- Example: `PrinterController` with various `print` methods

# ADTs in Java

# An ADT is a set of **operations**

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ADT abstracts from the *organization* to *meaning* of data

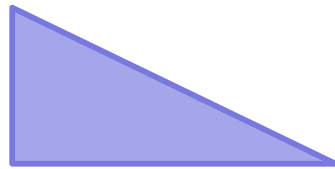
- details of data structures are hidden from the client
- client see only the operations that provided

# An ADT is a set of **operations**

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ADT abstracts from the *organization* to *meaning* of data

- details of data structures are hidden from the client
- client see only the operations that provided



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

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

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

**create, getBase, getArea, ...**

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

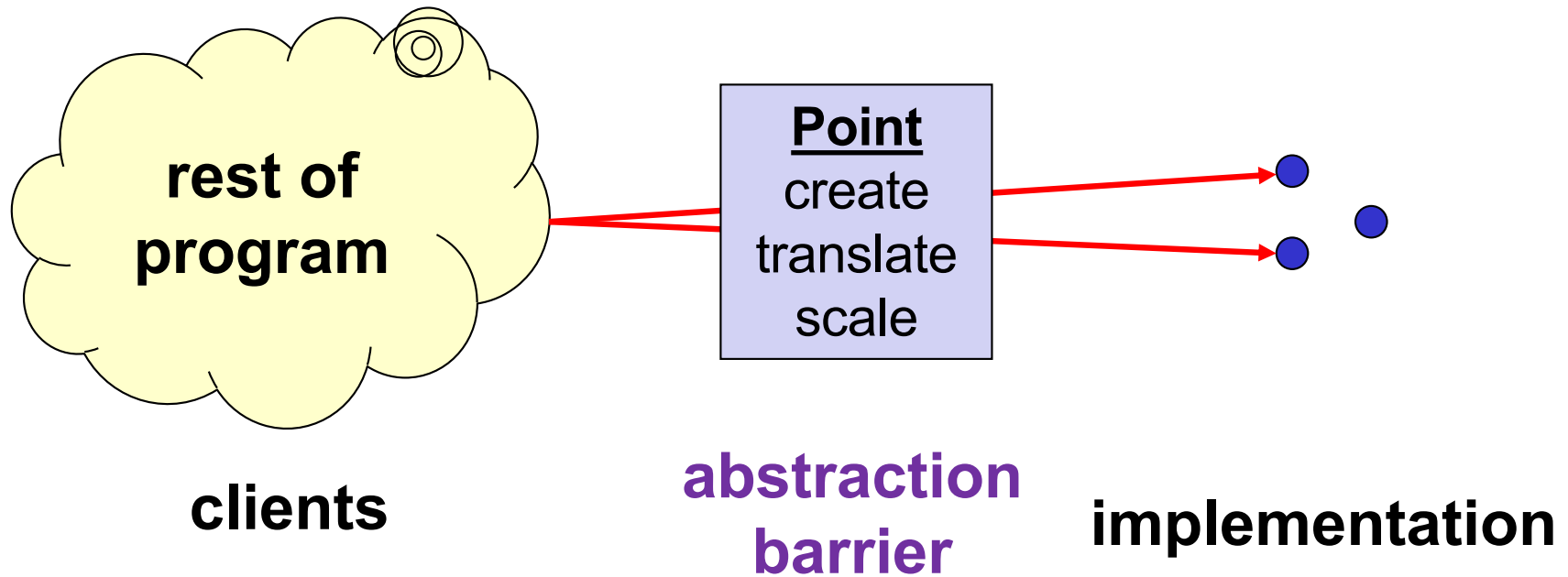
*Same Concept:* both classes implement the concept “2D point”

Goal of Point ADT is to express the sameness:

- clients should depend only on the concept “2D point”
- achieve this by specifying operations not the representation
- write clients that can work with either representation

# Abstract data type = objects + operations

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We call this an “**abstraction barrier**”

- a good thing to have and not *cross* (a.k.a. *violate*)
- prevents clients from depending on implementation details

# Benefits of ADTs

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If clients are forced to respect data abstractions, ...

- Can change how data is stored (and data structures)
  - fix bugs
  - improve performance
- Can also change algorithms
- Can delay decisions on how ADT is implemented



# Concept of 2D point, as an ADT

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```
class Point {  
    // A 2D 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 / Getters

Creators / Producers

Mutators

# 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)
- Observers / Getters: Return information about an ADT
- Producers: ADT operations that return new values
- Mutators: Modify a value of an ADT

# Specifying an ADT

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## Immutable

1. overview
2. abstract state
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## Mutable

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

- Should have no information about the implementation
  - (latter called the “concrete representation”)
  - leave ourselves free to change it later
- A collection of procedural abstractions — not procedures

# Specifying an ADT

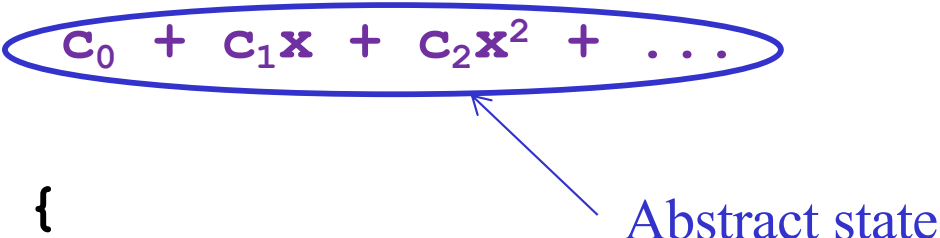
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- Need a way write specifications for these procedures
  - need a vocabulary for talking about what the operations do
  - need to avoid referencing the actual implementation
- Use “math” (when possible) not actual fields to describe the state
  - abstract description of a state is called an **abstract state**
  - describes what the state “means” not the implementation
    - give clients an abstract way to think about the state
  - each operation described in terms of “creating”, “observing”, “producing”, or “mutating” the abstract state

# Poly, an immutable datatype: overview

---

```
/**  
 * 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

## Overview

- defines the abstract states for use in operation specifications

# Notes on overview

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## Overview

- state if immutable (default not)
- define abstract states for use in operation specifications
  - difficult and vital!
  - appeal to math if appropriate
  - **never** make reference to concrete representation
- give an example (reuse it in operation definitions)

# Poly: creators

---

```
// 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

- creates a new object

**Note:** Javadoc above omits many details...

- should be `/** ... */` not `// ...`
- should be `@spec.effects` not `effects`

# Poly: observers

---

```
// returns: the degree of this polynomial,  
//   i.e., the largest exponent with a  
//   non-zero coefficient.  
//   Returns 0 if this = 0. ← “this” means the  
public int degree() abstract state
```

```
// returns: the coefficient of the term  
//   of this polynomial whose exponent is d  
// throws: NegExponent if d < 0  
public int coeff(int d)
```

## Observers

- obtains information about objects of that type



# Notes on observers

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## Observers

- **Never** modify the abstract state
- Specification uses the abstraction from the overview

# Poly: producers

---

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

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

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

## Producers

- creates other objects of the same type

# Notes on producers

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## Producers

- Common in immutable types like `java.lang.String`
  - `String substring(int offset, int len)`
- No side effects
  - **never** modify the abstract value of existing objects

# Poly, example

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```
Poly x = new Poly(4, 3);
```

```
Poly y = new Poly(5, 3);
```

```
Poly z = x.add(y);
```

```
System.out.println(z.coeff(3)); // prints 9
```

# IntSet, a mutable datatype: overview and creator

---

```
// 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()  
  
}
```

(Note: Javadoc is highly simplified...)

# IntSet: observers

---

```
// returns: true if and only if x in this set
```

```
public boolean contains(int x)
```

```
// returns: the cardinality of this set
```

```
public int size()
```

```
// returns: some element of this set
```

```
// throws: EmptyException when size()==0
```

```
public int choose()
```

# IntSet: mutators

---

```
// modifies: this  
// effects:  change this to this + {x}  
public void add(int x)
```

```
// modifies: this  
// effects:  change this to this - {x}  
public void remove(int x)
```

## Mutators

- modify the abstract state of the object

# Notes on mutators

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## Mutators

- Rarely modify anything (available to clients) other than **this**
  - list **this** in modifies clause
- 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