CSE 331
Software Design & Implementation

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Spring 2021
HW9, JSON, Fetch
Administrivia

• HW8 due today (Thur. 5/27 @ 11:00pm)

• HW9 due a week later (Fri. 6/4 @ 11:00pm)
  – Spec released soon. 😊
  – Plan ahead - this assignment can take a little longer than others.
  – Get creative! Lots of cool opportunities.

• Any questions?
Agenda

- HW9 Overview
- JSON
  - Brief overview
  - Helps share data between Java and JS.
- Fetch
  - How your JS sends requests to the Java server.
Homework 9 Overview

• Creating a new web GUI using React
  – Display a map and draw paths between two points on the map.
  – Works just like your React app in HW8 – but you get to design it!
  – Send requests to your Java server (new) to request building and path info.

• Creating a Java server as part of your previous HW5-7 code
  – Receives requests from the React app to calculate paths/send data.
  – Not much code to write here thanks to MVC.
    • Reuse your CampusMap class from HW7.
The Campus Paths Stack

Google Chrome
http://localhost:3000

CampusPaths
“Can I have the webpage?”
“Here’s some HTML and JS”

React Server
“localhost:3000”
Started with npm start
Your Javascript Code

Spark Java Server*
“localhost:4567”
Started with runSpark gradle task
SparkServer
CampusMap
Other pathfinder Code

*Note: This is not Apache Spark

Your React Application
<canvas>
<button>
Other Components

“Can I get some data?”
“Here’s some JSON with your data.”
Any Questions?

• Done:
  – HW9 Basic Overview

• Up Next:
  – JSON
  – Fetch
We have a whole application written in Java so far:
  - Reads CSV data, manages a Graph data structure, manages building information, does Dijkstra’s algorithm.

We’re writing a whole application in Javascript:
  - React web app to create a GUI for your users to interact with.

Even if we get them to communicate (discussed later), we need to make sure they “speak the same language”.
  - Javascript and Java store data very differently.

JSON = JavaScript Object Notation
  - Can convert JS Object → String, and String → JS Object
  - Bonus: Strings are easy to send inside server requests/responses.
JSON ↔ JS

Let's consider a school:

```javascript
let schoolInfo = {
  name: "U of Washington",
  location: "Seattle",
  founded: 1861,
  mascot: "Dubs II",
  isRainy: true,
  website: "www.uw.edu",
  colors: ["Purple","Gold"]
}
```

• Can convert between the two easily (we’ll see how later)
• This means: if the server sent back a JSON String, it’d be easy to use the data inside of it – just turn it into a JS Object and read the fields out of the object.
Use Gson (a library from Google) to convert between them.

- Tricky (but possible) to go from JSON String to Java Object, but we don't need that for this assignment.
JSON – Key Ideas

• Use Gson to turn Java objects containing the data into JSON before we send it back.
  – The Java objects don’t have to be simple, like in the example, Gson can handle complicated structures.
• Easy to turn a JSON string into a Javascript object so we can use the data (node-fetch can help us with that).
Any Questions?

• Done:
  – HW9 Basic Overview
  – JSON

• Up Next:
  – Fetch
Fetch

• Used by JS to send requests to servers to ask for info.
  – alternative to XMLHttpRequest

• Uses Promises:
  – Promises capture the idea of “it’ll be finished later.”
  – Asking a server for a response can be slow, so Promises allow the browser to keep working instead of stopping to wait.
  – Getting the data out is a little more complicated.

• Can use async/await syntax to deal with promises.
Creating a Request

• Recall from lecture:
  – When you type a URL into your browser, it makes a GET request to that URL, the response to that request is the website itself (HTML, JS, etc.).
    • A ”GET” request says “Hey server, can I get some info about _____?”
  – We’re going to make a request from inside Javascript to ask for data about paths on campus.
  – There are other kinds of requests, but we’re just using GET. (It’s the default for fetch).
• Each “place” that a request can be sent is called an “endpoint.”
  – Your Java server will provide multiple endpoints – one for each kind of request that your React app might want to make.
    • Find a path, get building info, etc...
Fetch Demo

- Let’s see how a request is handled in action.
Creating a Request

- Basic request with no extra data: “http://localhost:4567/getSomeData”
  - A request to the “/getSomeData” endpoint in the server at “localhost:4567”
  - “localhost” just means “on this same computer”
  - “:4567” specifies a port number – every computer has multiple ports so multiple things can be running at a given time.

- Sending extra information in a request is done with a query string:
  - Add a “?” and a list of “key=value” pairs. Each pair is separated by “&”.
  - Query string might look like: “?start=CSE&end=KNE”

- Complete request looks like:
  
  http://localhost:4567/findPath?start=CSE&end=KNE

- Sends a “/findPath” request to the server at “localhost:4567”, and includes two pieces of extra information, named “start” and “end”.

- You don’t need to name your endpoints or query string parameters anything specific, the above is just an example.
Sending the Request

```javascript
let responsePromise = fetch("http://localhost:4567/findPath?start=CSE&end=KNE");
```

- The URL you pass to `fetch()` can include a query string if you need to send extra data.
- `responsePromise` is a Promise object
  - Once the Promise “resolves,” it’ll hold whatever is sent back from the server.
- How do we get the data out of the Promise?
  - We can `await` the promise’s resolution.
  - `await` tells the browser that it can pause the currently-executing function and go do other things. Once the promise resolves, it’ll resume where we left off.
  - Prevents the browser from freezing while the request is happening
Getting Useful Data

“This function is pause-able”

Will eventually resolve to an actual JS object based on the JSON string.

Once we have the data, store it in a useful place.

```javascript
async sendRequest() {
  let responsePromise = fetch("...");
  let response = await responsePromise;
  let parsingPromise = response.json();
  let parsedObject = await parsingPromise;
  this.setState({
    importantData: parsedObject
  });
}
```

“This function is pause-able”

Will eventually resolve to an actual JS object based on the JSON string.

Once we have the data, store it in a useful place.
Error Checking

Every response has a ‘status code’ (404 = Not Found). This checks for 200 = OK

On a complete failure (i.e. server isn’t running) an error is thrown.

```javascript
async sendRequest() {
  try {
    let response = await fetch("...");
    if (!response.ok) {
      alert("Error!");
      return;
    }
    let parsed = await response.json();
    this.setState({
      importantData: parsed
    });
  } catch (e) {
    alert("Error!");
  }
}
```
Things to Know

• Can only use the `await` keyword inside a function declared with the `async` keyword.
  – `async` keyword means that a function can be “paused” while `await-ing`

• `async` functions automatically return a Promise that (will eventually) contain(s) their return value.
  – This means that if you need a return value from the function you declared as async, you’ll need to await the function call.
  – But that means that the caller also needs to be `async`.
  – Therefore: generally best to not have useful return values from async functions (in 331, there are lots of use cases outside of this course, but can get complicated fast).
  – Instead of returning, consider calling `setState` to store the result and trigger an update.
More Things to Know

• Error checking is important.
  – If you forget, the error most likely will disappear without actually causing your program to explode.
  – This is BAD! Silent errors can cause tricky bugs.
  – Happens because errors don’t bubble outside of promises, and the async function you’re inside is effectively “inside” a promise.
  – Means that if you don’t catch an exception, it’ll just disappear as soon as your function ends.
Any Questions?

- Done:
  - HW9 Basic Overview
  - JSON
  - Fetch
Wrap-Up

• Don’t forget:
  – HW8 due today (Thur. 5/27 @ 11:00pm)
  – HW9 due a week later (Fri. 6/4 @ 11:00pm)

• Use your resources!
  – Office Hours
  – Links from HW specs
  – React Tips & Tricks Handout (See “Resources” page on web)
  – Other students (remember academic honesty policies: can’t share/show/copy code, but discussion is great!)
  – Google (carefully, always fully understand code you use)