CSE 351 Section 2 – Pointers and Bit Operators

Pointers

A pointer is a variable that holds an address. C uses pointers explicitly. If we have a variable x, then &x gives the address of x rather than the value of x. If we have a pointer p, then *p gives us the value that p points to, rather than the value of p.

Consider the following declarations and assignments:

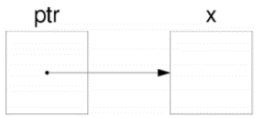
```
int x;
int *ptr;
ptr = &x;
```

1) We can represent the result of these three lines of code visually as shown. The variable `ptr` stores the address of x, and we say "`ptr` points to x." x currently doesn't contain a value since we did not assign x a value!

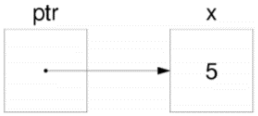
2) After executing `x = 5;`, the memory diagram changes as shown.

3) After executing `*ptr = 200;`, the memory diagram changes as shown. We modified the value of x by dereferencing `ptr`.

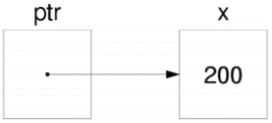
1)



2)



3)



Pointer Arithmetic

In C, arithmetic on pointers (++, +, --, -) is scaled by the size of the data type the pointer points to. That is, if p is declared with pointer `type*` p, then `p + i` will change the value of p (an address) by `i*sizeof(type)` (in bytes). However, *p returns the data *pointed at* by p, so pointer arithmetic only applies if p was a pointer to a pointer.

Exercise:

Draw out the memory diagram after sequential execution of each of the lines below:

```
int main(int argc, char **argv) {
  int x = 410, y = 351;   // assume &x = 0x10, &y = 0x18
  int *p = &x;            // p is a pointer to an integer
  *p = y;
  p = p + 4;
  p = &y;
  x = *p + 1;
}
```

Line 1:	Line 2:	Line 3:
Line 4:	Line 5:	Line 6:

C *Bitwise* Operators

&	0	1
0	**0**	**0**
1	**0**	**1**

← **AND** (&) outputs a 1 only when both input bits are 1.

|	0	1
0	**0**	**1**
1	**1**	**1**

OR (|) outputs a 1 when either input bit is 1. →

^	0	1
0	**0**	**1**
1	**1**	**0**

← **XOR** (^) outputs a 1 when either input is *exclusively* 1.

~	
0	**1**
1	**0**

NOT (~) outputs the opposite of its input. →

Masking is very commonly used with bitwise operations. A mask is a binary constant used to manipulate another bit string in a specific manner, such as setting specific bits to 1 or 0.

Exercises:

1) What happens when we fix/set one of the inputs to the binary bitwise operators? Let `x` be the other input. Fill in the following blanks with either `0`, `1`, `x`, or $\bar{x}$ (NOT x):

`x & 0 = _____` `x | 0 = _____` `x ^ 0 = _____`

`x & 1 = _____` `x | 1 = _____` `x ^ 1 = _____`

2) **Lab 1 Helper Exercises:** Lab 1 is intended to familiarize you with bitwise operations in C through a series of puzzles. These exercises are either sub-problems directly from the lab or expose concepts needed to complete the lab. Start early!

Bit Extraction: Returns the value (0 or 1) of the 19th bit (counting from LSB). Allowed operators: >>, &, |, ~.

```
int extract19(int x) {
    return
}
```

Subtraction: Returns the value of `x-y`. Allowed operators: >>, &, |, ~, +.

```
int subtract(int x, int y) {
    return
}
```

Equality: Returns the value of `x==y`. Allowed operators: >>, &, |, ~, +, ^, !.

```
int equals(int x, int y) {
    return
}
```

Divisible by Eight? Returns the value of (x%8)==0. Allowed operators: >>, <<, &, |, ~, +, ^, !.

```
int divisible_by_8(int x) {
    return
}
```

Greater than Zero? Returns the value of `x>0`. Allowed operators: >>, &, |, ~, +, ^, !.

```
int greater_than_0(int x) {
    return
}
```