Lecture 11
Recursive Thinking

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Outline of This Lecture

- Start with an Example of Recursion
  - “racing car” – not in the textbook
  - using slides (provided by the authors)
- Recursive Thinking: General Form
- Tracing Recursive Calls
  - using blackboard to show the concepts
- A Closer Look at Recursion
  - activation record and runtime stack
Chapter 9 introduces the technique of recursive programming.

As you have seen, recursive programming involves spotting smaller occurrences of a problem within the problem itself.

This presentation gives an additional example, which is not in the book.
A Car Object

- To start the example, think about your favorite family car
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- To start the example, think about your favorite family car
- Imagine that the car is controlled by a radio signal from a computer
A Car Class

- To start the example, think about your favorite family car
- Imagine that the car is controlled by a radio signal from a computer
- The radio signals are generated by activating member functions of a Car object
class Car
{
public:
    Car(int car_number);
    void move();
    void turn_around();
    bool is_blocked();

private:
    { We don't need to know the private fields! }

};
int main( )
{
    Car racer(7);
    ...

When we declare a Car and activate the constructor, the computer makes a radio link with a car that has a particular number.
int main( )
{
    Car racer(7);

    racer.turn_around( );
    ...
}

The turn_around Function

When we activate turn_around, the computer signals the car to turn 180 degrees.
int main() {
    Car racer(7);
    racer.turn_around();
    ...}

The turn_around Function

When we activate turn_around, the computer signals the car to turn 180 degrees.
When we activate move, the computer signals the car to move forward one foot.
The move Function

When we activate move, the computer signals the car to move forward one foot.

```c
int main( )
{
    Car racer(7);
    racer.turn_around( );
    racer.move( );
    ...
```

When we activate move, the computer signals the car to move forward one foot.
int main()
{
    Car racer(7);
    racer.turn_around();
    racer.move();
    if (racer.is_blocked())
        cout << "Cannot move!";
    . . .

The is_blocked member function detects barriers.
Your Mission

- Write a function which will move a Car forward until it reaches a barrier...
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- Write a function which will move a Car forward until it reaches a barrier...
- ...then the car is turned around...
Your Mission

- Write a function which will move a Car forward until it reaches a barrier...
- ...then the car is turned around...
- ...and returned to its original location, facing the opposite way.
Your Mission

- Write a function which will move a Car forward until it reaches a barrier...
- ...then the car is turned around...
- ...and returned to its original location, facing the opposite way.
void ricochet(Car& moving_car);

- Write a function which will move a Car forward until it reaches a barrier...
- ...then the car is turned around...
- ...and returned to its original location, facing the opposite way.
Pseudocode for ricochet

```c
void ricochet(Car& moving_car);
```

- if `moving_car.is_blocked()`, then the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
Pseudocode for ricochet

```c
void ricochet(Car& moving_car);
```

- if `moving_car.is_blocked()`, then the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
- Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:
  ```c
  moving_car.move();
  ```
Pseudocode for ricochet

void ricochet(Car& moving_car);

- if moving_car.is_blocked(), then the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
- Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:

  moving_car.move();

  ...

This makes the problem a bit smaller. For example, if the car started 100 feet from the barrier...
Pseudocode for ricochet

void ricochet(Car& moving_car);

- if moving_car.is_blocked(), then the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
- Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:
  moving_car.move();
  ...

This makes the problem a bit smaller. For example, if the car started 100 feet from the barrier... then after activating move once, the distance is only 99 feet.
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car) {
    if (moving_car.is_blocked()) {
        // The car is already at the barrier. Turn it around.
    } else {  
        // Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier.
        // Start with:
        moving_car.move();
        // ...}
```

We now have a smaller version of the same problem that we started with.
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car) {
  if (moving_car.is_blocked()) {
    // The car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
  } else {
    // Otherwise, the car hasn't reached the barrier, so start with:
    moving_car.move();
    ricochet(moving_car);
    // Make a recursive call to solve the smaller problem.
  }
}
```

99 ft.
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car)
{
    if (moving_car.is_blocked())
    {
        // The car is already at the barrier. In this case,
        // just turn the car around.
    }
    else
    {
        // Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier,
        // so start with:
        moving_car.move();
        ricochet(moving_car);
        // The recursive call will solve the smaller problem.
    }
}
```
Pseudocode for ricochet

```c
void ricochet(Car& moving_car) {
    if (moving_car.is_blocked()) {
        // The car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
    } else {
        // Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:
        moving_car.move();
        ricochet(moving_car);
        ...,
    }
}
```

The recursive call will solve the smaller problem.
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car)
{
    if (moving_car.is_blocked())
    {
        // The car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
    }
    else
    {
        // Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:
        moving_car.move();
        ricochet(moving_car);
        // The recursive call will solve the smaller problem.
    }
}
```
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car) {
    if (moving_car.is_blocked()) {
        // The car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
    } else {
        // The car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:
        moving_car.move();
        ricochet(moving_car);
        // The recursive call will solve the smaller problem.
    }
}
```
Pseudocode for ricochet

```c
void ricochet(Car& moving_car) {
    if (moving_car.is_blocked()) {
        // The car is already at the barrier. In this case,
        // just turn the car around.
    } else {
        // Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier,
        // so start with:
        moving_car.move();
        ricochet(moving_car);
    }
    // The recursive call will solve the smaller problem.
}
```
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car) {
  if (moving_car.is_blocked()) { // the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
    // do nothing
  } else { // the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:
    moving_car.move();
    ricochet(moving_car);
    // do something
  }
}
```

The recursive call will solve the smaller problem.
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car) {
  if (moving_car.is_blocked())
    return;  // The car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
  else
    // Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:
    moving_car.move();
    ricochet(moving_car);
    // The recursive call will solve the smaller problem.
}
```
Pseudocode for ricochet

```c
void ricochet(Car& moving_car)
{
    if (moving_car.is_blocked())
    {
        // The car is already at the barrier. In this case,
        // just turn the car around.
    }
    else
    {
        // Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier,
        // so start with:
        moving_car.move();
        ricochet(moving_car);
        // The recursive call will solve the smaller problem.
        ...
    }
}
```
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car) {
    if (moving_car.is_blocked()) {
        // The car is already at the barrier. In this case,
        // just turn the car around.
    } else {
        // Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier,
        // so start with:
        moving_car.move();
        ricochet(moving_car);
        ...  
    }
}
```

The recursive call will solve the smaller problem.
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car)
{
    if (moving_car.is_blocked())
    {
        // The car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
    }
    else
    {
        // Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:
        moving_car.move();
        ricochet(moving_car);
        // The recursive call will solve the smaller problem.
    }
}
```
Pseudocode for ricochet

```c
void ricochet(Car& moving_car);
```

- if `moving_car.is_blocked()` then the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
- Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:

```c
moving_car.move();
ricochet(moving_car);
...  
```

99 ft.
void ricochet(Car& moving_car) {
    if (moving_car.is_blocked()) {
        // The car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
    } else {
        // Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so:
        moving_car.move();
        ricochet(moving_car);
        moving_car.move();
    }
}

What is the last step that's needed to return to our original location?
Pseudocode for ricochet

```c
void ricochet(Car& moving_car);
```

- if `moving_car.is_blocked()`, then the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
- Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:

  ```c
  moving_car.move();
  ricochet(moving_car);
  moving_car.move();
  ```

This recursive function follows a common pattern that you should recognize.
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car);

- if moving_car.is_blocked( ), then the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.

- Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:

  moving_car.move( );
  ricochet(moving_car);
  moving_car.move( );
```

When the problem is simple, solve it with no recursive call. This is the **base case** or the **stopping case**.
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car);
```

- If `moving_car.is_blocked()`, then the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
- Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:

```cpp
moving_car.move();
ricochet(moving_car);
moving_car.move();
```

When the problem is more complex, start by doing work to create a smaller version of the same problem...
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car);
```

- if `moving_car.is_blocked()`, then the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
- Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:

```cpp
moving_car.move();
ricochet(moving_car);
moving_car.move();
```

...use a `recursive call` to completely solve the smaller problem...
Pseudocode for ricochet

```cpp
void ricochet(Car& moving_car);
```

- if `moving_car.is_blocked()`, then the car is already at the barrier. In this case, just turn the car around.
- Otherwise, the car has not yet reached the barrier, so start with:

```cpp
moving_car.move();
ricochet(moving_car);
moving_car.move();
```

...and finally do any work that's needed to complete the solution of the original problem.
void ricochet(Car& moving_car)
{
    if (moving_car.is_blocked())
        moving_car.turn_around(); // Base case
    else
    {
        // Recursive pattern
        moving_car.move();
        ricochet(moving_car);
        moving_car.move();
    }
}
An Exercise

Can you write ricochet as a new member function of the Car class, instead of a separate function?

```cpp
void Car:: ricochet()
{
    ...
}
```

You have 2 minutes to write the implementation.
void Car::ricochet()
{
    if (is_blocked())
        turn_around(); // Base case
    else
    {
        // Recursive pattern
        move();
        ricochet();
        ricochet();
        move();
    }
}
Recursive Thinking: General Form

- **Recursive Calls**
  - Suppose a problem has one or more cases in which some of the subtasks are simpler versions of the original problem. These subtasks can be solved by recursive calls.

- **Stopping Cases/Base Cases**
  - A function that makes recursive calls must have one or more cases in which the entire computation is fulfilled without recursion. These cases are called stopping cases or base cases.
Tracing Recursive Calls: Ricochet

Do it by hand if car is 4 feet away from the barrier

```cpp
void Car::ricochet() {
    if (is_blocked()) {  // Base case
        turn_around();
    } else {  // Recursive pattern
        move();
        ricochet();
        move();
    }
}
```
A Close Look at Ricochet Recursion

- The recursive case and the stopping case

- Activation record
  - The return location only in this example – other information is kept in the object racer

- The running stack
  - The collection of the activation records is stored in a stack data structure
Example 2: Write Number Vertically

- **Task**
  - Write a non-negative integer to the screen with its decimal digits stacked vertically
  - For example:

    Input: 1234

    Output:
    1
    2
    3
    4
A possible function

Write an integer number vertically

```cpp
void write_vertical (unsigned int number)
// precondition: number >=0
// Postcondition: The digits of number have been written, stacked vertically.
{
    assert(number>=0);
    do
    {
        cout << number % 10 << endl;        // Write a digit
        number = number / 10;
    } while (number !=0);
}
```

Input: 1234
Output:

4
3
2
1
Approach 1: using a stack

Write an integer number vertically

```cpp
void stack_write_vertical (unsigned int number)  
// Postcondition: The digits of number have been written, stacked vertically.  
{  
  stack<int> s;  
  do  
  {  
    s.push(number % 10); // push a digit in the stack  
    number = number / 10;  
  } while (number !=0);  
  while (!(s.empty()))  
  {  
    cout << s.top()<< endl; //print a digit from the stack  
    s.pop();  
  }  
}  
```
Approach 2: Using Recursion

Write an integer number vertically

```c++
void recursive_write_vertical(unsigned int number) {
    // Postcondition: The digits of number have been written, stacked vertically.
    if (number < 10) // stopping case
        cout << number << endl; // Write the one digit
    else // including recursive calls
    {
        recursive_write_vertical(number/10); // Write all but the last digit
        cout << number % 10 << endl; // Write the last digit
    }
}
```
Tracing Recursive Calls

Write an integer number vertically

```c
void recursive_write_vertical_2(unsigned int number) {
   // Postcondition: The digits of number have been written, stacked vertically.
   if (number < 10)  // stopping case
      cout << number << endl; // Write the one digit
   else // including recursive calls
      {
         recursive_write_vertical(number/10);          // Write all but the last digit
         cout << number % 10 << endl;        // Write the last digit
      }
}
```

Write an integer number vertically
A Closer Look at the Recursion

- Recursive Function
  - Recursive calls
  - Stopping (Base) cases

- Run-time Stack
  - the collection of activation records is stored in the stack

- Activation Record - a special memory block including
  - return location of a function call
  - values of the formal parameters and local variables
Recursive Thinking: General Form

- **Recursive Calls**
  - Suppose a problem has one or more cases in which some of the subtasks are simpler versions of the original problem. These subtasks can be solved by recursive calls.

- **Stopping Cases /Base Cases**
  - A function that makes recursive calls must have one or more cases in which the entire computation is fulfilled without recursion. These cases are called stopping cases or base cases.
Self-Tests and More Complicated Examples

- An Extension of write_vertical (page 436)
  - handles all integers including negative ones
  - Hints: you can have more than one recursive calls or stopping cases in your recursive function

- Homework
  - Reading: Section 9.1
  - Self-Test: Exercises 1-8
  - Advanced Reading: Section 9.2
  - Assignment 5 online
void super_write_vertical(int number)
// Postcondition: The digits of the number have been written, stacked vertically.
// If number is negative, then a negative sign appears on top.
// Library facilities used: iostream.h, math.h
{
    if (number < 0)
    {
        cout << '-' << endl;  // print a negative sign
        super_write_vertical(abs(number));  // abs computes absolute value
        // This is Spot #1 referred to in the text.
    }
    else if (number < 10)
        cout << number << endl;  // Write the one digit
    else
    {
        super_write_vertical(number/10);  // Write all but the last digit
        // This is Spot #2 referred to in the text.
        cout << number % 10 << endl;  // Write the last digit
    }
}