Introduction to Patterns and Frameworks

Developing Reusable Software Components

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Introduction

- Developing software is hard
- Developing reusable software is even harder
- Proven solutions include *patterns* and *frameworks*

Overview of Patterns and Frameworks

- Patterns support reuse of software *architecture* and *design*
  - *They capture the static and dynamic structures and collaborations of successful solutions to problems that arise when building applications in a particular domain*
- Frameworks support reuse of *detailed design* and *code*
  - *A framework is an integrated set of components that collaborate to provide a reusable architecture for a family of related applications*
- Together, *design patterns* and *frameworks* help to improve key software quality factors
  - *e.g.*, reuse, extensibility, modularity, performance

Patterns of Learning

- Successful solutions to many areas of human endeavor are deeply rooted in patterns
  - In fact, an important goal of education is transmitting *patterns of learning* from generation to generation
- Below, we'll explore how patterns are used to learn chess
- Learning to develop good software is similar to learning to play good chess
  - Though the consequences of failure are often far less dramatic!

Becoming a Chess Master

- *First learn rules and physical requirements*
  - *e.g.*, names of pieces, legal movements, chess board geometry and orientation, etc.
- *Then learn principles*
  - *e.g.*, relative value of certain pieces, strategic value of center squares, power of a threat, etc.
- However, to become a master of chess, one must study the games of other masters
  - These games contain *patterns* that must be understood, memorized, and applied repeatedly
- There are hundreds of these patterns

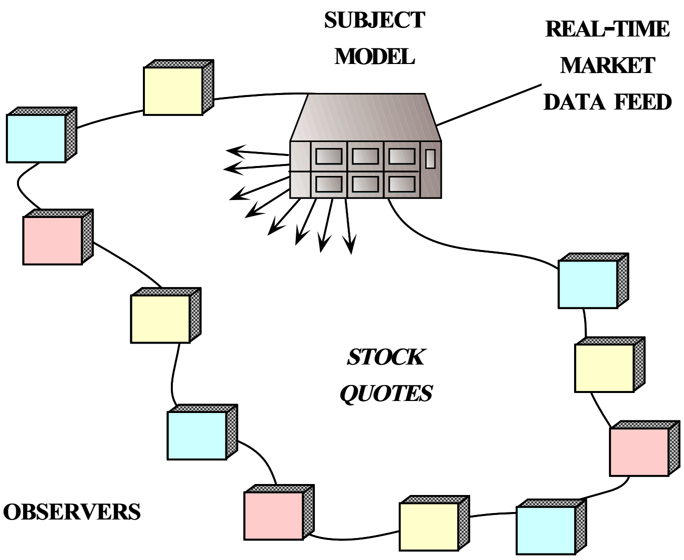
Becoming a Software Design Master

- *First learn the rules*
  - *e.g.*, the algorithms, data structures and languages of software
- *Then learn the principles*
  - *e.g.*, structured programming, modular programming, object oriented programming, generic programming, etc.
- However, to truly master software design, one must study the designs of other masters
  - These designs contain *patterns* must be understood, memorized, and applied repeatedly
- There are hundreds of these patterns

Design Patterns

- Design patterns represent *solutions* to *problems* that arise when developing software within a particular *context*
  - *i.e.*, "Patterns == problem/solution pairs in a context"
- Patterns capture the static and dynamic *structure* and *collaboration* among key *participants* in software designs
  - They are particularly useful for articulating how and why to resolve *non-functional forces*
- Patterns facilitate reuse of successful software architectures and designs

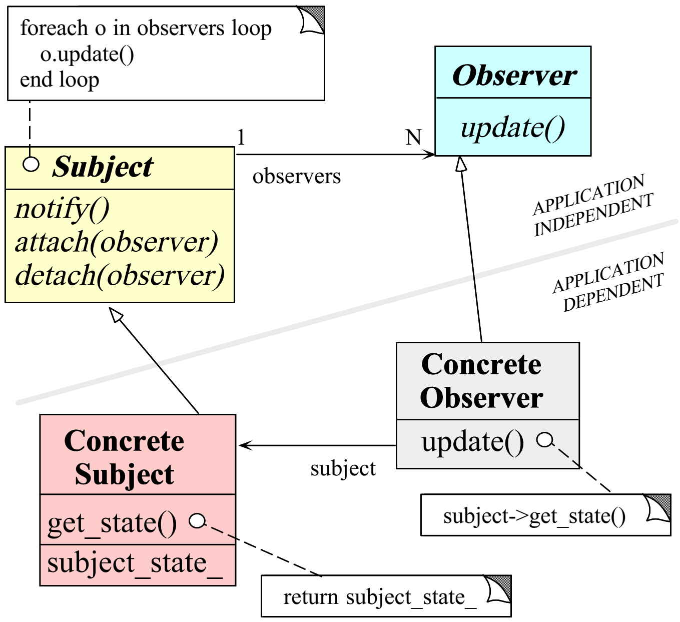
Example: Stock Quote Service



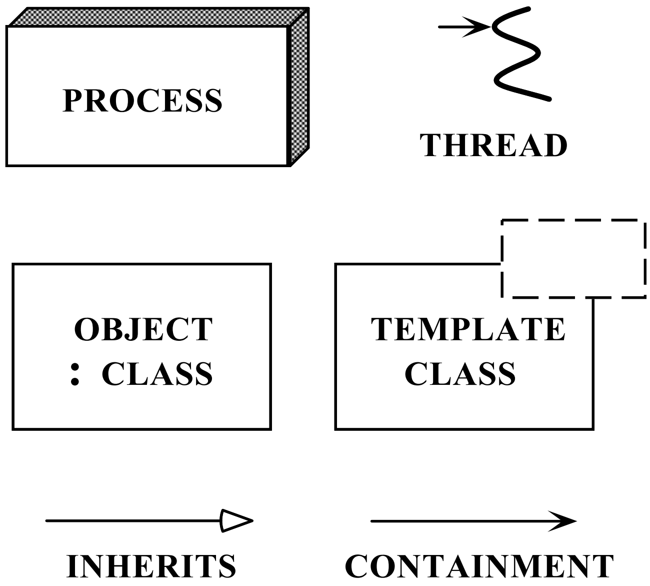
Observer Pattern

- *Intent*
  - "Define a one-to-many dependency between objects so that when one object changes state, all its dependents are notified and updated automatically"
- Key forces
  1. There may be many observers
  2. Each observer may react differently to the same notification
  3. The subject should be as decoupled as possible from the observers to allow observers to change independently of the subject

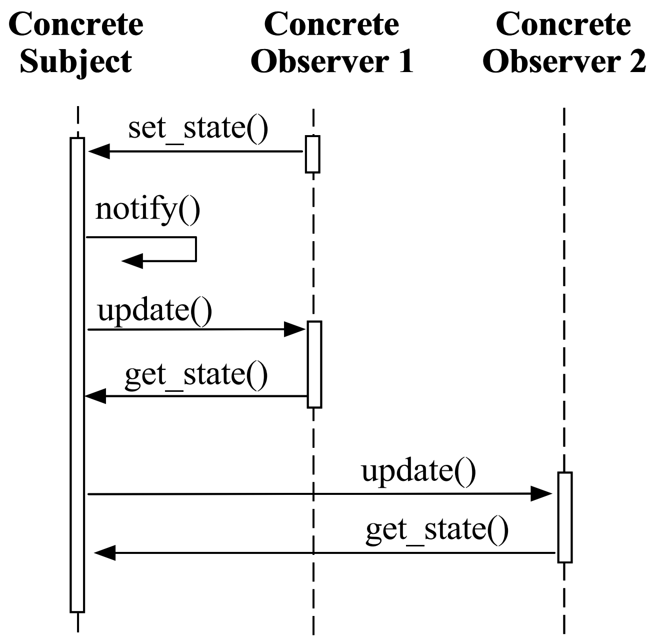
Structure of the Observer Pattern



Graphical Notation



Collaboration in the Observer Pattern



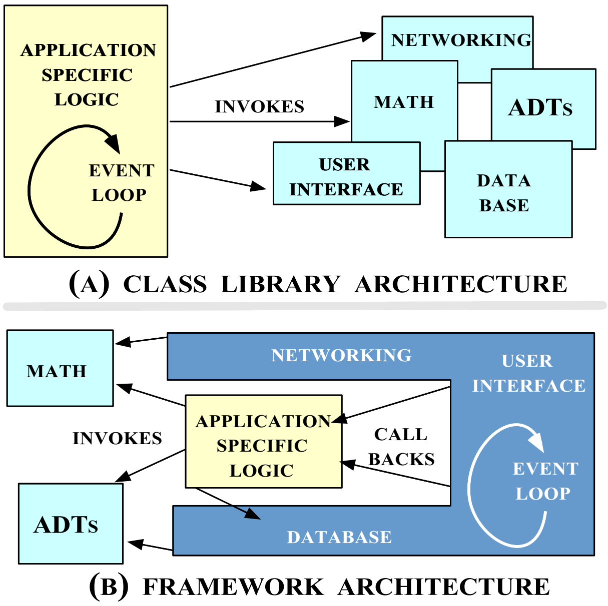
Design Pattern Descriptions

- Main parts
  1. *Name and intent*
  2. *Problem and context*
  3. *Force(s) addressed*
  4. *Abstract description of structure and collaborations in solution*
  5. *Positive and negative consequence(s) of use*
  6. *Implementation guidelines and sample code*
  7. *Known uses and related patterns*
- Pattern descriptions are often independent of programming language or implementation details
  - Contrast with frameworks...

Frameworks

1. *Frameworks are semi-complete applications*
   - Complete applications are developed by *inheriting* from, and *instantiating* parameterized framework components
2. *Frameworks provide domain-specific functionality*
   - *e.g.*, business applications, telecommunication applications, window systems, databases, distributed applications, OS kernels
3. *Frameworks exhibit inversion of control at run-time*
   - *i.e.*, the framework determines which objects and methods to invoke in response to events

Class Libraries vs. Frameworks



Component Integration in Frameworks

- Framework components are loosely coupled via "callbacks"
- Callbacks allow independently developed software components to be connected together
- Callbacks provide a connection-point where generic framework objects can communicate with application objects
  - The framework provides the common *template methods* and the application provides the variant *hook methods*

Comparing Pattern and Frameworks

- Patterns and frameworks are highly synergistic concepts, with neither subordinate to the other
- Patterns have been characterized as more abstract descriptions of frameworks, which are then implemented in a particular language
- Sophisticated frameworks typically embody dozens of patterns
- Likewise, patterns have been used to document frameworks

Design Pattern Space

- *Creational patterns*
  - Deal with initializing and configuring classes and objects
- *Structural patterns*
  - Deal with decoupling interface and implementation of classes and objects
- *Behavioral patterns*
  - Deal with dynamic interactions among societies of classes and objects

Creational Patterns

- *Factory Method*
  - Method in a derived class creates associates
- *Abstract Factory*
  - Factory for building related objects
- *Builder*
  - Factory for building complex objects incrementally
- *Prototype*
  - Factory for cloning new instances from a prototype
- *Singleton*
  - Factory for a singular (sole) instance

Structural Patterns

- *Adapter*
  - Translator adapts a server interface for a client
- *Bridge*
  - Abstraction for binding one of many implementations
- *Composite*
  - Structure for building recursive aggregations
- *Decorator*
  - Decorator extends an object transparently

Structual Patterns (cont'd)

- *Facade*
  - Facade simplifies the interface for a subsystem
- *Flyweight*
  - Many fine-grained objects shared efficiently
- *Proxy*
  - One object approximates another

Behavioral Patterns

- *Chain of Responsibility*
  - Request delegated to the responsible service provider
- *Command*
  - Request as first-class object
- *Interpreter*
  - Language interpreter for a small grammar
- *Iterator*
  - Aggregate elements are accessed sequentially

Behavioral Patterns (cont'd)

- *Mediator*
  - Mediator coordinates interactions between its associates
- *Memento*
  - Snapshot captures and restores object states privately
- *Observer*
  - Dependents update automatically when a subject changes
- *State*
  - Object whose behavior depends on its state

Behavioral Patterns (cont'd)

- *Strategy*
  - Abstraction for selecting one of many algorithms
- *Template Method*
  - Algorithm with some steps supplied by a derived class
- *Visitor*
  - Operations applied to elements of an heterogeneous object structure

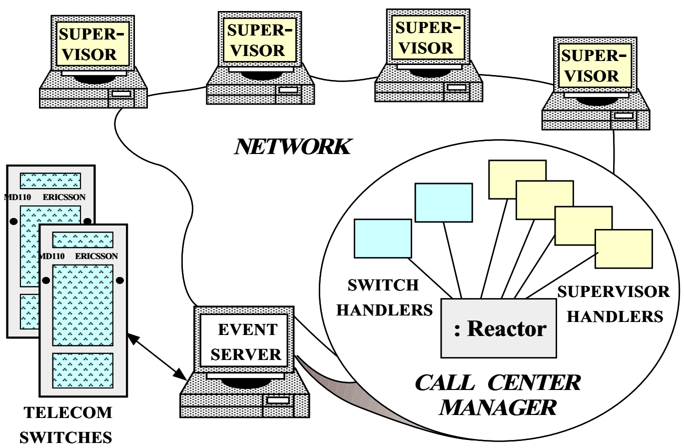
When to Use Patterns

1. *Solutions to problems that recur with variations*
   - No need for reuse if the problem only arises in one context
2. *Solutions that require several steps*
   - Not all problems need all steps
   - Patterns can be overkill if solution is simple linear set of instructions
3. *Solutions where the solver is more interested in the existence of the solution than its complete derivation*
   - Patterns leave out too much to be useful to someone who really wants to understand
     - They can be a temporary bridge, however...

Case Study: A Reusable OO Communication Software Framework

- Developing portable, reusable, and efficient communication software is hard
- OS platforms are often fundamentally incompatible
  - *e.g.*, different concurrency and I/O models
- Thus, it may be impractical to directly reuse:
  - *Algorithms*
  - *Detailed designs*
  - *Interfaces*
  - *Implementations*

System Overview



- OO framework for call center management developed for Ericsson
  - www.cs.wustl.edu/~schmidt/ECOOP−95.ps.gz

Problem: Cross-platform Reuse

- Original OO framework was developed for UNIX and later ported to Windows NT 3.51 in 1993
- UNIX and Windows NT have fundamentally different I/O models
  - *i.e.*, synchronous vs. asynchronous
- Thus, direct reuse of original framework was infeasible...
  - Later solved by ACE and Windows NT 4.0

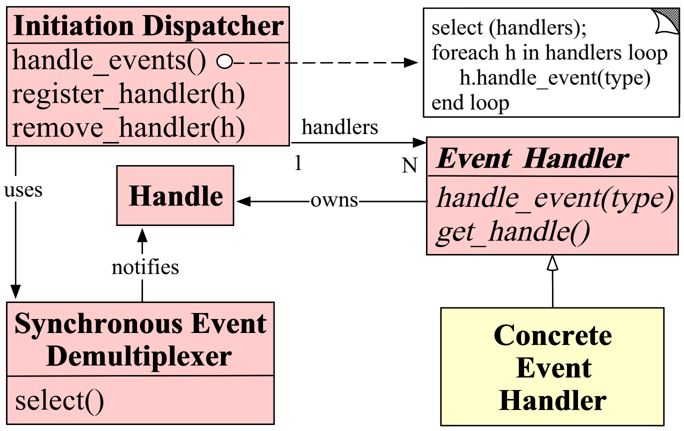
Solution: Reuse Design Patterns

- Design patterns support reuse of *software architecture*
- Patterns embody successful *solutions* to *problems* that arise when developing software in a particular *context*
- Design patterns greatly reduced project risk at Ericsson by leveraging proven design expertise

Example Pattern: Reactor

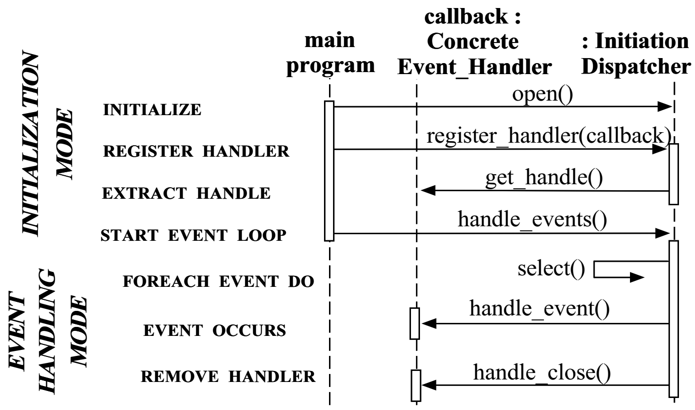
- *Intent*
  - "Decouples synchronous event demultiplexing and event handler initiation dispatching from service(s) performed in response to events"
- This pattern solves several problems for single-threaded communication software:
  1. *How to demultiplex multiple types of events from multiple sources of events synchronously and efficiently within a single thread of control*
  2. *How to extend application behavior without requiring changes to the event dispatching framework*
- A pattern description captures the static and dynamic *structure* and *collaboration* among key *participants* in a micro-architecture

Structure and Participants in the Reactor pattern



- www.cs.wustl.edu/~schmidt/Reactor.ps.gz

Collaborations



- Dynamic interaction among participants in the Reactor pattern

Differences Between UNIX and Windows NT

- *Reactive* vs. *Proactive* I/O
  - Reactive I/O is synchronous
  - Proactive I/O is asynchronous
    - Requires additional interfaces to "arm" the I/O mechanism
  - See *Proactor* pattern
    - www.cs.wustl.edu/~schmidt/proactor.ps.gz
- Other differences include
  - *Resource limitations*
    - *e.g.*, Windows NT limits HANDLEs per-thread to 64
  - *Demultiplexing fairness*
    - *e.g.*, `WaitForMultipleObjects` always returns the lowest active HANDLE

Lessons Learned from Case Study

- Real-world constraints of OS platforms can preclude direct reuse of communication software
  - *e.g.*, must often use non-portable features for performance
- Reuse of design patterns may be the only viable means to leverage previous development expertise
- Design patterns are useful, but are no panacea
  - Managing expectations is crucial...

Key Principles

- Successful patterns and frameworks can be boiled down to a few key principles:
  1. Separate interface from implementation
  2. Determine what is *common* and what is *variable* with an interface and an implementation
     - Common == stable
  3. Allow substitution of *variable* implementations via a *common* interface
- Dividing *commonality* from *variability* should be goal-oriented rather than exhaustive

Planning for Change

- Often, aspects of a design "seem" constant until they are examined in the light of the dependency structure of an application
  - At this point, it becomes necessary to refactor the framework or pattern to account for the variation
- Frameworks often represent the distinction between commonality and variability via *template methods* and *hook methods*, respectively

The Open/Closed Principle

- Determining common vs. variable components is important
  - Insufficient variation makes it hard for users to customize framework components
  - Conversely, insufficient commonality makes it hard for users to comprehend and depend upon the framework's behavior
- In general, dependency should always be in the direction of stability
  - *i.e.*, a software component should not depend on any component that is less stable than itself
- The "Open/Closed" principle
  - This principle allows the most stable component to be extensible

Benefits of Design Patterns

- *Design patterns enable large-scale reuse of software architectures*
- *Patterns explicitly capture expert knowledge and design tradeoffs*
- *Patterns help improve developer communication*
- *Patterns help ease the transition to object-oriented technology*

Drawbacks to Design Patterns

- *Patterns do not lead to direct code reuse*
- *Patterns are deceptively simple*
- *Teams may suffer from pattern overload*
- *Patterns are validated by experience and discussion rather than by automated testing*
- *Integrating patterns into a software development process is a human-intensive activity*

Suggestions for Using Patterns Effectively

- *Do not recast everything as a pattern*
  - Instead, develop strategic domain patterns and reuse existing tactical patterns
- *Institutionalize rewards for developing patterns*
- *Directly involve pattern authors with application developers and domain experts*
- *Clearly document when patterns apply and do not apply*
- *Manage expectations carefully*

Lessons Learned using OO Frameworks

- *Benefits of frameworks*
  - Enable direct reuse of code (*cf* patterns)
  - Facilitate larger amounts of reuse than stand-alone functions or individual classes
- *Drawbacks of frameworks*
  - High initial learning curve
    - Many classes, many levels of abstraction
  - The flow of control for reactive dispatching is non-intuitive
  - Verification and validation of generic components is hard

Patterns and Framework Literature

- *Books*
  - Gamma et al., "Design Patterns: Elements of Reusable OO Software" AW, 1994
  - *Pattern Languages of Program Design* series by AW, 1995–1997
  - Siemens, *Pattern-Oriented Software Architecture*, Wiley, 1996
- *Special Issues in Journals*
  - October '96 "Communications of the ACM" (eds: Douglas C. Schmidt, Ralph Johnson, and Mohamed Fayad)
  - October '97 "Communications of the ACM" (eds: Douglas C. Schmidt and Mohamed Fayad)
- *Magazines*
  - C++ Report and JOOP, columns by Coplien, Vlissides, Vinoski, Schmidt, and Martin

Conferences and Workshops on Patterns

- Pattern Language of Programs Conferences
  - September, 1999, Monticello, Illinois, USA
  - st-www.cs.uiuc.edu/users/patterns/patterns.html
- The European Pattern Languages of Programming conference
  - July, 1999, Kloster Irsee, Germany
  - www.cs.wustl.edu/~schmidt/patterns.html
- USENIX COOTS
  - May 3–7, 1999, San Diego, CA
  - www.usenix.org/events/coots99/

Summary

- Mature engineering disciplines have handbooks that describe successful solutions to known problems
  - *e.g.*, automobile designers don't design cars using the laws of physics, they adapt adequate solutions from the handbook known to work well enough
  - The extra few percent of performance available by starting from scratch typically isn't worth the cost
- Patterns can form the basis for the handbook of software engineering
  - If software is to become an engineering discipline, successful practices must be systematically documented and widely disseminated