

Class 38: Representing Color Palettes with Vectors

Held: Wednesday, 9 April 2008

Summary: We consider *vectors*, an alternative to files and lists for storing collections of data. We also consider how vectors can be used to represent color palettes.

Related Pages:

- EBoard.
- Lab: Vectors.
- Reading: Vectors.
- Due: Assignment 8: Run-Length Encoding.

Notes:

- Normal start-of-class time for discussion of campus issues.
- EC for attending tonight's Con Brio concert (9:30 in the pub).
- EC for attending Thursday noon applied studio recital in Sebring-Lewis.
- EC for attending Thursday 4:15 talk on Calculus for Dogs.
- EC for attending Friday evening talk by Patch Adams.
- EC for attending Saturday Evening's 10:00 p.m. RHPS.
- Jonathan Tsu and Ian Young are conducting a usability study on the Grinnell CS Department website as a project for Human-Computer Interaction. We are looking for students currently taking Fundamentals of CS to take part. The study should take about twenty minutes to complete. Email [youngian] if you are interested. *EC for participating.*
- Reading for Friday: Analyzing Algorithms (ready Thursday).

Overview:

- Problems with lists.
- A solution: Vectors.
- Important vector procedures.
- Representing palettes with vectors.

List Deficiencies

- Now that we've worked with lists for a while, we've identified some things that make lists inappropriate for some situations.
 - Lists are *expensive* to use; to find the length of a list or to access an element late in the list, you need to cdr down the list.
 - Lists are *fixed*; you can't easily change an element of a list.
- At the same time, there are some advantages to lists:

- Lists are *dynamic*; it is easy to grow and shrink a list.
- Lists are *inherently recursive*; the type is defined recursively.
- Lists are *simple*; you can build almost every list operation through just a few basic operations (`car`, `cdr`, `null`, and `null?`).

An Alternative: Vectors

- Vectors provide an alternative to lists.
- They have two primary advantages:
 - Vectors are *indexed*: You can quickly access elements by number.
 - Vectors are *mutable*: You can change the elements of a vector.
- In order to obtain these benefits, vectors lack some key features of lists. In particular,
 - Vectors are *static*: Once you've created a vector, you cannot change its length.
- Some key vector procedures:
 - `(vector val1 ... valn)`: Create a vector
 - `(make-vector length val)`: Make a vector of specified length, with duplicates of `val` as the contents.
 - `(vector-ref vector position)`: Extract a value from a vector.
 - `(vector-set! vector position newvalue)`: Change an element of a vector.
 - `(vector-length vector)`

Using Vectors for Palettes

- Why?
 - Lets you more easily change the palette (using `vector-set!`).
 - Much faster in rebuilding an image from indices
- Basic operations:
 - Create empty palette
 - Add a color to the palette
 - Find closest color in the palette
 - Given an index, get the corresponding color
 - ...
- How?
 - Create fixed-size vector
 - Fill with special value (`color-transparent` in the original reading; updated to be `null`).

Lab

- Do the lab.

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