Class 21: Naming Local Values

Held: Monday, March 1, 2010

Summary: We consider why and how you name values within a procedure. We also consider why and how you limit access to those names to within the procedure.

Related Pages:
- EBoard.
- Lab: Local Bindings.
- Reading: Local Bindings.

Notes:
- I’m way behind on grading, as you can tell. Hopefully, I’ll have time soon.
- What questions are there on Assignment 5?

Overview:
- Why name things.
- Naming things with `let`.
- Naming things with `let*`.
- Naming procedures.
- Lab.

The Problem: Naming Values

- As we’ve seen in many problems, it helps to name the values that we use within our procedure. Why?
  - It can make the code more readable because the name tells us something about the role the value plays.
  - It can make the code more efficient, because it allows us to avoid recomputing a value.
- Another reasons to name things is that we might want to create helper procedures and only make them available to the current procedure.

Naming Things with `let`

- You name things with `let`.
- `let` has the form

\[
(\text{let } ((name_1 \ exp_1)))
\]
let has the meaning:
- Evaluate all the expressions.
- Update the binding table to associate each name with the corresponding value.
- Evaluate body using the updated binding table.
- Eliminate all the bindings just created.

You can use let in a simple expression:

```scheme
(define values (list 1 4 2 4 1 5 9))
(let ((largest (max values))
     (smallest (min values)))
  (/ (+ largest smallest) 2))
```

More frequently, we use let within a procedure.

**Sequencing Bindings with let***

- If we want to bind some things in sequence, we need to use let* rather than let.
- let* has the form

```scheme
(let* ((name_1 exp_1)
        (name_2 exp_2)
        ...
        (name_n exp_n))
  body)
```

- let* has the meaning:
  - Evaluate exp_1.
  - Update the binding table to associate name_1 with that value.
  - Evaluate exp_2.
  - Update the binding table to associate name_2 with that value.
  - ...
  - Evaluate exp_n.
  - Update the binding table to associate name_n with that value.
  - Evaluate body using the updated binding table.
  - Eliminate all the bindings just created.