CS 61C Summer 2022

C Part 2, Floating Point

Discussion 3

1 Pre-Check

1.1 True or False. The goals of floating point are to have a large range of values, a low amount of precision, and real arithmetic results

False. Although floating point DOES
- Provide support for a wide range of values. (Both very small and very large)
- Help programmers deal with errors in real arithmetic because floating point can represent + ∞, -∞, NaN (Not a number)

Floating point actually has HIGH precision. Recall that precision is a count of the number of bits in a computer word used to represent a value. Floating point helps you keep as much precision as possible because we have so much freedom to interpret our bits as whatever negative powers of 2 are useful for specifying the number.

1.2 True or False. The distance between floating point numbers increases as the absolute value of the numbers increase.

True. The uneven spacing is due to the exponent representation of floating point numbers. There are a fixed number of bits in the significand. In IEEE 32 bit storage there are 23 bits for the significand, which means the LSB is 2^{-22} times the MSB. If the exponent is zero (after allowing for the offset) the difference between two neighboring floats will be 2^{-22}. If the exponent is 8, the difference between two neighboring floats will be 2^{-14} because the mantissa is multiplied by 2^8. Limited precision makes binary floating-point numbers discontinuous; there are gaps between them.

1.3 True or False. Floating Point addition is associative.

False. Because of rounding errors, you can find Big and Small numbers such that:
(Small + Big) + Big != Small + (Big + Big)
FP approximates results because it only has 23 bits for Significand

2 Floating in the 61Sea

The IEEE 754 standard defines a binary representation for floating point values using three fields.

- The *sign* determines the sign of the number (0 for positive, 1 for negative).
- The *exponent* is in **biased notation**. For instance, the bias is -127 which comes from -$(2^{8-1}-1)$ for single-precision floating point numbers.
- The *significand* or *mantissa* is akin to unsigned integers, but used to store a fraction instead of an integer.

The below table shows the bit breakdown for the single precision (32-bit) representation. The leftmost bit is the MSB and the rightmost bit is the LSB.

1	8	23
Sign	Exponent	Mantissa/Significand/Fraction

For normalized floats:
Value $= (-1)^{Sign} * 2^{Exp+Bias} * 1.\textbf{significand}_2$
For denormalized floats:
Value $= (-1)^{Sign} * 2^{Exp+Bias+1} * 0.\textbf{significand}_2$

Exponent	Significand	Meaning
0	Anything	Denorm
1-254	Anything	Normal
255	0	Infinity
255	Nonzero	NaN

Note that in the above table, our exponent has values from 0 to 255. When translating between binary and decimal floating point values, we must remember that there is a bias for the exponent.

2.1 Convert the following single-precision floating point numbers from binary to decimal or from decimal to binary. You may leave your answer as an expression.

- 0x00000000

  0
- 8.25

  0x41040000
- 0x00000F00

  $(2^{-12} + 2^{-13} + 2^{-14} + 2^{-15}) * 2^{-126}$
- 39.5625

  0x421E4000
- 0xFF94BEEF

  NaN
- -∞

  0xFF800000
- 1/3

  N/A — Impossible to actually represent, we can only approximate it

As we saw above, not every number can be represented perfectly using floating point. For this question, we will only look at positive numbers.

2.1 What is the next smallest number larger than 2 that can be represented completely?

For this question, you increment the number by the smallest amount possible. This is the same as incrementing the significand by 1 at the rightmost location.
$(1 + 2^{-23}) * 2 = 2 + 2^{-22}$

2.2 What is the next smallest number larger than 4 that can be represented completely?

For this question, you increment the number by the smallest amount possible. This is the same as incrementing the significand by 1 at the rightmost location.
$(1 + 2^{-23}) * 4 = 4 + 2^{-21}$

2.3 What is the largest odd number that we can represent? Hint: Try applying the step size technique covered in lecture.

To find the largest odd number we can represent, we want to find when odd numbers will stop appearing. This will be with step size of 2.

As a result, plugging into Part 4: $2 = 2^{x-150} \rightarrow x = 151$
This means the number before $2^{151-127}$ was a distance of 1 (it is the first value whose stepsize is 2) and no number after will be odd. Thus, the odd number is simply subtracting the previous step size of 1.This gives,
$2^{24} - 1$

3 Pass-by-who?

3.1 Implement the following functions so that they work as described.

(a) Swap the value of two **int**s. *Remain swapped after returning from this function.* Hint: Our answer is around three lines long.

```
1  void swap(int *x, int *y) {
2      int temp = *x;
3      *x = *y;
4      *y = temp;
5  }
```

(b) Return the number of bytes in a string. *Do not use* `strlen`. Hint: Our answer is around 4 lines long.

```
1  int mystrlen(char* str) {
2      int count = 0;
3      while (*str++) {
4          count++;
5      }
6      return count;
7  }
```

4 Debugging

4.1 The following functions may contain logic or syntax errors. Find and correct them.

(a) Returns the sum of all the elements in `summands`.

It is necessary to pass a size alongside the pointer.

```
1  int sum(int* summands, size_t n) {
2      int sum = 0;
```

```
    for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
        sum += *(summands + i);
    return sum;
}
```

(b) Increments all of the letters in the `string` which is stored at the front of an array of arbitrary length, `n >= strlen(string)`. Does not modify any other parts of the array's memory.

The ends of strings are denoted by the null terminator rather than n. Simply having space for n characters in the array does not mean the string stored inside is also of length n.

```
void increment(char* string) {
    for (i = 0; string[i] != 0; i++)
        string[i]++; // or (*(string + i))++;
}
```

Another common bug to watch out for is the corner case that occurs when incrementing the character with the value 0xFF. Adding 1 to 0xFF will overflow back to 0, producing a null terminator and unintentionally shortening the string.

(c) Copies the string `src` to `dst`.

```
void copy(char *src, char *dst) {
    while (*dst++ = *src++);
}
```

No errors.

(d) Overwrites an input string `src` with "61C is awesome!" if there's room. Does nothing if there is not. Assume that `length` correctly represents the length of `src`.

```
void cs61c(char *src, size_t length) {
    char *srcptr, replaceptr;
    char replacement[16] = "61C is awesome!";
    srcptr = src;
    replaceptr = replacement;
    if (length >= 16) {
        for (int i = 0; i < 16; i++)
            *srcptr++ = *replaceptr++;
    }
}
```

`char *srcptr, replaceptr` initializes a `char` pointer, and a `char`—not two `char` pointers.

The correct initialization should be, `char *srcptr, *replaceptr`.

5 Allocation

5.1 Write the code necessary to allocate memory on the heap in the following scenarios

(a) An array `arr` of k integers

```
arr = (int *) malloc(sizeof(int) * k);
```

(b) A string `str` containing p characters

```
str = (char *) malloc(sizeof(char) * (p + 1));
```
Don't forget the null terminator!

(c) An $n \times m$ matrix `mat` of integers initialized to zero.

```
mat = (int *) calloc(n * m, sizeof(int));
```

Alternative solution. This might be needed if you wanted to efficiently permute the rows of the matrix.

```
mat = (int **) calloc(n, sizeof(int *));
for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
    mat[i] = (int *) calloc(m, sizeof(int));
```

6 Linked List

Suppose we've defined a linked list **struct** as follows. Assume `*lst` points to the first element of the list, or is `NULL` if the list is empty.

```
struct ll_node {
    int first;
    struct ll_node* rest;
}
```

6.1 Implement `prepend`, which adds one new `value` to the front of the linked list. Hint: why use ll_node $**lst$ instead of ll_node$*lst$?

```
void prepend(struct ll_node** lst, int value) {
    struct ll_node* item = (struct ll_node*) malloc(sizeof(struct ll_node));
    item->first = value;
    item->rest = *lst;
    *lst = item;
}
```

6.2 Implement `free_ll`, which frees all the memory consumed by the linked list.

```
void free_ll(struct ll_node** lst) {
    if (*lst) {
        free_ll(&((*lst)->rest));
        free(*lst);
    }
    *lst = NULL; // Make writes to **lst fail instead of writing to unusable memory.
}
```