

Key-Value Observing Implementation Details

Automatic key-value observing is implemented using a technique called *isa-swizzling*.

The `isa` pointer, as the name suggests, points to the object's class which maintains a dispatch table. This dispatch table essentially contains pointers to the methods the class implements, among other data.

When an observer is registered for an attribute of an object the `isa` pointer of the observed object is modified, pointing to an intermediate class rather than at the true class. As a result the value of the `isa` pointer does not necessarily reflect the actual class of the instance.

You should never rely on the `isa` pointer to determine class membership. Instead, you should use the `class` method to determine the class of an object instance.

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