



FALMOUTH
UNIVERSITY



COMP110: Principles of Computing

4: LaTeX

Worksheet 3



Converting types



Weak vs strong typing

- ▶ In **weakly typed** languages, a variable can hold a value of any type
 - ▶ Examples: Python, JavaScript
- ▶ In **strongly typed** languages, the type of a variable must be **declared**
 - ▶ Examples: C#, C++, Java

Weak typing (example in Python)

```
x = 7  
# Now x has type int  
  
x = "hello"  
# Now x has type string
```

Strong typing (example in C#)

```
int x = 7;  
// x is declared with type int  
  
x = "hello";  
// Compile error: cannot convert type "string" to "int"
```

Type casting

- ▶ It is often useful to **cast**, or **convert**, a value from one type to another
- ▶ In Python, this is done by calling the type as if it were a function
 - ▶ `float(17)` → `17.0`
 - ▶ `int(3.14)` → `3`
 - ▶ `str(3.14)` → `"3.14"`
 - ▶ `str(1 + 1 == 2)` → `"True"`
 - ▶ `int("123")` → `123`
 - ▶ `int("five")` gives an error

Operations on types

- ▶ Certain operations can only be done on certain types of values
- ▶ Can add two ints: $2 + 3 \rightarrow 5$
- ▶ Can add int and float: $2 + 3.1 \rightarrow 5.1$
- ▶ Can add two strings: `"COMP" + "110" → "COMP110"`
- ▶ Can't add string and int: `"COMP" + 110 → error`

Implicit type conversion

- ▶ The type casts we saw a few slides ago are **explicit**
- ▶ Some languages (not Python) can perform **implicit** type casts to make operations work
- ▶ Sometimes called **type coercion**
- ▶ E.g. in JavaScript, `"COMP" + 110` \rightarrow `"COMP110"`
- ▶ The integer `110` is implicitly converted to a string `"110"` to make the addition work
- ▶ Equivalent in Python with explicit casts:
`"COMP" + str(110)`

Dangers of implicit type conversion

- ▶ Rules for implicit type conversion can sometimes be confusing
- ▶ E.g. in JavaScript:
 - ▶ `"5" + 3` → `"53"`
 - ▶ `"5" - 3` → `2`

Introducing LaTeX



What is LaTeX?

- ▶ A **typesetting** system
- ▶ A **markup language** (like HTML or Markdown)
- ▶ **Not** a WYSIWYG system

Why LaTeX?

- ▶ Plain text format
 - ▶ Can use any text editor
 - ▶ Can use version control (e.g. Git)
 - ▶ Can use online editors (e.g. Overleaf)
- ▶ Separates content from formatting
 - ▶ Similar to HTML and CSS
 - ▶ Unlike most WYSIWYG systems
- ▶ Produces professional-looking papers, reports, theses, books, slideshows, ...
- ▶ Excellent facilities for typesetting mathematical equations, pseudocode, source code listings etc.
- ▶ Automatically handles cross-referencing of sections, figures etc.
- ▶ Automatic tools for managing bibliographies (BibTeX)

Getting LaTeX

- ▶ LaTeX is **free open source software**
- ▶ Consists of:
 - ▶ Several **executables** (pdflatex, bibtex, makeindex, ...)
 - ▶ A large library of **packages**
 - ▶ An **integrated development environment (IDE)** (optional)
- ▶ Distributions available for all major OSes
 - ▶ Windows: MikTeX
 - ▶ MacOS: MacTeX
 - ▶ Linux: TeXLive
- ▶ Online services e.g. Overleaf (should also work on iPad / Android)

Workshop Activity

- ▶ Go to <https://www.overleaf.com> and sign up for a free account
- ▶ Go to <https://www.latex-tutorial.com/tutorials/> and work through the tutorials
- ▶ Please prioritise the following tutorials (look at the others afterwards if you have time):
 - ▶ 01 Your first document
 - ▶ 02 Document structure (sections and paragraphs)
 - ▶ 03 Packages
 - ▶ 05 Adding pictures
 - ▶ 07 Bibliography
 - ▶ 13 Source code highlighting
 - ▶ 16 Hyperlinks
 - ▶ 17 Lists