OCAML BASICS: EXPRESSIONS, VALUES, SIMPLE TYPES

Terminology: Expressions, Values, Types

Expressions are computations

-2+3 is a computation

Values (a subset of the expressions) are the results of computations

5 is a value

Types describe collections of values and the computations that generate those values

- int is a type
- values of type int include
 - 0, 1, 2, 3, ..., max_int
 - -1, -2, ..., min_int

Some simple types, values, expressions

<u>Type</u> :	<u>Values</u> :	Expressions:
int	-2, 0, 42	42 * (13 + 1)
float	3.14, -1., 2e12	(3.14 +. 12.0) *. 10e6
char	'a', 'b', '&'	int_of_char 'a'
string	"moo", "cow"	"moo" ^ "cow"
bool	true, false	if true then 3 else 4
unit	()	print_int 3

For more primitive types and functions over them, see the OCaml Reference Manual here:

http://caml.inria.fr/pub/docs/manual-ocaml/libref/Pervasives.html

Evaluation

Read like this: "the expression 42 * (13 + 1) evaluates to the value 588"

The "*" is there to say that it does so in 0 or more small steps

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The "*" is there to say that it does so in 0 or more small steps

Here I'm telling you how to execute an OCaml expression --- ie, I'm telling you something about the *operational semantics* of OCaml

More on semantics later.

if true then 3 else 4

"+" processes integers "hello" is not an integer evaluation is undefined!

Don't worry! This expression doesn't type check.

Aside: See this talk on Javascript: https://www.destroyallsoftware.com/talks/wat

OCAML BASICS: CORE EXPRESSION SYNTAX

Core Expression Syntax

The simplest OCaml expressions e are:

- values
- id
- e₁ op e₂
- id e₁ e₂ ... e_n
- let id = e_1 in e_2
- if e₁ then e₂ else e₃
- (e)
- (e:t)

numbers, strings, bools, ...

variables (x, foo, ...)

operators (x+3, ...)

function call (foo 3 42)

local variable decl.

a conditional

a parenthesized expression

an expression with its type

A note on parentheses

In most languages, arguments are parenthesized & separated by commas:

$$f(x,y,z)$$
 sum $(3,4,5)$

In OCaml, we don't write the parentheses or the commas:

$$f x y z \qquad sum 3 4 5$$

But we do have to worry about grouping. For example,

The first one passes three arguments to f (x, y, and z)

The second passes two arguments to f (x, and the result of applying the function y to z.)

OCAML BASICS: TYPE CHECKING

Type Checking

Every value has a type and so does every expression

This is a concept that is familiar from Java but it becomes more important when programming in a functional language

We write (e:t) to say that expression e has type t. eg:

2 : int

"hello": string

2 + 2 : int

"I say " ^ "hello" : string

There are a set of simple rules that govern type checking

- programs that do not follow the rules will not type check and
 OCaml will refuse to compile them for you (the nerve!)
- at first you may find this to be a pain ...

But types are a great thing:

- help us think about how to construct our programs
- help us find stupid programming errors
- help us track down errors quickly when we edit our code
- allow us to enforce powerful invariants about data structures

Example rules:

- (1) 0: int (and similarly for any other integer constant n)
- (2) "abc": string (and similarly for any other string constant "...")

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- (4) if e1 : int and e2 : int then e1 * e2 : int
- (6) if e : int then string_of_int e : string

Example rules:

- (1) 0: int (and similarly for any other integer constant n)
- (2) "abc": string (and similarly for any other string constant "...")
- (5) if e1: string and e2: string (6) if e: int then e1 ^ e2: string then string_of_int e: string

Using the rules:

2: int and 3: int. (By rule 1)

Example rules:

- (1) 0: int (and similarly for any other integer constant n)
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Using the rules:

```
2: int and 3: int. (By rule 1)
Therefore, (2 + 3): int (By rule 3)
```

Example rules:

- (1) 0: int (and similarly for any other integer constant n)
- (2) "abc": string (and similarly for any other string constant "...")
- (3) if e1 : int and e2 : int then e1 + e2 : int
- (4) if e1: int and e2: int then e1 * e2: int

- (5) if e1: string and e2: string then e1 ^ e2: string
- (6) if e : int then string_of_int e : string

Using the rules:

```
2: int and 3: int. (By rule 1)
Therefore, (2 + 3): int (By rule 3)
5: int (By rule 1)
```

Example rules:

- (1) 0: int (and similarly for any other integer constant n)
- (2) "abc": string (and similarly for a second string) "
- (3) if e1 : int and e2 : int then e1 + e2 : int
- (5) if e1 : string and e2 : string then e1 ^ e2 : string

FYI: This is a *formal proof* that the expression is well-typed!

ring_or_int e : string

Using the rules:

```
2: int and 3: int. (By rule 1)
```

Therefore, (2 + 3): int (By rule 3)

5: int (By rule 1)

Therefore, (2 + 3) * 5: int (By rule 4 and our previous work)

Example rules:

- (1) 0: int (and similarly for any other integer constant n)
- (2) "abc": string (and similarly for any other string constant "...")
- (3) if e1 : int and e2 : int then e1 + e2 : int
- (5) if e1: string and e2: string then e1 ^ e2: string

- (4) if e1 : int and e2 : int then e1 * e2 : int
- (6) if e : int then string_of_int e : string

Another perspective:

rule (4) for typing expressions says I can put any expression with type int in place of the ????



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Type Checking Rules

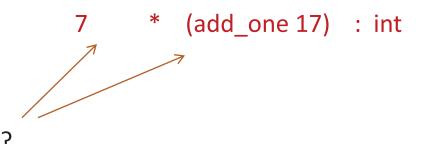
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Another perspective:

rule (4) for typing expressions says I can put any expression with type int in place of the ????



Type Checking Rules

```
$ ocaml
Objective Caml Version 3.12.0
```

```
$ ocaml
Objective Caml Version 3.12.0
# 3 + 1;;

to end
a phrase
in the
top level
```

```
$ ocaml
                    Objective Caml Version 3.12.0
            # 3 + 1;;
               : int = 4
press
return
and you
find out
the type
and the
value
```

You can always start up the OCaml interpreter to find out a type of a simple expression:

```
Objective Caml Version 3.12.0
# 3 + 1;;
 : int = 4
 "hello " ^ "world";;
  : string = "hello world"
#
```

\$ ocaml

press return and you find out the type and the value

```
$ ocaml
    Objective Caml Version 3.12.0
# 3 + 1;;
- : int = 4
# "hello " ^ "world";;
- : string = "hello world"
# #quit;;
$
```

Example rules:

- (1) 0: int (and similarly for any other integer constant n)
- (2) "abc": string (and similarly for any other string constant "...")
- (3) if e1: int and e2: int then e1 + e2: int then e1 * e2: int
- (5) if e1: string and e2: string (6) if e: int then e1 ^ e2: string then string of int e: string

Violating the rules:

```
"hello" : string
1 : int
(By rule 2)
1 + "hello" : ??
(NO TYPE! Rule 3 does not apply!)
```

Violating the rules:

```
# "hello" + 1;;
Error: This expression has type string but an
expression was expected of type int
```

The type error message tells you the type that was expected and the type that it inferred for your subexpression

By the way, this was one of the nonsensical expressions that did not evaluate to a value

It is a *good thing* that this expression does not type check!

"Well typed programs do not go wrong" Robin Milner, 1978

Violating the rules:

```
# "hello" + 1;;
Error: This expression has type string but an
expression was expected of type int
```

A possible fix:

```
# "hello" ^ (string_of_int 1);;
- : string = "hello1"
```

One of the keys to becoming a good ML programmer is to understand type error messages.

More rules:

```
(7) true: bool
(8) false: bool
(9) if e1: bool
    and e2: t and e3: t (for some type t)
    then if e1 then e2 else e3: t
Using the rules:
```

if ???? then ???? else ???? : int

More rules:

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(7) true: bool
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Using the rules:
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if true then ???? else ???? : int

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Using the rules:
```

if true then 7 else????: int

More rules:

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    and e2: t and e3: t (for some type t)
    then if e1 then e2 else e3: t
Using the rules:
```

if true then 7 else 8 : int

More rules:

```
(7) true: bool
```

(8) false: bool

```
(9) if e1 : bool
    and e2 : t and e3 : t (for some type t)
    then if e1 then e2 else e3 : t
```

Violating the rules

```
if false then "1" else 2 : ????
```

types don't agree -- one is a string and one is an int

• Violating the rules:

```
# if true then "1" else 2;;
Error: This expression has type int but an
expression was expected of type string
#
```

What about this expression:

```
# 3 / 0 ;;
Exception: Division_by_zero.
```

Why doesn't the ML type checker do us the favor of telling us the expression will raise an exception?

What about this expression:

```
# 3 / 0 ;;
Exception: Division_by_zero.
```

Why doesn't the ML type checker do us the favor of telling us the expression will raise an exception?

- In general, detecting a divide-by-zero error requires we know that the divisor evaluates to 0.
- In general, deciding whether the divisor evaluates to 0 requires solving the halting problem:

```
# 3 / (if turing_machine_halts m then 0 else 1);;
```

There are type systems that will rule out divide-by-zero errors, but they require programmers supply proofs to the type checker

Isn't that cheating?

"Well typed programs do not go wrong" Robin Milner, 1978

(3 / 0) is well typed. Does it "go wrong?" Answer: No.

"Go wrong" is a technical term meaning, "have no defined semantics." Raising an exception is perfectly well defined semantics, which we can reason about, which we can handle in ML with an exception handler.

So, it's not cheating.

(Discussion: why do we make this distinction, anyway?)

Type Soundness

"Well typed programs do not go wrong"

Programming languages with this property have sound type systems. They are called safe languages.

Safe languages are generally *immune* to buffer overrun vulnerabilities, uninitialized pointer vulnerabilities, etc., etc. (but not immune to all bugs!)

Safe languages: ML, Java, Python, ...

Unsafe languages: C, C++, Pascal

Well typed programs do not go wrong



Robin Milner

Turing Award, 1991

"For three distinct and complete achievements:

- 1. LCF, the mechanization of Scott's Logic of Computable Functions, probably the first theoretically based yet practical tool for machine assisted proof construction;
- 2. ML, the first language to include polymorphic type inference together with a type-safe exception-handling mechanism;
- 3. CCS, a general theory of concurrency.

In addition, he formulated and strongly advanced full abstraction, the study of the relationship between operational and denotational semantics."

"Well typed programs do not go wrong" Robin Milner, 1978

OVERALL SUMMARY: A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO FUNCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

OCaml

OCaml is a *functional* programming language

- Java gets most work done by modifying data
- OCaml gets most work done by producing new, immutable data

OCaml is a *typed* programming language

- the type of an expression correctly predicts the kind of value the expression will generate when it is executed
- types help us understand and write our programs
- the type system is sound; the language is safe

TYPE ERRORS

Type errors for if statements can be confusing sometimes. Recall:

```
let rec concatn s n =
  if n <= 0 then
    ...
  else
  s ^ (concatn s (n-1))</pre>
```

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```

merlin inside emacs points to the error above and gives a second error:

```
Error: This expression has type string but an expression was expected of type int
```

Type errors for if statements can be confusing sometimes. Example. We create a string from s, concatenating it n times:

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let rec concatn s n =
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Type errors for if statements can be confusing sometimes. Example. We create a string from s, concatenating it n times:

```
they don't
agree!

let rec concatn s n =
    if n <= 0 then
    o
    else
    s ^ (concatn s (n-1))</pre>
```



ocamlbuild says:

```
Error: This expression has type int but an expression was expected of type string
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Type errors for if statements can be confusing sometimes. Example. We create a string from s, concatenating it n times:

```
let rec concatn s n =
   if n <= 0 then
   o
   else
   s ^ (concatn s (n-1))</pre>
```

The type checker points to *some* place where there is *disagreement*.

Moral: Sometimes you need to look in an earlier branch for the error even though the type checker points to a later branch.

The type checker doesn't know what the user wants.

A Tactic: Add Typing Annotations

```
let rec concatn (s:string) (n:int) : string =
  if n <= 0 then
     0
  else
     s ^ (concatn s (n-1))</pre>
```

Error: This expression has type int but an expression was expected of type string

ONWARD

What is the single most important mathematical concept ever developed in human history?

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An answer: The mathematical variable

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An answer: The mathematical variable

(runner up: natural numbers/induction)

Why is the mathematical variable so important?

The mathematician says:

"Let x be some integer, we define a polynomial over x ..."

Why is the mathematical variable so important?

The mathematician says:

"Let x be some integer, we define a polynomial over x ..."

What is going on here? The mathematician has separated a *definition* (of x) from its *use* (in the polynomial).

This is the most primitive kind of *abstraction* (x is *some* integer)

Abstraction is the key to controlling complexity and without it, modern mathematics, science, and computation would not exist.

It allows *reuse* of ideas, theorems ... functions and programs!

OCAML BASICS: LET DECLARATIONS

Abstraction

- Good programmers identify repeated patterns in their code and factor out the repetition into meaningful components
- In OCaml, the most basic technique for factoring your code is to use let expressions
- Instead of writing this expression:

$$(2 + 3) * (2 + 3)$$

Abstraction & Abbreviation

- Good programmers identify repeated patterns in their code and factor out the repetition into meaning components
- In OCaml, the most basic technique for factoring your code is to use let expressions
- Instead of writing this expression:

We write this one:

$$let x = 2 + 3 in x * x$$

A Few More Let Expressions

```
let x = 2 in
let squared = x * x in
let cubed = x * squared in
squared * cubed
```

A Few More Let Expressions

```
let x = 2 in
let squared = x * x in
let cubed = x * squared in
squared * cubed
```

```
let a = "a" in
let b = "b" in
let as = a ^ a ^ a in
let bs = b ^ b ^ b in
as ^ bs
```

Abstraction & Abbreviation

Two "kinds" of let:

```
if tuesday() then
    let x = 2 + 3 in
    x + x
else
0
```

let ... in ... is an *expression* that can appear inside any other *expression*

The scope of x (ie: the places x may be used) does not extend outside the enclosing "in"

```
let x = 2 + 3
let y = x + 17 / x
```

let ... without "in" is a top-level declaration

Variables x and y may be exported; used by other modules

You can only omit the "in" in a toplevel declaration

During execution, we say an OCaml variable is bound to a value.

The value to which a variable is bound to never changes!

```
let x = 3
let add three (y:int) : int = y + x
```

During execution, we say an OCaml variable is **bound** to a value.

The value to which a variable is bound to never changes!

```
let x = 3
let add three (y:int) : int = y + x
```

It does not matter what I write next. add_three will always add 3!

During execution, we say an OCaml variable is bound to a value.

The value to which a variable is bound to never changes!

a distinct variable that "happens to be spelled the same"

```
let x = 3
let add three (y:int) : int = y + x
let x = 4
let add four (y:int): int = y + x
```

Since the 2 variables (both happened to be named x) are actually different, unconnected things, we can rename them

rename x
to zzz
if you want
to, replacing
its uses

```
let x = 3
let add three (y:int) : int = y + x
let zzz = 4
let add four (y:int): int = y + zzz
let add seven (y:int) : int =
  add three (add four y)
```

A use of a variable always refers to it's *closest* (in terms of syntactic distance) enclosing declaration. Hence, we say OCaml is a *statically scoped* (or *lexically scoped*) language

we can use add_three without worrying about the second definition of x

```
let x = 3
let add three (y:int) : int = y + x
let x = 4
let add four (y:int): int = y + x
let add seven (y:int) : int =
  add three (add four y)
```

How does OCaml execute a let expression?

let
$$x = 2 + 1$$
 in $x * x$

let
$$x = 2 + 1$$
 in $x * x$

-->

let
$$x = 3$$
 in $x * x$

-->

let
$$x = 2 + 1$$
 in $x * x$

let $x = 3$ in $x * x$

substitute
3 for x

3 * 3

let
$$x = 2 + 1 in x * x$$

-->

let
$$x = 3$$
 in $x * x$

-->

3 * 3

substitute 3 for x

-->

9

e1 --> e2 when e1 evaluates to e2 in one step

Meta-comment

OCaml expression

OCaml expression

let
$$x = 2$$
 in $x + 3 --> 2 + 3$

I defined the language in terms of itself: By reduction of one OCaml expression to another

I'm trying to train you to think at a high level of abstraction.

I didn't have to mention low-level abstractions like assembly code or registers or memory layout to tell you how OCaml works.

```
let x = 2 in
let y = x + x in
y * x
```

let
$$x = 2$$
 in
let $y = x + x$ in
 $y * x$

substitute 2 for x

->
$$\begin{cases} let y = 2 + 2 in \\ y * 2 \end{cases}$$

let
$$x = 2$$
 in
let $y = x + x$ in
 $y * x$

substitute 2 for x

let
$$y = 2 + 2 in y * 2$$

-->
$$\begin{vmatrix} 1 & \text{let } y = 4 \\ y & * 2 \end{vmatrix}$$
 in

--> <u>4 * 2</u>

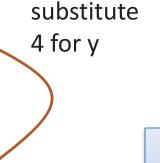
-->
$$\begin{cases} let y = 2 + 2 in \\ y * 2 \end{cases}$$

Moral: Let operates by substituting

computed values for variables

let
$$y = 4$$
 in $y * 2$

-> 4 * 2



substitute

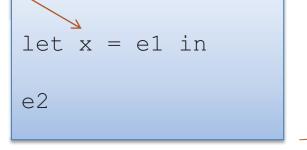
2 for x

8

OCAML BASICS: TYPE CHECKING AGAIN

Back to Let Expressions ... Typing

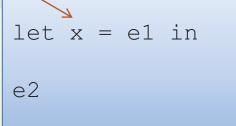
x granted type of e1 for use in e2



overall expression takes on the type of e2

Back to Let Expressions ... Typing

x granted type of e1 for use in e2



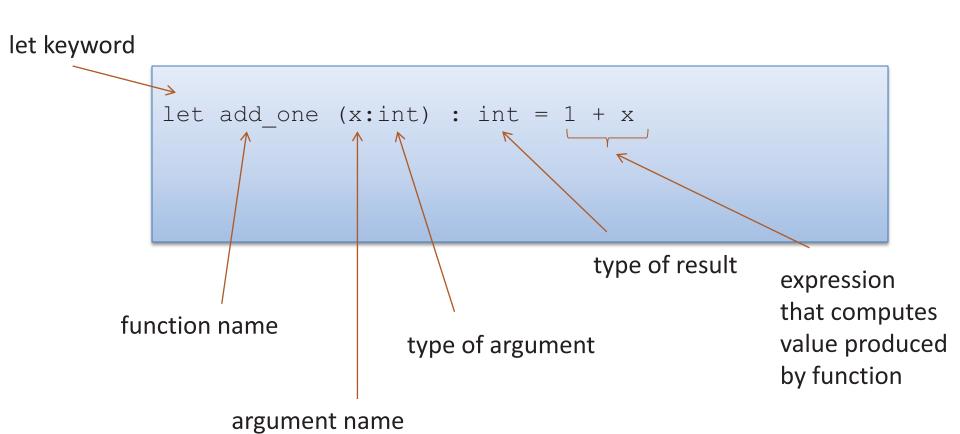
overall expression takes on the type of e2

x has type int for use inside the let body

overall expression has type string

OCAML BASICS: FUNCTIONS

```
let add_one (x:int) : int = 1 + x
```



Note: recursive functions with begin with "let rec"

Nonrecursive functions:

```
let add_one (x:int) : int = 1 + x
let add_two (x:int) : int = add_one (add_one x)
```

definition of add_one must come before use

Nonrecursive functions:

```
let add_one (x:int) : int = 1 + x
let add_two (x:int) : int = add_one (add_one x)
```

With a local definition:

local function definition hidden from clients

```
let add_two' (x:int) : int =
    let add_one x = 1 + x in
    add_one (add_one x)
```

I left off the types.

OCaml figures them out

Good style: types on top-level definitions

Types for Functions

Some functions:



```
let add_one (x:int) : int = 1 + x

let add_two (x:int) : int = add_one (add_one x)

let add (x:int) (y:int) : int = x + y
```

function with two arguments

Types for functions:

```
add_one : int -> int
add_two : int -> int
add : int -> int
```

General Rule:

```
If a function f: T1 → T2 and an argument e: T1 then fe: T2
```

```
add_one : int -> int
3 + 4 : int
add_one (3 + 4) : int
```

Recall the type of add:

Definition:

```
let add (x:int) (y:int) : int =
  x + y
```

Type:

```
add: int -> int -> int
```

Recall the type of add:

Definition:

```
let add (x:int) (y:int) : int =
  x + y
```

Type:

```
add: int -> int -> int
```

Same as:

```
add : int -> (int -> int)
```

General Rule:

If a function $f: T1 \rightarrow T2$ and an argument e: T1then fe: T2

$$A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$$

same as:

$$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$$

```
add: int -> int -> int

3 + 4: int

add (3 + 4): ???
```

General Rule:

If a function f: T1 -> T2 and an argument e: T1 then f e: T2

same as:

$$A -> (B -> C)$$

```
add: int -> (int -> int)

3 + 4: int

add (3 + 4):
```

General Rule:

If a function f: T1 -> T2 and an argument e: T1 then f e: T2

same as:

$$A -> (B -> C)$$

```
add: int -> (int -> int)
3 + 4: int
add (3 + 4): int -> int
```

General Rule:

If a function f: T1 -> T2 and an argument e: T1 then f e: T2

same as:

$$A -> (B -> C)$$

```
add: int -> int -> int

3 + 4: int

add (3 + 4): int -> int

(add (3 + 4)) 7: int
```

General Rule:

If a function f: T1 -> T2

and an argument e: T1

then fe: T2

same as:

$$A -> (B -> C)$$

Example:

add : int -> int -> int

3 + 4 : int

add (3 + 4) : int -> int

add (3 + 4) 7 : int

extra parens not necessary

```
let munge (b:bool) (x:int) : ?? =
  if not b then
    string_of_int x
  else
    "hello"

let y = 17
```

```
munge (y > 17) : ??
munge true (f (munge false 3)) : ??
f : ??
munge true (g munge) : ??
g : ??
```

```
let munge (b:bool) (x:int) : ?? =
  if not b then
    string_of_int x
  else
    "hello"

let y = 17
```

```
munge (y > 17) : ??

munge true (f (munge false 3)) : ??
  f : string -> int

munge true (g munge) : ??
  g : (bool -> int -> string) -> int
```

One key thing to remember

If you have a function f with a type like this:

$$A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F$$

 Then each time you add an argument, you can get the type of the result by knocking off the first type in the series

```
fa1: B \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F \text{ (if a1: A)}
fa1:a2:C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F \text{ (if a2: B)}
fa1:a2:a3:D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F \text{ (if a3: C)}
fa1:a2:a3:a4:a5:F \text{ (if a4: D and a5: E)}
```

Reading Assignments

Lecture Notes 01: OCaml Programming Basics

Lecture Notes 02: Type Checking

- Optional: Book "Real World OCaml"
 - Chapter 1
 - Section: OCaml as a Calculator
 - Section: <u>Functions and Type Inference</u>