Computer Design

Memory and Pointers in C

Computer Science (2nd year B.Sc.)

Seminar #2

1. Pre-Check

This section is designed as a check to allow you to determine whether you understand the concepts covered in class. Answer the following questions and include an explanation:

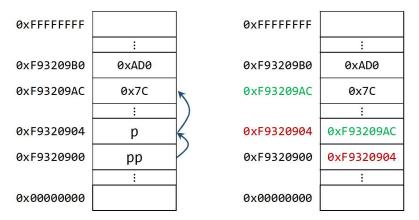
- 1.1. True or False: Parameter passing (i.e. when calling functions) is done by value in C.
- 1.2. What is a pointer in C? What does it have in common with array structures?
- 1.3. 1.3. If you try to dereference a variable that is not a pointer (i.e. prefix an asterisk to it), what happens? What about when you release it (i.e. free(...))?

2. Memory in C

The C language is syntactically very similar to Java, but there are some key differences:

- C is "function-oriented" not "object-oriented". So, there are no objects.
- There is no "garbage collector" or automatic memory management in the C language.
 Dynamic memory allocations and releases are explicitly managed by the programmer (i.e. using malloc(), ..., free()).
- Pointers are used explicitly in the C language. If "p" is a pointer, then "*p" indicates (i.e. points to) the data to be used and not the value of "p" (i.e. the memory address). If "x" is a variable, then "&x" returns the address (i.e. a pointer) of "x" and not the value of "x".

In the following example, on the left, a computer memory is represented by a box-and-pointer diagram. On the right, we see how this memory is actually organized in the computer (the addresses were chosen arbitrarily).



Assume a pointer to an integer (i.e. int* p) is allocated at address 0xF9320904. Let's also assume an integer variable (i.e. int x) being allocated at address 0xF93209B0. As can be seen from the left diagram above, one can verify:

- *p should return the value 0x7C.
- p is assigned the value 0xF93209AC (i.e. the address where the value 0x7C is stored).
- x contains the value 0xAD0.
- &x will return the value 0xF93209B0 (i.e. the address where "x" is stored).

Now assume a pointer to a pointer to an integer (i.e. int** pp) is allocated at address 0xF9320900 (see left diagram above).

- 2.1. What will be the value returned by pp? What about *pp? and **pp?
- 2.2. Something is wrong with the C code below! Can you spot the problem?

```
1 int* get_money(int cash) {
2   int* money = malloc(2017 * sizeof(int));
3   if(!cash)
4   money = malloc(1 * sizeof(int));
5   return money;
6 }
```

Let the linked list " $11_$ node" defined as below. Assume as well the argument "1st" in exercises 2.3-2.4 points to the first element of the linked list (i.e. list head) or contains NULL if the list is empty.

```
struct ll_node {
    int value;
    struct ll_node* next;
}
```

2.3. Write the code for inserting an item at the beginning of the linked list.
<pre>void insert (struct ll_node** lst, int val) {</pre>
2
} 2.4. Implement the function release_11 to release/empty the entire list
<pre>void release_ll(struct ll_node * lst) {</pre>
}
3. Programming with pointers
Implement the following functions so that they work as described.
3.1. A function that allows you to swap the values of two integers given as parameters.
3.2. A function that returns the number of bytes in a string (similar to the standard C library function strlen()).

Review the following functions and fix *any* problems

3.3. Return the total of all elements in the array summands

```
1 int sum(int* summands) {
2   int _sum = 0;
3   for(int i = 0; i <sizeof(summands); i++)
4     _sum += *(summands + i);
5   return _sum;
6 }</pre>
```

3.4. Increment the characters of the string stored at the beginning of an array of bytes of length n >= strlen(string). MUST NOT modify memory areas outside the character string.

```
1 void increment(char* string, int n) {
2 for(int i = 0; i < n; i++)
3 *(string + i)++;
4
5 }</pre>
```

3.5. Copying the string src into dst.

```
1 void copy(char* src, char* dst) {
2    while(*dst++ = *src++);
3
4 }
```

3.6. Replace, if there is enough space in a character string given as a parameter, with the string "This course is fantastic!". The function should do nothing if the condition is not true. You may assume that parameter length gives the correct length of the src string.

```
void ado(char* src, unsigned int length) {
char *srcptr, replacteptr;
char remplacement[26] = "This course is fantastic!";
srcptr = src;
replaceptr = replacement;
if(length >= 26) {
for(int i=0; i<26; i++)
    *srcptr++ = *replaceptr++;
}
</pre>
```

4. How Data is stored in Memory

Consider the data structure type defined below.

Suppose that an "employee" structure of type "data" is allocated at memory address "0x8040" with the following initializations:

```
data employee = {
    .name = "Tintin Lupin",
    .age = 23,
    .sexe = 'M',
    .id = {1994,408,10,7212}
};
```

4.1. If we consider that "sizeof(char) == 1, sizeof(short) == 2, and sizeof(int) == 4", and if we also consider a memory organization in "little-endian" mode, give the hexadecimal representation of the bytes of the "employee" structure in memory.

Address	Data (bytes)							
0x8040								
0x8048								
0x8050								
0x8058								
0x8060								

4.2. The same question as before but using the "big-endian" mode this time.

Address	Data (bytes)								
0x8040									
0x8048									
0x8050									
0x8058									
0x8060									