ENGG1003 - Tuesday Week 9

Introduction to MATLAB
Variables & Arithmetic
Vectorisation

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Assumed Knowledge

- These notes are written for ENGG1003 and assume C was taught first
- In particular, they require knowledge of:
  - Program top-to-bottom sequential execution
  - Flow control (IF / WHILE / FOR / etc)
  - Variables

What is MATLAB?

- MATLAB is an *interpreted* programming language designed for quickly performing numerical analysis
- It is sometimes criticised for not being a "legitimate" programming language.
  - Engineers use it to solve a complex numerical problem quickly, then throw the code away
  - NB: The code is *written* quickly. It doesn't necessarily *execute* quickly (compared to a compiled language like C)
- Arithmetic is fast, flow control is *very* slow
  - Problems need *vectorisation*

...Interpreted?

- A language is *compiled* when the entire source code listing gets converted to a binary executable in one step
- An *interpreted* language is read and executed line-by-line
  - The language interpreter is running the whole time your code is running

...Interpreted?

- Interpreted languages are slower, but have the advantages of:
  - Being more forgiving of mistakes
  - Having more advanced memory management, eg:
    - Variables don't need to be declared
    - Arrays automatically grow and shrink as needed
  - Allowing code snippets to easily be executed in isolation
    - You can run single lines instantly by typing them into a command prompt

MATLAB Vs C

- Some big contrasts:
  - MATLAB is "weakly typed"
    - There are no strict data types
    - By default, (almost) everything is a complex valued array of type `double`
  - Arithmetic (mostly) follows rules of linear algebra
    - Somewhat beyond this course. We won't cover matrix multiplication.
    - Many language behaviours will make more sense after you've studied linear algebra
    - The fact that "everything is an array" makes for some possibly confusing rules
  - MATLAB has "high level" features like plotting
    - It is more of a "calculator engine" than a programming language

Installing MATLAB

- MATLAB is (expensive) commercial software
  - Python is more popular in industry (c.f. IEEE survey), partly because it is free
- The university pays a site licence which allows students to install it for free
  - Instructions here (hopefully...): `https://uonau.service-now.com/itservices?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0023081&sys_kb_id=a7ccc3334f3953c08e8fa90f0310c7f7`
- The "standard" licence (for companies) is $1260 per year, per computer

Installing Octave

- Octave is a cost-free (and open source) MATLAB-like interpreter
  - Some employers prefer this over MATLAB
- It will probably execute all of the code for this course without modification
- Available for Windows / Mac / Linux: `https://www.gnu.org/software/octave/download.html`
- Demonstration of projects in Octave is fine
  - It tends to load *much* faster than MATLAB

Variable Classification

- MATLAB may be "weakly typed" but the following classifications are useful:
  - A *scalar* is a single number
  - A *vector* is a row or column of numbers
    - A 1D array in C
  - A *matrix* is rectangular array of numbers
    - A 2D array in C

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    - A 1D array in C
  - A *matrix* is rectangular array of numbers
    - A 2D array in C
- Arithmetic operations have different behaviours with different arguments, especially when mixed (eg: what does scalar plus vector do?)

Getting Started

- Lets load up MATLAB and:
  - Learn what the different GUI segments do
  - Assign values to some random variables
    - Observe them appear in the "workspace"
  - Do some basic arithmetic on scalar variables
  - Run a basic script
  - Observe output suppression

Variable Assignment Syntax

- When allocating a constant to a variable we have a few basic methods:
  - Scalar: just like in C

    ```
    x = 5
    ```

  - Row Vector: space separated list inside `[ ]`'s

    ```
    x = [1 2 3 4]
    ```

  - Column Vector: like row vectors, but uses `;` to separate rows:

    ```
    x = [1;2;3;4]
    ```

  - Matrix: A mix of row and column syntax:

    ```
    x = [1 2 3; 4 5 6; 7 8 9]
    ```

Observations

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- Observe that the variables are created automatically
- Observe that MATLAB prints the result after each line
- Add a `;` to the end of a line to suppress the output

Other Initialisation Methods

- MATLAB supports many other methods for "creating" data:
  - Create a list of numbers from A to B with increment C with:

    ```
    x = A:C:B
    ```

    eg:

    ```
    x = 0:0.1:2
    ```

  - Use the `linspace()` function
    - View the help page and run an example
  - We can also read data from files; see this later

Arithmetic

- For scalar data, MATLAB supports all basic arithmetic operators just like C
  - $+$
  - $-$
  - $/$
  - $*$
- It also supports exponents with ^
  - Shift-6 on a US keyboard
  - In C, this means a bitwise exclusive-OR

Arithmetic

- For vector and matrix data addition and subtraction is *element-wise*
  - The arguments should be the same size
    - Or *at least one* dimension must match but this is beyond ENGG1003 (and only supported on recent versions of MATLAB)
  - If the argument dimensions differ an error occurs
- Run some examples...

Arithmetic

- Vector and matrix multiplication and division are beyond ENGG1003
  - You will learn matrix multiplication in MATH..something
  - Division is advanced: multiplication by *matrix inverse*

Arithmetic

- Vector and matrix multiplication and division are beyond ENGG1003
  - You will learn matrix multiplication in MATH..something
  - Division is advanced: multiplication by *matrix inverse*
- However, you can do element-wise multiplication if the arguments are the same size
  - This is done with special operators:
    - .* Multiplication
    - ./ Division
    - .^ Exponent
- Run some examples...

Arithmetic

- Final examples (for now):
  - Scalar plus/minus vector/matrix adds/subtracts that scalar from every element
  - Scalar multiplication does the same
  - Scalar divided by vector/matrix causes an error (unless `./` is used)
  - Vector/matrix divided by scalar does an element-wise operation
- Run some examples...

Vectorisation

- *Vectorisation* is the process of arranging a large numerical computing task so that it can be broken up into sub-tasks which can all be executed *simultaneously* (ie: in parallel)

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- *Vectorisation* is the process of arranging a large numerical computing task so that it can be broken up into sub-tasks which can all be executed *simultaneously* (ie: in parallel)
- Element-wise addition of two arrays is an example of a task which is easy to vectorise
  - Such tasks are often said to be *embarrassingly parallel*

Vectorisation

- In MATLAB all vector and matrix arithmetic is said to be vectorised
  - A `for()` loop that processes an array is a *linear* operation
  - This can be *vectorised* by processing multiple array elements simultaneously

Vectorisation

- In MATLAB all vector and matrix arithmetic is said to be vectorised
  - A `for()` loop that processes an array is a *linear* operation
  - This can be *vectorised* by processing multiple array elements simultaneously
- Unlike C, MATLAB is automatically *multi-threaded*
  - An arithmetic operation on a large array will be spread over multiple CPU cores to increase execution speed
- Run an example

Maths Functions

- MATLAB has hundreds (thousands?) of built-in functions
- Lets play with trig functions
- Run an example of *scalar* `sin()`

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- MATLAB has hundreds (thousands?) of built-in functions
- Lets play with trig functions
- Run an example of *scalar* `sin()`
- What about vectors and matrices?
- Mathematics doesn't define what a "matrix sine" (etc) is
- MATLAB simply evaluates them element-wise
- Run an example

Scripts

- MATLAB supports running source code from a file
- There is a built-in editor we can use to write (and debug) said files
- Long story short:
  - Create a file with the editor
  - Save it with the `.m` extension
  - Click the "run" button
- Script files can also be run from the command prompt by typing their name *without the* `.m`
  - Prompt must have the correct "working directory"

Plotting

- MATLAB has very powerful built-in plotting tools
  - They are commonly used in academic literature
  - They make Excel plots look like something my 4 year old drew at daycare
  - An impressive example I found on Google images: `http://www.asu.cas.cz/~bezdek/vyzkum/rotating_3d_globe/rotating_3d_globe/manual.html`

Plotting

- Basic 2D plotting is done with the `plot()` function
- It does the Excel equivalent of a scatter plot
- The first two arguments are vectors (1D arrays) listing x-y pairs of points
- Run a basic example...

Plotting

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Plotting

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- Task: plot `sin(x)` from 0 to 2π
- Steps
  1. Create a vector, `x`, that contains "many" elements going from 0 to 2π
  2. Pass this vector to the `sin()` function
     - This is an example of vectorisation
  3. Run the plot command as plot(x, sin(x))
- Do the above manually then repeat it from a script

Scripts And Scalar Arithmetic Example

- Example: (From last year's slides) Write a MATLAB script which, given adequate physical data, calculates the rate at which the Sun loses mass due to nuclear fusion