

JavaScript Basics

Mendel Rosenblum

What is JavaScript?

From Wikipedia:

... **high-level, dynamic, untyped**, and **interpreted** programming language

... is **prototype-based** with **first-class functions**, ...

... supporting **object-oriented, imperative**, and **functional programming**

... has an API for working with **text, arrays, dates** and **regular expressions**

- Not particularly similar to Java: More like C crossed with Self/Scheme
 - C-like statements with everything objects, closures, garbage collection, etc.
- Also known as ECMAScript

Some thoughts about JavaScript

- Example of a **scripting language**
 - Interpreted, less declaring of things, just use them
- Seems like it was designed in a rush
 - Some “Good Parts”, some not so good
 - Got bad reputation
- Many programmers use a subset that avoids some common problems
- `"use strict";` tweaks language to avoid some problematic parts
 - Language being extended to fix things (e.g. ES6, TypeScript)
- Code quality checkers (e.g. `jslint` and `jshint`) widely used



Good news if you know C - JavaScript is similar

```
i = 3;

i = i * 10 + 3 + (i / 10);

while (i >= 0) {
    sum += i*i;    // Comment
    i--;
}

for (i = 0; i < 10; i++) {

}

/* this is a comment */
```

```
if (i < 3) {
    i = foobar(i);
} else {
    i = i * .02;
}
```

Most C operators work:

* / % + - ! >= <= > < && || ?:

function foobar(i) { return i;}

continue/break/return

JavaScript has **dynamic** typing

```
var i;    // Need to define variable ('use strict;'), note: untyped
```

```
typeof i == 'undefined' // It does have a type of 'undefined'
```

```
i = 32;    // Now: typeof i == typeof 32 == 'number'
```

```
i = "foobar"; // Now: typeof i == typeof 'foobar' == 'string'
```

```
i = true;    // Now typeof i == 'boolean'
```

- Variables have the type of the last thing assigned to it
- Primitive types: undefined, number, string, boolean, function, object

Variable scoping: Lexical/static scoping

Two scopes: Global and function local

```
var globalVar;
```

```
function() {  
  var localVar;  
  if (globalVar > 0) {  
    var localVar2 = 2;  
  }  
}
```

All var statements **hoisted** to top of scope:

```
function foo() {  
  var x;  
  x = 2;  
  // Same as:  
function foo() {  
  x = 2  
  var x;  
}
```

Var scope problems

- Global variables are bad in browsers

Easy to get conflicts between modules

- Hoisting can cause confusion in local scopes

```
function() {  
    for(var i = 0; i < 10; i++) {  
        ...  
        for(var i = 0; i < 25; i++) {    // Error: i already defined
```

- Some JavaScript guides suggest always declaring all var at function start
- ES6 introduced non-hosting **let** and explicit scopes

number type

number type is stored in floating point (i.e. double in C)

$$\text{MAX_INT} = (2^{53} - 1) = 9007199254740991$$

Some oddities: NaN, Infinity are numbers

`1/0 == Infinity`

`Math.sqrt(-1) == NaN`

Nerd joke: `typeof NaN` returns 'number'

Watch out:

`(0.1 + 0.2) == 0.3` is false // 0.30000000000000004

bitwise operators (e.g. `~`, `&`, `|`, `^`, `>>`, `<<`, `>>>`) are 32bit!

string type

string type is variable length (no char type)

```
var foo = 'This is a test'; // can use "This is a test"  
foo.length // 14
```

+ is string concat operator

```
foo = foo + 'XXX'; // This is a testXXX
```

Lots of useful methods: `indexOf()`, `charAt()`, `match()`, `search()`, `replace()`, `toUpperCase()`, `toLowerCase()`, `slice()`, `substr()`, ...

boolean type

- Either **true** or **false**
- Language classifies values as either **truthy** or **falsy**
 - Used when a value is converted to a boolean (e.g. `if (foo) { ... }`)

- Falsy:

`false`, `0`, `""`, `null`, `undefined`, and `NaN`

- Truthy:

Not falsy (all objects, non-empty strings, non-zero numbers, functions, etc.)

undefined and null

- **undefined** - does not have a value assign

```
var x;    // x has a value of undefined
x = undefined; // It can be explicitly store
typeof x == 'undefined'
```

- **null** - a value that represents whatever the user wants it to

Use to return special condition (e.g. no value)

```
typeof null == 'object'
```

- Both are falsy but not equal (`null == undefined`; `null !== undefined`)

function type

```
var foobar = function foobar(x) {    // Same as function foobar(x)
    if (x <= 1) {
        return 1;
    }
    return x*foobar(x-1);
}
typeof foobar == 'function';  foobar.name == 'foobar'
```

- Function definitions are hoisted (i.e. can use before define)
- Can be called with variable arguments
 - Array arguments variable (e.g. arguments[0] is first argument)
 - Unspecified arguments have value undefined
- All functions return a value (default is undefined)

First class function example

```
function myFunc(routine) {  
    console.log('Called with', routine.toString());  
    var retVal = routine(10);  
    console.log('retVal', retVal);  
}
```

```
myFunc(function (x) {  
    console.log('Called with', x);  
    return x+1;  
}  
);
```

object type

- Object is an unordered collection of name-value pairs called **properties**
`var foo = {};`
`var bar = {name: "Alice", age: 23, state: "California"};`
- Name can be any string: `var x = { "": "empty", "---": "dashes" }`
- Referenced either like a structure or like a hash table with string keys:
`bar.name` or `bar["name"]`
`x["---"]` // have to use hash format for illegal names
`foo.nonExistent == undefined`
- Global scope is an object in browser (i.e. `window[prop]`)

Properties can be added, removed, enumerated

- To add, just assign to the property:

```
var foo = {};  
foo.name = "Fred";      // foo.name returns "Fred"
```

- To remove use delete:

```
var foo = {name: "Fred"};  
delete foo.name; // foo is now an empty object
```

- To enumerate use Object.keys():

```
Object.keys({name: "Alice", age: 23}) = ["name", "age"]
```

Arrays

```
var anArr = [1,2,3];
```

Are special objects: `typeof anArr == 'object'`

Indexed by non-negative integers: `(anArr[0] == 1)`

Can be sparse and polymorphic: `anArr[5]='FooBar'; //[1,2,3,,, 'FooBar']`

Like strings, have many methods: `anArr.length == 3`

`push, pop, shift, unshift, sort, reverse, splice, ...`

Oddity: can store properties like objects (e.g. `anArr.name = 'Foo'`)

Some properties have implications: (e.g. `anArr.length = 0;`)

Dates

```
var date = new Date();
```

Are special objects: `typeof date == 'object'`

The number of milliseconds since midnight January 1, 1970 UTC

Timezone needed to convert. Not good for fixed dates (e.g. birthdays)

Many methods for returning and setting the data object. For example:

```
date.valueOf() = 1452359316314
```

```
date.toISOString() = '2016-01-09T17:08:36.314Z'
```

```
date.toLocaleString() = '1/9/2016, 9:08:36 AM'
```

Regular Expressions

```
var re = /ab+c/;    or    var re2 = new RegExp("ab+c");
```

Defines a pattern that can be searched for in a string

String: `search()`, `match()`, `replace()`, and `split()`

RegExp: `exec()` and `test()`

Cool combination of CS Theory and Practice: CS143

Uses:

Searching: Does this string have a pattern I'm interested in?

Parsing: Interpret this string as a program and return its components

Regular Expressions by example - search/test

```
/HALT/.test(str);    // Returns true if string str has the substr HALT
/halt/i.test(str);   // Same but ignore case
/[Hh]alt [A-Z]/.test(str); // Returns true if str either "Halt L" or "halt L"

'XXX abbbbbb' .search(/ab+c/); // Returns 4 (position of 'a')
'XXX ac' .search(/ab+c/);      // Returns -1, no match
'XXX ac' .search(/ab*c/);      // Returns 4

'12e34' .search(/^[^d]/);      // Returns 2
'foo: bar;' .search(/...\s*:\s*...\s*/); // Returns 0
```

Regular Expressions - exec/match/replace

```
var str = "This has 'quoted' words like 'this'";  
var re = /^[^']*'/g;
```

```
re.exec(str); // Returns ["'quoted'", index: 9, input: ...  
re.exec(str); // Returns ["'this'", index: 29, input: ...  
re.exec(str); // Returns null
```

```
str.match(/^[^']*'/g); // Returns ["'quoted'", "'this'"]
```

```
str.replace(/^[^']*'/g, 'XXX'); // Returns:  
                                'This has XXX words with XXX.'
```

Exceptions - try/catch

- Error reporting frequently done with exceptions

Example:

```
nonExistentFunction();
```

Terminates execution with error:

Uncaught ReferenceError: nonExistentFunction is not defined

- Exception go up stack: Catch exceptions with try/catch

```
try {  
    nonExistentFunction();  
} catch (err) {    // typeof err 'object'  
    console.log("Error call func", err.name, err.message);  
}
```

Exceptions - throw/finally

- Raise exceptions with throw statement

```
try {  
    throw "Help!";  
} catch (errstr) { // errstr === "Help!"  
    console.log('Got exception', errstr);  
} finally {  
    // This block is executed after try/catch  
}
```

- Conventions are to throw sub-classes of Error object

```
console.log("Got Error:", err.stack || err.message || err);
```

Getting JavaScript into a web page

- By including a separate file:

```
<script type="text/javascript" src="code.js"></script>
```

- Inline in the HTML:

```
<script type="text/javascript">  
//<![CDATA[  
Javascript goes here...  
//]]>  
</script>
```