

Programming with C++

COMP2011: File I/O

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Up to now, you only know how to **interactively**

- **input** data from the keyboard using `cin >>`
- **output** data to the screen using `cout <<`

- In general, C++ allows you to input/output data to/from **files** and **devices** (e.g. printer, hard disk, USB memory stick) using an abstraction called **stream**.



C++ Stream

A **stream** is simply a **sequence of characters**.

- The data transferred between a C++ **program** and a **file/device** are modeled as a **stream** of **characters**, *regardless* of the data type (basic types: int, float, etc.; user-defined types: btree, linked_list, etc.).
- A **device** can also be treated like a **file**. In the following, when we say file, we mean both file and device.

Stream I/O Operations >>, <<

- To perform I/O, create a **stream object** (from various **stream classes**) for each file.
- These **stream objects** all support the 2 basic input/output operators: **>>**, **<<**.
 - Both **>>** and **<<** are implemented so that they **convert** **input/output data** of the required **type** from/to a **sequence of characters**.
 - The input operator **>>** always skip whitespaces — spaces, tabs, newlines, formfeeds, carriage returns — before reading the next datum.

Common Stream Member Functions

The **stream objects** of various **stream classes** also support the following **class member functions**:

- **open(const char* filename)**: create a stream and associate it with a **file** with the given **filename**.
- **close()**: close a stream created by **open()**.
- **eof()**: check if the **end of a file** is reached.
- **get(char& c)**: get the next character into the variable **c** from an **input stream**.
- **getline(char* s, int max-num-char, char terminator='\\n')**: get a stream of characters and put it into the char array pointed by the variable **s**. **getline()** stops when either
 - (**max-num-char - 1**) characters are read; or,
 - the **stopping character** **terminator** ('\\n' by default) is seen.

Notice that the stopping character is **not** read into the array, and the **null character** is automatically inserted at the end of **s**.

- **put(char c)**: put the character represented by the variable **c** onto an **output stream**.

Interactive Stream: iostream

STREAM TYPE	CLASS NAME	HEADER FILENAME
input stream	istream	istream
output stream	ostream	ostream

- The header file “**iostream**” combines the 2 header files “**istream**” and “**ostream**”.
- C++ already creates the following **istream/ostream objects** for you:

istream cin : standard (or console) input, by default, is the keyboard.

ostream cout : standard (or console) output, by default, is the screen.

ostream cerr : standard (or console) error output, by default, is the screen. From now on, you should send your **error messages** to **cerr** instead of **cout**.

File Stream: fstream

STREAM TYPE	CLASS NAME
input file stream	ifstream
output file stream	ofstream

- The header file “**fstream**” contains the definitions of 2 classes: “**ifstream**” and “**ofstream**”.
- The input file must **exist** before you create an **input file stream** for it.
- If the output file **doesn't exist** when you create its **output file stream**, it will be created for you. If it **already exists**, its content will be **erased**, and **overwritten** by the new output data.

Open and Close a File Stream

- Create an **input file stream** from a file called “input.txt” and an **output file stream** associated with a file called “output.txt” by one of the following 2 ways:

Example: Open a File Stream

```
#include <fstream>
// [1] Use a special form of ifstream/ofstream constructor
ifstream ifs("input.txt");
ofstream ofs("output.txt");

// [2] Use the default form of ifstream/ofstream constructor,
//      and then their open() member function
ifstream ifs; ifs.open("input.txt");
ofstream ofs; ofs.open("output.txt");
```

- Close a **file stream** by

Example: Close a File Stream

```
ifs.close();
ofs.close();
```

Example: File Copy

```
#include <iostream>      /* File: filecopy.cpp */
#include <fstream>
using namespace std;
int main()
{
    char ip_file[32], op_file[32]; // Input and output filename

    cout << "Enter the input filename: "; cin >> ip_file;
    ifstream ifs(ip_file); // One way to create a fstream object
    if (!ifs)
    { cerr << "Error: Can't open \"\" << ip_file << "\\n"; return -1; }

    cout << "Enter the output filename: "; cin >> op_file;
    ofstream ofs; ofs.open(op_file); // Another way to create a fstream object
    if (!ofs)
    { cerr << "Error: Can't open \"\" << op_file << "\\n"; return -1; }

    char c; ifs.get(c); // Try to get the first char
    while (!ifs.eof()) // Check if EOF is reached
    {
        ofs.put(c); // Copy one char at a time
        ifs.get(c); // Try to get the next char
    }
    ifs.close(); ofs.close(); return 0; // Close input/output file streams
}
```

Example: Read an Array of Integers

```
#include <iostream>      /* File: read-int-array.cpp */
#include <fstream>
using namespace std;

/* Expected input file format:
 * array size on the first line, followed by the array elements.
 */
int main()
{
    const int MAX_SIZE = 128;
    int x[MAX_SIZE];      // An integer array
    char ip_file[32];     // Input filename

    // Open the file to read
    cout << "Enter the input filename: "; cin >> ip_file;
    ifstream ifs(ip_file); // One way to create a fstream object

    if (!ifs)
    { cerr << "Error: Can't open \"\" << ip_file << "\\n"; return -1; }
```

Example: Read an Array of Integers ..

```
int array_size; ifs >> array_size;
if (array_size > MAX_SIZE)
{
    cerr << "Error: array size (" << array_size
          << ") > max size of array (" << MAX_SIZE << ")\n";
    return -1;
}

// Read in the array
for (int j = 0; j < array_size; j++)
    ifs >> x[j];

// Print the array to screen
for (int j = 0; j < array_size; j++)
    cout << x[j] << endl;

ifs.close( ); // Close input file stream
return 0;
}
```