The JavaScript Programming Language

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http://www.yuiblog.com/blog/2007/01/24/video-crockford-tjpl/

Overview

- History
- Language
- Advanced Features
- Platforms
- Standards
- Style

The World's Most Misunderstood Programming Language

Sources of Misunderstanding

- The Name
- Mispositioning
- Design Errors
- Bad Implementations
- The Browser
- Bad Books
- Substandard Standard
- JavaScript is a Functional Language

History

- 1992
 - Oak, Gosling at Sun & FirstPerson
- 1995
 - **HotJava**
 - LiveScript, Eich at Netscape
- 1996
 - **JScript at Microsoft**
- 1998
 - **ECMAScript**

Not a Web Toy

It is a real language

Small, but sophisticated

It is not a subset of Java

Key Ideas

- Load and go delivery
- Loose typing
- Objects as general containers
- Prototypal inheritance
- Lambda
- Linkage though global variables

Values

- Numbers
- Strings
- Booleans
- Objects
- null
- undefined

Numbers

Only one number type

No integers

- 64-bit floating point
- IEEE-754 (aka "Double")
- Does not map well to common understanding of arithmetic:
- \bullet 0.1 + 0.2 = 0.3000000000000004

NaN

- Special number: Not a Number
- Result of undefined or erroneous operations
- Toxic: any arithmetic operation with NaN as an input will have NaN as a result
- NaN is not equal to anything, including NaN

Number function

Number (value)

Converts the value into a number.

• It produces NaN if it has a problem.

Similar to + prefix operator.

parseInt function

parseInt(value, 10)

- Converts the value into a number.
- It stops at the first non-digit character.
- The radix (10) should be required.

```
parseInt("08") === 0
parseInt("08", 10) === 8
```

Math

Math object is modeled on Java's Math class.

It contains

abs absolute value

floor integer

log logarithm

max maximum

pow raise to a power

random random number

round nearest integer

sin sine

sqrt square root

Strings

Sequence of 0 or more 16-bit characters

UCS-2, not quite UTF-16

No awareness of surrogate pairs

- No separate character type
 - Characters are represented as strings with a length of 1
- Strings are immutable
- Similar strings are equal (==)
- String literals can use single or double quotes

String length

• string.length

 The length property determines the number of 16-bit characters in a string.

String function

String (value)

Converts value to a string

String Methods

- charAt
- concat
- indexOf
- lastIndexOf
- match
- replace
- search
- slice
- split
- substring
- toLowerCase
- toUpperCase

Booleans

- true
- false

Boolean function

Boolean (value)

- returns true if value is truthy
- returns false if value is falsy
- Similar to !! prefix operator

null

A value that isn't anything

undefined

A value that isn't even that

 The default value for variables and parameters

 The value of missing members in objects

Falsy values

- false
- null
- undefined
- "" (empty string)
- 0
- NaN
- All other values (including all objects) are truthy.

Everything Else Is Objects

Dynamic Objects

- Unification of Object and Hashtable
- new Object() produces an empty container of name/value pairs
- A name can be any string, a value can be any value except undefined
- members can be accessed with dot notation or subscript notation
- No hash nature is visible (no hash codes or rehash methods)

Loosely Typed

 Any of these types can be stored in an variable, or passed as a parameter to any function

The language is not "untyped"

C

 JavaScript is syntactically a C family language

 It differs from C mainly in its type system, which allows functions to be values

Identifiers

- Starts with a letter or _ or \$
- Followed by zero or more letters, digits, _ or \$
- By convention, all variables, parameters, members, and function names start with lower case
- Except for constructors which start with upper case
- Initial _ should be reserved for implementations
- \$ should be reserved for machines.

Reserved Words

```
abstract
boolean break byte
case catch char class const continue
debugger default delete do double
else enum export extends
false final finally float for function
goto
if implements import in instanceof int
interface
long
native new null
package private protected public
return
short static super switch synchronized
this throw throws transient true try typeof
var volatile void
while with
```

Comments

```
// slashslash line comment
/*
    slashstar
    block
    comment
*/
```

Operators

Arithmetic

Comparison

Logical

```
&& | | !
```

Bitwise

Ternary

?:

+

- Addition and concatenation
- If both operands are numbers, then

add them

else

convert them both to strings concatenate them

+

Unary operator can convert strings to numbers

$$+"42" = 42$$

Also

$$Number("42") = 42$$

Also

$$parseInt("42", 10) = 42$$

$$+"3" + (+"4") = 7$$

 Division of two integers can produce a non-integer result

10 / 3 = 3.3333333333333333

== !=

Equal and not equal

These operators can do type coercion

 It is better to use === and !==, which do not do type coercion.

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- The guard operator, aka logical and
- If first operand is truthy then result is second operand else result is first operand
- It can be used to avoid null references

```
if (a) {
   return a.member;
} else {
   return a;
}
```

can be written as

```
return a && a.member;
```

- The default operator, aka logical or
- If first operand is truthy
 then result is first operand
 else result is second operand
- It can be used to fill in default values.

```
var last = input || nr_items;
```

 (If input is truthy, then last is input, otherwise set last to nr_items.)

- Prefix logical not operator.
- If the operand is truthy, the result is false. Otherwise, the result is true.
- ·!! produces booleans.

Bitwise

 The bitwise operators convert the operand to a 32-bit signed integer, and turn the result back into 64bit floating point.

Statements

- expression
- if
- switch
- while
- do
- for
- break
- continue
- return
- try/throw

Break statement

- Statements can have labels.
- Break statements can refer to those labels.

```
loop: for (;;) {
    if (...) {
       break loop;
    }
....
}
```

For statement

 Iterate through all of the elements of an array:

```
for (var i = 0; i < array.length; i += 1) {
    // within the loop,
    // i is the index of the current member
    // array[i] is the current element</pre>
```

For statement

 Iterate through all of the members of an object:

```
for (var name in object) {
   if (object.hasOwnProperty(name)) {

       // within the loop,
       // name is the key of current member
       // object[name] is the current value

}
}
```

Switch statement

Multiway branch

 The switch value does not need to a number. It can be a string.

The case values can be expressions.

Switch statement

```
switch (expression) {
case ';':
case ',':
case '.':
    punctuation();
    break;
default:
    noneOfTheAbove();
```

Throw statement

```
throw new Error(reason);
throw {
    name: exceptionName,
    message: reason
};
```

Try statement

```
try {
} catch (e) {
    switch (e.name) {
    case 'Error':
        break;
    default:
        throw e;
```

Try Statement

 The JavaScript implementation can produce these exception names:

```
'Error'
'EvalError'
'RangeError'
'SyntaxError'
'TypeError'
```

With statement

 Intended as a short-hand

Ambiguous

Error-prone

Don't use it

```
with (o) {
    foo = null;
}
```

 \Box o.foo = null;

 \Box foo = null;

Function statement

```
function name(parameters) {
    statements;
}
```

Var statement

Defines variables within a function.

Types are not specified.

Initial values are optional.

```
var name;
var nrErrors = 0;
var a, b, c;
```

Scope

 In JavaScript, {blocks} do not have scope.

Only functions have scope.

 Vars defined in a function are not visible outside of the function.

Return statement

```
return expression;
```

• or

```
return;
```

- If there is no expression, then the return value is undefined.
- Except for constructors, whose default return value is this.

Objects

Everything else is objects

Objects can contain data and methods

Objects can inherit from other objects.

Collections

- An object is an unordered collection of name/value pairs
- Names are strings
- Values are any type, including other objects
- Good for representing records and trees
- Every object is a little database

- Object literals are wrapped in { }
- Names can be names or strings
- Values can be expressions
- : separates names and values
- , separates pairs
- Object literals can be used anywhere a value can appear

"name"	"Jack B. Nimble"
"goto"	"Jail"
"grade"	"A"
"level"	3

Maker Function

```
function maker(name, where, grade, level) {
    var it = {};
    it.name = name;
    it['goto'] = where;
    it.grade = grade;
    it.level = level;
    return it;
myObject = maker("Jack B. Nimble",
    'Jail', 'A', 3);
```

```
format:
```

{type: 'rect', width: 1920, height: 1080,

interlace: false, framerate: 24}

```
function SuperDiv(width, height,
  left, top, zIndex, position,
  color, visibility, html,
  cssClass)
```

function SuperDiv(spec)

Object Augmentation

 New members can be added to any object by simple assignment

There is no need to define a new class

```
myObject.format.colorModel =
   'YCgCb';

myObject[name] = value;
```

Linkage

- Objects can be created with a secret link to another object.
- If an attempt to access a name fails, the secret linked object will be used.
- The secret link is not used when storing. New members are only added to the primary object.
- The object(o) function makes a new empty object with a link to object o.

Linkage



"name"	"Jack B. Nimble"
"goto"	"Jail"
"grade"	"A"
"level"	3

Linkage

"name"	"Tom Piperson"
"level"	4
"crime"	"pignapping"

"name"	"Jack B. Nimble"
"goto"	"Jail"
"grade"	"A"
"level"	3

Inheritance

 Linkage provides simple inheritance.

An object can inherit from an older object.



Prototypal Inheritance

- Some languages have classes, methods, constructors, and modules.
 JavaScript's functions do the work of all of those.
- Instead of Classical Inheritance, JavaScript has Prototypal Inheritance.
- It accomplishes the same things, but differently.
- It offers greater expressive power.
- But it's different.

Prototypal Inheritance

- Instead of organizing objects into rigid classes, new objects can be made that are similar to existing objects, and then customized.
- Object customization is a lot less work than making a class, and less overhead, too.
- One of the keys is the object (o) function.
- The other key is functions.

Object Methods

- All objects are linked directly or indirectly to Object.prototype
- All objects inherit some basic methods.
- None of them are very useful.
- hasOwnProperty(name)
 - Is the name a true member of this object?
- No copy method.
- No equals method.

Object Construction

- Make a new empty object
- All three of these expressions have exactly the same result:

```
new Object()
{}
object(Object.prototype)
```

• {} is the preferred form.

Reference

- Objects can be passed as arguments to functions, and can be returned by functions
 Objects are passed by reference.
 Objects are not passed by value.
- The === operator compares object references, not values true only if both operands are the same object

Delete

Members can be removed from an object with the delete operator

delete myObject[name];

Arrays

- Array inherits from Object.
- Indexes are converted to strings and used as names for retrieving values.
- Very efficient for sparse arrays.
- Not very efficient in most other cases.
- One advantage: No need to provide a length or type when creating an array.

length

- Arrays, unlike objects, have a special length member.
- It is always 1 larger than the highest integer subscript.
- It allows use of the traditional for statement.

```
for (i = 0; i < a.length; i += 1) {
    ....
}</pre>
```

• Do not use for ... in with arrays

Array Literals

- An array literal uses []
- It can contain any number of expressions, separated by commas

```
myList = ['oats', 'peas', 'beans'];
```

New items can be appended

```
myList[myList.length] = 'barley';
```

- The dot notation should not be used with arrays.
- [] is preferred to new Array().

Array Methods

- concat
- join
- pop
- push
- slice
- sort
- splice

Deleting Elements

delete array[number]

 Removes the element, but leaves a hole in the numbering.

array.splice(number, 1)

 Removes the element and renumbers all the following elements.

Deleting Elements

```
myArray = ['a', 'b', 'c', 'd'];
delete myArray[1];
// ['a', undefined, 'c', 'd']
myArray.splice(1, 1);
// ['a', 'c', 'd']
```

Arrays v Objects

 Use objects when the names are arbitrary strings.

 Use arrays when the names are sequential integers.

 Don't get confused by the term Associative Array.

Distinguishing Arrays

value.constructor === Array

value instanceof Array

Neither of these work when the value comes from a different frame.

Arrays and Inheritance

Don't use arrays as prototypes.
 The object produced this way does not have array nature. It will inherit the array's values and methods, but not its length.

You can augment an individual array.
 Assign a method to it.
 This works because arrays are objects.

You can augment all arrays.
 Assign methods to Array.prototype

Functions

Functions are first-class objects

1. Functions can be passed, returned, and stored just like any other value

3. Functions inherit from Object and can store name/value pairs.

Function operator

 The function operator takes an optional name, a parameter list, and a block of statements, and returns a function object.

```
function name(parameters) {
    statements
}
```

 A function can appear anywhere that an expression can appear.

lambda

 What JavaScript calls function, other languages call lambda.

 It is a source of enormous expressive power.

Unlike most power-constructs, it is secure.

Function statement

 The function statement is just a short-hand for a var statement with a function value.

```
function foo() {}
```

expands to

```
var foo = function foo() {};
```

Inner functions

 Functions do not all have to be defined at the top level (or left edge).

 Functions can be defined inside of other functions.

Scope

 An inner function has access to the variables and parameters of functions that it is contained within.

 This is known as Static Scoping or Lexical Scoping.

Closure

 The scope that an inner function enjoys continues even after the parent functions have returned.

• This is called *closure*.

Example

```
function fade(id) {
    var dom = document.getElementById(id),
        level = 1;
    function step () {
        var h = level.toString(16);
        dom.style.backgroundColor =
            '#FFFF' + h + h;
        if (level < 15) {
            level += 1;
            setTimeout(step, 100);
    setTimeout(step, 100);
```

Function Objects

 Functions are objects, so they can contain name/value pairs.

 This can serve the same purpose as static members in other languages.

Method

 Since functions are values, functions can be stored in objects.

 A function in an object is called a method.

Invocation

 If a function is called with too many arguments, the extra arguments are ignored.

 If a function is called with too few arguments, the missing values will be undefined.

 There is no implicit type checking on the arguments.

Invocation

 There are four ways to call a function: **Function form** functionObject (arguments) Method form thisObject.methodName(arguments) thisObject["methodName"] (arguments) **Constructor form** new functionObject (arguments) Apply form functionObject.apply(thisObject, [arguments])

Method form

thisObject. methodName (arguments)

- When a function is called in the method form, this is set to thisObject, the object containing the function.
- This allows methods to have a reference to the object of interest.

Function form

functionObject (arguments)

 When a function is called in the function form, this is set to the global object.

That is not very useful.

It makes it harder to write helper functions within a method because the helper function does not get access to the outer this.

```
var that = this;
```

Constructor form

new functionObject (arguments)

- When a function is called with the new operator, a new object is created and assigned to this.
- If there is not an explicit return value, then this will be returned.

this

- this is an extra parameter. Its value depends on the calling form.
- this gives methods access to their objects.
- this is bound at invocation time.

Invocation form	this
function	the global object
method	the object
constructor	the new object

arguments

- When a function is invoked, in addition to its parameters, it also gets a special parameter called arguments.
- It contains all of the arguments from the invocation.
- It is an array-like object.
- arguments.length is the number of arguments passed.

Example

```
function sum() {
    var i,
        n = arguments.length,
        total = 0;
    for (i = 0; i < n; i += 1) {
        total += arguments[i];
    return total;
```

Augmenting Built-in Types

- Object.prototype
- Array.prototype
- Function.prototype
- Number.prototype
- String.prototype
- Boolean.prototype

trim

supplant

```
var template = '' +
  'Last{last}' +
  'First{first}' +
  '';
var data = {
   first: "Carl",
   last: "Hollywood",
  border: 2
};
mydiv.innerHTML = template.supplant(data);
```

supplant

typeof

 The typeof prefix operator returns a string identifying the type of a

value.

type	typeof
object	'object'
function	'function'
array	'object'
number	'number'
string	'string'
boolean	'boolean'
null	'object'
undefined	'undefined'

eval

eval (*string*)

- The eval function compiles and executes a string and returns the result.
- It is what the browser uses to convert strings into actions.
- It is the most misused feature of the language.

Function function

new Function(parameters, body)

- The Function constructor takes zero or more parameter name strings, and a body string, and uses the JavaScript compiler to produce a function object.
- It should only be used to compile fresh source from a server.
- It is closely related to eval.

Built-in Type Wrappers

- Java has int and Integer, two incompatible types which can both carry the same value with differing levels of efficiency and convenience.
- JavaScript copied this pattern to no advantage. Avoid it.
- Avoid new Boolean()
- Avoid new String()
- Avoid new Number()

Confession

```
function object(o) {
  function F() {}
  F.prototype = o;
  return new F();
}
```

Augmentation

 We can directly modify individual objects to give them just the characteristics we want.

- We can do this without having to create classes.
- We can then use our new object as the prototype for lots of new objects, each of which can also be augmented.

Working with the Grain

 Classical patterns are less effective than prototypal patterns or parasitic patterns.

 Formal classes are not needed for reuse or extension.

(global) Object

- The object that dares not speak its name.
- It is the container for all global variables and all built-in objects.
- Sometimes this points to it.

```
var global = this;
```

On browsers, window is the global object.

Global variables are evil

 Functions within an application can clobber each other.

 Cooperating applications can clobber each other.

 Use of the global namespace must be minimized.

Implied Global

- Any var which is not properly declared is assumed to be global by default.
- This makes it easy for people who do not know or care about encapsulation to be productive, but it makes applications less reliable.
- JSLint is a tool which helps identify implied globals and other weaknesses.

http://www.JSLint.com

Namespace

- Every object is a separate namespace.
- Use an object to organize your variables and functions.
- The YAHOO Object.

```
<head>
<script>
YAHOO={};
</script>
```

http://twiki.corp.yahoo.com/view/Devel/TheYAHOOObject

Encapsulate

Function scope can create an encapsulation.

 Use an anonymous function to wrap your application.

Example

Thinking about type

- Trading type-safety for dynamism.
- JavaScript has no cast operator.
- Reflection is really easy, and usually unnecessary.
- Why inheritance?
 Automatic casting
 Code reuse
- Trading brittleness for flexibility.

Date

The Date function is based on Java's Date class.

It was not Y2K ready.

RegExp

- Regular expression pattern matcher
- Patterns are enclosed in slashes
- Example: a pattern that matches regular expressions

```
/\/(\\[^\x00-\x1f]|\[(\\[^\x00-\x1f]|[^\x00-\x1f\\\/])*\]|[^\x00-\x1f\\\/\[])+\/[gim]*/
```

Bizarre notation, difficult to read.

Threads

 The language definition is neutral on threads

 Some language processors (like SpiderMonkey) provide thread support

 Most application environments (like browsers) do not provide it

Threads are evil

Platforms

Browsers

WSH and Dashboard

Yahoo!Widgets

DreamWeaver and Photoshop

Embedded

ActionScript

- Empty strings are truthy
- keywords are case insensitive
- No Unicode support
- No RegExp
- No try
- No statement labels
- | | and && return booleans
- separate operators for strings and numbers

E4X

- Extensions to ECMAScript for XML
- Proposed by BEA
- Allows <XML> literals
- Not compatible with ECMAScript Third Edition
- Not widely accepted yet
- Not in IE7

ECMAScript Fourth Edition

 A very large set of new features are being considered.

Mozilla and Opera are committed.

 It is not clear that Microsoft will adopt it.

No word from Safari yet.

Style

- Programming style isn't about personal taste.
- It is about rigor in expression.
- It is about clearness in presentation.
- It is about product adaptability and longevity.
- Good rules help us to keep the quality of our programs high.

Style and JavaScript

 Style is critically important for JavaScript.

- The dynamic nature of the language is considered by some to be "too soft". Discipline is necessary for balance.
- Most of the world's body of JavaScript programs is crap.

Code Conventions for the JavaScript Programming Language

http://javascript.crockford.com/code.html

Semicolon insertion

- When the compiler sees an error, it attempts to replace a nearby linefeed with a semicolon and try again.
- This should alarm you.
- It can mask errors.
- Always use the full, correct forms, including semicolons.

Line Ending

Break a line after a punctuator: , , ; ; { } ([=

- Do not break after a name, string, number, or)] ++ --
- Defense against copy/paste errors.

Comma

Avoid tricky expressions using the comma operators.

 Do not use extra commas in array literals.

• Good: [1, 2, 3]

• **Bad:** [1, 2, 3,]

Required Blocks

```
Good:

if (a) {
b();

Bad:

if (a) b();
```

Forbidden Blocks

- Blocks do not have scope in JavaScript.
- Blocks should only be used with structured statements

```
function
if
switch
while
for
do
try
```

Variables

 Define all variables at the beginning of the function.

 JavaScript does not have block scope, so their is no advantage in declaring variables at the place of their first use.

Expression Statements

- Any expression can be used as a statement. That can mask errors.
- Only assignment expressions and invocation expressions should be used as statements.

```
Good:
```

```
foo();
```

Bad:

```
foo && foo();
```

switch Statement

Avoid using fallthrough.

• Each clause should explicitly break or return or throw.

Assignment Expressions

 Do not use assignment expressions in the condition parts of if, while, or for.

It is more likely that

```
if (a = b) { ... }
```

was intended to be

```
if (a == b) { ... }
```

Avoid tricky expressions.

== and !=

- Be aware that == and != do type coercion.
- Bad

```
if (a == null) { ... }
```

Good:

```
if (a === null) { ... }
if (!a) { ... }
```

Labels

 Use labels only on these statements:

```
do
for
switch
while
```

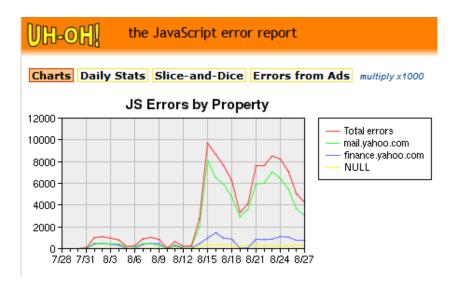
• Never use javascript: as a label.

JSLint

- JSLint can help improve the robustness and portability of your programs.
- It enforces style rules.
- It can spot some errors that are very difficult to find in debugging.
- It can help eliminate implied globals.
- Currently available on the web and as a Konfabulator widget.
- Soon, in text editors and Eclipse.

http://www.JSLint.com/

UHOH!



- Universal Header Onerror Handler
- Inserted into 0.1% of pages
- Reports on JavaScript errors
- http://uhoh.corp.yahoo.com/

Key Ideas

- Load and go delivery
- Loose typing
- Objects as general containers
- Prototypal inheritance
- Lambda
- Linkage though global variables

The JavaScript Programming Language

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