Evaluation Strategies and Termination

August 31, 2012

Call-by-name, Call-by-value and termination

You know from the last module that the call-by-name and call-by-value evaluation strategies reduce an expression to the same value, as long as both evaluations terminate.

But what if termination is not guaranteed?

We have:

- If CBV evaluation of an expression *e* terminates, then CBN evaluation of *e* terminates, too.
- The other direction is not true

Non-termination example

Question: Find an expression that terminates under CBN but not under CBV.

Non-termination example

Let's define

```
def first(x: Int, y: Int) = x
```

and consider the expression `first(1, loop)`.

Under CBN:

```
first(1, loop)
```

Under CBV:

```
first(1, loop)
```

Interesting!!!!

Scala's evaluation strategy

Scala normally uses call-by-value.

But if the type of a function parameter starts with `=>` it uses call-by-name.

Example:

```
def constOne(x: Int, y: => Int) = 1
```

Let's trace the evaluations of

```
constOne(1+2, loop)
```

and

```
constOne(loop, 1+2)
```

Trace of constOne(1 + 2, loop)

```
constOne(1 + 2, loop)
```

Trace of constOne(loop, 1 + 2)

```
constOne(loop, 1 + 2)
```