Nathan Birch

CIT 261

Understandings Portfolio

JavaScript Objects: JavaScript objects as associative arrays

1/9/2015

I have been studying JavaScript objects as associative arrays. As I studied associative arrays in and of themselves I came to the understanding that they are very broad elements and are everywhere in JavaScript code. According to my understanding, an associative array is just a set of key value pairs. Each ‘key’ is stored with a value (or is ready for a value to be entered by the user in some cases). Associative arrays allow you to access these values through the keys using either numbers or strings by association. I think these are really cool because you can pick out specific elements in an array based on string matching. It can be very convenient. I have developed several pieces of code that I wanted to share in conjunction with associative arrays. The first is:

* [JS Objects – Associative Arrays](https://github.com/nathanbirch/CIT-261-Winter-2016/blob/master/JS%20Objects%20-%20Associative%20Arrays)
* [JS Objects – Associative Arrays – Months Example](https://github.com/nathanbirch/CIT-261-Winter-2016/blob/master/JS%20Objects%20-%20Associative%20Arrays%20-%20Months%20Example)

Example from the web: [JS Objects - Associative Arrays WEB example](https://github.com/nathanbirch/CIT-261-Winter-2016/blob/master/JS%20Objects%20-%20Associative%20Arrays%20WEB%20example)

Here is my sharing video:

Additional Notes:

The key idea is that every Javascript object is an associative array which is the most general sort of array you can invent - sometimes this is called a hash or map structure.

An associative array is simply a set of key value pairs. The value is stored in association with it key and if you provide the key the array will return the value.

For example:

array={key1: 'value1',key2:'value2'};

creates an object called array with two keys and two values which in this case happen to be two constant strings.

Notice that the value stored can be any JavaScript object and in this example it is probably better to think of storing two string objects rather two string literals.

The key can be either an identifier, a string or a number but more about the difference in the key type as we progress.

You can retrieve a value via it key using array notation:

alert(array['key2']);

Which displays the string value2. If you try and access a key that doesn't exist then you get the result undefined.

With an associative array…you don’t access elements in it by the index (or number), you access it by strings.

See example