Continuations in Haskell

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What we are going to cover today

- ► The basics of CPS style
- ► The Cont monad
- ► Call with Current Continuation (callCC)
- An motivating use case

The Basics of CPS Style

How do we compute things?

Computing a value is normally quite simple.

```
type Radius = Double type Area = Double areaCircle :: Radius \rightarrow Area areaCircle r = pi * r * r areaCircle 1 — \pi
```

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```
type Radius = Double type Area = Double areaCircle :: Radius \rightarrow Area areaCircle r = pi * r * r areaCircle 1 — \pi
```

But what if we have some value (radius/width/etc), but we don't know what area function to use yet.

How do we make a value wait for a function?

Normally we have a function wait for a value.

(
$$$$$
) :: (a \rightarrow b) \rightarrow a \rightarrow b
f $$$ x = f x

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(
$$$$$
) :: (a \rightarrow b) \rightarrow a \rightarrow b
f $$$ x = f x

What if we flip the arguments?

(f) ::
$$a \rightarrow (a \rightarrow b) \rightarrow b$$

(f) = flip (\$)
- or (f) = $x \rightarrow (f \rightarrow f x)$

Now we can do all sorts of things to the same radius

```
type Height = Double; type Volume = Double; type Diameter = Double
volumeCylinder :: Radius → Height → Volume
volumeCylinder r h = areaCircle r * h

diameter :: Radius → Diameter
diameter r = 2*r

doSomethingToR :: (Radius → r) → r
doSomethingToR = (1.0 f)
```

Now we can do all sorts of things to the same radius

```
type Height = Double; type Volume = Double; type Diameter = Double
volumeCylinder :: Radius → Height → Volume
volumeCylinder r h = areaCircle r * h
diameter :: Radius → Diameter
diameter r = 2*r
doSomethingToR :: (Radius \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r
doSomethingToR = (1.0 £)
doSomethingToR areaCircle
— doSomethingToR volumeCylinder :: Height → Volume
doSomethingToR volumeCylinder 2 -2\pi
doSomethingToR diameter
                                 — 2
```

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90 ○

 ${f f}$ creates what is known as a suspended computation.

areaCircle — Waiting for an input

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```
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```

 ${\tt areaCircle~1-Represents~a~value}$

 ${f f}$ creates what is known as a suspended computation.

```
areaCircle — Waiting for an input
areaCircle 1 — Represents a value
```

(1 f) — Do something to the value 1 later

£ creates what is known as a suspended computation.

```
areaCircle — Waiting for an input

areaCircle 1 — Represents a value

(1 £) — Do something to the value 1 later

(areaCircle 1 £) — Wait to do something with the
— result of areaCircle 1
```

```
£ creates what is known as a suspended computation.
areaCircle — Waiting for an input
areaCircle 1 — Represents a value
(1 \not E) — Do something to the value 1 later
(areaCircle 1 \not \mathbf{E}) — Wait to do something with the

    result of areaCircle 1

areaCircle 1 £ id — Execute 'areaCircle 1',
                   — pass the result to id
```

Standard Notation for Suspended Computations

In the literature/online, you will likely see turning a value into a suspended computation written as follows.

```
cpsify :: a \rightarrow (a \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r

cpsify x k = k x

— or cpsify x = \k \rightarrow k x
```

where

- **r** is the final result of evaluating the computation.
- a → r is what you are doing to do to x later. This is represented here as k.
- ▶ k is also called the "continuation", or "continue on with the value you pass to me".

Currently we can't do much

We can create suspended computations quite easily using **cpsify**. What we really need is something to *chain* our suspended computations together.

Say we have two suspended computations.

```
suspendArea :: Radius \rightarrow (Area \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r suspendArea r = \backslash k \rightarrow k (areaCircle r) 
— Calculate the volume of any extrusion. suspendExtrude :: Area \rightarrow Height \rightarrow (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r suspendExtrude a h = \backslash k \rightarrow k (a * h)
```

Say we have two suspended computations.

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suspendArea :: Radius \rightarrow (Area \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r suspendArea r = \backslash k \rightarrow k (areaCircle r)

— Calculate the volume of any extrusion. suspendExtrude :: Area \rightarrow Height \rightarrow (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r suspendExtrude a h = \backslash k \rightarrow k (a * h)

What we would like is something like this suspendVolume :: Radius \rightarrow Height \rightarrow (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r
```

```
suspendVolume :: Radius \rightarrow Height \rightarrow (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r suspendVolume r h = \backslash k \rightarrow? — k :: (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r
```

```
suspendVolume :: Radius \rightarrow Height \rightarrow (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r suspendVolume r h = \k \rightarrow — k :: (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r suspendArea r — needs a (Area \rightarrow r) (\area \rightarrow — needs to return r suspendExtrude area h ?) — needs a (Volume \rightarrow r)
```

suspendVolume seems to work

We get a suspended computation that calculates the volume and waits for us to do something with it.

```
suspendVolume 1 2 - :: (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r suspendVolume 1 2 id - 2\pi suspendVolume 1 2 (*2) - 2*2\pi = 4\pi
```

Let's break it down to make sure we are calculating what we want.

Expand suspendArea.

Evaluate the ($\k \rightarrow k$ (areaCircle r)).

Substitude in area.

Expand suspendExtrude.

```
— suspendArea r = \k \rightarrow k (areaCircle r)

— suspendExtrude a h = \k \rightarrow k (a * h)

suspendVolume :: Radius \rightarrow Height \rightarrow (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r suspendVolume r h = \k \rightarrow — k :: (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r (\k \rightarrow k $ (areaCircle r) * h) — needs (Volume \rightarrow r) k)

Apply k.
```

Well that is certainly correct!

Manual chaining is suspended rear pain

We can do better. We have a common pattern here

```
suspendA :: (a \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r
suspendB :: a \rightarrow (b \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r
suspendA (\a \rightarrow (suspendB a) (\b \rightarrow ...))
```

Let's turn this pattern into a function¹

```
chain :: ((a \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r) \rightarrow (a \rightarrow ((b \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r)) \rightarrow ((b \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r)
```

¹From The Haskell Wikibook, although there it is called chainCPS = + + = + > 2 - >

Manual chaining is suspended rear pain

We can do better. We have a common pattern here

```
suspendA :: (a \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r
 suspendB :: a \rightarrow (b \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r
 suspendA (\alpha \rightarrow (suspendB a) (\begin{subarray}{c} \begin{subarray}{c} \begin{su
Let's turn this pattern into a function<sup>1</sup>
chain :: ((a \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r) \rightarrow (a \rightarrow ((b \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r)) \rightarrow
                                                                       ((h \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r)
chain sA aTosB = \k \rightarrow - k :: (b \rightarrow r)
                                                                                                                                                                                       - needs a (a \rightarrow r)
                sA
                (\a →
                               aTosB a
                                                                                                                                                                               — needs a (b \rightarrow r)
                                                                                                                                                                                      - k is a (b \rightarrow r)!
                                       k)
```

Making suspendVolume is much easier now

```
- suspendArea r = \k \rightarrow k (areaCircle r)

    Flip arguments to chain easier.

suspendExtrude' :: Height \rightarrow Area \rightarrow (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r
suspendExtrude' h a = suspendExtrude a h
suspendVolume' :: Radius \rightarrow Height \rightarrow (Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r
suspendVolume' r h = suspendArea r 'chain'
                               suspendExtrude' h

    chain for us looks like

chain :: ((Area \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r) \rightarrow (Area \rightarrow ((Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r)) \rightarrow
             ((Volume \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r)
```

I smell a monadic burrito (link)

cpsify (or (£)) is acting like return, and chain is acting like bind((➣)). Lets make a type for these suspended computations then.

```
— Already defined in Control.Monad.Trans.Cont newtype Cont r a = Cont {runCont :: (a \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r}
```

I smell a monadic burrito (link)

- cpsify $x = \langle k \rangle k \times k x$

```
cpsify (or (£)) is acting like return, and chain is acting like bind
((>=)). Lets make a type for these suspended computations then.

— Already defined in Control.Monad.Trans.Cont
newtype Cont r a = Cont {runCont :: (a → r) → r}
instance Monad (Cont r) where
  return :: a → Cont r a
  return x = Cont (\k → k x)
```

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cpsify (or (£)) is acting like return, and chain is acting like bind ((➣)). Lets make a type for these suspended computations then.

```
    Already defined in Control.Monad.Trans.Cont

newtype Cont r a = Cont {runCont :: (a \rightarrow r) \rightarrow r}
instance Monad (Cont r) where
     return :: a \rightarrow Cont r a
     return x = Cont (\k \rightarrow k x)
 - cpsify x = \langle k \rangle k \rangle k x
     (>=) :: Cont r a \rightarrow (a \rightarrow Cont r b) \rightarrow Cont r b
     m \gg f = Cont
          (\k \rightarrow runCont m (\a \rightarrow runCont (f a) k))
 — chain m f = \k \rightarrow m (\alpha \rightarrow (f a) k)
```

The Cont monad

do sweetness is now possible

Cont is a monad, which means we can get some nice **do** syntactic sugar.

```
    Control.Monad.Trans.Cont exports cont, not Cont

cont = Cont
suspendAreaCont :: Radius → Cont r Area
suspendAreaCont r = cont (\k \rightarrow k (areaCircle r))
suspendExtrudeCont :: Height → Area → Cont r Volume
suspendExtrudeCont h a = cont (k \rightarrow k (a * h))
suspendVolumeCont :: Radius → Height → Cont r Volume
suspendVolumeCont r h = do
  area ← suspendAreaCont r
  suspendExtrudeCont h area
```

What happens if we forget the k?

The k in the prior functions represented "the rest of the computation". So what happens when we forget the k?

```
    I wonder where the r went....

suspendAreaOops :: Double → Cont Double Double
suspendAreaOops r = cont (\  \rightarrow areaCircle r)
suspendVolumeOops :: Radius → Height → Cont Double Double
suspendVolumeOops r h = do
  area ← suspendAreaOops r
  suspendExtrudeCont h area
What is the result of the following?
oops :: Double
oops = runCont (suspendVolumeOops 1 2) id
```

What happens if we forget the k?

The k in the prior functions represented "the rest of the computation". So what happens when we forget the k?

```
    I wonder where the r went....

suspendAreaOops :: Double → Cont Double Double
suspendAreaOops r = cont (\  \rightarrow areaCircle r)
suspendVolumeOops :: Radius → Height → Cont Double Double
suspendVolumeOops r h = do
  area ← suspendAreaOops r
  suspendExtrudeCont h area
What is the result of the following?
oops :: Double
oops = runCont (suspendVolumeOops 1 2) id
- oops == \pi
- (wait, that is not (\pi * 1^2) * 2 = 2 * \pi)
```

The k meant "keep going!"

Normally we have this kind of scenario.

```
area \rightarrow extrude \rightarrow suspended computation

— or (area \rightarrow ((extrude \rightarrow suspended computation))

— k is "conceptually" \land—————\land
```

When we did not call \mathbf{k} , we forgot to keep going forward and instead did this.

```
area → suspended computation
```

What happens if we double the use of k?

```
suspendAreaDbl :: Radius → Cont [r] Area
suspendAreaDbl r = cont (k \rightarrow k (areaCircle r) ++
                                  k (areaCircle (r + 2)))
suspendVolumeDbl :: Radius \rightarrow Height \rightarrow Cont [r] Volume
suspendVolumeDbl r h = do
  area ← suspendAreaDbl r
  suspendExtrudeCont h area
What is the result of the following?
dbl :: [Volume]
dbl = runCont (suspendVolumeDbl 1 2) return
```

What happens if we double the use of k?

```
suspendAreaDbl :: Radius → Cont [r] Area
suspendAreaDbl r = cont (k \rightarrow k (areaCircle r) ++
                                 k (areaCircle (r + 2)))
suspendVolumeDbl :: Radius \rightarrow Height \rightarrow Cont [r] Volume
suspendVolumeDbl r h = do
  area ← suspendAreaDbl r
  suspendExtrudeCont h area
What is the result of the following?
dbl :: [Volume]
dbl = runCont (suspendVolumeDbl 1 2) return
- db1 = [6.283185307179586, 56.548667764616276]
- db1 = [2\pi] + [18\pi]
We execute the remaining computation twice, and throw the result
```

into $\k \rightarrow k$ (areaCircle r) + k (areaCircle $(r_{*}+2)$), $r_{*} \rightarrow r_{*} \rightarrow r_{*}$

What do we currently have?

We have a few tools to make suspended computations.

- ► A way to create suspended computations (cpsify or return)
- ► A way to chain those computations (chain or (>=))
- ► All of this wrapped in a type Cont r a

In addition, we have seen how to break out of the standard control flow.

- ► Forget k: do not process any more lines in the continuation.
- ▶ Use **k** twice: repeat the continuation twice, combine results.

Call with Current Continuation (callCC)

What else could we want?

- ► We have a way to stop what we were doing (forget k)
- ▶ We have a way to "branch" (use k) twice
- ▶ We didn't talk about it but if $k :: (r \rightarrow r)$ then we can run a function on itself again $(\k + \k (k (...)))$

Once we are in Cont, using k is somewhat tedious (it needs to be explicitly brought out).

An eject button would be nice

What if we brought out ${\bf k}$ only when we needed it? Where ${\bf k}$ is "skip whatever else we were going to do in this continuation and keep going with the next one".

Ejecting with callCC

There is a function that does this called "call with current continuation", or callCC in Haskell.

```
callCC :: ((a \rightarrow Cont \ r \ b) \rightarrow Cont \ r \ a) \rightarrow Cont \ r \ a
calc :: Double → Double → String
calc a b = ('runCont' id) $ do
  ans \leftarrow callCC \$ \eject \rightarrow do
             c \leftarrow return $ a*2 + b + 3
             when (c == 0) (eject "oops dividing by 0")
             d ← return $ a + b
             return $ show (d / c)
  return $ "Answer: " ++ ans
```

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```
callCC :: ((a \rightarrow Cont \ r \ b) \rightarrow Cont \ r \ a) \rightarrow Cont \ r \ a
calc :: Double → Double → String
calc a b = ('runCont' id) $ do

    Calling 'eject' is the same as

  - v 'ans ← return "oops dividing by 0"'
  ans ← callCC $ \eject → do
            c \leftarrow return \$ a*2 + b + 3
            when (c == 0) (eject "oops dividing by 0")
            d ← return $ a + b
            return $ show (d / c)
  return $ "Answer: " ++ ans
```

Ejecting with callCC

There is a function that does this called "call with current continuation", or callCC in Haskell.

```
callCC :: ((a \rightarrow Cont \ r \ b) \rightarrow Cont \ r \ a) \rightarrow Cont \ r \ a
calc :: Double → Double → String
calc a b = ('runCont' id) $ do
  — 'eject' is often called 'k': 'k' is the same as
  - v 'ans ← return "oops dividing by 0"'
  ans \leftarrow callCC \ \k \rightarrow do
            c \leftarrow return $ a*2 + b + 3
                             k :: String → Cont String ()
            when (c == 0) (k "oops dividing by 0")
            d ← return $ a + b
            — String → Cont String String
            return $ show (d / c)
```

```
calc :: Double → Double → String
calc a b = ('runCont' id) $ do
  ans \leftarrow callCC \stackrel{$}{} \k \rightarrow do
             c \leftarrow return $ a*2 + b + 3
            when (c == 0) (k "oops dividing by 0")
            d ← return $ a + b
             return $ show (d / c)
  return $ "Answer: " ++ ans
calc 1 = \text{calc } 1 = ?
```

```
calc :: Double → Double → String
calc a b = ('runCont' id) $ do
  ans \leftarrow callCC \stackrel{$}{} \k \rightarrow do
            c \leftarrow return $ a*2 + b + 3
            when (c == 0) (k "oops dividing by 0")
            d ← return $ a + b
            return $ show (d / c)
  return $ "Answer: " ++ ans
calc 1 = calc 1 2 — "Answer: 0.42857142857142855"
```

```
calc :: Double → Double → String
calc a b = ('runCont' id) $ do
  ans \leftarrow callCC \stackrel{$}{} \k \rightarrow do
            c \leftarrow return $ a*2 + b + 3
            when (c == 0) (k "oops dividing by 0")
            d ← return $ a + b
            return $ show (d / c)
  return $ "Answer: " ++ ans
calc_1 = calc 1 2 — "Answer: 0.42857142857142855"
calc 2 = \text{calc } 0 (-3) - ?
```

```
calc :: Double → Double → String
calc a b = ('runCont' id) $ do
 ans \leftarrow callCC \ \k \rightarrow do
          c ← return $ a*2 + b + 3
          when (c == 0) (k "oops dividing by 0")
          d ← return $ a + b
          return $ show (d / c)
  return $ "Answer: " ++ ans
calc1 :: String
calc1 = calc 1 2 - "Answer: 0.42857142857142855"
calc2 :: String
calc2 = calc 0 (-3) - "Answer: oops dividing by 0"
```

```
prod :: (Eq a, Num a) ⇒ [a] → a
prod l = ('runCont' id) $ callCC (\k → loop k l)
where
    loop _ [] = return 1
    loop k (0:_) = k 0
    loop k (x:xs) = do
        n ← loop k xs
    return (n*x)
```



```
prod :: (Eq a, Num a) \Rightarrow [a] \rightarrow a
prod l = (\text{runCont'} id) \ callCC (\k \rightarrow loop \ k \ l)
 where
   loop _ [] = return 1
   loop k (0:) = k 0
   loop k(x:xs) = do
        n \leftarrow loop k xs
        return (n*x)
prod [1, 2, 3, 4] - ?
```



³From the Haskell Wiki delcont page

```
prod :: (Eq a, Num a) ⇒ [a] → a
prod 1 = ('runCont' id) $ callCC (\k → loop k 1)
where
    loop _ [] = return 1
    loop k (0:_) = k 0
    loop k (x:xs) = do
        n ← loop k xs
        return (n*x)
prod [1, 2, 3, 4] — 24
```



⁴From the Haskell Wiki delcont page

```
prod :: (Eq a, Num a) \Rightarrow [a] \rightarrow a
prod 1 = ('runCont' id) \frac{1}{2} callCC (\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2} loop k 1)
 where
   loop [] = return 1
   loop k (0:) = k 0
   loop k (x:xs) = do
        n ← loop k xs
        return (n*x)
prod [1, 2, 3, 4] — 24
prod [1, 2, 0, 3, 4] - ?
```



⁵From the Haskell Wiki delcont page

```
prod :: (Eq a, Num a) \Rightarrow [a] \rightarrow a
prod 1 = ('runCont' id) \frac{1}{2} callCC (\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2} loop k 1)
 where
   loop [] = return 1
   loop k (0:) = k 0
   loop k (x:xs) = do
       n ← loop k xs
       return (n*x)
prod [1, 2, 3, 4] — 24
prod [1, 2, 0, 3, 4] - 0 by shortcut
```



What we have done so far

- ▶ We have a way to stop what we were doing (forget k)
- ▶ We have a way to "branch" (use k) twice
- ▶ We didn't talk about it but if $k :: (r \rightarrow r)$ then we can run a function on itself again $(\k k \rightarrow k (k (...)))$
- ► We can eject from a function (callCC)

What you can build with continuations

Lots of different control structures, including

- Exceptions
- Coroutines
- Generators/Iterators

Thanks

References I

All bullets are clockable links.

Tutorials

- ► The Mother of all Monads
- Continuation Passing Style: Haskell Wikibooks
- Continuations in Haskell
- Haskell for All: The Continuation Monad (on modular development using continuations and sum types)
- Understanding Continuations (this one can be a bit tricky for new Haskell users).
- ▶ Understanding the callCC example in above

CallCC

- call/cc implementation StackOverflow
- Example callCC usage (in Scheme)



References II

callCC patterns (in Scheme)

Real World Use

► CPS is great! CPS is terrible! (on the use in attoparsec)

Delimited Continuations

- Delimited Continuations in Haskell tutorial
- Example code for delimited continuations in haskell
- ► Library CC-delcont examples
- Delimited Continuations and co-monads video

Extra Code

Set Example

We can define sets as a list with a careful insertion function.

What is problematic when **insert** is given a value already in the set? (Modified problem from Okasaki's "Purely Functional Data Structures", problem 2.3)

insert allocates unneeded nodes

Given a set s.

```
s = a : b : c : d : e : f : []
```

insert allocates unneeded nodes

Given a set s.

insert allocates a (mostly) new Set.

A "smarter" insert

Let's use a continuation to return **s** when **x** is in **s**.

```
insert' :: Eq a ⇒ Set a → a → Set a
insert' s' x = ('runCont' id) $ callCC (\k → insertShortcut k s')
where
    insertShortcut _ (Set []) = return $ Set [x]
    insertShortcut k (Set (y:ys)) =
        if x == y
            then k s'
        else insertShortcut k ⇒ setcons y $ Set ys

setcons y (Set ys) = return $ Set (y : ys)
```

insert' uses less memory

Given a set s.

insert' returns the same s if an element x is in s.

```
{-----
- Testing with IO -
____}
io1 :: Int → ContT () IO String
io1 x = ContT ^{\$} \k \rightarrow do
    putStrLn "io1 start"
    k $ show x
    putStrLn "io1 end"
io2 :: String → ContT () IO String
io2 s = ContT \ \k \rightarrow do
    putStrLn "io2 start"
    k (s + "io2")
    putStrLn "io2 end"
ioExample :: Int → ContT () IO String
ioExample = io1 \implies io2
```

From the "Understanding Continuations" FP article.