

Whiteboard Chat Application with Half-Duplex Communication

Joseph Butterworth
jdb1g20@soton.ac.uk
MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Personal Tutor: Tracy Melvin

Abstract:

1. Introduction

2. Theory

2.1. QPainter

How will the send-window allow users to draw diagrams? How will it display diagrams as they are being drawn, and how will it retain these diagrams so that they don't disappear when the window is repainted?

QPainter is a part of the qt library family that allows you to draw pixel graphics. For this application, QPainter will be used to modify a QImage.

2.2. Threads and Mutexes

text

How will you use threads to send and receive these packets, while the rest of the application keeps running? How will you use mutexes to make any relevant collections "thread-safe"?

2.3. Serialisation

How will you serialize these commands into packets to be sent from the send window?

How will you convert binary packets into a stream of 1's and 0's? How will you transmit this stream in a reliable way? For example, you may need to signal when a bit is ready to be read, and when the receive window has finished reading the current bit.

2.4. Simplex, Half-Duplex, and Duplex Communication

How will you represent the drawing commands so that they can be sent to the other user whilst they are being

drawn?

How will you receive and buffer packets at the other end? How will you deserialize them? How will you draw them on the receive window? How will you retain the currently received diagram so that when the window is repainted the diagram isn't lost?

3. Implementation

3.1. The GUI - Send and Receive Window

On initiation, the program creates new instances of the sendWindow and receiveWindow classes. The new windows are then given defined parameters, they are named and resized to a proportion of the screen they are being displayed on.

```
QScreen *screen =
    QGuiApplication::primaryScreen();
QRect screenGeometry = screen->geometry();
int height = screenGeometry.height();
int width = screenGeometry.width();

// Creating send window
QPixmap sendpix(QDir::currentPath()
    + "/Icons/send_icon.png");

sendWindow sendW(nullptr);
sendW.setWindowIcon(sendpix);
sendW.setWindowTitle("Send Window");
sendW.resize(width/3, height/2);
sendW.move(width/9, height/4);
sendW.show();
```

The sendWindow and receiveWindow classes inherited from QMainWindow. To enable either the user or the draw commands the central widgets were set to

be their respective canvas classes, sendCanvas and receiveCanvas.

```
sendCanvas::sendCanvas(QWidget *parent)
    : QWidget(parent)
```

The central canvases would draw by taking the position of an input, for the send window a mouse click and for the receive window the position data passed to it by the send window, and drawing a rectangle between them. For the send window the mousePressEvent(), mouseMoveEvent() and mouseReleaseEvent() were all overwritten. The program is able to draw curves and circles owing to the mouseMoveEvent() function being overwritten, this receives a lot of information from the mouse as it is constantly polling, hence all the rectangles are really small and to create a smooth line.

```
QPainter painter(&drawImage);

// Create pen and draw line
QPen newPen(areaBrushStyle, areaPenWidth,
            areaPenStyle, areaCapStyle,
            Qt::RoundJoin);
newPen.setColor(areaColour);
painter.setPen(newPen);
painter.drawLine(prevPoint, endPoint);

// Maintain radius whilst drawing
int radius = (areaPenWidth / 2) + 2;
update(QRect(prevPoint, endPoint)
        .normalized().adjusted(-radius,
                                -radius, +radius, +radius));

// Update point
prevPoint = endPoint;
```

When using the drawLine() function the program uses QPainter to draw a line from the last known position to the new position. It maintains the previous drawings by loading an image of the previous inputs, the private variable drawImage, as the canvas and overlaying the new rectangle on top of that.

In addition to the central UI of the canvas, the send window also has a menubar and toolbar that allows users to easily interact with the program as in Figure 2, in an easy to use fashion. The user inputs used the QMenubar and QToolbar functionality, to easily add buttons to the menubar and toolbar.

```
// Toolbar
auto *colour = new QAction("&Colour", this);
auto *width = new QAction("&PenWidth", this);
```

```
QToolBar *toolbar =
    addToolBar("main_toolbar");
toolbar->addAction(colour);
toolbar->addSeparator();
toolbar->addAction(width);

connect(colour, &QAction::triggered, this,
        &sendWindow::colour);
connect(width, &QAction::triggered, this,
        &sendWindow::penWidth);
```

These buttons were connected to member functions, that used the QFileDialog, QInputDialog and QColorDialog, this allowed for effective handling of opening files, saving the screen as an image, getting the pen width and the pen colour respectively, shown in Figures 3 & 4. Using the Qt library family allowed the program to use dialog boxes in a way that would be familiar to any user.

```
// Get image file formats
const QList<QByteArray> imageFormats =
    QImageWriter::supportedImageFormats();

// Create file filter from QList
QString fileFilter = "";
for(const QByteArray &format : imageFormats)
{
    fileFilter.append(tr("%1_Files_(*.%2)")
                    .arg(QString::fromLatin1(format)
                        .toUpper(),
                        QString::fromLatin1(format)));
    fileFilter.append(";");
}
//qDebug() << fileFilter;

// Set filename from dialog box
QString fileName =
    QFileDialog::getSaveFileName(this,
    tr("Save File"), QDir::currentPath()
    + "/untitled", fileFilter);

// Set fileformat from dialog box
char *format = fileName.split(".").last()
    .toUtf8().data();

// Pass to draw area function
if (!fileName.isEmpty())
    canvas->saveArea(fileName, format);
```

3.2. The Serialise and Deserialise Drawing Commands

To pass the

```
uint16_t temp[3] = {serialData.opcode,
    serialData.xPosition,
    serialData.yPosition};
bool serialisedArray[48];

// Loop over each element of the
//temporary array
for(int i = 0; i < 3; i++)
{
    for(int j = 15; j >= 0; j--)
    {
        // Convert to binary
        if (temp[i] >= pow(2, j))
        {
            temp[i] -= pow(2, j);

            // Increase Local Count
            serialisedArray[i*j+j] = true;
        }
    }
}
```

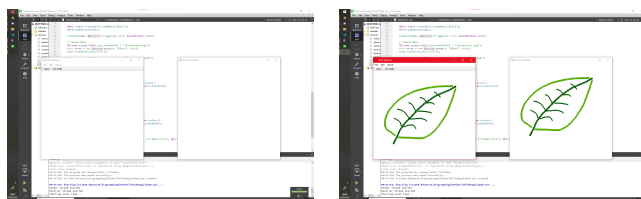
3.3. The Send and Receive Threads

text

3.4. Communication Protocol using Booleans

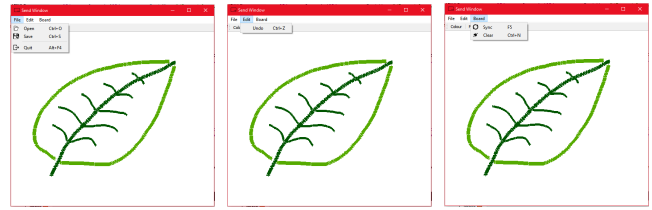
text

4. Final Application



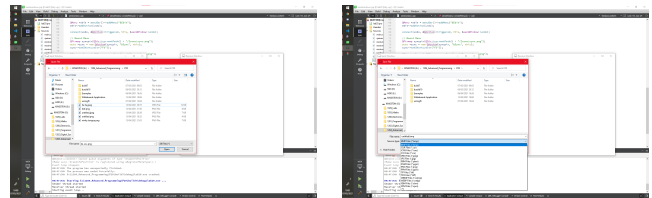
(a) Send and receive windows when application is opened (b) Send and receive windows after drawing

Figure 1: Send and receive windows open on screen and allow drawing between them



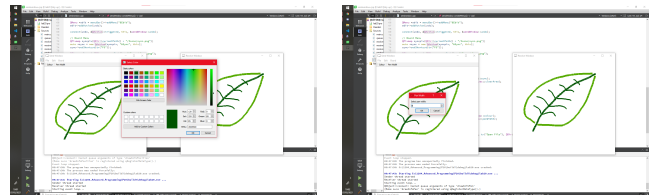
(a) File Menu with opening saving and closing (b) Edit Menu with the undo allows the screen functionality, redo to be cleared or was to be added later (c) Board menu allows the screen windows to be synced

Figure 2: Menus allow the user to control the program



(a) Open file dialog (b) Save file dialog

Figure 3: File handling dialogs using QFileDialog



(a) Colour selection dialog box (b) Pen width control dialog box

Figure 4: Dialog boxes to control the QPen characteristics

5. Discussion

6. Conclusion