Graphical User Interfaces
Programs With GUIs

• A Java program with a GUI, or graphical user interface, is pretty routine in most respects
  – It declares and manipulates the values of some variables of various types, albeit new ones intended for use in developing GUIs (e.g., buttons, scrollbars, drawing panels, etc.)

• There is just one (big) issue...
The User Interaction Problem

• Not just your program, but an end-user, can spontaneously change the “state” of any active user interface widget (e.g., click a button, check a box, move a slider, scroll a document, press a key, etc.)

• **Problem**: How does your program know *when* the user has attempted to provide input to the program via a widget, and determine *which* widget has been manipulated?
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  User interaction includes the keyboard—and any other input devices, e.g., a Kinect controller; so, it goes well beyond reading characters using a SimpleReader.
Terminology

• The act of a user manipulating a widget is called an **event** for that widget

• The widget the user has manipulated is called the **subject** of the interaction

• The objects in your program that need to do something in response to the events for a particular subject are called **observers** (or **listeners**) for that subject
Solution #1: Use Polling

- The main program (the only observer) continually **polls** each possible subject to ask whether any events have occurred.
- This is considered cumbersome...
Polling Pseudo-code

`while (true) {
  if (s₀ has experienced an event) {
    if (event is e₀) {
      respond to it
    } else if (event is e₁) {
      respond to it
    } else ...
  } else if (s₁ has experienced an event) {
    ...
  }
}`
Solution #2: Use Callbacks

- Each observer (there may be many) registers its interest in a subject’s events, and then waits until the subject calls it back to tell it that there has been an event.
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But how? What does this mean?
The Observer Pattern

• Each subject expects each observer (listener) to register itself with that subject if it is interested in the subject’s events

• Each subject keeps track of its own set of interested observers

• Whenever an event occurs, the subject invokes a specific callback method for each registered observer, passing an event argument that describes the event
The Observer Pattern

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• Each subject keeps track of its own set of interested observers.

• Whenever an event occurs, the subject invokes a specific callback method for each registered observer, passing an event argument that describes the event.

Registering interest is done by calling a method of the subject; usually this is done once as part of set-up.
The Observer Pattern

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• Each subject keeps track of its own set of interested observers.
• Whenever an event occurs, the subject invokes a specific callback method for each registered observer, passing an event argument that describes the event.

The set of observers for a given subject can be kept in a Set variable, for example.
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This method is described in an interface that any potential observer must implement.
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This is one of many object-oriented design patterns that address common OOP issues (often language deficiencies); most are considered best practices.
Example: Simple GUI Demo

JFrame

ACTIONLISTENER

extends

implements

DemoGUI
Example: Simple GUI Demo

Components from Java’s Swing Framework

- JFrame
- ActionListener

DemoGUI extends JFrame and implements ActionListener.
Example: Simple GUI Demo

Components from Java’s Swing Framework

JFrame

extends

DemoGUI

implements ActionListener

This class is the type of the main window of a GUI application.
Example: Simple GUI Demo

Components from Java’s Swing Framework

JFrame

does not extend DemoGUI

extends

implies

This interface declares the callback method: actionPerformed.
Example: Simple GUI Demo

Components from Java’s Swing Framework

This class (our code) contains the **body** of the `actionPerformed` method, based on the program’s intent, and other code to set up the GUI.
Important Interfaces/Methods

```java
interface ActionListener {
    void actionPerformed(ActionEvent e);
}

interface ActionEvent {
    Object getSource();
    ...
}
```
The class `Object` is special in Java: **every class** extends `Object`! We will return to this later...
Fundamentals: DemoGUI

**JFrame**

**JPanel**

**JButton**

**JTextArea** in **JScrollPane**
This is the underlying type of the main window of a GUI application using Swing.
Nested inside a JFrame’s **content pane**, you can put any number of things …

![Diagram showing JFrame, JPanel, JButton, JTextArea, and JScrollPane](image)

- JFrame
- JPanel
- JButton
- JTextArea in JScrollPane
... such as a JPanel ...
... and nested inside a `JPanel`, you can put any number of, e.g., `JButtons`.
You can also put in a JFrame a JScrollPane with, e.g., a JTextArea.
It’s Demo Time

• The DemoGUI1 project contains a very simple GUI application using Swing

• You can get it at:
  http://web.cse.ohio-state.edu/software/common/DemoGUI1.zip
Instance Variables

• Variables can be declared:
  – in method bodies: local variables
  – in method headers: formal parameters
  – in classes: fields or instance variables

• Examples of instance variables:
  – resetButton, copyButton, inputText, outputText, input, output

• Instance variables are essentially global variables that are shared by and can be accessed from all instance methods in the class
Set Up by DemoGUI Constructor

- resetButton
- copyButton

(this (DemoGUI) (and other widgets))
Before registration of this as an observer of the buttons.
After registration of this as an observer of the buttons.
Now, Who’s In Charge?

• Note: when DemoGUI is executed:
  – DemoGUI.main starts execution
    • Constructor for DemoGUI is called by main
    • Constructor for DemoGUI returns to main
  – DemoGUI.main finishes execution
• After that, what code is executing?
Threads

- A standard Java program executes in a thread, i.e., a single path of sequential code executing one step at a time.
- A GUI program with Swing uses at least two threads rather than one:
  - The initial thread executes `main` (until it completes).
  - An event dispatch thread executes everything else, including `actionPerformed`.
Timeline of Thread Execution

main

time
Timeline of Thread

This is the initial thread; main executes...
Timeline of Thread

... until it calls the DemoGUI constructor, which executes...
... until it calls the JFrame constructor (super), which starts Swing code executing in the event dispatch thread...
Timeline of Thread Execution

... and the DemoGUI constructor continues until it returns to main...
Timeline of Thread Execution

main

Swing code

... and main continues until it completes; end of initial thread.
The event dispatch thread is now the only executing thread.
Timeline of Thread Execution

An event results in a call to \texttt{actionPerformed}...
... and when it returns, the Swing code resumes; and so on.
Layout Managers

• A **layout manager** allows you to arrange widgets without providing specific location coordinates
  – GridLayout (simplest?; used in DemoGUI)
  – FlowLayout (default for JPanel)
  – BorderLayout (default for JFrame)
  – ...

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Java GUI Packages

• Some important packages in the Java libraries for GUI components:
  - `java.awt`
  - `java.awt.event`
  - `javax.swing`
  - ...

Java Swing Widgets

- Some important classes in `javax.swing`:
  - JFrame
  - JPanel
  - JButton
  - JScrollPane
  - JTextArea
  - JCheckBox
  - JComboBox
  - ...
Resources

• Java Tutorials (and beyond...)
  – http://docs.oracle.com/javase/tutorial/uiswing/index.html

• A Visual Guide to Layout Managers
  – http://docs.oracle.com/javase/tutorial/uiswing/layout/visual.html