
Searching and Strings

IST 256

Application Programming for Information Systems

Searching for Strings

- In an array, we do a simple linear search for an item by going through the array in order from the first and comparing each item to the search string.

```
String [ ] names = new String [20];
String searchname = ... ; // get a value to search for
for (int i = 0; i < names.length; i ++)
{
    if ( names[i].equals(searchname))
    {
        //found one!
    }
}
```

Searching for Strings

- If we want to find only one (the first one), we can save it and exit from the loop:

```
String [ ] names = new String [20];
String searchname = ... ; // get a value to search for
String resultname = "";
for (int i = 0; i < names.length; i ++ ) {
    if ( names[i].equals(searchname))
    {
        resultname = names[i];
        break;
    }
}
// display the result
```

“break” causes the program to break out of the loop; immediately jump to the end

Searching for Strings

- But if we don't find one, we can display that, too:

```
String [ ] names = new String [20];
String searchname = ... ; // get a value to search for
String resultname = "";
for (int i = 0; i < names.length; i ++) {
    if ( names[i].equals(searchname))
    {
        resultname = names[i];
        break;
    }
}
// if still empty result, then it was not found
if (resultname.equals("")) {
    resultname = "No match found."
}
// display resultname
```

Searching for Strings

- If there's more than one match, we can find them all:

```
String [ ] names = new String [20];
String searchname = ... ; // get a value to search for
String resulthead = "<html>Result: <p>:";
String resultnames = "";
for (int i = 0; i < names.length; i++) {
    if ( names[i].equals(searchname))
    {
        resultnames = resultnames + "<p>" + names[i];
    }
}
// if still empty result, then none was found
if (resultnames.equals("")) {
    resultnames = "No match found."
}
// display resulthead + resultnames
```

Search Criteria

- So far, we have used an exact string match with the string function equals

```
names[i].equals(searchname)
```

- Suppose that we want to find names where the search name is the start of the name (e.g. “Alex Brown” and we search for “Al” or “Alex”)

```
names[i].startsWith(searchname)
```

uses the String function startsWith

Search Criteria

- Or suppose that we want the strings to match regardless of capitalization. This is called “ignoring case”, and there is another equals method that will ignore case in doing the comparison:

```
names[i].equalsIgnoreCase(searchname)
```

- An alternate method is to use the `.toLowerCase()` method to convert both strings to lower case and then compare them.

```
names[i].toLowerCase().equals(searchname.toLowerCase())
```

Note that this is particularly useful if you want to use other comparison operators, such as `startsWith()`

Search Criteria

- Or suppose that we want to find the search string as a substring of the name, anywhere that it occurs. There is a String function contains that tests if a substring occurs anywhere in the string

```
names[i].contains(searchname)
```


Search Criteria

- Here is an alternate way to find if the search name is a substring of the name. There is a String function `indexOf` that finds a substring and returns an integer that is the number of the character where the substring occurs (starting from 0)

if searchname is “Alex”,
 `searchname.indexOf(“ex”)`
returns the integer 2, the position where “ex” is in “Alex”

- But if the substring is not found, `indexOf` returns -1, so our search criteria becomes
 `names[i].indexOf(searchname) != -1`

Other String Functions

- Other useful functions include:
 - endsWith()
 - lastIndexOf()
 - toUpperCase()
 - substring(startIndex, stopIndex) returns the substring that starts at the character at startIndex and ends one character before the stopIndex.
- A complete list is found in the API under the String class:
 - <http://java.sun.com/j2se/1.5.0/docs/api/>
which now redirects to
<http://download.oracle.com/javase/1.5.0/docs/api/>
 - Where you scroll down to find the String class in the lower left pane
 - And note that String “implements” the CharSequence class, so you are allowed to pass a String to any method that asks for a CharSequence parameter.

Search that returns index

- In the examples so far, when we found a string that matches, we display or save the string. But sometimes we should just save the index where we found the match
 - This is particularly useful in an array of class instances, where we search on one criteria (height of student) but want to display another (name of tallest student)

```
String [ ] names = new String [20];
String searchname = ... ; // get a value to search for
String resultindex = -1;
for (int i = 0; i < names.length; i++) {
    if ( names[i].equals(searchname))
    {
        resultindex = i;
        break;
    }
}
// display the result at resultindex,
//     where resultindex == -1 means “not found”
```

Searching for largest or smallest

- In this case, we are not searching to match an already known value, but searching to find the one larger or smaller than all the rest
- Strategy:
 - Pick the first one to be the “largest so far”,
 - Loop over the array: if any item is larger, make it be the “largest so far”
 - At the end of the loop, the “largest so far” is largest

Example: Hottest Temperature

- In this example, we assume an array of (integer) temperatures and we find the largest value:

```
int indexSoFar, hottestTemp;
// index of hottest temperature so far is at 0
indexSoFar = 0;
// loop over array to keep finding index of new hottest temperature so far
for(int i = 1; i < numtemps; i++)
{
    if (temperatures[i] > temperatures[indexSoFar])
    {
        indexSoFar = i;
    }
}
hottestTemp = temperatures[indexSoFar];
hottestLabel.setText("Hottest temperature: " + hottestTemp);
```

Digression on primitive types vs. classes

- In Java, primitive types (int, double, boolean) use operators, while classes have fields and methods. But arrays and Strings have a mix:

	Operators	Use new constructor	Use fields and methods
Primitive types: int, double, boolean	Yes +, -, *, /, &&,	No	No
Arrays	Indexing: []	Mostly: new int []	.length
Strings	Catenation: +	No	Mostly: .equals, indexOf, etc.
Everything else	No	Yes	Yes