

Tip 43: Wrap substructures in parent structures

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level: You have lots of structures floating around
purpose: quickly jump around your hierarchy of types

As per tip 39 (Entry #089), inheritance is obnoxiously simple in C: use substructures. If you have `base_struct` which is somehow fixed and immutable, but you want to add information to it, then set up a new struct with bonus features:

```
typedef struct {
    base_struct base;
    color_struct now_with_color;
    audio_struct whizz, bang;
} better_struct;
```

OK, you're done: now when you allocate a `better_struct`, let us name it `bb`, you can use the original library of operations on `bb.base` as before.

What's the syntax for multiple inheritance and mixins? Add as many base structs to the new struct as you wish.

Apophenia does this: the `apop_data` struct is a `gsl_matrix` and a `gsl_vector` plus bells and whistles, which means that you can allocate an `apop_data` set `ad` and use the GNU Scientific Library's full arsenal on `ad->matrix` or `ad->vector`. That is, using functions that call the base struct is trivial.

The other direction can be an annoyance: you've got a `gsl_matrix`, and would like to use a function that requires a `apop_data` set with as little hassle as possible. How can you get the system to allocate the requisite extra stuff around the matrix that you care about?

Designated initializers, of course.

Apophenia has a wrapper to take dot products, because I hate the BLAS syntax (Basic Linear Algebra Subroutines—and for needs in the present day, is it ever basic).

```
#include <apop.h>
```

```
int main() {
```

```
    //Let us allocate a matrix & vector via designated initializers.
    //It's not easy: more on this below.
```

```

gsl_vector *v1 = &(gsl_vector){.size=3, .stride=1,
                             .data = (double[]){1, 2, 3}};
gsl_matrix *m1 = &(gsl_matrix){.size1=3, .size2=3, .tda=3,
                              .data = (double[]){1, 0, 0,
                                                  0, 0, 1,
                                                  0, 1, 0
                              }};

//wrap the matrix and vector in apop_data structs.
//This is easy.
printf("method 1:\n");
apop_data *d1 = &(apop_data){.matrix=m1};
apop_data *d2 = &(apop_data){.vector=v1};
apop_data *out = apop_dot(d1, d2);
apop_data_show(out);

//or even easier:
printf("method 2:\n");
out = apop_dot(
    &(apop_data){.matrix=m1},
    &(apop_data){.vector=v1});
apop_data_show(out);

//Or, via macros
#define Data_from_matrix(m) &(apop_data){.matrix=(m)}
#define Data_from_vector(v) &(apop_data){.vector=(v)}

out = apop_dot(Data_from_matrix(m1), Data_from_vector(v1));
printf("method 3:\n");
apop_data_show(out);
}

```

Making this happen actually took some planning, because there are now two ways to allocate the structure: you could use the official allocation function, or you can use designated initializers to pop a struct into existence. We generally don't like having two ways to do something, but for a struct explicitly designed to wrap an already-useful structure, it's hard to say no to such easy wrapping. Which is where the planning comes in: functions that take in the structure need to accept a fully-allocated data structure or a structure that is mostly empty. For the `apop_data`, it's not such a problem, because functions have an eye out for inputs which are mostly zero. The `gsl_matrix` and `_vector`, however, don't gracefully deal with having certain basically internal elements, the `tda` and `stride`, at zero.