

# Observer Design Pattern

## Event-Driven Design



EECS3311 M: Software Design  
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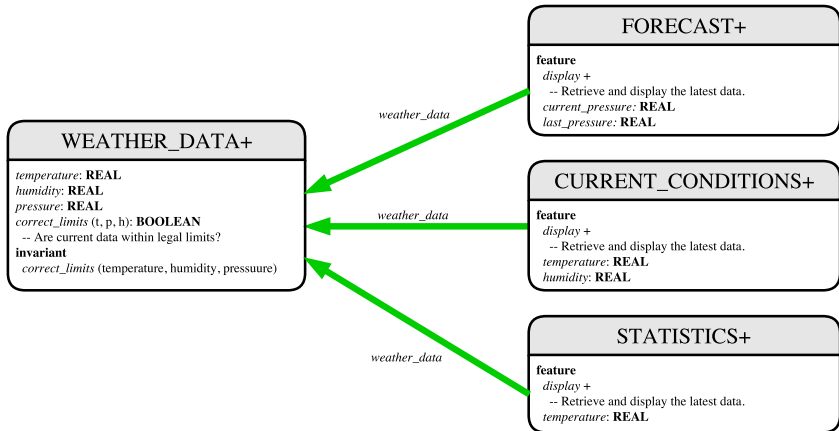
CHEN-WEI WANG

# Motivating Problem



- A *weather station* maintains *weather data* such as *temperature*, *humidity*, and *pressure*.
- Various kinds of applications on these *weather data* should regularly update their *displays*:
  - *Condition*: *temperature* in celsius and *humidity* in percentages.
  - *Forecast*: if expecting for rainy weather due to reduced *pressure*.
  - *Statistics*: minimum/maximum/average measures of *temperature*.

# First Design: Weather Station



**Whenever** the `display` feature is called, **retrieve** the current values of temperature, humidity, and/or pressure via the `weather_data` reference.

# Implementing the First Design (1)

```
class WEATHER_DATA create make
feature -- Data
  temperature: REAL
  humidity: REAL
  pressure: REAL
feature -- Queries
  correct_limits(t,p,h: REAL): BOOLEAN
  ensure
    Result implies -36 <= t and t <= 60
    Result implies 50 <= p and p <= 110
    Result implies 0.8 <= h and h <= 100
feature -- Commands
  make (t, p, h: REAL)
  require
    correct_limits(temperature, pressure, humidity)
  ensure
    temperature = t and pressure = p and humidity = h
invariant
  correct_limits(temperature, pressure, humidity)
end
```

## Implementing the First Design (2.1)

```
class FORECAST create make
feature -- Attributes
  current_pressure: REAL
  last_pressure: REAL
  weather_data: WEATHER_DATA
feature -- Commands
  make(wd: WEATHER_DATA)
    ensure weather_data = wd
  update
    do last_pressure := current_pressure
      current_pressure := weather_data.pressure
    end
  display
    do update
      if current_pressure > last_pressure then
        print("Improving weather on the way!%N")
      elseif current_pressure = last_pressure then
        print("More of the same%N")
      else print("Watch out for cooler, rainy weather%N") end
    end
  end
end
```

## Implementing the First Design (2.2)

```
class CURRENT_CONDITIONS create make
feature -- Attributes
  temperature: REAL
  humidity: REAL
  weather_data: WEATHER_DATA
feature -- Commands
  make(wd: WEATHER_DATA)
    ensure weather_data = wd
  update
    do temperature := weather_data.temperature
       humidity := weather_data.humidity
    end
  display
    do update
       io.put_string("Current Conditions: ")
       io.put_real (temperature) ; io.put_string (" degrees C and ")
       io.put_real (humidity) ; io.put_string (" percent humidity%N")
    end
end
```

## Implementing the First Design (2.3)

```
class STATISTICS create make
feature -- Attributes
  weather_data: WEATHER_DATA
  current_temp: REAL
  max, min, sum_so_far: REAL
  num_readings: INTEGER
feature -- Commands
  make(wd: WEATHER_DATA)
    ensure weather_data = wd
  update
  do current_temp := weather_data.temperature
    -- Update min, max if necessary.
  end
  display
  do update
    print("Avg/Max/Min temperature = ")
    print(sum_so_far / num_readings + "/" + max + "/" min + "%N")
  end
end
```

## Implementing the First Design (3)

```
1  class WEATHER_STATION create make
2  feature -- Attributes
3      cc: CURRENT_CONDITIONS ; fd: FORECAST ; sd: STATISTICS
4      wd: WEATHER_DATA
5  feature -- Commands
6      make
7          do create wd.make (9, 75, 25)
8              create cc.make (wd) ; create fd.make (wd) ; create sd.make(wd)
9
10         wd.set_measurements (15, 60, 30.4)
11         cc.display ; fd.display ; sd.display
12         cc.display ; fd.display ; sd.display
13
14         wd.set_measurements (11, 90, 20)
15         cc.display ; fd.display ; sd.display
16     end
17 end
```

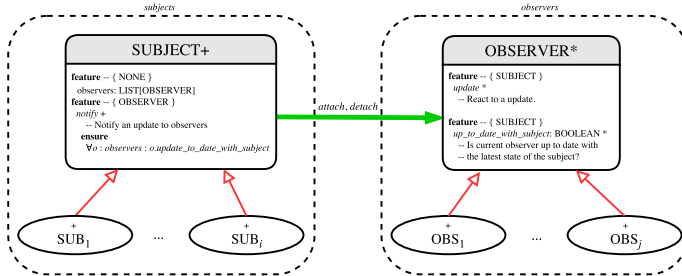
**L14:** Updates occur on cc, fd, sd even with the same data.



# First Design: Good Design?

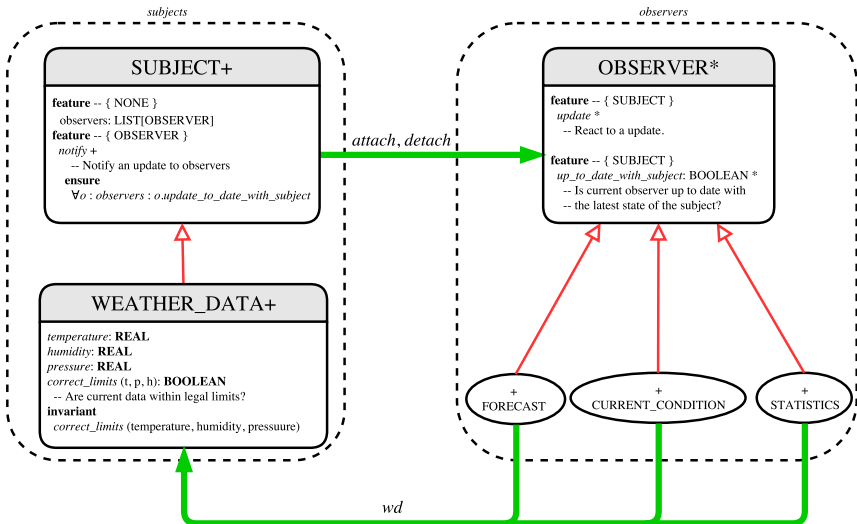
- Each application (CURRENT\_CONDITION, FORECAST, STATISTICS) *cannot know* when the weather data change.
  - ⇒ All applications have to periodically initiate updates in order to keep the `display` results up to date.
  - ∴ Each inquiry of current weather data values is *a remote call*.
  - ∴ Waste of computing resources (e.g., network bandwidth) when there are actually no changes on the weather data.
- To avoid such overhead, it is better to let:
  - Each application is *subscribed/attached/registered* to the weather data.
  - The weather station *publish/notify* new changes.
    - ⇒ Updates on the application side occur only *when necessary*.

# Observer Pattern: Architecture



- Observer (publish-subscribe) pattern: **one-to-many** relation.
  - Observers (*subscribers*) are attached to a subject (*publisher*).
  - The subject notify its attached observers about changes.
- Some interchangeable vocabulary:
  - subscribe  $\approx$  attach  $\approx$  register
  - unsubscribe  $\approx$  detach  $\approx$  unregister
  - publish  $\approx$  notify
  - handle  $\approx$  update

# Observer Pattern: Weather Station



# Implementing the Observer Pattern (1.1)

```
class SUBJECT create make
feature -- Attributes
  observers : LIST[OBSERVER]
feature -- Commands
  make
    do create {LINKED_LIST[OBSERVER]} observers.make
    ensure no_observers: observers.count = 0 end
feature -- Invoked by an OBSERVER
  attach (o: OBSERVER) -- Add 'o' to the observers
    require not_yet_attached: not observers.has (o)
    ensure is_attached: observers.has (o) end
  detach (o: OBSERVER) -- Add 'o' to the observers
    require currently_attached: observers.has (o)
    ensure is_attached: not observers.has (o) end
feature -- invoked by a SUBJECT
  notify -- Notify each attached observer about the update.
    do across observers as cursor loop cursor.item.update end
    ensure all_views_updated:
      across observers as o all o.item.up_to_date_with_subject end
    end
end
```

# Implementing the Observer Pattern (1.2)

```
class WEATHER_DATA
inherit SUBJECT rename make as make_subject end
create make
feature -- data available to observers
  temperature: REAL
  humidity: REAL
  pressure: REAL
  correct_limits(t,p,h: REAL): BOOLEAN
feature -- Initialization
  make (t, p, h: REAL)
  do
    make_subject -- initialize empty observers
    set_measurements (t, p, h)
  end
feature -- Called by weather station
  set_measurements(t, p, h: REAL)
  require correct_limits(t,p,h)
invariant
  correct_limits(temperature, pressure, humidity)
end
```

# Implementing the Observer Pattern (2.1)

```
deferred class
  OBSERVER
  feature -- To be effected by a descendant
    up_to_date_with_subject: BOOLEAN
      -- Is this observer up to date with its subject?
      deferred
      end

  update
    -- Update the observer's view of 's'
    deferred
    ensure
      up_to_date_with_subject: up_to_date_with_subject
    end
end
```

Each effective descendant class of `OBSERVER` should:

- Define what weather data are required to be up-to-date.
- Define how to update the required weather data.

## Implementing the Observer Pattern (2.2)

```
class FORECAST
inherit OBSERVER
feature -- Commands
  make(a_weather_data: WEATHER_DATA)
  do weather_data := a_weather_data
    weather_data.attach (Current)
  ensure weather_data = a_weather_data
    weather_data.observers.has (Current)
  end
feature -- Queries
up_to_date_with_subject: BOOLEAN
  ensure then
    Result = current_pressure = weather_data.pressure
  update
  do -- Same as 1st design; Called only on demand
  end
  display
  do -- No need to update; Display contents same as in 1st design
  end
end
```

## Implementing the Observer Pattern (2.3)

```
class CURRENT_CONDITIONS
inherit OBSERVER
feature -- Commands
  make(a_weather_data: WEATHER_DATA)
  do weather_data := a_weather_data
    weather_data.attach (Current)
  ensure weather_data = a_weather_data
    weather_data.observers.has (Current)
  end
feature -- Queries
up_to_date_with_subject: BOOLEAN
  ensure then Result = temperature = weather_data.temperature and
    humidity = weather_data.humidity

update
  do -- Same as 1st design; Called only on demand
  end
display
  do -- No need to update; Display contents same as in 1st design
  end
end
```



## Implementing the Observer Pattern (2.4)

```
class STATISTICS
inherit OBSERVER
feature -- Commands
  make(a_weather_data: WEATHER_DATA)
  do weather_data := a_weather_data
    weather_data.attach (Current)
  ensure weather_data = a_weather_data
    weather_data.observers.has (Current)
  end
feature -- Queries
up_to_date_with_subject: BOOLEAN
  ensure then
    Result = current_temperature = weather_data.temperature
  update
  do -- Same as 1st design; Called only on demand
  end
display
  do -- No need to update; Display contents same as in 1st design
  end
end
```

## Implementing the Observer Pattern (3)

```
1 class WEATHER_STATION create make
2 feature -- Attributes
3   cc: CURRENT_CONDITIONS ; fd: FORECAST ; sd: STATISTICS
4   wd: WEATHER_DATA
5 feature -- Commands
6   make
7     do create wd.make (9, 75, 25)
8       create cc.make (wd) ; create fd.make (wd) ; create sd.make (wd)
9
10    wd.set_measurements (15, 60, 30.4)
11    wd.notify
12    cc.display ; fd.display ; sd.display
13    cc.display ; fd.display ; sd.display
14
15    wd.set_measurements (11, 90, 20)
16    wd.notify
17    cc.display ; fd.display ; sd.display
18 end
19 end
```

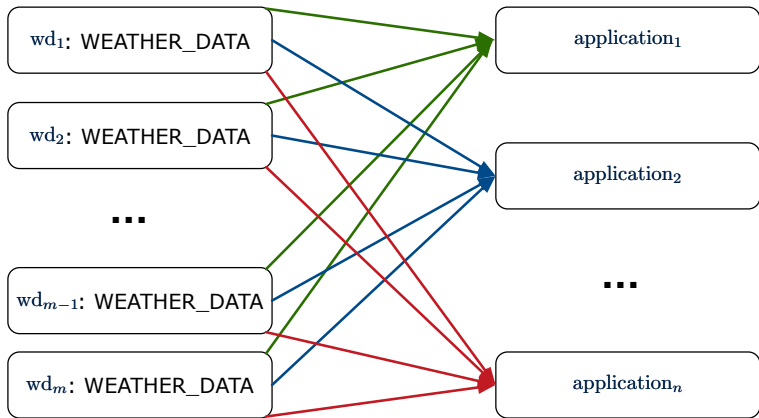
**L13:** cc, fd, sd make use of “cached” data values.

## Observer Pattern: Limitation? (1)

- The *observer design pattern* is a reasonable solution to building a *one-to-many* relationship: one subject (publisher) and multiple observers (subscribers).
- But what if a *many-to-many* relationship is required for the application under development?
  - *Multiple weather data* are maintained by weather stations.
  - Each application observes *all* these *weather data*.
  - But, each application still stores the *latest* measure only. e.g., the statistics app stores one copy of `temperature`
  - Whenever some weather station updates the `temperature` of its associated *weather data*, all relevant subscribed applications (i.e., current conditions, statistics) should update their temperatures.
- How can the observer pattern solve this general problem?
  - Each *weather data* maintains a list of subscribed *applications*.
  - Each *application* is subscribed to *multiple weather data*.

## Observer Pattern: Limitation? (2)

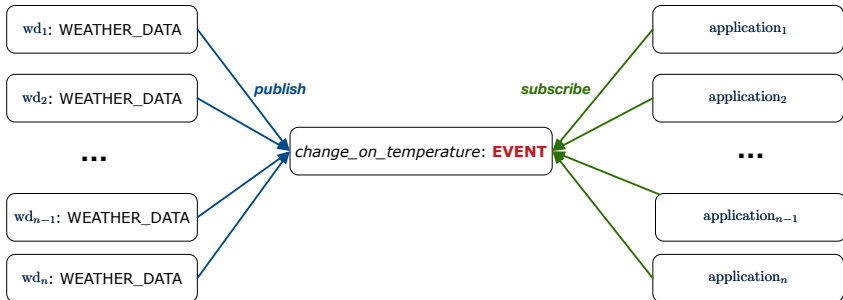
What happens at runtime when building a *many-to-many* relationship using the *observer pattern*?



Graph complexity, with  $m$  subjects and  $n$  observers? [  $O(m \cdot n)$  ]

# Event-Driven Design (1)

Here is what happens at runtime when building a *many-to-many* relationship using the *event-driven design*.



Graph complexity, with  $m$  subjects and  $n$  observers?  $[O(m + n)]$

Additional cost by adding a new subject?  $[O(1)]$

Additional cost by adding a new observer?  $[O(1)]$

Additional cost by adding a new event type?  $[O(m + n)]$

## Event-Driven Design (2)

In an *event-driven design*:

- Each variable being observed (e.g., temperature, humidity, pressure) is called a *monitored variable*.  
e.g., A nuclear power plant (i.e., the *subject*) has its temperature and pressure being *monitored* by a shutdown system (i.e., an *observer*): as soon as values of these *monitored variables* exceed the normal threshold, the SDS will be notified and react by shutting down the plant.
- Each *monitored variable* is declared as an *event*:
  - An *observer* is *attached/subscribed* to the relevant events.
    - CURRENT\_CONDITION attached to events for temperature, humidity.
    - FORECAST only subscribed to the event for pressure.
    - STATISTICS only subscribed to the event for temperature.
  - A *subject notifies/publishes* changes to the relevant events.

# Event-Driven Design: Implementation

- Requirements for implementing an *event-driven design* are:
  1. When an *observer* object is *subscribed to* an *event*, it attaches:
    - 1.1 The **reference/pointer** to an update operation  
Such reference/pointer is used for delayed executions.
    - 1.2 Itself (i.e., the **context object** for invoking the update operation)
  2. For the *subject* object to *publish* an update to the *event*, it:
    - 2.1 Iterates through all its observers (or listeners)
    - 2.2 Uses the operation reference/pointer (attached earlier) to update the corresponding observer.
- Both requirements can be satisfied by Eiffel and Java.
- We will compare how an *event-driven design* for the weather station problems is implemented in Eiffel and Java.
  - ⇒ It's much more convenient to do such design in Eiffel.

# Event-Driven Design in Java (1)

```
1 public class Event {
2     Hashtable<Object, MethodHandle> listenersActions;
3     Event() { listenersActions = new Hashtable<>(); }
4     void subscribe(Object listener, MethodHandle action) {
5         listenersActions.put(listener, action);
6     }
7     void publish(Object arg) {
8         for (Object listener : listenersActions.keySet()) {
9             MethodHandle action = listenersActions.get(listener);
10            try {
11                action.invokeWithArguments(listener, arg);
12            } catch (Throwable e) { }
13        }
14    }
15 }
```

- **L5:** Both the delayed `action` reference and its context object (or call target) `listener` are stored into the table.
- **L11:** An invocation is made from retrieved `listener` and `action`.



## Event-Driven Design in Java (2)

```
1 public class WeatherData {
2     private double temperature;
3     private double pressure;
4     private double humidity;
5     public WeatherData(double t, double p, double h) {
6         setMeasurements(t, h, p);
7     }
8     public static Event changeOnTemperature = new Event();
9     public static Event changeOnHumidity = new Event();
10    public static Event changeOnPressure = new Event();
11    public void setMeasurements(double t, double h, double p) {
12        temperature = t;
13        humidity = h;
14        pressure = p;
15        changeOnTemperature.publish(temperature);
16        changeOnHumidity.publish(humidity);
17        changeOnPressure.publish(pressure);
18    }
19 }
```

# Event-Driven Design in Java (3)

```
1 public class CurrentConditions {
2     private double temperature; private double humidity;
3     public void updateTemperature(double t) { temperature = t; }
4     public void updateHumidity(double h) { humidity = h; }
5     public CurrentConditions() {
6         MethodHandles.Lookup lookup = MethodHandles.lookup();
7         try {
8             MethodHandle ut = lookup.findVirtual(
9                 this.getClass(), "updateTemperature",
10                MethodType.methodType(void.class, double.class));
11            WeatherData.changeOnTemperature.subscribe(this, ut);
12            MethodHandle uh = lookup.findVirtual(
13                this.getClass(), "updateHumidity",
14                MethodType.methodType(void.class, double.class));
15            WeatherData.changeOnHumidity.subscribe(this, uh);
16        } catch (Exception e) { e.printStackTrace(); }
17    }
18    public void display() {
19        System.out.println("Temperature: " + temperature);
20        System.out.println("Humidity: " + humidity); } }
```

# Event-Driven Design in Java (4)

```
1 public class WeatherStation {
2     public static void main(String[] args) {
3         WeatherData wd = new WeatherData(9, 75, 25);
4         CurrentConditions cc = new CurrentConditions();
5         System.out.println("=====");
6         wd.setMeasurements(15, 60, 30.4);
7         cc.display();
8         System.out.println("=====");
9         wd.setMeasurements(11, 90, 20);
10        cc.display();
11    } }
```

L4 invokes

```
WeatherData.changeOnTemperature.subscribe(
    cc, ``updateTemperature handle``)
```

L6 invokes

```
WeatherData.changeOnTemperature.publish(15)
```

which in turn invokes

```
``updateTemperature handle``.invokeWithArguments(cc, 15)
```

# Event-Driven Design in Eiffel (1)

```
1 class EVENT [ARGUMENTS -> TUPLE ]
2 create make
3 feature -- Initialization
4   actions: LINKED_LIST[PROCEDURE[ARGUMENTS]]
5   make do create actions.make end
6 feature
7   subscribe (an_action: PROCEDURE[ARGUMENTS])
8     require action_not_already_subscribed: not actions.has(an_action)
9     do actions.extend (an_action)
10    ensure action_subscribed: action.has(an_action) end
11  publish (args: ARGUMENTS)
12    do from actions.start until actions.after
13      loop actions.item.call (args) ; actions.forth end
14    end
15 end
```

- **L1** constrains the generic parameter ARGUMENTS: any class that instantiates ARGUMENTS must be a *descendant* of TUPLE.
- **L4**: The type *PROCEDURE* encapsulates both the context object and the reference/pointer to some update operation.

## Event-Driven Design in Eiffel (2)

```
1 class WEATHER_DATA
2 create make
3 feature -- Measurements
4   temperature: REAL ; humidity: REAL ; pressure: REAL
5   correct_limits(t,p,h: REAL): BOOLEAN do ... end
6   make (t, p, h: REAL) do ... end
7 feature -- Event for data changes
8   change_on_temperature : EVENT[TUPLE[REAL]] once create Result end
9   change_on_humidity : EVENT[TUPLE[REAL]] once create Result end
10  change_on_pressure : EVENT[TUPLE[REAL]] once create Result end
11 feature -- Command
12   set_measurements(t, p, h: REAL)
13   require correct_limits(t,p,h)
14   do temperature := t ; pressure := p ; humidity := h
15     change_on_temperature .publish ([t])
16     change_on_humidity .publish ([p])
17     change_on_pressure .publish ([h])
18   end
19 invariant correct_limits(temperature, pressure, humidity) end
```

## Event-Driven Design in Eiffel (3)

```

1  class CURRENT_CONDITIONS
2  create make
3  feature -- Initialization
4      make(wd: WEATHER_DATA)
5          do
6              wd.change_on_temperature.subscribe (agent update_temperature)
7              wd.change_on_humidity.subscribe (agent update_humidity)
8          end
9  feature
10     temperature: REAL
11     humidity: REAL
12     update_temperature (t: REAL) do temperature := t end
13     update_humidity (h: REAL) do humidity := h end
14     display do ... end
15 end
  
```

- `agent cmd` retrieves the pointer to `cmd` and its context object.
- `L6`  $\approx$  `... (agent Current.update_temperature)`
- Contrast `L6` with `L8–11` in Java class `CurrentConditions`.

## Event-Driven Design in Eiffel (4)

```
1 class WEATHER_STATION create make
2 feature
3   cc: CURRENT_CONDITIONS
4   make
5     do create wd.make (9, 75, 25)
6       create cc.make (wd)
7         wd.set_measurements (15, 60, 30.4)
8         cc.display
9         wd.set_measurements (11, 90, 20)
10        cc.display
11   end
12 end
```

L6 invokes

```
wd.change_on_temperature.subscribe(  
    agent cc.update_temperature)
```

L7 invokes

```
wd.change_on_temperature.publish([15])
```

which in turn invokes `cc.update_temperature(15)`

# Event-Driven Design: Eiffel vs. Java

- **Storing observers/listeners of an event**

- Java, in the Event class:

```
Hashtable<Object, MethodHandle> listenersActions;
```

- Eiffel, in the EVENT class:

```
actions: LINKED_LIST[PROCEDURE[ARGUMENTS]]
```

- **Creating and passing function pointers**

- Java, in the CurrentConditions class constructor:

```
MethodHandle ut = lookup.findVirtual(  
    this.getClass(), "updateTemperature",  
    MethodType.methodType(void.class, double.class));  
WeatherData.changeOnTemperature.subscribe(this, ut);
```

- Eiffel, in the CURRENT\_CONDITIONS class construction:

```
wd.change_on_temperature.subscribe (agent update_temperature)
```

⇒ Eiffel's type system has been better thought-out for **design**.



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