

Why Dependent Types Matter

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based on joint work with
and cartoons by

Conor McBride



The established social order

⋮

The established social order



terms



The established social order



terms



types

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do all the work



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- Polymorphic types can be use to represent square matrices

$$\text{Matrix } a \quad = \quad \text{Matrix}' \text{ Nil } a$$
$$\text{Matrix}' t a \quad = \quad \text{Zero } (t (t a)) \mid \text{Succ } (\text{Cons } t) a$$
$$\text{Nil } a \quad = \quad \text{Nil}$$
$$\text{Cons } t a \quad = \quad \text{Cons } a (t a)$$

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- Conor showed in *Faking it* how to use the logic programming of Haskell's class system to simulate some usages of dependent types.

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nth — no dependent types

$$\text{let } \frac{A \in * \quad l \in \text{List } A \quad n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{nth } A \ l \ n \in A}$$

nth $A \ l \ n \mapsto ?$

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nth $l n \mapsto ?$

- Hindley-Milner: Type quantification and application can be made implicit.

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$$\text{let } \frac{l \in \text{List } A \quad n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{nth } l \ n \in A}$$

`nth nil n` $\mapsto ?$

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`nth (cons a as) (s n)` \mapsto `nth as n`

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`nth` is not good

let $\frac{l \in \text{List } A \quad n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{nth } l \ n \in A}$

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- The function `nth` is partial

`nth 3 [1, 2]`

leads to a runtime error.

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- The function `nth` is partial

`nth 3 [1, 2]`

leads to a runtime error.

- Reason: The type of `nth` is not informative enough.

data types

data $\frac{}{\text{Nat} \in *}$ where $\frac{}{0 \in \text{Nat}}$ $\frac{n \in \text{Nat}}{s\ n \in \text{Nat}}$

data $\frac{A \in *}{\text{List } A \in *}$ where

$\frac{A \in *}{\text{nil}_A \in \text{List } A}$ $\frac{A \in * \quad a \in A \quad as \in \text{List } A}{\text{cons}_A\ a\ as \in \text{List } A}$

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$\frac{}{\text{nil} \in \text{List } A}$ $\frac{a \in A \quad as \in \text{List } A}{\text{cons } a\ as \in \text{List } A}$

Better data types, better *nth*

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data $\frac{n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{Fin } n \in *}$ where $\frac{n \in \text{Nat}}{0'_n \in \text{Fin } (s \ n)}$ $\frac{n \in \text{Nat} \quad i \in \text{Fin } n}{s'_n i \in \text{Fin } (s \ n)}$

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$$\begin{array}{c}
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 \text{data } \frac{A \in * \quad n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{Vec } A \ n \in *} \text{ where } \frac{}{\text{vnil} \in \text{Vec } A \ 0} \quad \frac{n \in \text{Nat} \quad a \in A \quad as \in \text{Vec } A \ n}{\text{vcons}_n a \ as \in \text{Vec } A \ (s \ n)}
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 \text{let } \frac{n \in \text{Nat} \quad l \in \text{Vec } A \ n \quad i \in \text{Fin } \ n}{\text{nth}_n \ l \ i \in A}
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$\text{nth } l \ n \mapsto ?$

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● nth is a total function.

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- nth is a total function.
- $\text{nth } 3 \ [1, 2]$ is not well-typed.

Verify

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- How can we use `nth` on lists of unknown length user input, . . . ?

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$$\text{let } \frac{n, i \in \text{Nat}}{\text{verify } n \ i \in \text{Maybe } (\text{Fin } n)}$$

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$$\text{let } \frac{n, i \in \text{Nat}}{\text{verify } n \ i \in \text{Maybe } (\text{Fin } n)}$$

$$\text{verify } 0 \ i \quad \mapsto \quad ?$$

$$\text{verify } (\text{s } n) \ i \quad \mapsto \quad ?$$

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$$\text{let } \frac{n, i \in \text{Nat}}{\text{verify } n \ i \in \text{Maybe } (\text{Fin } n)}$$

`verify 0 i` \mapsto `nothing`

`verify (s n) i` \mapsto ?

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`verify 0 i` \mapsto `nothing`

`verify (s n) 0` \mapsto `just 0'`

`verify (s n) (s i)` \mapsto ?

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`verify 0 i` \mapsto `nothing`

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`verify (s n) (s i)` \parallel `verify n i` \mapsto ?

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<code>verify (s n) (s i)</code>	\parallel	<code>verify n i</code>
		<code>nothing</code> \mapsto <code>nothing</code>
		<code>just i</code> \mapsto <code>just (s' i)</code>

Going further

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- The type of `verify` is not informative enough for some of its potential applications.

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- How is `just j` \equiv `verify n i` related to `j`?

Going further

- The type of `verify` is not informative enough for some of its potential applications.
- How is `just j ≡ verify n i` related to `j`?
- When does `verify` return `nothing`?

verify improved.

$$\text{let } \frac{i \in \text{Fin } n}{\text{val } i \in \text{Nat}} \quad \text{val } 0' \quad \mapsto \quad 0$$
$$\text{val } (s' i) \quad \mapsto \quad s (\text{val } i)$$

verify improved.

$$\text{let } \frac{i \in \text{Fin } n \quad \text{val } 0' \quad \mapsto \quad 0}{\text{val } i \in \text{Nat} \quad \text{val } (s' i) \quad \mapsto \quad s (\text{val } i)}$$
$$\text{data } \frac{n, i \in \text{Nat}}{\text{Bound } n i \in *}$$
 where $\frac{i \in \text{Fin } n}{\text{bound } n i \in \text{Bound } n (\text{val } i)}$ $\frac{i, n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{tooBig } n i \in \text{Bound } n (n+i)}$

verify improved.

$$\text{let } \frac{i \in \text{Fin } n}{\text{val } i \in \text{Nat}} \quad \text{val } 0' \mapsto 0 \quad \text{val } (s' i) \mapsto s (\text{val } i)$$
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where

$$\frac{i \in \text{Fin } n}{\text{bound } n i \in \text{Bound } n (\text{val } i)} \quad \frac{i, n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{tooBig } n i \in \text{Bound } n (n+i)}$$
$$\text{let } \frac{n, i \in \text{Nat}}{\text{verify } n i \in \text{Bound } n i}$$

verify improved.

$$\text{let } \frac{i \in \text{Fin } n \quad \text{val } 0' \mapsto 0}{\text{val } i \in \text{Nat} \quad \text{val } (s' i) \mapsto s (\text{val } i)}$$
$$\text{data } \frac{n, i \in \text{Nat}}{\text{Bound } n i \in *}$$

where

$$\frac{i \in \text{Fin } n}{\text{bound } n i \in \text{Bound } n (\text{val } i)} \quad \frac{i, n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{tooBig } n i \in \text{Bound } n (n+i)}$$
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$$\text{verify } (s n) (s i) \quad || \quad \text{verify } n i \quad \mapsto \quad ?$$

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$$\text{verify } (s n) (s (n+i)) \quad | \quad \text{tooBig } n i \quad \mapsto \quad ?$$

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$$\text{verify } (s n) (\text{val } i) \quad | \quad \text{bound } n i \quad \mapsto \quad \text{bound } (s n) (s' i)$$

Definitional equality

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- The typing of `verify` depends on the equations:

$$\begin{aligned} 0+n &\equiv n \\ (s\ m)+n &\equiv s\ (m+n) \end{aligned}$$

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$$\begin{aligned}0+n &\equiv n \\ (s\ m)+n &\equiv s\ (m+n)\end{aligned}$$

- These equations need to be true *definitionally*.
- If we need $n+0 = n$ we have to use propositional equality.

Propositional equality

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data $\frac{A \in * \quad a, b \in A}{a=b \in *}$ where

$\frac{a \in A}{\text{refl } a \in a=a}$

Propositional equality

$$\text{data } \frac{A \in * \quad a, b \in A}{a=b \in *} \text{ where } \frac{a \in A}{\text{refl } a \in a=a}$$

$$\text{let } \frac{n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{add}_0 n \in n+0=n}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{add}_0 0 \quad \mapsto \quad \text{refl } 0 \\ \text{add}_0 (s n) \quad || \quad n + 0 \\ \quad | \quad m \quad || \quad \text{add}_0 n \\ \quad | \quad n \quad | \quad \text{refl} \quad \mapsto \quad \text{refl} \end{array}$$

Propositional equality

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$$\begin{array}{l} \text{add}_0 0 \quad \mapsto \quad \text{refl } 0 \\ \text{add}_0 (s n) \quad || \quad n + 0 \\ | \quad m \quad || \quad \text{add}_0 n \\ | \quad n \quad | \quad \text{refl} \quad \mapsto \quad \text{refl} \end{array}$$

$$\text{let } \frac{q \in a=b \quad P \in A \rightarrow * \quad x \in P a}{\text{subst } q P x \in P b} \quad \text{subst } (\text{refl } a) P x \mapsto x$$

Problems with =

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- Programs cluttered with coercions.

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- Programs cluttered with coercions.
- Programming requires theorem proving.
- Equality on functions is not extensional, i.e.

$$\text{let } \frac{f, g \in A \rightarrow B \quad p \in \forall x \in A. f x = g x}{\text{ext } p \in f = g}$$

cannot be derived.

Solutions ?

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- DML shows that many equalities needed in programming can be proven automatically.
Proposal: Integrate an extensible constraint prover into the elaboration process.
- The problem with extensional equality can be overcome using a different approach to equality.

Eval

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- Implement an evaluator for a simply typed object language.

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- We use type-checking to avoid run-time errors.
- First we implement a simply typed version.
- Then a dependently typed version, exploiting the *verify pattern*.

The object language

data $\frac{}{\text{Val} \in *}$ where $\frac{n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{vnat } n \in \text{Val}}$ $\frac{b \in \text{Bool}}{\text{vbool } b \in \text{Val}}$

The object language

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data $\frac{}{\text{Tm} \in *}$ where $\frac{v \in \text{Val}}{\text{tval } v \in \text{Tm}}$ $\frac{t, u_0, u_1 \in \text{Tm}}{\text{tif } t \ u_0 \ u_1 \in \text{Tm}}$ $\frac{t, u, \in \text{Tm}}{\text{tadd } t \ u \in \text{Tm}}$

Object types

data $\overline{\text{Ty} \in *}$ where $\overline{\text{nat} \in \text{Ty}}$ $\overline{\text{bool} \in \text{Ty}}$

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let $\frac{t \in \text{Tm}}{\text{verify } t \in \text{Maybe Ty}}$...

Eval — simply typed

$$\text{let } \frac{t \in \text{Tm}}{\text{eval } t \in \text{Val}}$$

Safe eval ?

$$\text{let } \frac{t \in \text{Tm}}{\text{seval } t \in \text{Maybe Val}}$$

Safe eval ?

$$\text{let } \frac{t \in \text{Tm}}{\text{seval } t \in \text{Maybe Val}}$$

$\text{seval } t$	\parallel	$\text{verify } t$	
	$ $	$\text{just } u$	$\mapsto \text{just } (\text{eval } u)$
	$ $	nothing	$\mapsto \text{nothing}$

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 - `eval` checks the tags

Object language using dependent types

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data $\frac{a \in \text{Ty}}{\text{TVal } a \in *}$ where $\frac{n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{vnat } n \in \text{TVal nat}}$ $\frac{b \in \text{Bool}}{\text{vbool } b \in \text{TVal bool}}$

Object language using dependent types

$$\text{data } \frac{a \in \text{Ty}}{\text{TVal } a \in *}$$

where

$$\frac{n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{vnat } n \in \text{TVal nat}} \quad \frac{b \in \text{Bool}}{\text{vbool } b \in \text{TVal bool}}$$
$$\text{data } \frac{a \in *}{\text{TTm } a \in *}$$

where

Object language using dependent types

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$\frac{n \in \text{Nat}}{\text{vnat } n \in \text{TVal nat}}$

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data $\frac{a \in *}{\text{TTm } a \in *}$ where

$\frac{v \in \text{TVal } a}{\text{tval } v \in \text{TTm } a}$

$\frac{t \in \text{TTm bool} \quad u_0, u_1 \in \text{TTm } a}{\text{tif } t \ u_0 \ u_1 \in \text{TTm } a}$

$\frac{t, u \in \text{TTm nat}}{\text{tadd } t \ u \in \text{TTm nat}}$

Eval — dependently

$$\text{let } \frac{t \in \text{TTm } a}{\text{eval } t \in \text{Val } a}$$

Eval — dependently

$$\text{let } \frac{t \in \text{TTm } a}{\text{eval } t \in \text{Val } a}$$

$$\text{eval } (\text{tval } v) \quad \mapsto \quad v$$

$$\text{eval } (\text{tif } t \ u_0 \ u_1) \quad || \quad \text{eval } t$$

$$| \quad \text{vbool true} \quad \mapsto \quad \text{eval } u_0$$

$$| \quad \text{vbool false} \quad \mapsto \quad \text{eval } u_1$$

$$\text{eval } (\text{tadd } t \ u) \quad || \quad \text{eval } t$$

$$| \quad \text{vnat } m \quad || \quad \text{eval } u$$

$$| \quad \text{vnat } n \quad \mapsto \quad \text{vnat}(m+n)$$

Safe eval !

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$$\text{let } \frac{t \in \mathbb{T}m \ a}{\text{strip } t \in \mathbb{T}m} \quad \dots$$

Safe eval !

$$\text{let} \frac{t \in \text{TTm } a}{\text{strip } t \in \text{Tm}} \quad \dots$$

$$\text{data} \frac{t \in \text{Tm}}{\text{Verify } t \in \text{Ty}} \text{ where} \quad \frac{}{\text{error} \in \text{Verify } t} \quad \frac{t \in \text{TTm } a}{\text{ok } t \in \text{Verify } (\text{strip } t)}$$

$$\text{let} \frac{t \in \text{Tm}}{\text{verify } t \in \text{Verify } t} \quad \dots$$

$$\text{let} \frac{t \in \text{Tm}}{\text{seval } t \in \text{Maybe } (\Sigma_{a \in \text{Ty}} \text{Val } a)}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{seval } t \quad || \quad \text{verify } t \\ | \quad \text{just } u \quad \mapsto \quad \text{just } (\text{eval } u) \\ | \quad \text{error} \quad \mapsto \quad \text{nothing} \end{array}$$

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- `seval` is efficient:
 - No tags at runtime.
 - No checking.

Generic equality

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- Usually requires a language extension (Generic Haskell)

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- Usually requires a language extension (Generic Haskell)
- Topic developed further in our (Conor and me) paper: *Generic programming within dependently typed programming*
Working Conference on Generic Programming 2002

Codes and data

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$\frac{\quad}{\text{unit} \in \text{Ty}}$ $\frac{a, b \in \text{Ty}}{\text{prod } a \ b \in \text{Ty}}$ $\frac{a, b \in \text{Ty}}{\text{sum } a \ b \in \text{Ty}}$ $\frac{\quad}{\text{rec} \in \text{Ty}}$

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data $\frac{r, a \in \text{Ty}}{\text{Val } r \ a \in *}$ where

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data $\frac{r, a \in \text{Ty}}{\text{Val } r \ a \in *}$ where

$\frac{\quad}{\text{void} \in \text{Val } r \ \text{unit}}$ $\frac{x \in \text{Val } r \ a \quad y \in \text{Val } r \ b}{\text{pair } x \ y \in \text{Val } r \ (\text{prod } a \ b)}$

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$\frac{\quad}{\text{void} \in \text{Val } r \text{ unit}}$ $\frac{x \in \text{Val } r a \quad y \in \text{Val } r b}{\text{pair } x y \in \text{Val } r (\text{prod } a b)}$

$\frac{x \in \text{Val } a}{\text{inl } x \in \text{Val } (\text{sum } a b)}$ $\frac{y \in \text{Val } b}{\text{inr } y \in \text{Val } (\text{sum } a b)}$

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$\frac{x \in \text{Val } a}{\text{inl } x \in \text{Val } (\text{sum } a b)}$ $\frac{y \in \text{Val } b}{\text{inr } y \in \text{Val } (\text{sum } a b)}$

$\frac{x \in \text{Val } r r}{\text{in } x \in \text{Val } r r}$

Example

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$$\text{let } \frac{a \in \text{Ty}}{\text{Data } a \in \text{Ty}} \quad \text{Data } a \mapsto \text{Val } a \ a$$

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$$\text{let } \overline{\text{nat} \in \text{Ty}} \quad \text{nat} \mapsto \text{sum unit rec}$$

Example

$$\text{let } \frac{a \in \text{Ty}}{\text{Data } a \in \text{Ty}} \quad \text{Data } a \mapsto \text{Val } a \ a$$
$$\text{let } \frac{}{\text{nat} \in \text{Ty}} \quad \text{nat} \mapsto \text{sum unit rec}$$
$$\text{let } \frac{}{\text{zero} \in \text{Data nat}} \quad \text{zero} \mapsto \text{inl void}$$

Example

$$\text{let } \frac{a \in \text{Ty}}{\text{Data } a \in \text{Ty}} \quad \text{Data } a \mapsto \text{Val } a \ a$$
$$\text{let } \frac{}{\text{nat} \in \text{Ty}} \quad \text{nat} \mapsto \text{sum unit rec}$$
$$\text{let } \frac{}{\text{zero} \in \text{Data nat}} \quad \text{zero} \mapsto \text{inl void}$$
$$\text{let } \frac{n \in \text{Data nat}}{\text{succ } n \in \text{Data nat}} \quad \text{succ } n \mapsto \text{inr } (\text{in } n)$$

Generic equality

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$$\text{let } \frac{x, y \in \text{Val } r \ t}{\text{eq } x \ y \in \text{Bool}}$$

Generic equality

$$\text{let } \frac{x, y \in \text{Val } r \ t}{\text{eq } x \ y \in \text{Bool}}$$

eq void void \mapsto true

eq (pair $x \ y$) (pair $x' \ y'$) \mapsto (eq $x \ x'$) && (eq $y \ y'$)

eq (inl x) (inl x') \mapsto eq $x \ x'$

eq (inl x) (inr y) \mapsto false

eq (inr y) (inl x) \mapsto false

eq (inr y) (inr y') \mapsto eq $y \ y'$

eq (in x) (in x') \mapsto eq $x \ x'$

Advantages of Dependently Typed Programming

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- Extensions of Type System as library
- Easier to reason about

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- Inductive families have to be supported
- Type inference is generalized by elaboration
Extensible elaboration ?

Important issues

- Definitional equality should be well behaved
- Inductive families have to be supported
- Type inference is generalized by elaboration
Extensible elaboration ?
- Programs are constructed interactively,
starting with the type as a partial specification