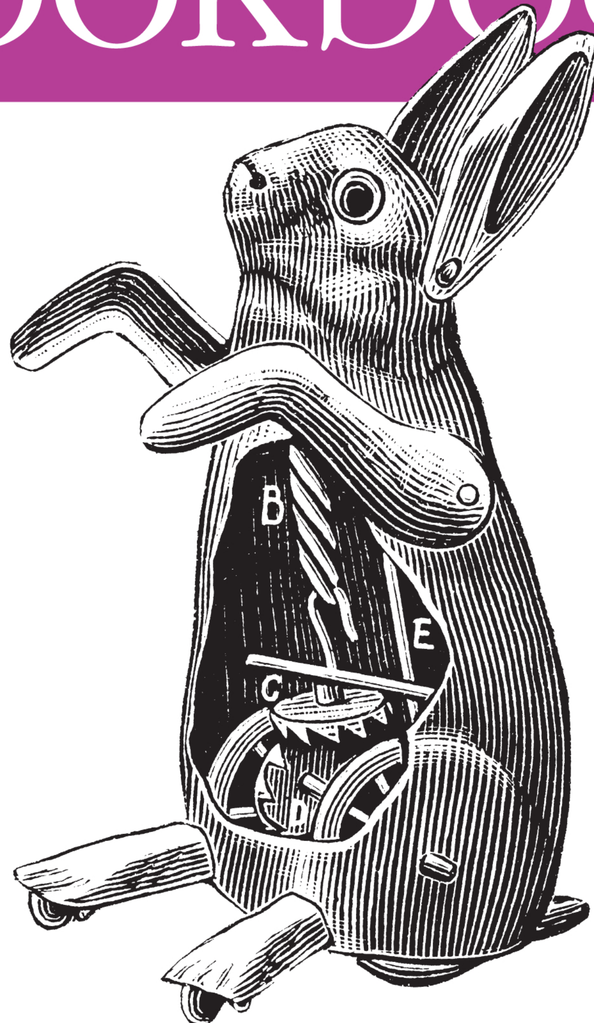
Recipes to Begin, Expand, and Enhance Your Projects

2nd Edition
Covers Arduino 1.0

Arduino Cookbook



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Arduino Cookbook

Want to create devices that interact with the physical world? This cookbook is perfect for anyone who wants to experiment with the popular Arduino microcontroller and programming environment. You'll find more than 200 tips and techniques for building a variety of objects and prototypes such as toys, detectors, robots, and interactive clothing that can sense and respond to touch, sound, position, heat, and light.

You don't need experience with Arduino or programming to get started. Updated for the Arduino 1.0 release, the recipes in this second edition include practical examples and guidance to help you begin, expand, and enhance your projects right away—whether you're an artist, designer, hobbyist, student, or engineer.

- Get up to speed quickly on the Arduino board and essential software concepts
- Learn basic techniques for reading digital and analog signals
- Use Arduino with a variety of popular input devices and sensors
- Drive visual displays, generate sound, and control several types of motors
- Interact with devices that use remote controls, including TVs and appliances
- Learn techniques for handling time delays and time measurement
- Apply advanced coding and memory handling techniques

Michael Margolis is a technologist in the field of real-time computing, with expertise in developing hardware and software for interacting with the environment. He has more than 30 years of experience at senior levels with Sony, Microsoft, and Lucent/Bell Labs, and has written libraries and core software included in the Arduino 1.0 distribution.

"Michael Margolis's comprehensive set of recipes is a fine gift to the burgeoning Arduino community. Whatever your background or skill, the Cookbook provides solutions for that project you're wrestling with today and fuel for imagining what you'll build tomorrow. I doubt it will ever leave my workbench table."

—Mikal Hart
Arduino Uno Advisory Team

US $44.99 **CAN $47.99**
ISBN: 978-1-449-31387-6

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SECOND EDITION

Arduino Cookbook

Michael Margolis

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Arduino Cookbook, Second Edition
by Michael Margolis

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Printed in the United States of America.

Published by O'Reilly Media, Inc., 1005 Gravenstein Highway North, Sebastopol, CA 95472.

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Editors: Shawn Wallace and Brian Jepson
Production Editor: Teresa Elsey
Proofreader: Kiel Van Horn
Indexer: Lucie Haskins
Cover Designer: Karen Montgomery
Interior Designer: David Futato
Illustrator: Robert Romano

March 2011: First Edition.
December 2011: Second Edition.

Revision History for the Second Edition:
2011-12-09 First release
2013-05-17 Second release
See *http://oreilly.com/catalog/errata.csp?isbn=9781449313876* for release details.

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ISBN: 978-1-449-31387-6

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Preface

This book was written by Michael Margolis with Nick Weldin to help you explore the amazing things you can do with Arduino.

Arduino is a family of microcontrollers (tiny computers) and a software creation environment that makes it easy for you to create programs (called *sketches*) that can interact with the physical world. Things you make with Arduino can sense and respond to touch, sound, position, heat, and light. This type of technology, often referred to as *physical computing*, is used in all kinds of things from the iPhone to automobile electronics systems. Arduino makes it possible for anyone with an interest—even people with no programming or electronics experience—to use this rich and complex technology.

Who This Book Is For

Unlike in most technical cookbooks, experience with software and hardware is not assumed. This book is aimed at readers interested in using computer technology to interact with the environment. It is for people who want to quickly find the solution to hardware and software problems. The recipes provide the information you need to accomplish a broad range of tasks. It also has details to help you customize solutions to meet your specific needs. There is insufficient space in a book limited to 700 pages to cover general theoretical background, so links to external references are provided throughout the book. See "What Was Left Out" on page xiv for some general references for those with no programming or electronics experience.

If you have no programming experience—perhaps you have a great idea for an interactive project but don't have the skills to develop it—this book will help you learn what you need to know to write code that works, using examples that cover over 200 common tasks.

If you have some programming experience but are new to Arduino, the book will help you become productive quickly by demonstrating how to implement specific Arduino capabilities for your project.

People already using Arduino should find the content helpful for quickly learning new techniques, which are explained using practical examples. This will help you to embark on more complex projects by showing how to solve problems and use capabilities that may be new to you.

Experienced C/C++ programmers will find examples of how to use the low-level AVR resources (interrupts, timers, I2C, Ethernet, etc.) to build applications using the Arduino environment.

How This Book Is Organized

The book contains information that covers the broad range of the Arduino's capabilities, from basic concepts and common tasks to advanced technology. Each technique is explained in a recipe that shows you how to implement a specific capability. You do not need to read the content in sequence. Where a recipe uses a technique covered in another recipe, the content in the other recipe is referenced rather than repeating details in multiple places.

Chapter 1, *Getting Started*, introduces the Arduino environment and provides help on getting the Arduino development environment and hardware installed and working.

The next couple of chapters introduce Arduino software development. Chapter 2, *Making the Sketch Do Your Bidding*, covers essential software concepts and tasks, and Chapter 3, *Using Mathematical Operators*, shows how to make use of the most common mathematical functions.

Chapter 4, *Serial Communications*, describes how to get Arduino to connect and communicate with your computer and other devices. Serial is the most common method for Arduino input and output, and this capability is used in many of the recipes throughout the book.

Chapter 5, *Simple Digital and Analog Input*, introduces a range of basic techniques for reading digital and analog signals. Chapter 6, *Getting Input from Sensors*, builds on this with recipes that explain how to use devices that enable Arduino to sense touch, sound, position, heat, and light.

Chapter 7, *Visual Output*, covers controlling light. Recipes cover switching on one or many LEDs and controlling brightness and color. This chapter explains how you can drive bar graphs and numeric LED displays, as well as create patterns and animations with LED arrays. In addition, the chapter provides a general introduction to digital and analog output for those who are new to this.

Chapter 8, *Physical Output*, explains how you can make things move by controlling motors with Arduino. A wide range of motor types is covered: solenoids, servo motors, DC motors, and stepper motors.

Chapter 9, *Audio Output*, shows how to generate sound with Arduino through an output device such as a speaker. It covers playing simple tones and melodies and playing WAV files and MIDI.

Chapter 10, *Remotely Controlling External Devices*, describes techniques that can be used to interact with almost any device that uses some form of remote controller, including TV, audio equipment, cameras, garage doors, appliances, and toys. It builds on techniques used in previous chapters for connecting Arduino to devices and modules.

Chapter 11, *Using Displays*, covers interfacing text and graphical LCD displays. The chapter shows how you can connect these devices to display text, scroll or highlight words, and create special symbols and characters.

Chapter 12, *Using Time and Dates*, covers built-in Arduino time-related functions and introduces many additional techniques for handling time delays, time measurement, and real-world times and dates.

Chapter 13, *Communicating Using I2C and SPI*, covers the Inter-Integrated Circuit (I2C) and Serial Peripheral Interface (SPI) standards. These standards provide simple ways for digital information to be transferred between sensors and Arduino. This chapter shows how to use I2C and SPI to connect to common devices. It also shows how to connect two or more Arduino boards, using I2C for multiboard applications.

Chapter 14, *Wireless Communication*, covers wireless communication with XBee and other wireless modules. This chapter provides examples ranging from simple wireless serial port replacements to mesh networks connecting multiple boards to multiple sensors.

Chapter 15, *Ethernet and Networking*, describes the many ways you can use Arduino with the Internet. It has examples that demonstrate how to build and use web clients and servers and shows how to use the most common Internet communication protocols with Arduino.

Arduino software libraries are a standard way of adding functionality to the Arduino environment. Chapter 16, *Using, Modifying, and Creating Libraries*, explains how to use and modify software libraries. It also provides guidance on how to create your own libraries.

Chapter 17, *Advanced Coding and Memory Handling*, covers advanced programming techniques, and the topics here are more technical than the other recipes in this book because they cover things that are usually concealed by the friendly Arduino wrapper. The techniques in this chapter can be used to make a sketch more efficient—they can help improve performance and reduce the code size of your sketches.

Chapter 18, *Using the Controller Chip Hardware*, shows how to access and use hardware functions that are not fully exposed through the documented Arduino language. It covers low-level usage of the hardware input/output registers, timers, and interrupts.

Appendix A, *Electronic Components*, provides an overview of the components used throughout the book.

Appendix B, *Using Schematic Diagrams and Data Sheets*, explains how to use schematic diagrams and data sheets.

Appendix C, *Building and Connecting the Circuit*, provides a brief introduction to using a breadboard, connecting and using external power supplies and batteries, and using capacitors for decoupling.

Appendix D, *Tips on Troubleshooting Software Problems*, provides tips on fixing compile and runtime problems.

Appendix E, *Tips on Troubleshooting Hardware Problems*, covers problems with electronic circuits.

Appendix F, *Digital and Analog Pins*, provides tables indicating functionality provided by the pins on standard Arduino boards.

Appendix G, *ASCII and Extended Character Sets*, provides tables showing ASCII characters.

Appendix H, *Migrating to Arduino 1.0*, explains how to modify code written for previous releases to run correctly with Arduino 1.0.

What Was Left Out

There isn't room in this book to cover electronics theory and practice, although guidance is provided for building the circuits used in the recipes. For more detail, readers may want to refer to material that is widely available on the Internet or to books such as the following:

- *Make: Electronics* by Charles Platt (O'Reilly; search for it on oreilly.com)
- *Getting Started in Electronics* by Forrest M. Mims III (Master Publishing)
- *Physical Computing* by Dan O'Sullivan and Tom Igoe (Cengage)
- *Practical Electronics for Inventors* by Paul Scherz (McGraw-Hill)

This cookbook explains how to write code to accomplish specific tasks, but it is not an introduction to programming. Relevant programming concepts are briefly explained, but there is insufficient room to cover the details. If you want to learn more about programming, you may want to refer to the Internet or to one of the following books:

- *Practical C Programming* by Steve Oualline (O'Reilly; search for it on oreilly.com)
- *A Book on C* by Al Kelley and Ira Pohl (Addison-Wesley)

My favorite, although not really a beginner's book, is the book I used to learn C programming:

- *The C Programming Language* by Brian W. Kernighan and Dennis M. Ritchie (Prentice Hall)

Code Style (About the Code)

The code used throughout this book has been tailored to clearly illustrate the topic covered in each recipe. As a consequence, some common coding shortcuts have been avoided, particularly in the early chapters. Experienced C programmers often use rich but terse expressions that are efficient but can be a little difficult for beginners to read. For example, the early chapters increment variables using explicit expressions that are easy for nonprogrammers to read:

```
result = result + 1; // increment the count
```

Rather than the following, commonly used by experienced programmers, that does the same thing:

```
result++;  // increment using the post increment operator
```

Feel free to substitute your preferred style. Beginners should be reassured that there is no benefit in performance or code size in using the terse form.

Some programming expressions are so common that they are used in their terse form. For example, the loop expressions are written as follows:

```
for(int i=0; i < 4; i++)
```

This is equivalent to the following:

```
int i;
for(i=0; i < 4; i = i+1)
```

See Chapter 2 for more details on these and other expressions used throughout the book.

Good programming practice involves ensuring that values used are valid (garbage in equals garbage out) by checking them before using them in calculations. However, to keep the code focused on the recipe topic, very little error-checking code has been included.

Arduino Platform Release Notes

This edition has been updated for Arduino 1.0. All of the code has been tested with the latest Arduino 1.0 release candidate at the time of going to press (RC2). The download code for this edition will be updated online if necessary to support the final 1.0 release, so check the book's website to get the latest code. The download contains a file named *changelog.txt* that will indicate code that has changed from the published edition.

Although many of the sketches will run on earlier Arduino releases, you need to change the extension from *.ino* to *.pde* to load the sketch into a pre-1.0 IDE. If you have not migrated to Arduino 1.0 and have good reason to stick with an earlier release, you can use the example code from the first edition of this book (available at *http://shop.oreilly.com/product/9780596802486.do*), which has been tested with releases from 0018 to 0022. Note that many recipes in the second edition have been enhanced, so we encourage you to upgrade to Arduino 1.0. If you need help migrating older code, see Appendix H.

There's also a link to errata on that site. Errata give readers a way to let us know about typos, errors, and other problems with the book. Errata will be visible on the page immediately, and we'll confirm them after checking them out. O'Reilly can also fix errata in future printings of the book and on Safari, making for a better reader experience pretty quickly.

If you have problems making examples work, check the *changelog.txt* file in the latest code download to see if the sketch has been updated. If that doesn't fix the problem, see Appendix D, which covers troubleshooting software problems. The Arduino forum is a good place to post a question if you need more help: *http://www.arduino.cc*.

If you like—or don't like—this book, by all means, please let people know. Amazon reviews are one popular way to share your happiness or other comments. You can also leave reviews at the O'Reilly site for the book.

Conventions Used in This Book

The following font conventions are used in this book:

Italic
: Indicates pathnames, filenames, and program names; Internet addresses, such as domain names and URLs; and new items where they are defined

`Constant width`
: Indicates command lines and options that should be typed verbatim; names and keywords in programs, including method names, variable names, and class names; and HTML element tags

`Constant width bold`
: Indicates emphasis in program code lines

`Constant width italic`
: Indicates text that should be replaced with user-supplied values

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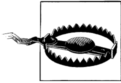

This icon indicates a warning or caution.

Using Code Examples

This book is here to help you make things with Arduino. In general, you may use the code in this book in your programs and documentation. You do not need to contact us for permission unless you're reproducing a significant portion of the code. For example, writing a program that uses several chunks of code from this book does not require permission. Selling or distributing a CD-ROM of examples from this book *does* require permission. Answering a question by citing this book and quoting example code does not require permission. Incorporating a significant amount of example code from this book into your product's documentation *does* require permission.

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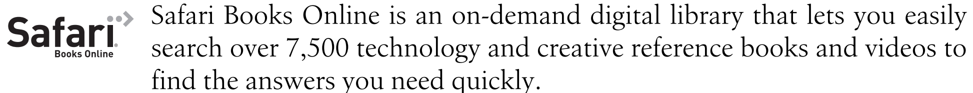

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Acknowledgments

Nick Weldin's contribution was invaluable for the completion of this book. It was 90 percent written when Nick came on board—and without his skill and enthusiasm, it would still be 90 percent written. His hands-on experience running Arduino workshops for all levels of users enabled us to make the advice in this book practical for our broad range of readers. Thank you, Nick, for your knowledge and genial, collaborative nature.

Simon St. Laurent was the editor at O'Reilly who first expressed interest in this book. And in the end, he is the man who pulled it together. His support and encouragement kept us inspired as we sifted our way through the volumes of material necessary to do the subject justice.

Brian Jepson helped me get started with the writing of this book. His vast knowledge of things Arduino and his concern and expertise for communicating about technology in plain English set a high standard. He was an ideal guiding hand for shaping the book and making technology readily accessible for readers. We also have Brian to thank for the XBee content in Chapter 14.

Brian Jepson and Shawn Wallace were technical editors for this second edition and provided excellent advice for improving the accuracy and clarity of the content.

Audrey Doyle worked tirelessly to stamp out typos and grammatical errors in the initial manuscript and untangle some of the more convoluted expressions.

Philip Lindsay collaborated on content for Chapter 15 in the first edition. Adrian McEwen, the lead developer for many of the Ethernet enhancements in Release 1.0, provided valuable advice to ensure this Chapter reflected all the changes in that release.

Mikal Hart wrote recipes covering GPS and software serial. Mikal was the natural choice for this—not only because he wrote the libraries, but also because he is a fluent communicator, an Arduino enthusiast, and a pleasure to collaborate with.

Arduino is possible because of the creativity of the core Arduino development team: Massimo Banzi, David Cuartielles, Tom Igoe, Gianluca Martino, and David Mellis. On behalf of all Arduino users, I wish to express our appreciation for their efforts in making this fascinating technology simple and their generosity in making it free.

Special thanks to Alexandra Deschamps-Sonsino, whose Tinker London workshops provided important understanding of the needs of users. Thanks also to Peter Knight, who has provided all kinds of clever Arduino solutions as well as the basis of a number of recipes in this book.

On behalf of everyone who has downloaded user-contributed Arduino libraries, I would like to thank the authors who have generously shared their knowledge.

The availability of a wide range of hardware is a large part of what makes Arduino exciting—thanks to the suppliers for stocking and supporting a broad range of great devices. The following were helpful in providing hardware used in the book: SparkFun, Maker Shed, Gravitech, and NKC Electronics. Other suppliers that have been helpful include Modern Device, Liquidware, Adafruit, MakerBot Industries, Mindkits, Oomlout, and SK Pang.

Nick would like to thank everyone who was involved with Tinker London, particularly Alexandra, Peter, Brock Craft, Daniel Soltis and all the people who assisted on workshops over the years.

Nick's final thanks go to his family, Jeanie, Emily, and Finn, who agreed to let him do this over their summer holiday, and of course, much longer after that than they originally thought, and to his parents, Frank and Eva, for bringing him up to take things apart.

Last but not least, I express thanks to the following people:

Joshua Noble for introducing me to O'Reilly. His book, *Programming Interactivity*, is highly recommended for those interested in broadening their knowledge in interactive computing.

Robert Lacy-Thompson for offering advice early on with the first edition.

Mark Margolis for his support and help as a sounding board in the book's conception and development.

I thank my parents for helping me to see that the creative arts and technology were not distinctive entities and that, when combined, they can lead to extraordinary results.

And finally, this book would not have been started or finished without the support of my wife, Barbara Faden. My grateful appreciation to her for keeping me motivated and for her careful reading and contributions to the manuscript.

Notes on the Second Edition

The second edition of this book has followed relatively quickly from the first, prompted by the release of Arduino 1.0. The stated purpose of 1.0 is to introduce significant change that will smooth the way for future enhancements but break some code written for older software. These have necessitated changes to code in many of the chapters of this book. Most changed are Chapter 15, *Ethernet and Networking*, and Chapter 13, *Communicating Using I2C and SPI*, but all of the recipes in this edition have been migrated to 1.0, with many being updated to use features new in this release. If you are using a release prior to Arduino 1.0, then you can download code from the first edition of this book. See "Arduino Platform Release Notes" on page xv for download details.

Appendix H, *Migrating to Arduino 1.0*, has been added to describe the changes introduced by Arduino Release 1.0. This describes how to update older code to use with Arduino 1.0.

Recipes for devices that are no longer widely available have been updated to use current replacements and some new sensors and wireless devices have been added.

Errata posted on the O'Reilly site has been corrected, thanks to readers taking the time to notify us of these.

We think you will like the improvements made in Arduino 1.0 as well as the enhancements made to this edition of the *Arduino Cookbook*. The first edition was well received; the constructive criticism being divided between people that wanted more technical content and those that preferred less. In a book that we limited to only 700 or so pages (to keep it affordable and portable), that seems to indicate that the right balance has been achieved.

CHAPTER 1

Getting Started

1.0 Introduction

The Arduino environment has been designed to be easy to use for beginners who have no software or electronics experience. With Arduino, you can build objects that can respond to and/or control light, sound, touch, and movement. Arduino has been used to create an amazing variety of things, including musical instruments, robots, light sculptures, games, interactive furniture, and even interactive clothing.

If you're not a beginner, please feel free to skip ahead to recipes that interest you.

Arduino is used in many educational programs around the world, particularly by designers and artists who want to easily create prototypes but do not need a deep understanding of the technical details behind their creations. Because it is designed to be used by nontechnical people, the software includes plenty of example code to demonstrate how to use the Arduino board's various facilities.

Though it is easy to use, Arduino's underlying hardware works at the same level of sophistication that engineers employ to build embedded devices. People already working with microcontrollers are also attracted to Arduino because of its agile development capabilities and its facility for quick implementation of ideas.

Arduino is best known for its hardware, but you also need software to program that hardware. Both the hardware and the software are called "Arduino." The combination enables you to create projects that sense and control the physical world. The software is free, open source, and cross-platform. The boards are inexpensive to buy, or you can build your own (the hardware designs are also open source). In addition, there is an active and supportive Arduino community that is accessible worldwide through the Arduino forums and the wiki (known as the Arduino Playground). The forums and the

wiki offer project development examples and solutions to problems that can provide inspiration and assistance as you pursue your own projects.

The recipes in this chapter will get you started by explaining how to set up the development environment and how to compile and run an example sketch.

Source code containing computer instructions for controlling Arduino functionality is usually referred to as a *sketch* in the Arduino community. The word *sketch* will be used throughout this book to refer to Arduino program code.

The Blink sketch, which comes with Arduino, is used as an example for recipes in this chapter, though the last recipe in the chapter goes further by adding sound and collecting input through some additional hardware, not just blinking the light built into the board. Chapter 2 covers how to structure a sketch for Arduino and provides an introduction to programming.

If you already know your way around Arduino basics, feel free to jump forward to later chapters. If you're a first-time Arduino user, patience in these early recipes will pay off with smoother results later.

Arduino Software

Software programs, called *sketches*, are created on a computer using the Arduino integrated development environment (IDE). The IDE enables you to write and edit code and convert this code into instructions that Arduino hardware understands. The IDE also transfers those instructions to the Arduino board (a process called *uploading*).

Arduino Hardware

The Arduino board is where the code you write is executed. The board can only control and respond to electricity, so specific components are attached to it to enable it to interact with the real world. These components can be sensors, which convert some aspect of the physical world to electricity so that the board can sense it, or actuators, which get electricity from the board and convert it into something that changes the world. Examples of sensors include switches, accelerometers, and ultrasound distance sensors. Actuators are things like lights and LEDs, speakers, motors, and displays.

There are a variety of official boards that you can use with Arduino software and a wide range of Arduino-compatible boards produced by members of the community.

The most popular boards contain a USB connector that is used to provide power and connectivity for uploading your software onto the board. Figure 1-1 shows a basic board that most people start with, the Arduino Uno.

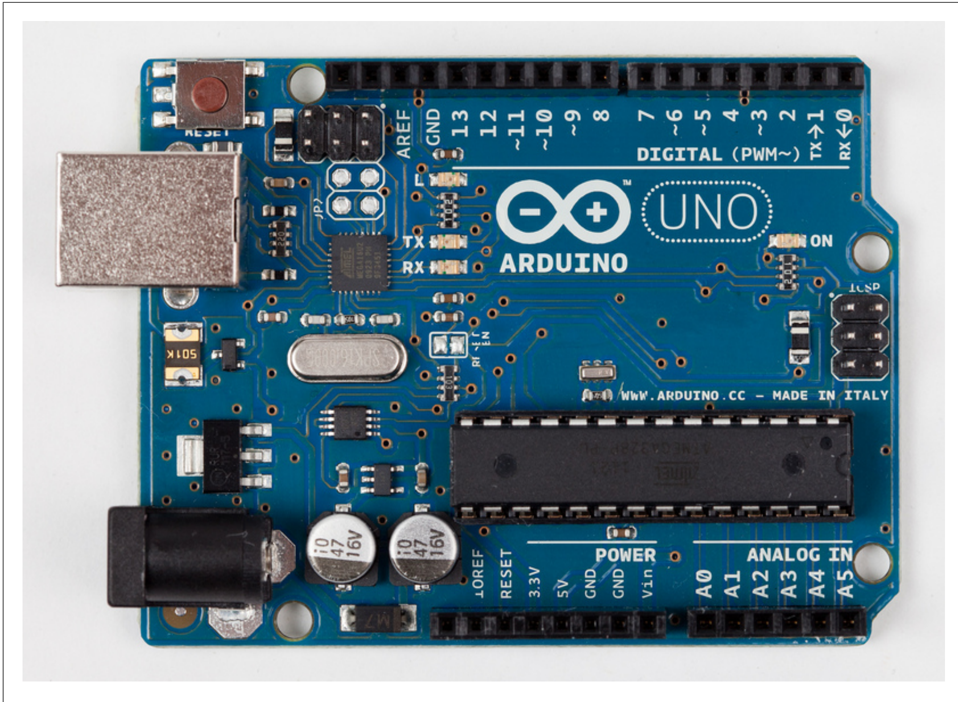


Figure 1-1. Basic board: the Arduino Uno. Photograph courtesy todo.to.it.

The Arduino Uno has a second microcontroller onboard to handle all USB communication; the small surface-mount chip (the ATmega8U2) is located near the USB socket on the board. This can be programmed separately to enable the board to appear as different USB devices (see Recipe 18.14 for an example). The Arduino Leonardo board replaces the ATmega8U2 and the ATmega328 controllers with a single ATmega32u4 chip that implements the USB protocol in software. The Arduino-compatible Teensy and Teensy+ boards from PJRC (*http://www.pjrc.com/teensy/*) are also capable of emulating USB devices. Older boards, and most of the Arduino-compatible boards, use a chip from the FTDI company that provides a hardware USB solution for connection to the serial port of your computer.

You can get boards as small as a postage stamp, such as the Arduino Mini and Pro Mini; larger boards that have more connection options and more powerful processors, such as the Arduino Mega; and boards tailored for specific applications, such as the LilyPad for wearable applications, the Fio for wireless projects, and the Arduino Pro for embedded applications (standalone projects that are often battery-operated).

Recent additions to the range include the Arduino ADK, which has a USB host socket on it and is compatible with the Android Open Accessory Development Kit, the officially approved method of attaching hardware to Android devices. The Leonardo board uses a controller chip (the ATmega32u4) that is able to present itself as various HID

devices. The Ethernet board includes Ethernet connectivity, and has a Power Over Ethernet option, so it is possible to use a single cable to connect and power the board.

Other Arduino-compatible boards are also available, including the following:

- Arduino Nano, a tiny board with USB capability, from Gravitech (*http://store.gravitech.us/arna30wiatn.html*)
- Bare Bones Board, a low-cost board available with or without USB capability, from Modern Device (*http://www.moderndevice.com/products/bbb-kit*)
- Boarduino, a low-cost breadboard-compatible board, from Adafruit Industries (*http://www.adafruit.com/*)
- Seeeduino, a flexible variation of the standard USB board, from Seeed Studio Bazaar (*http://www.seeedstudio.com/*)
- Teensy and Teensy++, tiny but extremely versatile boards, from PJRC (*http://www.pjrc.com/teensy/*)

A list of Arduino-compatible boards is available at *http://www.freeduino.org/*.

See Also

An overview of Arduino boards: *http://www.arduino.cc/en/Main/Hardware*.

Online guides for getting started with Arduino are available at *http://arduino.cc/en/Guide/Windows* for Windows, *http://arduino.cc/en/Guide/MacOSX* for Mac OS X, and *http://www.arduino.cc/playground/Learning/Linux* for Linux.

A list of over a hundred boards that can be used with the Arduino development environment can be found at: *http://jmsarduino.blogspot.com/2009/03/comprehensive-arduino-compatible.html*

1.1 Installing the Integrated Development Environment (IDE)

Problem

You want to install the Arduino development environment on your computer.

Solution

The Arduino software for Windows, Mac, and Linux can be downloaded from *http://arduino.cc/en/Main/Software*.

The Windows download is a ZIP file. Unzip the file to any convenient directory—*Program Files/Arduino* is a sensible place.

A free utility for unzipping files, called 7-Zip, can be downloaded from *http://www.7-zip.org/*.

Unzipping the file will create a folder named *Arduino-00<nn>* (where <*nn*> is the version number of the Arduino release you downloaded). The directory contains the executable file (named *Arduino.exe*), along with various other files and folders. Double-click the *Arduino.exe* file and the splash screen should appear (see Figure 1-2), followed by the main program window (see Figure 1-3). Be patient, as it can take some time for the software to load.

Figure 1-2. Arduino splash screen (Version 1.0 in Windows 7)

The Arduino download for the Mac is a disk image (*.dmg*); double-click the file when the download is complete. The image will mount (it will appear like a memory stick

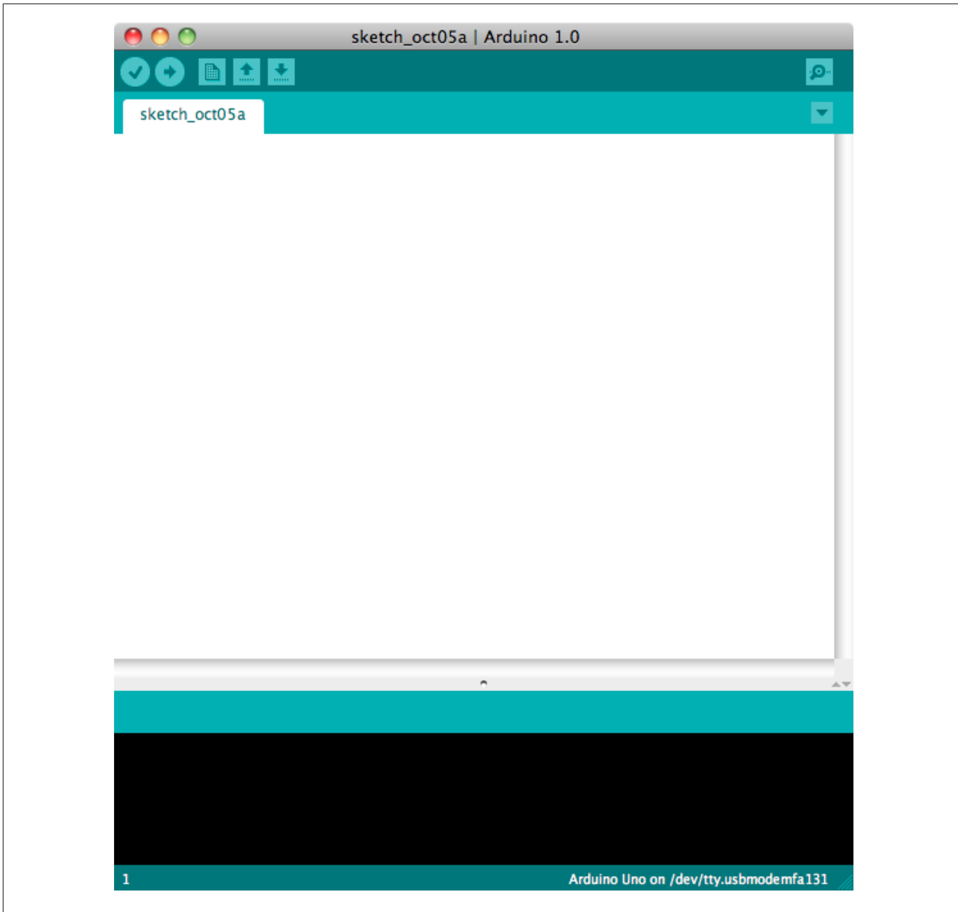


Figure 1-3. IDE main window (Arduino 1.0 on a Mac)

on the desktop). Inside the disk image is the Arduino application. Copy this to somewhere convenient—the *Applications* folder is a sensible place. Double-click the application once you have copied it over (it is not a good idea to run it from the disk image). The splash screen will appear, followed by the main program window.

Linux installation varies depending on the Linux distribution you are using. See the Arduino wiki for information (*http://www.arduino.cc/playground/Learning/Linux*).

To enable the Arduino development environment to communicate with the board, you need to install drivers.

On Windows, use the USB cable to connect your PC and the Arduino board and wait for the Found New Hardware Wizard to appear. If you are using an Uno board, let the wizard attempt to find and install drivers. It will fail to do this (don't worry, this is the expected behavior). To fix it you now need to go to Start Menu→Control Panel→System

and Security. Click on System, and then open Device Manager. In the listing that is displayed find the entry in COM and LPT named `Arduino UNO (COM nn)`. `nn` will be the number Windows has assigned to the port created for the board. You will see a warning logo next to this because the appropriate drivers have not yet been assigned. Right click on the entry and select Update Driver Software. Choose the "Browse my computer for driver software" option, and navigate to the *Drivers* folder inside the Arduino folder you just unzipped. Select the `ArduinoUNO.inf` file and windows should then complete the installation process.

If you are using an earlier board (any board that uses FTDI drivers) with Windows Vista or Windows 7 and are online, you can let the wizard search for drivers and they will install automatically. On Windows XP (or if you don't have Internet access), you should specify the location of the drivers. Use the file selector to navigate to the *FTDI USB Drivers* directory, located in the directory where you unzipped the Arduino files. When this driver has installed, the Found New Hardware Wizard will appear again, saying a new serial port has been found. Follow the same process as before.

It is important that you go through the sequence of steps to install the drivers two times, or the software will not be able to communicate with the board.

On the Mac, the latest Arduino boards, such as the Uno, can be used without additional drivers. When you first plug the board in a notification will pop up saying a new network port has been found, you can dismiss this. If you are using earlier boards (boards that need FTDI drivers), you will need to install driver software. There is a package named *FTDIUSBSerialDriver*, with a range of numbers after it, inside the disk image. Double-click this and the installer will take you through the process. You will need to know an administrator password to complete the process.

On Linux, most distributions have the driver already installed, but follow the Linux link given in this chapter's introduction for specific information for your distribution.

Discussion

If the software fails to start, check the troubleshooting section of the Arduino website, *http://arduino.cc/en/Guide/Troubleshooting*, for help solving installation problems.

See Also

Online guides for getting started with Arduino are available at *http://arduino.cc/en/Guide/Windows* for Windows, *http://arduino.cc/en/Guide/MacOSX* for Mac OS X, and *http://www.arduino.cc/playground/Learning/Linux* for Linux.

1.2 Setting Up the Arduino Board

Problem

You want to power up a new board and verify that it is working.

Solution

Plug the board in to a USB port on your computer and check that the green LED power indicator on the board illuminates. Standard Arduino boards (Uno, Duemilanove, and Mega) have a green LED power indicator located near the reset switch.

An orange LED near the center of the board (labeled "Pin 13 LED" in Figure 1-4) should flash on and off when the board is powered up (boards come from the factory preloaded with software to flash the LED as a simple check that the board is working).

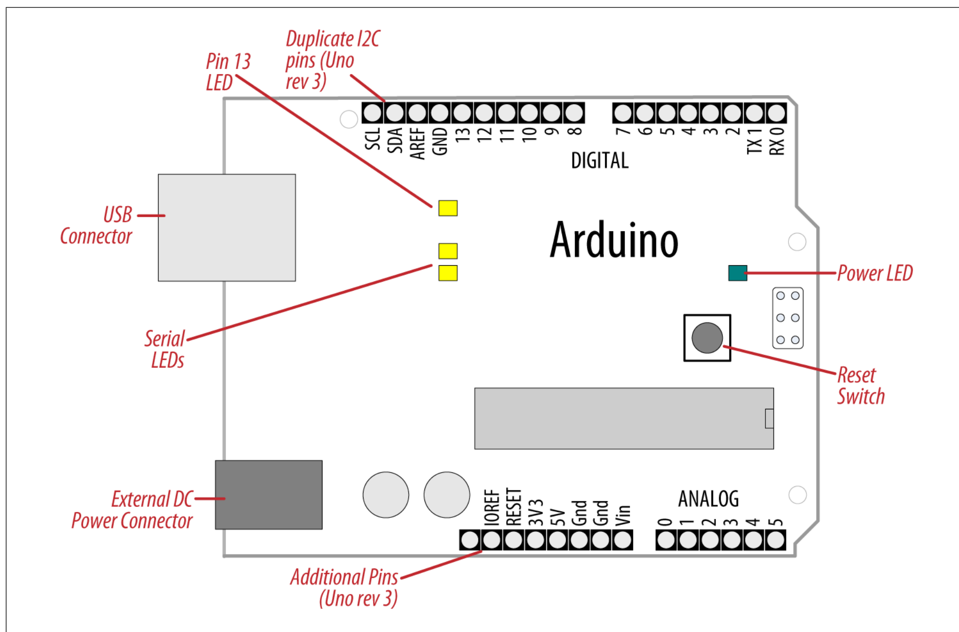


Figure 1-4. Basic Arduino board (Duemilanove and Uno)

New boards such as Leonardo have the LEDs located near the USB connector; see Figure 1-5. Recent boards have duplicate pins for use with I2C (marked `SCL` and `SDA`). These boards also have a pin marked `IOREF` that can be used to determine the operating voltage of the chip.

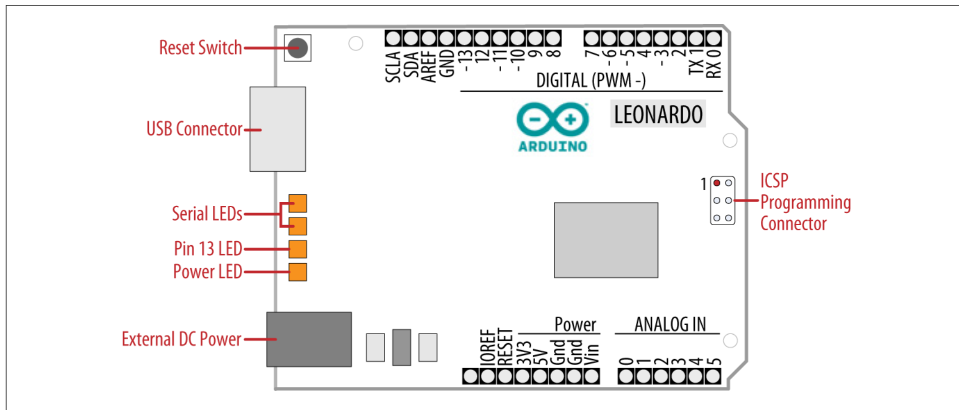


Figure 1-5. Leonardo Board

The latest boards have three additional connections in the new standard for connector layout on the board. This does not affect the use of older shields (they will all continue to work with the new boards, just as they did with earlier boards). The new connections provide a pin (IOREF) for shields to detect the analog reference voltage (so that analog input values can be calibrated to the supply voltage), SCL and SDA pins to enable a consistent connection for I2C devices (the location of the I2C pins has differed on previous boards due to different chip configurations). Shields designed for the new layout should work on any board that uses the new pin locations. An additional pin (next to the IOREF pin) is not being used at the moment, but enables new functionality to be implemented in the future without needing to change the pin layout again.

Discussion

If the power LED does not illuminate when the board is connected to your computer, the board is probably not receiving power.

The flashing LED (connected to digital output pin 13) is being controlled by code running on the board (new boards are preloaded with the Blink example sketch). If the pin 13 LED is flashing, the sketch is running correctly, which means the chip on the board is working. If the green power LED is on but the pin 13 LED is not flashing, it could be that the factory code is not on the chip; follow the instructions in Recipe 1.3 to load the Blink sketch onto the board to verify that the board is working. If you are not using a standard board, it may not have a built-in LED on pin 13, so check the documentation for details of your board. The Leonardo board fades the LED up and down (it looks like the LED is "breathing") to show that the board is working.

See Also

Online guides for getting started with Arduino are available at *http://arduino.cc/en/Guide/Windows* for Windows, *http://arduino.cc/en/Guide/MacOSX* for Mac OS X, and *http://www.arduino.cc/playground/Learning/Linux* for Linux.

A troubleshooting guide can be found at *http://arduino.cc/en/Guide/Troubleshooting*.

1.3 Using the Integrated Development Environment (IDE) to Prepare an Arduino Sketch

Problem

You want to get a sketch and prepare it for uploading to the board.

Solution

Use the Arduino IDE to create, open, and modify sketches that define what the board will do. You can use buttons along the top of the IDE to perform these actions (shown in Figure 1-6), or you can use the menus or keyboard shortcuts (shown in Figure 1-7).

The Sketch Editor area is where you view and edit code for a sketch. It supports common text-editing keys such as Ctrl-F (⌘+F on a Mac) for find, Ctrl-Z (⌘+Z on a Mac) for undo, Ctrl-C (⌘+C on a Mac) to copy highlighted text, and Ctrl-V (⌘+V on a Mac) to paste highlighted text.

Figure 1-7 shows how to load the Blink sketch (the sketch that comes preloaded on a new Arduino board).

After you've started the IDE, go to the File→Examples menu and select 1. Basics→Blink, as shown in Figure 1-7. The code for blinking the built-in LED will be displayed in the Sketch Editor window (refer to Figure 1-6).

Before the code can be sent to the board, it needs to be converted into instructions that can be read and executed by the Arduino controller chip; this is called *compiling*. To do this, click the compile button (the top-left button with a tick inside), or select Sketch→Verify/Compile (Ctrl-R; ⌘+R on a Mac).

You should see a message that reads "Compiling sketch..." and a progress bar in the message area below the text-editing window. After a second or two, a message that reads "Done Compiling" will appear. The black console area will contain the following additional message:

```
Binary sketch size: 1026 bytes (of a 32256 byte maximum)
```

The exact message may differ depending on your board and Arduino version; it is telling you the size of the sketch and the maximum size that your board can accept.

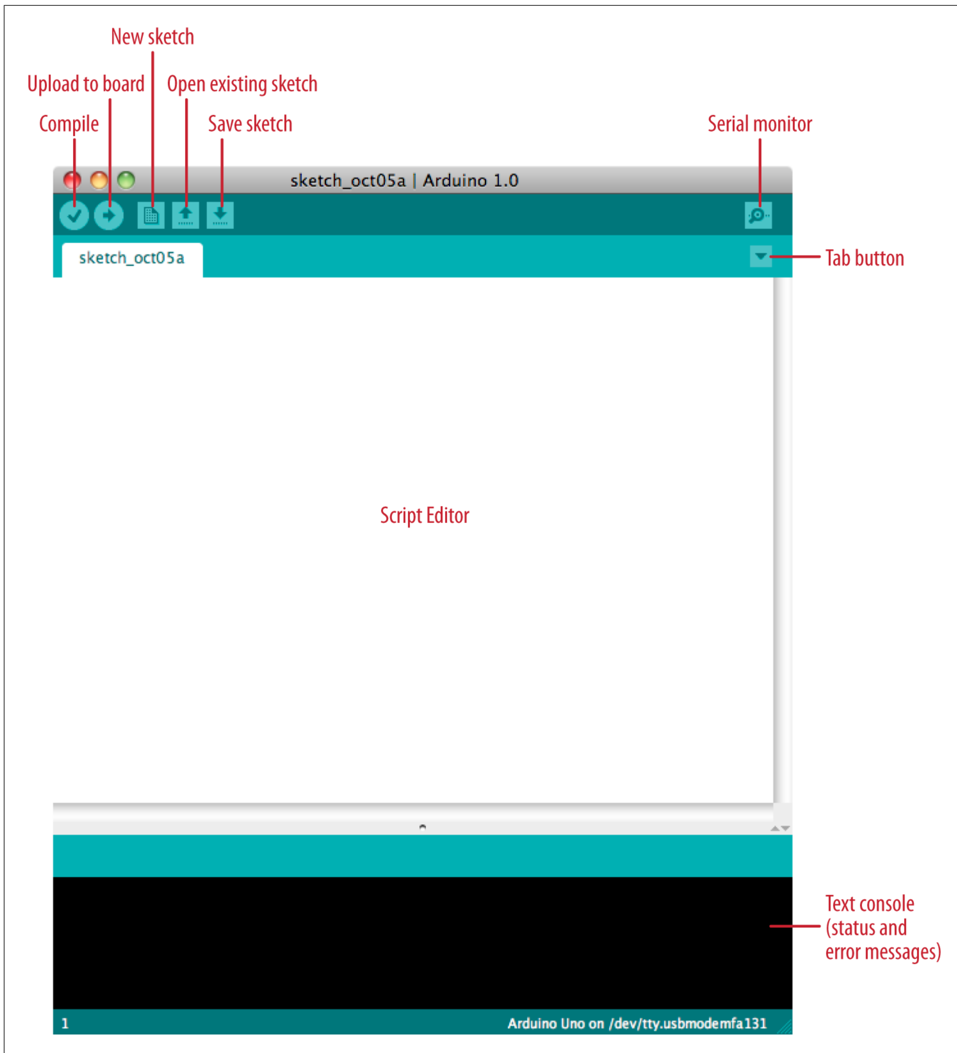


Figure 1-6. Arduino IDE

Discussion

Source code for Arduino is called a *sketch*. The process that takes a sketch and converts it into a form that will work on the board is called *compilation*. The IDE uses a number of command-line tools behind the scenes to compile a sketch. For more information on this, see Recipe 17.1.

The final message telling you the size of the sketch indicates how much program space is needed to store the controller instructions on the board. If the size of the compiled

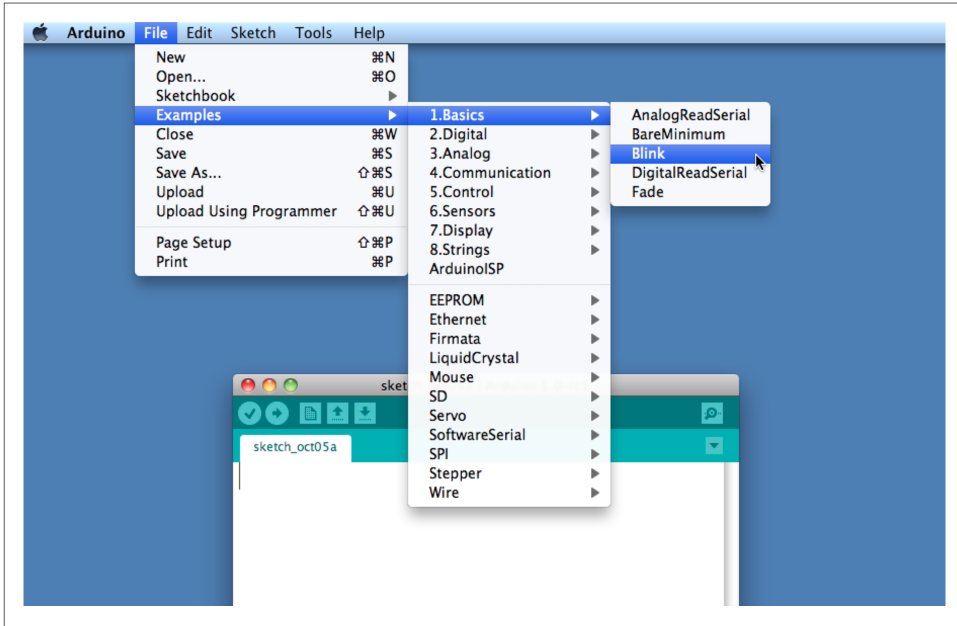


Figure 1-7. IDE menu (selecting the Blink example sketch)

sketch is greater than the available memory on the board, the following error message is displayed:

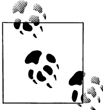
```
Sketch too big; see http://www.arduino.cc/en/Guide/Troubleshooting#size
 for tips on reducing it.
```

If this happens, you need to make your sketch smaller to be able to put it on the board, or get a board with higher capacity.

If there are errors in the code, the compiler will print one or more error messages in the console window. These messages can help identify the error—see Appendix D on software errors for troubleshooting tips.

To prevent accidental overwriting of the examples, the Arduino IDE does not allow you to save changes to the provided example sketches. You must rename them using the Save As menu option. You can save sketches you write yourself with the Save button (see Recipe 1.5).

As you develop and modify a sketch, you should also consider using the File→Save As menu option and using a different name or version number regularly so that as you implement each bit, you can go back to an older version if you need to.



Code uploaded onto the board cannot be downloaded back onto your computer. Make sure you save your sketch code on your computer. You cannot save changes back to the example files; you need to use Save As and give the changed file another name.

See Also

Recipe 1.5 shows an example sketch. Appendix D has tips on troubleshooting software problems.

1.4 Uploading and Running the Blink Sketch

Problem

You want to transfer your compiled sketch to the Arduino board and see it working.

Solution

Connect your Arduino board to your computer using the USB cable. Load the Blink sketch into the IDE as described in Recipe 1.3.

Next, select Tools→Board from the drop-down menu and select the name of the board you have connected (if it is the standard Uno board, it is probably the first entry in the board list).

Now select Tools→Serial Port. You will get a drop-down list of available serial ports on your computer. Each machine will have a different combination of serial ports, depending on what other devices you have used with your computer.

On Windows, they will be listed as numbered COM entries. If there is only one entry, select it. If there are multiple entries, your board will probably be the last entry.

On the Mac, your board will be listed twice if it is an Uno board:

```
/dev/tty.usbmodem-XXXXXXX
/dev/cu.usbmodem-XXXXXXX
```

If you have an older board, it will be listed as follows:

```
/dev/tty.usbserial-XXXXXXX
/dev/cu.usbserial-XXXXXXX
```

Each board will have different values for *XXXXXXX*. Select either entry.

Click on the upload button (in Figure 1-6, it's the second button from the left), or choose File→Upload to I/O board (Ctrl-U, ⌘+U on a Mac).

The software will compile the code, as in Recipe 1.3. After the software is compiled, it is uploaded to the board. If you look at your board, you will see the LED stop flashing, and two lights (labeled as Serial LEDs in Figure 1-4) just below the previously flashing

LED should flicker for a couple of seconds as the code uploads. The original light should then start flashing again as the code runs.

Discussion

For the IDE to send the compiled code to the board, the board needs to be plugged in to the computer, and you need to tell the IDE which board and serial port you are using.

When an upload starts, whatever sketch is running on the board is stopped (if you were running the Blink sketch, the LED will stop flashing). The new sketch is uploaded to the board, replacing the previous sketch. The new sketch will start running when the upload has successfully completed.

Older Arduino boards and some compatibles do not automatically interrupt the running sketch to initiate upload. In this case, you need to press the Reset button on the board just after the software reports that it is done compiling (when you see the message about the size of the sketch). It may take a few attempts to get the timing right between the end of the compilation and pressing the Reset button.

The IDE will display an error message if the upload is not successful. Problems are usually due to the wrong board or serial port being selected or the board not being plugged in. The currently selected board and serial port are displayed in the status bar at the bottom of the Arduino window

If you have trouble identifying the correct port on Windows, try unplugging the board and then selecting Tools→Serial Port to see which COM port is no longer on the display list. Another approach is to select the ports, one by one, until you see the lights on the board flicker to indicate that the code is uploading.

See Also

The Arduino troubleshooting page: *http://www.arduino.cc/en/Guide/Troubleshooting*.

1.5 Creating and Saving a Sketch

Problem

You want to create a sketch and save it to your computer.

Solution

To open an editor window ready for a new sketch, launch the IDE (see Recipe 1.3), go to the File menu, and select New. Paste the following code into the Sketch Editor window (it's similar to the Blink sketch, but the blinks last twice as long):

```
const int ledPin =  13;    // LED connected to digital pin 13

void setup()
{
  pinMode(ledPin, OUTPUT);
}

void loop()
{
  digitalWrite(ledPin, HIGH);   // set the LED on
  delay(2000);                  // wait for two seconds
  digitalWrite(ledPin, LOW);    // set the LED off
  delay(2000);                  // wait for two seconds
}
```

Compile the code by clicking the compile button (the top-left button with a triangle inside), or select Sketch→Verify/Compile (see Recipe 1.3).

Upload the code by clicking on the upload button, or choose File→Upload to I/O board (see Recipe 1.4). After uploading, the LED should blink, with each flash lasting two seconds.

You can save this sketch to your computer by clicking the Save button, or select File→Save.

You can save the sketch using a new name by selecting the Save As menu option. A dialog box will open where you can enter the filename.

Discussion

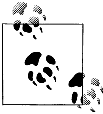
When you save a file in the IDE, a standard dialog box for the operating system will open. It suggests that you save the sketch to a folder called *Arduino* in your *My Documents* folder (or your *Documents* folder on a Mac). You can replace the default sketch name with a meaningful name that reflects the purpose of your sketch. Click Save to save the file.

The default name is the word *sketch* followed by the current date. Sequential letters starting from *a* are used to distinguish sketches created on the same day. Replacing the default name with something meaningful helps you to identify the purpose of a sketch when you come back to it later.

If you use characters that the IDE does not allow (e.g., the space character), the IDE will automatically replace these with valid characters.

Arduino sketches are saved as plain text files with the extension *.ino*. Older versions of the IDE used the *.pde* extension, also used by Processing. They are automatically saved in a folder with the same name as the sketch.

You can save your sketches to any folder on your computer, but if you use the default folder (the *Arduino* folder in your *Documents* folder) your sketches will automatically appear in the Sketchbook menu of the Arduino software and be easier to locate.



If you have edited one of the examples from the Arduino download, you will not be able to save the changed file using the same filename. This preserves the standard examples intact. If you want to save a modified example, you will need to select another location for the sketch.

After you have made changes, you will see a dialog box asking if you want to save the sketch when a sketch is closed.

The § symbol following the name of the sketch in the top bar of the IDE window indicates that the sketch code has changes that have not yet been saved on the computer. This symbol is removed when you save the sketch.

The Arduino software does not provide any kind of version control, so if you want to be able to revert to older versions of a sketch, you can use Save As regularly and give each revision of the sketch a slightly different name.

Frequent compiling as you modify or add code is a good way to check for errors as you write your code. It will be easier to find and fix any errors because they will usually be associated with what you have just written.

Once a sketch has been uploaded onto the board there is no way to download it back to your computer. Make sure you save any changes to your sketches that you want to keep.

If you try and save a sketch file that is not in a folder with the same name as the sketch, the IDE will inform you that this can't be opened as is and suggest you click OK to create the folder for the sketch with the same name.

Sketches must be located in a folder with the same name as the sketch. The IDE will create the folder automatically when you save a new sketch.

Sketches made with older versions of Arduino software have a different file extension (*.pde*). The IDE will open them, when you save the sketch it will create a file with the new extension (*.ino*). Code written for early versions of the IDE may not be able to compile in version 1.0. Most of the changes to get old code running are easy to do. See Appendix H for more details.

See Also

The code in this recipe and throughout this book use the `const int` expression to provide meaningful names (`ledPin`) for constants instead of numbers (`13`). See Recipe 17.5 for more on the use of constants.

1.6 Using Arduino

Problem

You want to get started with a project that is easy to build and fun to use.

Solution

This recipe provides a taste of some of the techniques that are covered in detail in later chapters.

The sketch is based on the LED blinking code from the previous recipe, but instead of using a fixed delay, the rate is determined by a light-sensitive sensor called a light dependent resistor or LDR (see Recipe 6.2). Wire the LDR as shown in Figure 1-8.

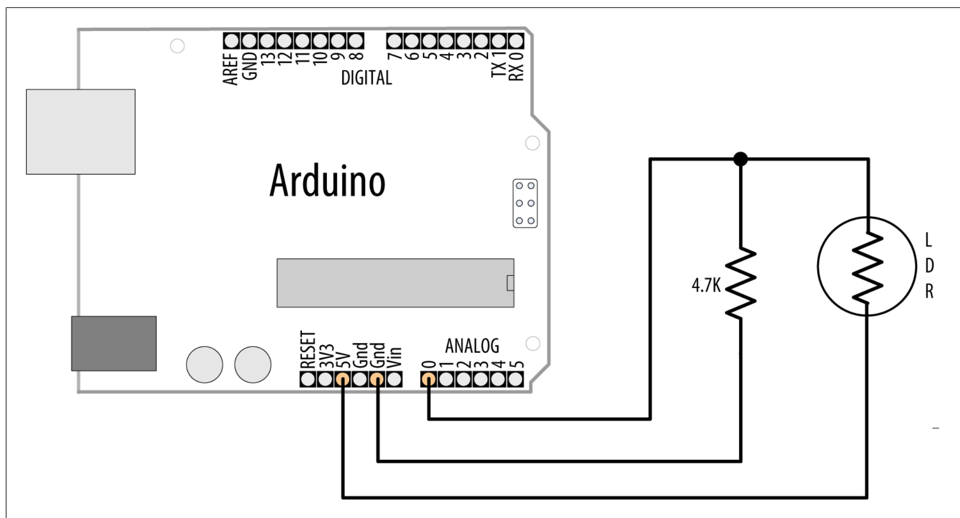


Figure 1-8. Arduino with light dependent resistor

If you are not familiar with building a circuit from a schematic, see Appendix B for step-by-step illustrations on how to make this circuit on a breadboard.

The following sketch reads the light level of an LDR connected to analog pin 0. The light level striking the LDR will change the blink rate of the internal LED connected to pin 13:

```
const int ledPin =  13;     // LED connected to digital pin 13
const int sensorPin = 0;    // connect sensor to analog input 0

void setup()
{
  pinMode(ledPin, OUTPUT);  // enable output on the led pin
}

void loop()
{
  int rate = analogRead(sensorPin);    // read the analog input
  digitalWrite(ledPin, HIGH);   // set the LED on
  delay(rate);                  // wait duration dependent on light level
  digitalWrite(ledPin, LOW);    // set the LED off
  delay(rate);
}
```

Discussion

The value of the 4.7K resistor is not critical. Anything from 1K to 10K can be used. The light level on the LDR will change the voltage level on analog pin 0. The `analogRead` command (see Chapter 6) provides a value that ranges from around 200 when the LDR is dark to 800 or so when it is very bright. This value determines the duration of the LED on and off times, so the blink time increases with light intensity.

You can scale the blink rate by using the Arduino `map` function as follows:

```
const int ledPin =  13;     // LED connected to digital pin 13
const int sensorPin = 0;    // connect sensor to analog input 0

// the next two lines set the min and max delay between blinks
const int minDuration = 100;  // minimum wait between blinks
const int maxDuration = 1000;  // maximum wait between blinks


void setup()
{
  pinMode(ledPin, OUTPUT);  // enable output on the led pin
}

void loop()
{
  int rate = analogRead(sensorPin);    // read the analog input
  // the next line scales the blink rate between the min and max values
  rate = map(rate, 200,800,minDuration, maxDuration); // convert to blink rate
  rate = constrain(rate, minDuration,maxDuration);    // constrain the value
```

```
  digitalWrite(ledPin, HIGH);   // set the LED on
  delay(rate);                  // wait duration dependent on light level
  digitalWrite(ledPin, LOW);    // set the LED off
  delay(rate);
}
```

Recipe 5.7 provides more details on using the `map` function to scale values. Recipe 3.5 has details on using the `constrain` function to ensure values do not exceed a given range.

If you want to view the value of the rate variable on your computer, you can print this to the Arduino Serial Monitor as shown in the revised loop code that follows. The sketch will display the blink rate in the Serial Monitor. You open the Serial Monitor window in the Arduino IDE by clicking on the icon on the right of the top bar (see Chapter 4 for more on using the Serial Monitor):

```
const int ledPin =  13;     // LED connected to digital pin 13
const int sensorPin = 0;    // connect sensor to analog input 0

// the next two lines set the min and max delay between blinks
const int minDuration = 100;  // minimum wait between blinks
const int maxDuration = 1000;  // maximum wait between blinks


void setup()
{
  pinMode(ledPin, OUTPUT);  // enable output on the led pin
  Serial.begin(9600);       // initialize Serial
}

void loop()
{
  int rate = analogRead(sensorPin);    // read the analog input
  // the next line scales the blink rate between the min and max values
  rate = map(rate, 200,800,minDuration, maxDuration); // convert to blink rate
  rate = constrain(rate, minDuration,maxDuration);    // constrain the value

  Serial.println(rate);         // print rate to serial monitor
  digitalWrite(ledPin, HIGH);   // set the LED on
  delay(rate);                  // wait duration dependent on light level
  digitalWrite(ledPin, LOW);    // set the LED off
  delay(rate);
}
```

You can use the LDR to control the pitch of a sound by connecting a small speaker to the pin, as shown in Figure 1-9.

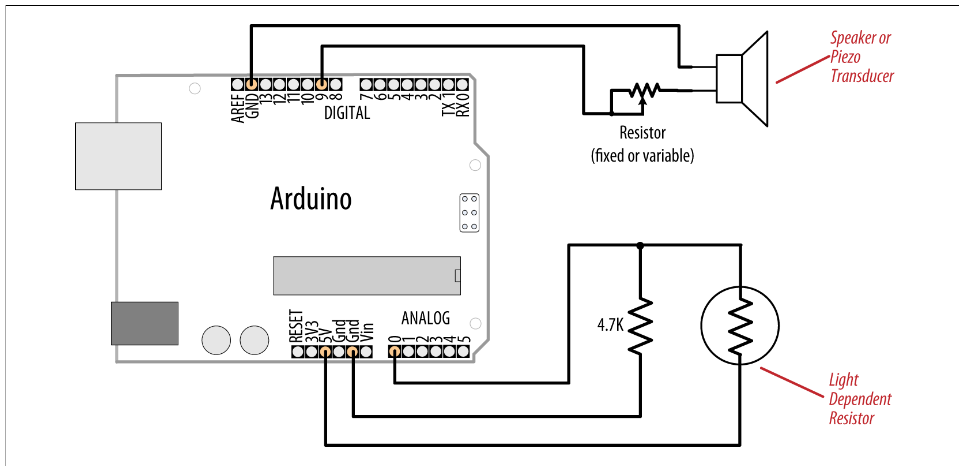


Figure 1-9. Connections for a speaker with the LDR circuit

You will need to increase the on/off rate on the pin to a frequency in the audio spectrum. This is achieved, as shown in the following code, by decreasing the min and max durations:

```
const int outputPin = 9;    // Speaker connected to digital pin 9
const int sensorPin = 0;    // connect sensor to analog input 0

const int minDuration = 1;   // 1ms on, 1ms off (500 Hz)
const int maxDuration = 10;  // 10ms on, 10ms off (50 hz)

void setup()
{
  pinMode(outputPin, OUTPUT);  // enable output on the led pin
}

void loop()
{
  int sensorReading = analogRead(sensorPin);    // read the analog input
  int rate = map(sensorReading, 200,800,minDuration, maxDuration);
  rate = constrain(rate, minDuration,maxDuration);    // constrain the value

  digitalWrite(outputPin, HIGH);   // set the LED on
  delay(rate);                     // wait duration dependent on light level
  digitalWrite(outputPin, LOW);    // set the LED off
  delay(rate);
}
```

See Also

See Recipe 3.5 for details on using the `constrain` function.

See Recipe 5.7 for a discussion on the `map` function.

If you are interested in creating sounds, see Chapter 9 for a full discussion on audio output with Arduino.

CHAPTER 2
Making the Sketch Do Your Bidding

2.0 Introduction

Though much of an Arduino project will involve integrating the Arduino board with supporting hardware, you need to be able to tell the board what to do with the rest of your project. This chapter introduces core elements of Arduino programming, shows nonprogrammers how to use common language constructs, and provides an overview of the language syntax for readers who are not familiar with C or C++, the language that Arduino uses.

Since making the examples interesting requires making Arduino do something, the recipes use physical capabilities of the board that are explained in detail in later chapters. If any of the code in this chapter is not clear, feel free to jump forward, particularly to Chapter 4 for more on serial output and Chapter 5 for more on using digital and analog pins. You don't need to understand all the code in the examples, though, to see how to perform the specific capabilities that are the focus of the recipes. Here are some of the more common functions used in the examples that are covered in the next few chapters:

`Serial.println(value);`
: Prints the value to the Arduino IDE's Serial Monitor so you can view Arduino's output on your computer; see Recipe 4.1.

`pinMode(pin, mode);`
: Configures a digital pin to read (input) or write (output) a digital value; see the introduction to Chapter 5.

`digitalRead(pin);`
: Reads a digital value (`HIGH` or `LOW`) on a pin set for input; see Recipe 5.1.

`digitalWrite(pin, value);`
: Writes the digital value (`HIGH` or `LOW`) to a pin set for output; see Recipe 5.1.

2.1 Structuring an Arduino Program

Problem

You are new to programming and want to understand the building blocks of an Arduino program.

Solution

Programs for Arduino are usually referred to as *sketches*; the first users were artists and designers and *sketch* highlights the quick and easy way to have an idea realized. The terms *sketch* and *program* are interchangeable. Sketches contain code—the instructions the board will carry out. Code that needs to run only once (such as to set up the board for your application) must be placed in the `setup` function. Code to be run continuously after the initial setup has finished goes into the `loop` function. Here is a typical sketch:

```
const int ledPin =  13;    // LED connected to digital pin 13

 // The setup() method runs once, when the sketch starts
 void setup()
 {
   pinMode(ledPin, OUTPUT);      // initialize the digital pin as an output
 }

 // the loop() method runs over and over again,
 void loop()
 {
   digitalWrite(ledPin, HIGH);   // turn the LED on
   delay(1000);                  // wait a second
   digitalWrite(ledPin, LOW);    // turn the LED off
   delay(1000);                  // wait a second
 }
```

When the Arduino IDE finishes uploading the code, and every time you power on the board after you've uploaded this code, it starts at the top of the sketch and carries out the instructions sequentially. It runs the code in `setup` once and then goes through the code in `loop`. When it gets to the end of `loop` (marked by the closing bracket, `}`) it goes back to the beginning of `loop`.

Discussion

This example continuously flashes an LED by writing `HIGH` and `LOW` outputs to a pin. See Chapter 5 to learn more about using Arduino pins. When the sketch begins, the code in `setup` sets the pin mode (so it's capable of lighting an LED). After the code in `setup` is completed, the code in `loop` is repeatedly called (to flash the LED) for as long as the Arduino board is powered on.

You don't need to know this to write Arduino sketches, but experienced C/C++ programmers may wonder where the expected `main()` entry point function has gone. It's there, but it's hidden under the covers by the Arduino build environment. The build process creates an intermediate file that includes the sketch code and the following additional statements:

```
int main(void)
{
    init();

    setup();

    for (;;)
        loop();

    return 0;
}
```

The first thing that happens is a call to an `init()` function that initializes the Arduino hardware. Next, your sketch's `setup()` function is called. Finally, your `loop()` function is called over and over. Because the `for` loop never terminates, the `return` statement is never executed.

See Also

Recipe 1.4 explains how to upload a sketch to the Arduino board.

Chapter 17 and *http://www.arduino.cc/en/Hacking/BuildProcess* provide more on the build process.

2.2 Using Simple Primitive Types (Variables)

Problem

Arduino has different types of variables to efficiently represent values. You want to know how to select and use these Arduino data types.

Solution

Although the `int` (short for *integer*, a 16-bit value in Arduino) data type is the most common choice for the numeric values encountered in Arduino applications, you can use Table 2-1 to determine the data type that fits the range of values your application expects.

Table 2-1. Arduino data types

Numeric types	Bytes	Range	Use
`int`	2	–32768 to 32767	Represents positive and negative integer values.
`unsigned int`	2	0 to 65535	Represents only positive values; otherwise, similar to `int`.
`long`	4	–2147483648 to 2147483647	Represents a very large range of positive and negative values.
`unsigned long`	4	4294967295	Represents a very large range of positive values.
`float`	4	3.4028235E+38 to –3.4028235E+38	Represents numbers with fractions; use to approximate real-world measurements.
`double`	4	Same as `float`	In Arduino, `double` is just another name for `float`.
`boolean`	1	`false` (0) or `true` (1)	Represents true and false values.
`char`	1	–128 to 127	Represents a single character. Can also represent a signed value between –128 and 127.
`byte`	1	0 to 255	Similar to `char`, but for unsigned values.

Other types	Use
`String`	Represents arrays of `char`s (characters) typically used to contain text.
`void`	Used only in function declarations where no value is returned.

Discussion

Except in situations where maximum performance or memory efficiency is required, variables declared using `int` will be suitable for numeric values if the values do not exceed the range (shown in the first row in Table 2-1) and if you don't need to work with fractional values. Most of the official Arduino example code declares numeric variables as `int`. But sometimes you do need to choose a type that specifically suits your application.

Sometimes you need negative numbers and sometimes you don't, so numeric types come in two varieties: `signed` and `unsigned`. `unsigned` values are always positive. Variables without the keyword `unsigned` in front are signed so that they can represent negative and positive values. One reason to use `unsigned` values is when the range of `signed` values will not fit the range of the variable (an unsigned variable has twice the capacity of a signed variable). Another reason programmers choose to use `unsigned` types is to clearly indicate to people reading the code that the value expected will never be a negative number.

`boolean` types have two possible values: `true` or `false`. They are commonly used for things like checking the state of a switch (if it's pressed or not). You can also use `HIGH` and `LOW` as equivalents to `true` and `false` where this makes more sense; `digitalWrite(pin, HIGH)` is a more expressive way to turn on an LED than `digitalWrite(pin, true)` or `digitalWrite(pin,1)`, although all of these are treated identically when the

sketch actually runs, and you are likely to come across all of these forms in code posted on the Web.

See Also

The Arduino reference at *http://www.arduino.cc/en/Reference/HomePage* provides details on data types.

2.3 Using Floating-Point Numbers

Problem

Floating-point numbers are used for values expressed with decimal points (this is the way to represent fractional values). You want to calculate and compare these values in your sketch.

Solution

The following code shows how to declare floating-point variables, illustrates problems you can encounter when comparing floating-point values, and demonstrates how to overcome them:

```
/*
 * Floating-point example
 * This sketch initialized a float value to 1.1
 * It repeatedly reduces the value by 0.1 until the value is 0
 */


float  value = 1.1;

void setup()
{
  Serial.begin(9600);
}

void loop()
{
  value = value - 0.1;   // reduce value by 0.1 each time through the loop
  if( value == 0)
     Serial.println("The value is exactly zero");
  else if(almostEqual(value, 0))
  {
    Serial.print("The value ");
    Serial.print(value,7); // print to 7 decimal places
    Serial.println(" is almost equal to zero");
  }
  else
    Serial.println(value);

  delay(100);
```

```
}

// returns true if the difference between a and b is small
// set value of DELTA to the maximum difference considered to be equal
boolean almostEqual(float a, float b)
{
  const float DELTA = .00001; // max difference to be almost equal
  if (a == 0) return fabs(b) <= DELTA;
  if (b == 0) return fabs(a) <= DELTA;
  return fabs((a - b) / max(fabs(a), fabs(b))) <= DELTA ;
}
```

Discussion

Floating-point math is not exact, and values returned can have a small approximation error. The error occurs because floating-point values cover a huge range, so the internal representation of the value can only hold an approximation. Because of this, you need to test if the values are within a range of tolerance rather than exactly equal.

The Serial Monitor output from this sketch is as follows:

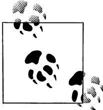
```
1.00
0.90
0.80
0.70
0.60
0.50
0.40
0.30
0.20
0.10
The value -0.0000001 is almost equal to zero
-0.10
-0.20
```

The output continues to produce negative numbers.

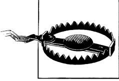
You may expect the code to print `"The value is exactly zero"` after `value` is `0.1` and then 0.1 is subtracted from this. But `value` never equals exactly zero; it gets very close, but that is not good enough to pass the test: `if (value == 0)`. This is because the only memory-efficient way that floating-point numbers can contain the huge range in values they can represent is by storing an approximation of the number.

The solution to this is to check if a variable is close to the desired value, as shown in this recipe's Solution.

The `almostEqual` function tests if the variable `value` is within 0.00001 of the desired target and returns true if so. The acceptable range is set with the constant `DELTA`, you can change this to smaller or larger values as required. The function named `fabs` (short for *floating-point absolute value*) returns the absolute value of a floating-point variable and this is used to test the difference between the given parameters.



Floating point approximates numbers because it only uses 32 bits to hold all values within a huge range. Eight bits are used for the decimal multiplier (the exponent), and that leaves 24 bits for the sign and value—only enough for seven significant decimal digits.



Although `float` and `double` are exactly the same on Arduino, `double`s do have a higher precision on many other platforms. If you are importing code that uses `float` and `double` from another platform, check that there is sufficient precision for your application.

See Also

The Arduino reference for `float`: *http://www.arduino.cc/en/Reference/Float*.

2.4 Working with Groups of Values

Problem

You want to create and use a group of values (called *arrays*). The arrays may be a simple list or they could have two or more dimensions. You want to know how to determine the size of the array and how to access the elements in the array.

Solution

This sketch creates two arrays: an array of integers for pins connected to switches and an array of pins connected to LEDs, as shown in Figure 2-1:

```
/*
 array sketch
 an array of switches controls an array of LEDs
 see Chapter 5 for more on using switches
 see Chapter 7 for information on LEDs
 */

int inputPins[] = {2,3,4,5};  // create an array of pins for switch inputs

int ledPins[] = {10,11,12,13};  // create array of output pins for LEDs

void setup()
{
  for(int index = 0; index < 4; index++)
  {
    pinMode(ledPins[index], OUTPUT);         // declare LED as output
    pinMode(inputPins[index], INPUT);        // declare pushbutton as input

    digitalWrite(inputPins[index],HIGH);     // enable pull-up resistors
    // (see Recipe 5.2)
  }
}
```

```
void loop(){
  for(int index = 0; index < 4; index++)
  {
    int val = digitalRead(inputPins[index]);  // read input value
    if (val == LOW)                           // check if the switch is pressed
    {
      digitalWrite(ledPins[index], HIGH); // turn LED on if switch is pressed
    }
    else
    {
      digitalWrite(ledPins[index], LOW);  // turn LED off
    }
  }
}
```

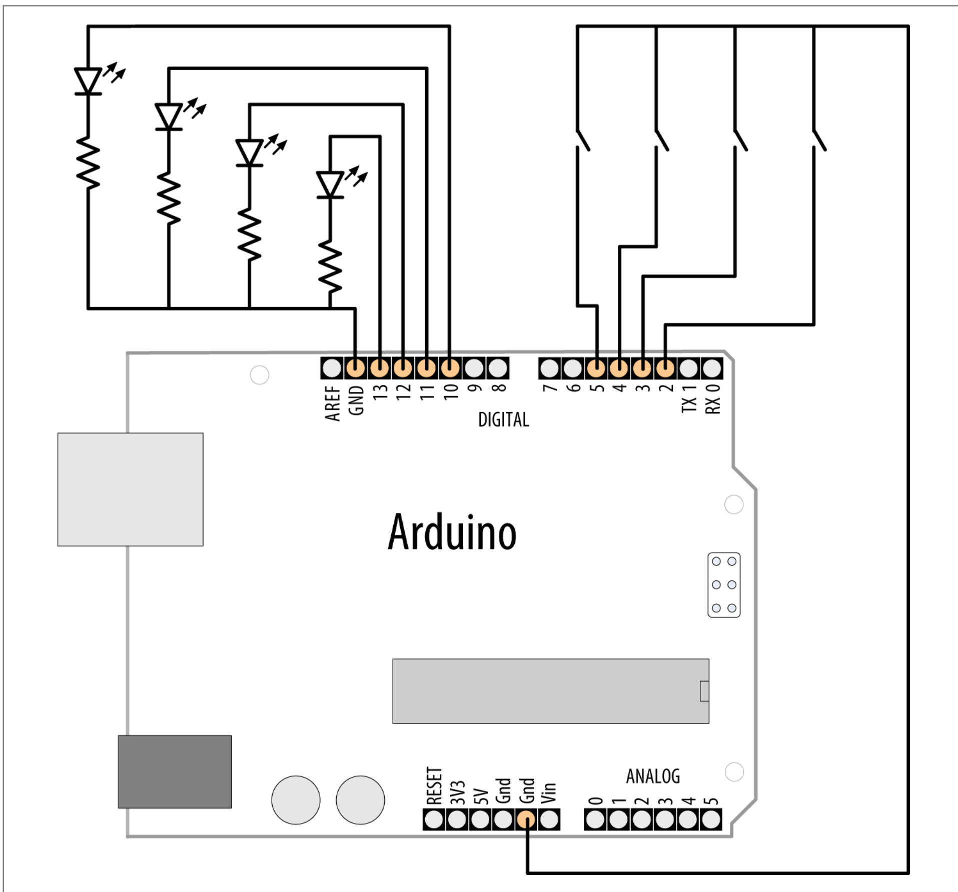


Figure 2-1. Connections for LEDs and switches

Discussion

Arrays are collections of consecutive variables of the same type. Each variable in the collection is called an *element*. The number of elements is called the *size* of the array.

The Solution demonstrates a common use of arrays in Arduino code: storing a collection of pins. Here the pins connect to switches and LEDs (a topic covered in more detail in Chapter 5). The important parts of this example are the declaration of the array and access to the array elements.

The following line of code declares (creates) an array of integers with four elements and initializes each element. The first element is set equal to 2, the second to 3, and so on:

```
int inputPins[] = {2,3,4,5};
```

If you don't initialize values when you declare an array (for example, when the values will only be available when the sketch is running), you must change each element individually. You can declare the array as follows:

```
int inputPins[4];
```

This declares an array of four elements with the initial value of each element set to zero. The number within the square brackets ([]) is the size, and this sets the number of elements. This array has a size of four and can hold, at most, four integer values. The size can be omitted if array declaration contains initializers (as shown in the first example) because the compiler figures out how big to make the array by counting the number of initializers.

The first element of the array is `element[0]`:

```
int firstElement = inputPins[0];  // this is the first element

inputPins[0] = 2; // set the value of this element equal to 2
```

The last element is one less than the size, so in the preceding example, with a size of four, the last element is element 3:

```
int lastElement = inputPins[3]; // this is the last element
```

It may seem odd that an array with a size of four has the last element accessed using `array[3]`, but because the first element is `array[0]`, the four elements are:

```
inputPins[0],inputPins[1],inputPins[2],inputPins[3]
```

In the previous sketch, the four elements are accessed using a `for` loop:

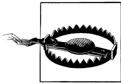
```
for(int index = 0; index < 4; index++)
{
    //get the pin number by accessing each element in the pin arrays
    pinMode(ledPins[index], OUTPUT);         // declare LED as output
    pinMode(inputPins[index], INPUT);        // declare pushbutton as input
}
```

This loop will step through the variable `index` with values starting at 0 and ending at 3. It is a common mistake to accidentally access an element that is beyond the actual

size of the array. This is a bug that can have many different symptoms and care must be taken to avoid it. One way to keep your loops under control is to set the size of an array by using a constant as follows:

```
const int PIN_COUNT = 4;  // define a constant for the number of elements
int inputPins[PIN_COUNT] = {2,3,4,5};

  for(int index = 0; index < PIN_COUNT; index++)
    pinMode(inputPins[index], INPUT);
```



The compiler will not report an error if you accidentally try to store or read beyond the size of the array. You must be careful that you only access elements that are within the bounds you have set. Using a constant to set the size of an array and in code referring to its elements helps your code stay within the bounds of the array.

Another use of arrays is to hold a string of text characters. In Arduino code, these are called *character strings* (*strings* for short). A character string consists of one or more characters, followed by the null character (the value 0) to indicate the end of the string.

The null at the end of a character string is not the same as the character 0. The null has an ASCII value of 0, whereas 0 has an ASCII value of 48.

Methods to use strings are covered in Recipes 2.5 and 2.6.

See Also

Recipe 5.2; Recipe 7.1

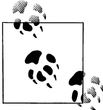
2.5 Using Arduino String Functionality

Problem

You want to manipulate text. You need to copy it, add bits together, and determine the number of characters.

Solution

The previous recipe mentioned how arrays of characters can be used to store text: these character arrays are usually called strings. Arduino has a capability called `String` that adds rich functionality for storing and manipulating text.



The word *String* with an uppercase *S* refers to the Arduino text capability provided by the Arduino String library. The word *string* with a lowercase *s* refers to the group of characters rather than the Arduino `String` functionality.

This recipe demonstrates how to use Arduino `String`s.

The `String` capability was introduced in version 0019 alpha (older than 1.0) of Arduino. If you are using an older version, you can use the Text-String library; see the link at the end of this recipe.

Load the following sketch onto your board, and open the Serial Monitor to view the results:

```
/*
  Basic_Strings sketch
 */

String text1 = "This string";
String text2 = " has more text";
String text3;  // to be assigned within the sketch

void setup()
{
  Serial.begin(9600);

  Serial.print( text1);
  Serial.print(" is ");
  Serial.print(text1.length());
  Serial.println(" characters long.");

  Serial.print("text2 is ");
  Serial.print(text2.length());
  Serial.println(" characters long.");

  text1.concat(text2);
  Serial.println("text1 now contains: ");
  Serial.println(text1);
}

void loop()
{
}
```

Discussion

This sketch creates three variables of type `String`, called `text1`, `text2`, and `text3`. Variables of type `String` have built-in capabilities for manipulating text. The statement

`text1.length()` returns (provides the value of) the length (number of characters) in the string `text1`.

`text1.concat(text2)` combines the contents of strings; in this case, it appends the contents of `text2` to the end of `text1` (`concat` is short for *concatenate*).

The Serial Monitor will display the following:

```
This string is 11 characters long.
text2 is 14 characters long.
text1 now contains:
This string has more text
```

Another way to combine strings is to use the string addition operator. Add these two lines to the end of the `setup` code:

```
  text3 = text1 + " and more";
  Serial.println(text3);
```

The new code will result in the Serial Monitor adding the following line to the end of the display:

```
This string has more text and more
```

You can use the `indexOf` and `lastIndexOf` functions to find an instance of a particular character in a string.

Because the `String` class is a recent addition to Arduino, you will come across a lot of code that uses arrays of characters rather than the `String` type. See Recipe 2.6 for more on using arrays of characters without the help of the Arduino `String` functionality.

If you see a line such as the following:

```
char oldString[] = "this is a character array";
```

the code is using C-style character arrays (see Recipe 2.6). If the declaration looks like this:

```
String newString = "this is a string object";
```

the code uses Arduino `Strings`. To convert a C-style character array to an Arduino `String`, just assign the contents of the array to the `String` object:

```
char oldString[] = "I want this character array in a String object";
String newString = oldString;
```

To use any of the functions listed in Table 2-2, you need to invoke them upon an existing string object, as in this example:

```
int len = myString.length();
```

Table 2-2. Brief overview of Arduino String functions

`charAt(n)`	Returns the *n*th character of the `String`
`compareTo(S2)`	Compares the `String` to the given `String` S2
`concat(S2)`	Returns a new `String` that is the combination of the `String` and S2
`endsWith(S2)`	Returns true if the `String` ends with the characters of S2
`equals(S2)`	Returns true if the `String` is an exact match for S2 (case-sensitive)
`equalsIgnoreCase(S2)`	Same as `equals` but is not case-sensitive
`getBytes(buffer,len)`	Copies `len`(gth) characters into the supplied byte buffer
`indexOf(S)`	Returns the index of the supplied `String` (or character) or –1 if not found
`lastIndexOf(S)`	Same as `indexOf` but starts from the end of the `String`
`length()`	Returns the number of characters in the `String`
`replace(A,B)`	Replaces all instances of `String` (or character) A with B
`setCharAt(index,c)`	Stores the character c in the `String` at the given index
`startsWith(S2)`	Returns true if the `String` starts with the characters of S2
`substring(index)`	Returns a `String` with the characters starting from index to the end of the `String`
`substring(index,to)`	Same as above, but the substring ends at the character location before the 'to' position
`toCharArray(buffer,len)`	Copies up to `len` characters of the `String` to the supplied buffer
`toInt()`	Returns the integer value of the numeric digits in the `String`
`toLowerCase()`	Returns a `String` with all characters converted to lowercase
`toUpperCase()`	Returns a `String` with all characters converted to uppercase
`trim()`	Returns a `String` with all leading and trailing whitespace removed

See the Arduino reference pages for more about the usage and variants for these functions.

Choosing between Arduino Strings and C character arrays

Arduino's built-in `String` datatype is easier to use than C character arrays, but this is achieved through complex code in the String library, which makes more demands on your Arduino, and is, by nature, more prone to problems.

The `String` datatype is so flexible because it makes use of *dynamic memory allocation*. That is, when you create or modify a `String`, Arduino requests a new region of memory from the C library, and when you're done using a `String`, Arduino needs to release that memory. This usually works smoothly, but in practice there are many cracks through which memory can leak. Bugs in the String library can result in some or all of the memory not being returned properly. When this happens, the memory available to Arduino will slowly decrease (until you reboot the Arduino). And even if there were no memory leaks, it's complicated to write code to check if a `String` request failed due to insufficient memory (the `String` functions mimic those in Processing, but unlike that

platform, Arduino does not have runtime error exception handling). Running out of dynamic memory is a bug that can be very difficult to track down because the sketch can run without problems for days or weeks before it starts misbehaving through insufficient memory.

If you use C character arrays, you are in control of memory usage: you're allocating a fixed (static) amount of memory at compile time so you don't get memory leaks. Your Arduino sketch will have the same amount of memory available to it all the time it's running. And if you do try to allocate more memory than available, finding the cause is easier because there are tools that tell you how much static memory you have allocated (see the reference to `avr-objdump` in Recipe 17.1).

However, with C character arrays, it's easier for you to have another problem: C will not prevent you from modifying memory beyond the bounds of the array. So if you allocate an array as `myString[4]`, and assign `myString[4] = 'A'` (remember, `myString[3]` is the end of the array), nothing will stop you from doing this. But who knows what piece of memory `myString[4]` refers to? And who knows whether assigning `'A'` to that memory location will cause you a problem? Most likely, it will cause your sketch to misbehave.

So, Arduino's built-in String library, by virtue of using dynamic memory, runs the risk of eating up your available memory. C's character arrays require care on your part to ensure that you do not exceed the bounds of the arrays you use. So use Arduino's built-in String library if you need rich text handling capability and you won't be creating and modifying `String`s over and over again. If you need to create and modify them in a loop that is constantly repeating, you're better off allocating a large C character array and writing your code carefully so you don't write past the bounds of that array.

Another instance where you may prefer C character arrays over Arduino `String`s is in large sketches that need most of the available RAM or flash. The Arduino `StringToInt` example code uses almost 2 KB more flash than equivalent code using a C character array and `atoi` to convert to an `int`. The Arduino `String` version also requires a little more RAM to store allocation information in addition to the actual string.

If you do suspect that the String library, or any other library that makes use of dynamically allocated memory, might be leaking memory, you can determine how much memory is free at any given time; see Recipe 17.2. Check the amount of RAM when your sketch starts, and monitor it to see whether it's decreasing over time. If you suspect a problem with the String library, search the list of open bugs (*http://code.google.com/p/arduino/issues/list*) for "String."

See Also

The Arduino distribution provides `String` example sketches (File→Examples→Strings).

The `String` reference page can be found at *http://arduino.cc/en/Reference/StringObject*.

Tutorials for the new String library are available at *http://arduino.cc/en/Tutorial/HomePage*, and a tutorial for the original String library (only needed if you are using a version of Arduino older than 0019 alpha) is available at *http://www.arduino.cc/en/Tutorial/TextString*.

2.6 Using C Character Strings

Problem

You want to understand how to use raw character strings: you want to know how to create a string, find its length, and compare, copy, or append strings. The core C language does not support the Arduino-style `String` capability, so you want to understand code from other platforms written to operate with primitive character arrays.

Solution

Arrays of characters are sometimes called *character strings* (or simply *strings* for short). Recipe 2.4 describes Arduino arrays in general. This recipe describes functions that operate on character strings.

You declare strings like this:

```
char stringA[8]; // declare a string of up to 7 chars plus terminating null
char stringB[8]  = "Arduino"; // as above and init(ialize) the string to "Arduino"
char stringC[16] = "Arduino"; // as above, but string has room to grow
char stringD[ ]  = "Arduino"; // the compiler inits the string and calculates size
```

Use `strlen` (short for *string length*) to determine the number of characters before the terminating null:

```
int length = strlen(string);  // return the number of characters in the string
```

`length` will be 0 for `stringA` and 7 for the other strings shown in the preceding code. The null that indicates the end of the string is not counted by `strlen`.

Use `strcpy` (short for *string copy*) to copy one string to another:

```
strcpy(destination, source);   // copy string source to destination
```

Use `strncpy` to limit the number of characters to copy (useful to prevent writing more characters than the destination string can hold). You can see this used in Recipe 2.7:

```
// copy up to 6 characters from source to destination
strncpy(destination, source, 6);
```

Use `strcat` (short for *string concatenate*) to append one string to the end of another:

```
// append source string to the end of the destination string
strcat(destination, source);
```

Always make sure there is enough room in the destination when copying or concatenating strings. Don't forget to allow room for the terminating null.

Use `strcmp` (short for *string compare*) to compare two strings. You can see this used in Recipe 2.7:

```
if(strcmp(str, "Arduino") == 0)
   // do something if the variable str is equal to "Arduino"
```

Discussion

Text is represented in the Arduino environment using an array of characters called strings. A string consists of a number of characters followed by a null (the value 0). The null is not displayed, but it is needed to indicate the end of the string to the software.

See Also

See one of the many online C/C++ reference pages, such as *http://www.cplusplus.com/reference/clibrary/cstring/* and *http://www.cppreference.com/wiki/string/c/start*.

2.7 Splitting Comma-Separated Text into Groups

Problem

You have a string that contains two or more pieces of data separated by commas (or any other separator). You want to split the string so that you can use each individual part.

Solution

This sketch prints the text found between each comma:

```
/*
 * SplitSplit sketch
 * split a comma-separated string
 */

String  text = "Peter,Paul,Mary";  // an example string
String  message = text; // holds text not yet split
int     commaPosition;  // the position of the next comma in the string

void setup()
{
  Serial.begin(9600);

  Serial.println(message);          // show the source string
  do
  {
```

```
        commaPosition = message.indexOf(',');
        if(commaPosition != -1)
        {
            Serial.println( message.substring(0,commaPosition));
            message = message.substring(commaPosition+1, message.length());
        }
        else
        {  // here after the last comma is found
           if(message.length() > 0)
             Serial.println(message);  // if there is text after the last comma,
                                       // print it
        }
     }
     while(commaPosition >=0);
  }

  void loop()
  {
  }
```

The Serial Monitor will display the following:

```
Peter,Paul,Mary
Peter
Paul
Mary
```

Discussion

This sketch uses `String` functions to extract text from between commas. The following code:

```
commaPosition = message.indexOf(',');
```

sets the variable `commaPosition` to the position of the first comma in the `String` named `message` (it will be set to –1 if no comma is found). If there is a comma, the `substring` function is used to print the text from the beginning of the string up to, but excluding, the comma. The text that was printed, and its trailing comma, are removed from `message` in this line:

```
message = message.substring(commaPosition+1, message.length());
```

`substring` returns a string starting from `commaPosition+1` (the position just after the first comma) up to the length of the message. This results in that message containing only the text following the first comma. This is repeated until no more commas are found (`commaPosition` will be equal to –1).

If you are an experienced programmer, you can also use the low-level functions that are part of the standard C library. The following sketch has similar functionality to the preceding one using Arduino strings:

```
/*
 * SplitSplit sketch
 * split a comma-separated string
 */
```

```
const int  MAX_STRING_LEN = 20; // set this to the largest string
                                // you will process

char stringList[] = "Peter,Paul,Mary"; // an example string

char stringBuffer[MAX_STRING_LEN+1]; // a static buffer for computation and output

void setup()
{
  Serial.begin(9600);
}

void loop()
{
  char *str;
  char *p;
  strncpy(stringBuffer, stringList, MAX_STRING_LEN); // copy source string
  Serial.println(stringBuffer);                      // show the source string

  for( str = strtok_r(stringBuffer, ",", &p);        // split using comma
       str;                                          // loop while str is not null
       str = strtok_r(NULL, ",", &p)                 // get subsequent tokens
     )
  {
    Serial.println(str);
  }
    delay(5000);
}
```

The core functionality comes from the function named `strtok_r` (the name of the version of `strtok` that comes with the Arduino compiler). The first time you call `strtok_r`, you pass it the string you want to *tokenize* (separate into individual values). But `strtok_r` overwrites the characters in this string each time it finds a new token, so it's best to pass a copy of the string as shown in this example. Each call that follows uses a `NULL` to tell the function that it should move on to the next token. In this example, each token is printed to the serial port.

If your tokens consist only of numbers, see Recipe 4.5. This shows how to extract numeric values separated by commas in a stream of serial characters.

See Also

See *http://www.nongnu.org/avr-libc/user-manual/group__avr__string.html* for more on C string functions such as `strtok_r` and `strcmp`.

Recipe 2.5; online references to the C/C++ functions `strtok_r` and `strcmp`.

2.8 Converting a Number to a String

Problem

You need to convert a number to a string, perhaps to show the number on an LCD or other display.

Solution

The `String` variable will convert numbers to strings of characters automatically. You can use literal values, or the contents of a variable. For example, the following code will work:

```
String myNumber = 1234;
```

As will this:

```
int value = 127;
String myReadout = "The reading was ";
myReadout.concat(value);
```

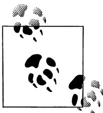
Or this:

```
int value = 127;
String myReadout = "The reading was ";
myReadout += value;
```

Discussion

If you are converting a number to display as text on an LCD or serial device, the simplest solution is to use the conversion capability built in to the LCD and Serial libraries (see Recipe 4.2). But perhaps you are using a device that does not have this built-in support (see Chapter 13) or you want to manipulate the number as a string in your sketch.

The Arduino `String` class automatically converts numerical values when they are assigned to a `String` variable. You can combine (concatenate) numeric values at the end of a string using the `concat` function or the string `+` operator.



The `+` operator is used with number types as well as strings, but it behaves differently with each.

The following code results in `number` having a value of `13`:

```
int number = 12;
number += 1;
```

With a `String`, as shown here:

```
String textNumber = "12";
textNumber += 1;
```

textNumber is the text string "121".

Prior to the introduction of the String class, it was common to find Arduino code using the itoa or ltoa function. The names come from "integer to ASCII" (itoa) and "long to ASCII" (ltoa). The String version described earlier is easier to use, but the following can be used if you prefer working with C character arrays as described in Recipe 2.6.

itoa or ltoa take three parameters: the value to convert, the buffer that will hold the output string, and the number base (10 for a decimal number, 16 for hex, and 2 for binary).

The following sketch illustrates how to convert numeric values using ltoa:

```
/*
 * NumberToString
 * Creates a string from a given number
 */

void setup()
{
  Serial.begin(9600);
}

char buffer[12];  // long data type has 11 characters (including the
                  // minus sign) and a terminating null
void loop()
{
  long value = 12345;
  ltoa(value, buffer, 10);
  Serial.print( value);
  Serial.print(" has  ");
  Serial.print(strlen(buffer));
  Serial.println(" digits");
  value = 123456789;
  ltoa(value, buffer, 10);
  Serial.print( value);
  Serial.print(" has  ");
  Serial.print(strlen(buffer));
  Serial.println(" digits");
  delay(1000);
}
```

Your buffer must be large enough to hold the maximum number of characters in the string. For 16-bit base 10 (decimal) integers, that is seven characters (five digits, a possible minus sign, and a terminating 0 that always signifies the end of a string); 32-bit long integers need 12 character buffers (10 digits, the minus sign, and the terminating 0). No warning is given if you exceed the buffer size; this is a bug that can cause all kinds of strange symptoms, because the overflow will corrupt some other part of memory that may be used by your program. The easiest way to handle this is to always use a 12-character buffer and always use ltoa because this will work on both 16-bit and 32-bit values.

2.9 Converting a String to a Number

Problem

You need to convert a string to a number. Perhaps you have received a value as a string over a communication link and you need to use this as an integer or floating-point value.

Solution

There are a number of ways to solve this. If the string is received as serial data, it can be converted on the fly as each character is received. See Recipe 4.3 for an example of how to do this using the serial port.

Another approach to converting text strings representing numbers is to use the C language conversion function called `atoi` (for `int` variables) or `atol` (for `long` variables).

This code fragment terminates the incoming digits on any character that is not a digit (or if the buffer is full). For this to work, though, you'll need to enable the newline option in the Serial Monitor or type some other terminating character:

```
/*
 * StringToNumber
 * Creates a number from a string
 */

const int ledPin = 13; // pin the LED is connected to

int   blinkDelay;     // blink rate determined by this variable
char strValue[6];     // must be big enough to hold all the digits and the
                      // 0 that terminates the string
int index = 0;        // the index into the array storing the received digits

void setup()
{
 Serial.begin(9600);
 pinMode(ledPin,OUTPUT); // enable LED pin as output
}

void loop()
{
  if( Serial.available())
  {
    char ch = Serial.read();
    if(index < 5 && isDigit(ch) ){
      strValue[index++] = ch; // add the ASCII character to the string;
    }
    else
    {
      // here when buffer full or on the first non digit
      strValue[index] = 0;        // terminate the string with a 0
      blinkDelay = atoi(strValue);  // use atoi to convert the string to an int
      index = 0;
    }
```

```
  }
  blink();
}

void blink()
{
   digitalWrite(ledPin, HIGH);
   delay(blinkDelay/2);  // wait for half the blink period
   digitalWrite(ledPin, LOW);
   delay(blinkDelay/2);  // wait for the other half
}
```

Discussion

The obscurely named `atoi` (for ASCII to `int`) and `atol` (for ASCII to `long`) functions convert a string into integers or long integers. To use them, you have to receive and store the entire string in a character array before you can call the conversion function. The code creates a character array named `strValue` that can hold up to five digits (it's declared as `char strValue[6]` because there must be room for the terminating null). It fills this array with digits from `Serial.read` until it gets the first character that is not a valid digit. The array is terminated with a null and the `atoi` function is called to convert the character array into the variable `blinkDelay`.

A function called `blink` is called that uses the value stored in `blinkDelay`.

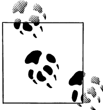
As mentioned in the warning in Recipe 2.4, you must be careful not to exceed the bound of the array. If you are not sure how to do that, see the Discussion section of that recipe.

Arduino release 22 added the `toInt` method to convert a String to an integer:

```
String aNumber = "1234";
int value = aNumber.toInt();
```

Arduino 1.0 added the `parseInt` method that can be used to get integer values from Serial and Ethernet (or any object that derives from the `Stream` class). The following fragment will convert sequences of numeric digits into numbers. It is similar to the solution fragment but does not need a buffer (and does not limit the number of digits to 5):

```
void loop()
{
  if( Serial.available())
  {
    blinkRate = Serial.parseInt();
  }
  blink();
}
```



Stream-parsing methods such as `parseInt` use a timeout to return control to your sketch if data does not arrive within the desired interval. The default timeout is one second but this can be changed by calling the `setTimeout` method:

```
Serial.setTimeout(1000 * 60); // wait up to one minute
```

`parseInt` (and all other stream methods) will return whatever value was obtained prior to the timeout if no delimiter was received. The return value will consist of whatever values were collected; if no digits were received, the return will be zero. Arduino 1.0 does not have a way to determine if a parse method has timed out, but this capability is planned for a future release.

See Also

Documentation for `atoi` can be found at: *http://www.nongnu.org/avr-libc/user-manual/group__avr__stdlib.html*.

There are many online C/C++ reference pages covering these low-level functions, such as *http://www.cplusplus.com/reference/clibrary/cstdlib/atoi/* or *http://www.cppreference.com/wiki/string/c/atoi*.

See Recipe 4.3 and Recipe 4.5 for more about using `parseInt` with Serial.

2.10 Structuring Your Code into Functional Blocks

Problem

You want to know how to add functions to a sketch, and the correct amount of functionality to go into your functions. You also want to understand how to plan the overall structure of the sketch.

Solution

Functions are used to organize the actions performed by your sketch into functional blocks. Functions package functionality into well-defined *inputs* (information given to a function) and *outputs* (information provided by a function) that make it easier to structure, maintain, and reuse your code. You are already familiar with the two functions that are in every Arduino sketch: `setup` and `loop`. You create a function by declaring its *return type* (the information it provides), its name, and any optional parameters (values) that the function will receive when it is called.

The terms *functions* and *methods* are used to refer to well-defined blocks of code that can be called as a single entity by other parts of a program. The C language refers to these as functions. Object-oriented languages such as C++ that expose functionality through classes tend to use the term method. Arduino uses a mix of styles (the example sketches tend to use C-like style, libraries tend to be written to expose C++ class methods). In this book, the term function is usually used unless the code is exposed through a class. Don't worry; if that distinction is not clear to you, treat both terms as the same.

Here is a simple function that just blinks an LED. It has no parameters and doesn't return anything (the `void` preceding the function indicates that nothing will be returned):

```
// blink an LED once
void blink1()
{
   digitalWrite(13,HIGH);   // turn the LED on
   delay(500);              // wait 500 milliseconds
   digitalWrite(13,LOW);    // turn the LED off
   delay(500);              // wait 500 milliseconds
}
```

The following version has a parameter (the integer named `count`) that determines how many times the LED will flash:

```
// blink an LED the number of times given in the count parameter
void blink2(int count)
{
  while(count > 0 )  // repeat until count is no longer greater than zero
  {
    digitalWrite(13,HIGH);
    delay(500);
    digitalWrite(13,LOW);
    delay(500);
    count = count -1; // decrement count
  }
}
```

Experienced programmers will note that both functions could be blink because the compiler will differentiate them by the type of values used for the parameter. This behavior is called *function overloading*. The Arduino `print` discussed in Recipe 4.2 is a common example. Another example of overloading is in the discussion of Recipe 4.6.

That version checks to see if the value of `count` is `0`. If not, it blinks the LED and then reduces the value of `count` by one. This will be repeated until `count` is no longer greater than `0`.

A *parameter* is sometimes referred to as an *argument* in some documentation. For practical purposes, you can treat these terms as meaning the same thing.

Here is an example sketch that takes a parameter and returns a value. The parameter determines the length of the LED on and off times (in milliseconds). The function continues to flash the LED until a button is pressed, and the number of times the LED flashed is returned from the function:

```
/*
  blink3 sketch
  Demonstrates calling a function with a parameter and returning a value.
  Uses the same wiring as the pull-up sketch from
  Recipe 5.2

  The LED flashes when the program starts and stops when a switch connected
  to digital pin 2 is pressed.
  The program prints the number of times that the LED flashes.
 */

const int ledPin = 13;          // output pin for the LED
const int inputPin = 2;         // input pin for the switch

void setup() {
  pinMode(ledPin, OUTPUT);
  pinMode(inputPin, INPUT);
  digitalWrite(inputPin,HIGH); // use internal pull-up resistor (Recipe 5.2)
  Serial.begin(9600);
}

void loop(){
  Serial.println("Press and hold the switch to stop blinking");
  int count = blink3(250); // blink the LED 250ms on and 250ms off
  Serial.print("The number of times the switch blinked was ");
  Serial.println(count);
}

// blink an LED using the given delay period
// return the number of times the LED flashed
int blink3(int period)
{
  int result = 0;
  int switchVal = HIGH; //with pull-ups, this will be high when switch is up

  while(switchVal == HIGH)  // repeat this loop until switch is pressed
                            // (it will go low when pressed)
  {
    digitalWrite(ledPin,HIGH);
    delay(period);
    digitalWrite(ledPin,LOW);
    delay(period);
    result = result + 1; // increment the count
```

```
    switchVal = digitalRead(inputPin);  // read input value
  }
  // here when switchVal is no longer HIGH because the switch is pressed
  return result;  // this value will be returned
}
```

Discussion

The code in this recipe's Solution illustrates the three forms of function call that you will come across. `blink1` has no parameter and no return value. Its form is:

```
void blink1()
{
   // implementation code goes here...
}
```

`blink2` takes a single parameter but does not return a value:

```
void blink2(int count)
{
   // implementation code goes here...
}
```

`blink3` has a single parameter and returns a value:

```
int blink3(int period)
{
   // implementation code goes here...
}
```

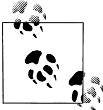
The data type that precedes the function name indicates the return type (or no return type if `void`). When *declaring the function* (writing out the code that defines the function and its action), you do not put a semicolon following the parenthesis at the end. When you *use* (call) the function, you do need a semicolon at the end of the line that calls the function.

Most of the functions you come across will be some variation on these forms. For example, here is a function that takes a parameter and returns a value:

```
int sensorPercent(int pin)
{
int percent;

  int val = analogRead(pin);  // read the sensor (ranges from 0 to 1023)
  percent = map(val,0,1023,0,100); // percent will range from 0 to 100.
  return percent;
}
```

The function name is `sensorPercent`. It is given an analog pin number to read and returns the value as a percent (see Recipe 5.7 for more on `analogRead` and `map`). The `int` in front of the declaration tells the compiler (and reminds the programmer) that the function will return an integer. When creating functions, choose the return type appropriate to the action the function performs. This function returns an integer value from 0 to 100, so a return type of `int` is appropriate.



It is recommended that you give your functions meaningful names, and it is a common practice to combine words by capitalizing the first letter of each word, except for the first word. Use whatever style you prefer, but it helps others who read your code if you keep your naming style consistent.

`sensorPercent` has a parameter called `pin` (when the function is called, `pin` is given the value that is passed to the function).

The body of the function (the code within the brackets) performs the action you want—here it reads a value from an analog input pin and maps it to a percentage. In the preceding example, the percentage is temporarily held in a variable called `percent`. The following statement causes the value held in the temporary variable `percent` to be returned to the calling application:

```
return percent;
```

The same functionality can be achieved without using the `percent` temporary variable:

```
int sensorPercent(int pin)
{
  int val = analogRead(pin);  // read the sensor (ranges from 0 to 1023)
  return map(val,0,1023,0,100); // percent will ranges from 0 to 100.
}
```

Here is how the function can be called:

```
// print the percent value of 6 analog pins
for(int sensorPin = 0; sensorPin < 6; sensorPin++)
{
  Serial.print("Percent of sensor on pin ");
  Serial.print(sensorPin);
  Serial.print(" is ");
  int val = sensorPercent(sensorPin);
  Serial.print(val);
}
```

See Also

The Arduino function reference page: *http://www.arduino.cc/en/Reference/FunctionDeclaration*

2.11 Returning More Than One Value from a Function

Problem

You want to return two or more values from a function. Recipe 2.10 provided examples for the most common form of a function, one that returns just one value or none at all. But sometimes you need to modify or return more than one value.

Solution

There are various ways to solve this. The easiest to understand is to have the function change some global variables and not actually return anything from the function:

```
/*
  swap sketch
  demonstrates changing two values using global variables
 */

int x; // x and y are global variables
int y;

void setup() {
  Serial.begin(9600);
}

void loop(){
  x = random(10); // pick some random numbers
  y = random(10);

  Serial.print("The value of x and y before swapping are: ");
  Serial.print(x); Serial.print(","); Serial.println(y);
  swap();

  Serial.print("The value of x and y after swapping are: ");
  Serial.print(x); Serial.print(","); Serial.println(y);Serial.println();


  delay(1000);
}

// swap the two global values
void swap()
{
  int temp;
  temp = x;
  x = y;
  y = temp;
}
```

The `swap` function changes two values by using global variables. Global variables are easy to understand (global variables are values that are accessible everywhere and anything can change them), but they are avoided by experienced programmers because it's easy to inadvertently modify the value of a variable or to have a function stop working because you changed the name or type of a global variable elsewhere in the sketch.

A safer and more elegant solution is to pass references to the values you want to change and let the function use the references to modify the values. This is done as follows:

```
/*
  functionReferences sketch
  demonstrates returning more than one value by passing references
 */
```

```
void setup() {
  Serial.begin(9600);
}

void loop(){
  int x = random(10); // pick some random numbers
  int y = random(10);

  Serial.print("The value of x and y before swapping are: ");
  Serial.print(x); Serial.print(","); Serial.println(y);
  swap(x,y);

  Serial.print("The value of x and y after swapping are: ");
  Serial.print(x); Serial.print(","); Serial.println(y);Serial.println();

  delay(1000);
}

// swap the two given values
void swap(int &value1, int &value2)
{
  int temp;
  temp = value1;
  value1 = value2;
  value2 = temp;
}
```

Discussion

The `swap` function is similar to the functions with parameters described in Recipe 2.10, but the ampersand (&) symbol indicates that the parameters are *references*. This means changes in values within the function will also change the value of the variable that is given when the function is called. You can see how this works by first running the code in this recipe's Solution and verifying that the parameters are swapped. Then modify the code by removing the two ampersands in the function definition.

The changed line should look like this:

```
void swap(int value1, int value2)
```

Running the code shows that the values are not swapped—changes made within the function are local to the function and are lost when the function returns.

If you are using Arduino release 21 or earlier, you will need to create a function declaration to inform the compiler that your function is using references. The sketch for this recipe in the download for the first edition of this book shows how to create the function declaration:

```
// functions with references must be declared before use
// The declaration goes at the top, before your setup and loop code
```