CS 61B Lab 11
November 14-15, 2006

Goal: This lab wil introduce you to several sorting algorithms and allow you to compare their running times in practice.

Copy the Lab 11 directory by starting from your home directory and typing:

```
cp -r $master/lab/lab11 .
```

Part I: Identifying Sort Algorithms (1 point)

To help build your intuition of how these sorting algorithms work, take a look at three algorithms in action. Run Netscape and go to the Web page

http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/~jrs/61b/lab/MysterySort

Each histogram shown illustrates an array of ints. The height of each bar is proportional to the integer stored at that position in the array. When you click on a histogram, an animated algorithm sorts the array.

The histograms are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4, each number corresponding to a different sorting algorithm you have seen in class. Identify each algorithm. How can you tell which is which? Which is fastest on the random data? What about the presorted data and the reverse sorted data?

One of the algorithms is quicksort. Which element does it choose for the pivot in a partition? (The pivot is not randomly chosen.) How can you tell?

Part II: Timing Sort Algorithms (2 points)

Part I gave you a rough idea of the relative speeds of the three sorting algorithms. For greater accuracy, we will now time several algorithms.

SortPerf.java runs a sorting algorithm (chosen from a selection of several) on a randomly generated array of specified size, and outputs the data to a file. Compile and run SortPerf.

```
javac -g SortPerf.java
java SortPerf select 5 175 200 select.dat
```

The first argument is the sorting algorithm ("select", "merge", "insert", or "quick"). The second is both the size of the smallest array to sort and the increment between array sizes. The third is the size of the largest array to sort. The fourth is the number of trials for each size of array. Because timings are easily perturbed by other processes running on the same workstation, you must run each test for a few hundred trials to get accurate timings. The last argument is the name of the file in which SortPerf reports the total running time, in milliseconds, of all trials for each array size.

The sample command above runs selection sort on arrays of size 5, 10, 15, ..., 175, each 200 times, placing the timing results in the file select.dat. If you notice that the timings look a little bumpy, i.e., the running time does not appear to be strictly increasing with input size, try running SortPerf several times until you get a fairly smooth set of numbers. When SortPerf is running, be careful not to touch the mouse or keyboard, as any user input increases the running time.

Now run SortPerf for the same sizes using mergesort, insertion sort, and quicksort. Save these data to different files--say, merge.dat, insert.dat, and quick.dat. To make this easier, we have also provided a file called runrace, which you can execute to run all four sorting algorithms. Read runrace to see how it works.

Use the program "gnuplot" to plot the timing results. At the prompt in an xterm (not emacs), type

```
gnuplot
```

You will see a ">" prompt. Plot the files using a command like

```
gnuplot>  plot "select.dat" with linesp 1, "merge.dat" with linesp 2,
          "insert.dat" with linesp 3, "quick.dat" with linesp 4
```

[Type all this on just one line, though.]

You should observe that the algorithms behave asymptotically as expected, but it is unclear which algorithm is faster for small array sizes. At what values of n do you observe cross-overs in execution time between the three sorting algorithms? To help see these cross-overs better, edit the runrace file to use the command

```
java SortPerf <sort> 1 50 1000 <sort>.dat
```

for each sorting algorithm. This gives a clearer picture of what happens for array sizes less than 50. Again run the script and plot the results with gnuplot.

PART III: Building a Better Sort (1 point)

Based on your observations in Part II, write a sorting algorithm that works well on the random data for all sizes of n. It won't be a completely new sorting algorithm, but should combine the sorting algorithms described here (in a very simple way). Implement your solution in YourSort.java. Run your algorithm from SortPerf by calling the sorting method "best". Modify runrace to generate timings for your new algorithm, and plot the results.

Check-off

1 point: What are sorting algorithms 1, 2, and 3 in Part I? How do you know? How is the pivot element chosen? How do you know?

3 points: Show the plotted performance of the sorting algorithms. (The third point is for including your algorithm in the plot, and demonstrating that it's roughly as good as any of the others for any array size.)