Representing Rooted Trees

Goodrich and Tamassia present a data structure in which each node has three references: one reference to an item, one reference to the node’s parent, and one reference to the node’s children, which can be stored in any reasonable data structure like a linked list. Directories are typically stored this way, but the lists they use are represented very differently than our list ADTs.

Another popular tree representation spurns separately encapsulated linked lists so that siblings are directly linked. It retains the "item" and "parent" references, but instead of referencing a list of children, each node references just its leftmost child. Each node also references its next sibling to the right. The "nextSibling" references are used to join the children of a node in a singly-linked list, whose head is the node’s "firstChild".

I’ll call this tree a "SibTree", since siblings are central to the representation. The nodes I call "SibTreeNode".

```
class SibTreeNode {
    Object item;
    SibTreeNode parent;
    SibTreeNode firstChild;
    SibTreeNode nextSibling;
}
```

A commonly encountered application of trees is the directory structure of a file system.

```
jrs/61b
  hw index.html lab lec
    /\      /
  hw1 hw2 lab1 lab2 01 02 03 04 05
  <-- Leaf nodes
```

```
Tree Traversals

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A _traversal_ is a manner of _visiting_ each node in a tree once. What you do when visiting any particular node depends on the application; for instance, you might print a node’s value, or perform some calculation upon it. There are several different traversals, each of which orders the nodes differently.

Many traversals can be defined recursively. In a _preorder_ traversal, you visit each node before recursively visiting its children, which are visited from left to right. The root is visited first.

class SibTreeNode {
    public void preorder() {
        this.visit();
        if (firstChild != null) {
            firstChild.preorder();
        }
        if (nextSibling != null) {
            nextSibling.preorder();
        }
    }
}

Suppose your method visit() numbers the nodes in the order they’re visited. A preorder traversal visits the nodes in this order.

```
1
 / \\ /
 /     
2        6
/ \    / \  
3 4 5 7 8
```

Each node is visited only once, so a preorder traversal takes Θ(n) time, where n is the number of nodes in the tree. All the traversals we will consider take Θ(n) time.

A preorder traversal is a natural way to print a directory’s structure. Simply have the method visit() print each node of the tree.

```
/hr/61b
hw
hw1
hw2
index.html
lab
lab1
lab2
lec
```

In a _postorder_ traversal, you visit each node’s children (in left-to-right order) before the node itself.

```
public void postorder() {
    if (firstChild != null) {
        firstChild.postorder();
    }
    this.visit();
    if (nextSibling != null) {
        nextSibling.postorder();
    }
}
```

A postorder traversal visits the nodes in this order.

```
θ
 / \ / \ /
| 7 3 1 2 5 6
```

The postorder() code is trickier than it looks. The best way to understand it is to draw a depth-two tree on paper, then pretend you’re the computer and execute the algorithm carefully. Trust me on this. It’s worth your time.

A postorder traversal is the natural way to sum the total disk space used in the root directory and its descendants. The method visit() sums “this” node’s disk space with the disk space of all its children. In the example above, a postorder traversal would first sum the sizes of the files in hw/ and hw2/; then it would visit hw/ and sum its two subdirectories (which in this case are empty); then it would visit hw2/ and do the same. Finally, it would compute the total disk space at the root ‘/hr/61b’, which sums all the files in the tree.

Binary trees allow for an _inorder_ traversal: recursively traverse the root’s left subtree (rooted at the left child), then the root itself, then the root’s right subtree. The preorder, inorder, and postorder traversals of an expression tree will print a _prefix_, _infix_, or _postfix_ expression, respectively.

```
+ 3 7 * 4 2
```

In an _inorder_ traversal, you visit the root, then all the depth-1 nodes (from left to right), then all the depth-2 nodes, et cetera. The level-order traversal of our expression tree is “+ * 3 7 4 2” (which doesn’t mean much).

Unlike the three previous traversals, a level-order traversal is not straightforward to define recursively. However, a level-order traversal can be done in Θ(n) time. Use a queue, which initially contains only the root. Then repeat the following steps:

1. dequeue a node.
2. visit it.
3. enqueue its children (in order from left to right).

Continue until the queue is empty.

A final thought: if you use a stack instead of a queue, and push each node’s children in reverse order—right to left (so they pop off the stack in order from left to right)—you perform a preorder traversal. Think about why.