

mentioning department names

 Discussion List -> Lab Assignments -> Questions about Assignment #2

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Author

Message

01/20/2011 06:30:41 PM

Subject: mentioning department names



Deepak Mansharamani

Messages: 18

Hi Elaine,

I sent you a private message about my assignment2 review and you asked me to discuss it in the public discussion. So, here was my question:

I was reading your review of my Assignment2. You have deducted a point for

"Your code mentions the department names and the assignment disallowed that".

I was checking the code to see where I did that so I can fix it for assignment3. But I do not see the department names being used anywhere. I have a class called courses in which I have used instance variable names that look like department names but actually they are not. For example I have instance variable names called "castcourses", "ciscourses" and "coincourses" which I use but I am free to use any variable names. Can you please point me to the line(s) that violate the assignment rules?

Your response:

In functions: reportCourseDescriptions() and showCourses()

If you have future questions about this, please ask in the public Discussion for this assignment

I don't have any function called showCourses() and this is my reportCourseDescription() function

```
function reportCourseDescription() {
    var selectNode = document.getElementById("selectDepartment");
    switch (selectNode.selectedIndex) {
        default:
            // check if child nodes exist before assigning nodeValue
            var usernameNode = document.getElementById("courseDescription");
            var text = "Choose a department and a course number to view a course description";
            showDefaultmsg(usernameNode, text);
            break;
        case 1:
            extractCourseDesc("castcourses");
            break;
        case 2:
            extractCourseDesc("ciscourses");
            break;
        case 3:
            extractCourseDesc("coincourses");
            break;
    }
}
```

What you might be talking about are the "castcourses", "ciscourses" and "coincourses" variable names I am using which are being passed to extractCourseDesc() function

Like I explained in my message I have a class called courses() and these names are the instance variable names inside the class.

```
// create a class of courses. All courses are in this class
function courses() {
    this.castcourses = "";
    this.ciscourses = "";
    this.coincourses = "";
}
coursesObject = new courses(); // object of new courses
```

Now to get to these instance variables I have to do:
coursesObject.castcourses
coursesObject.ciscourses
coursesObject.coincourses

or if I want to reach them inside a function I can pass the instance variable names as a string and then use javascript's eval() function:

```
function extractCourseDesc(str) {
    var data_array = eval("coursesObject."+str).trim().split("\n");
}
```

.. more code here...
}

eval() will get me to the same instance variables inside the function from the string passed as a parameter.

So, I am not sure what you mean by "mentioning the department names". Like I explained, my variable names are similar to department names but nowhere I use the department names themselves. In fact, locally, I changed these names to abc, pqr, xyz and the program works exactly the same way.

Could you please clarify?

-Deepak



01/20/2011 07:49:38 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Patrick Stallard



Messages: 13
Location: San Jose, CA

Hi Deepak,

I don't want to speak for the instructor, of course, and also I'm not completely sure that I'm understanding exactly how your code works. But my thought would be that one problem with the way you're doing things is that it isn't very flexible.

If I'm understanding it correctly, your code depends on there being exactly three values in the "departments.txt" file, and in those values being in exactly the right order... This would mean changing your code if any of that should ever change, i. e., if a department were added or removed. What I did with mine was write code to take advantage of the fact that all the "courses" files are named based on the relevant department name prepended to "courses.txt". You should be able to use that fact, and come up with a system where it doesn't matter how many values are in the departments.txt file, as long as each one has an appropriately named courses.txt file to go with it. That way, someone with no coding experience can just add or remove values from the departments.txt file, and create or delete courses.txt files when things change, and as long as they stick to the correct file naming scheme, etc., everything should continue to work, without any need for a change in the code.

Does that make any sense?

Patrick

"To understand recursion you must first understand recursion"



01/20/2011 08:38:50 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Deepak Mansharamani

Messages: 18

Hi Patrick,

The question was regarding "mentioning department names".

Anyway, to answer your question you are right. The program does assume there are three text files and since I know the order in the departments.txt file I use that to my advantage. But you have a very good point. I can with some extra work make it totally flexible. But that was not a requirement for this assignment. You do have to work with some specifications that you described/made regarding the name of text files.

I will do that for the assignment3 since you brought it up.

Thanks,

-Deepak



01/21/2011 08:18:25 AM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Elaine Haight



Messages: 94
Location: Palo Alto, CA

Patrick is exactly right, I think he explained it better than I could!. Im sorry Deepak, but I did specify this in the assignment. I just copied this from the posted assignment:

"Your source code can contain no department names or course names. In this way, your source code will need no modification when the courses change, only the data files will need to be modified."

The variable names that you refer to contain the department names, so yes, your source code contains all three department names in at least two different places. What you really need here is an array, there is no way to meet the assignment specifications without using an array.



01/21/2011 01:14:57 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Hanrong Fan



Last edited: 01/21/2011
01:15:28 PM
Messages: 35

I got the same comment regarding the department text filenames:

First comment:

"This looks great, but your js code mentions the department text filenames explicitly. You need to make your program modifiable so that if we add a new department (like cnet) only the new textfile needs to be added, and your code doesn't need to be changed. (-1)"

However, it is not the same as in the assignment requirements which only mentioned "no department names or course names" which is not "department text filenames". it is misleading. I do not have any department names or course names in my js file except the file names. If a new department is added to departments.txt, I do not need to change my JS file. If you do not want to the file names in the functions, Is that allowed that I add the the four file names in an Array as global var? The department file name and course names will still be in my js code. Only benefit is

Location: Sunnyvale, CA

more easy to change the var array for those file names.

If it is allowed, I'll submit the modified lab2.js.

Please make it clear.

Hannie



01/21/2011 02:31:28 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Elaine Haight



Messages: 94
Location: Palo Alto, CA

I'm sorry, but I think the assignment was very clear on this point. Thank you Hanrong, for pasting the requirement from the assignment instructions into your post. I will paste it here again:

"no department names or course names"

maybe if I added "no exceptions, not even for filenames", it would be more clear? (In future assignments, when the instructions state something, you can assume "no exceptions.") I believe that the part of the assignment instructions following that really clarifies things, where I state that you should not have to change your JavaScript code in any way when a new department is added.

Hanrong, you state that "If a new department is added to departments.txt, I do not need to change my JS file." But that is not correct, since in that case your JS code will never look for that fourth department file with the course numbers and names for that new department.

Reading assignment instructions is a focussed and detailed activity. The students who succeed at these assignments read them over carefully many, many times, during the different stages of their application development process.



01/21/2011 02:51:57 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Hanrong Fan



Last edited: 01/21/2011
05:50:10 PM
Messages: 35
Location: Sunnyvale, CA

If I create a global variable as Array which includes all the departments and courses files names in my JS file, is that allowed?

// Global variables for department and course data

```
var data = new Array ("departments.txt", "castcourses.txt", "ciscourses.txt", "coincourses.txt")
```

Hannie



01/21/2011 06:35:57 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Elaine Haight



Last edited: 01/21/2011
06:36:42 PM
Messages: 94
Location: Palo Alto, CA

No. The department names are not allowed in your JS code. Whether it is in constants or global or local, you cannot have department names in your JS code. The code you pasted (thank you) in the previous post clearly contains the department names. As is stated in the assignment instructions, you must be able to change the departments and courses without changing your JS code. Here is a test: After you have finished your program, you need to be able to add a fourth department "cnet" to the contents of departments.txt, and add an additional file called "cnetcourses.txt" containing some course numbers and descriptions, and your exact same, UNTOUCHED javascript file should work perfectly to show you the cnet course numbers and chosen description in the menus with the other departments.



01/21/2011 08:47:56 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Deepak Mansharamani

Messages: 18

Hi Elaine,

I have modified my code to make it utmost flexible. Is there any possibility to resubmit the assignment ?? I know the deadline is over and the assignments are already graded. Trying my luck anyway!

-Deepak



01/21/2011 08:52:11 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Hanrong Fan



Last edited: 01/21/2011
11:19:22 PM
Messages: 35
Location: Sunnyvale, CA

Yes, you can click the assignment 2 "try again" and copy your link again then click "finish" to request the instructor's review. You can submit three times.

Good luck.

Hannie



01/21/2011 11:27:40 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Chew Kong

Last edited: 01/21/2011
11:29:20 PM
Messages: 10

>Then I cannot figure out how to link the external text files for departments >and courses to the data array without the file names in js file. If you look at the the current 3 data files: ciscourses.txt, coincourses.txt and castcourses.txt. They could be divided into 2 parts: 1) "cis", "coin", "cast" -- which is the department names that you read from departments.txt. 2) constant part: courses.txt Hence, you should not have to know in advance the filenames for courses. You read the content of departments.txt and get the department names to an array. Using a for loop on the array, and concat each department name with courses.txt, for example: "cis" (again this should be a variable) + "courses.txt" (this is a constant) = "ciscourses.txt". Thanx chew



01/22/2011 01:57:10 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Deepak Mansharamani

Messages: 18

I have resubmitted my Assignment2 for any number of courses. Not sure if it counts. I have even taken care of cases where there are blank lines in any of the text files (department or course files).

-Deepak



01/22/2011 02:54:48 PM

Subject: Re: mentioning department names



Hanrong Fan



Messages: 35
Location: Sunnyvale, CA

Thank Chew for your hint.

I figured it out last nigh before seeing your reply. I re-submitted my assignment which is flexible for more departments. I still have to use global variable departments = "departments.txt" in my lab2.js. Hope it is not violation of the rule of the class (No department names and course names). Otherwise I do not know how to load the departments in the first place to start the program.

Thanks again.

Hannie



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