DECORATOR

Object Structural

Intent

Attach additional responsibilities to an object dynamically. Decorators provide a flexible alternative to subclassing for extending functionality.

Also Known As

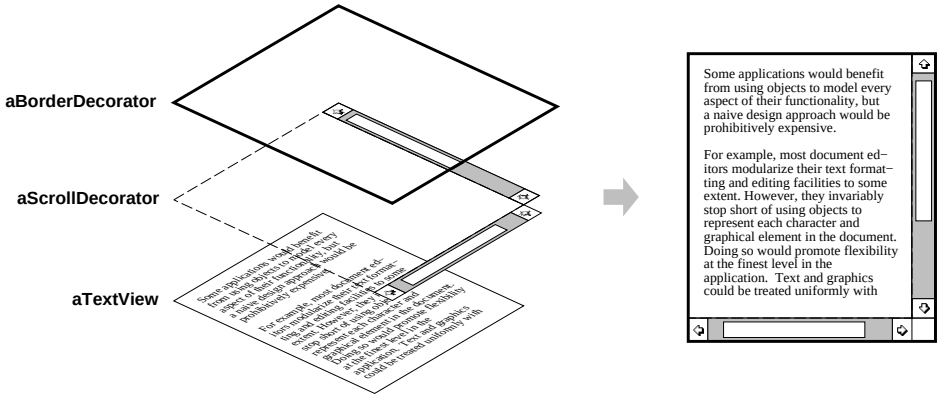
Wrapper

Motivation

Sometimes we want to add responsibilities to individual objects, not to an entire class. A graphical user interface toolkit, for example, should let you add properties like borders or behaviors like scrolling to any user interface component.

One way to add responsibilities is with inheritance. Inheriting a border from another class puts a border around every subclass instance. This is inflexible, however, because the choice of border is made statically. A client can't control how and when to decorate the component with a border.

A more flexible approach is to enclose the component in another object that adds the border. The enclosing object is called a **decorator**. The decorator conforms to the interface of the component it decorates so that its presence is transparent to the component's clients. The decorator forwards requests to the component and may perform additional actions (such as drawing a border) before or after forwarding. Transparency lets you nest decorators recursively, thereby allowing an unlimited number of added responsibilities.



FLYWEIGHT

Object Structural

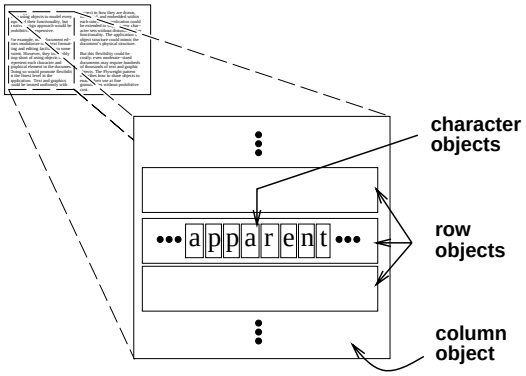
Intent

Use sharing to support large numbers of fine-grained objects efficiently.

Motivation

Some applications could benefit from using objects throughout their design, but a naive implementation would be prohibitively expensive.

For example, most document editor implementations have text formatting and editing facilities that are modularized to some extent. Object-oriented document editors typically use objects to represent embedded elements like tables and figures. However, they usually stop short of using an object for each character in the document, even though doing so would promote flexibility at the finest levels in the application. Characters and embedded elements could then be treated uniformly with respect to how they are drawn and formatted. The application could be extended to support new character sets without disturbing other functionality. The application's object structure could mimic the document's physical structure. The following diagram shows how a document editor can use objects to represent characters.

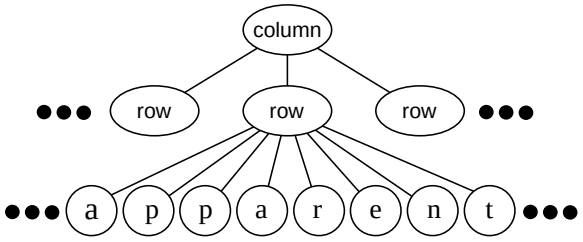


The drawback of such a design is its cost. Even moderate-sized documents may require hundreds of thousands of character objects, which will consume lots of memory and may incur unacceptable run-time overhead. The Flyweight pattern describes how to share objects to allow their use at fine granularities without prohibitive cost.

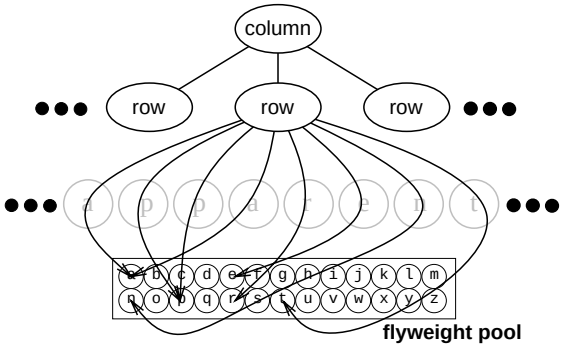
A **flyweight** is a shared object that can be used in multiple contexts simultaneously. The flyweight acts as an independent object in each context—it's indistinguishable from an instance of the object that's not shared. Flyweights cannot make assumptions about the context in which they operate. The key concept here is the distinction between **intrinsic** and **extrinsic** state. Intrinsic state is stored in the flyweight; it consists of information that's independent of the flyweight's context, thereby making it sharable. Extrinsic state depends on and varies with the flyweight's context and therefore can't be shared. Client objects are responsible for passing extrinsic state to the flyweight when it needs it.

Flyweights model concepts or entities that are normally too plentiful to represent with objects. For example, a document editor can create a flyweight for each letter of the alphabet. Each flyweight stores a character code, but its coordinate position in the document and its typographic style can be determined from the text layout algorithms and formatting commands in effect wherever the character appears. The character code is intrinsic state, while the other information is extrinsic.

Logically there is an object for every occurrence of a given character in the document:



Physically, however, there is one shared flyweight object per character, and it appears in different contexts in the document structure. Each occurrence of a particular character object refers to the same instance in the shared pool of flyweight objects:

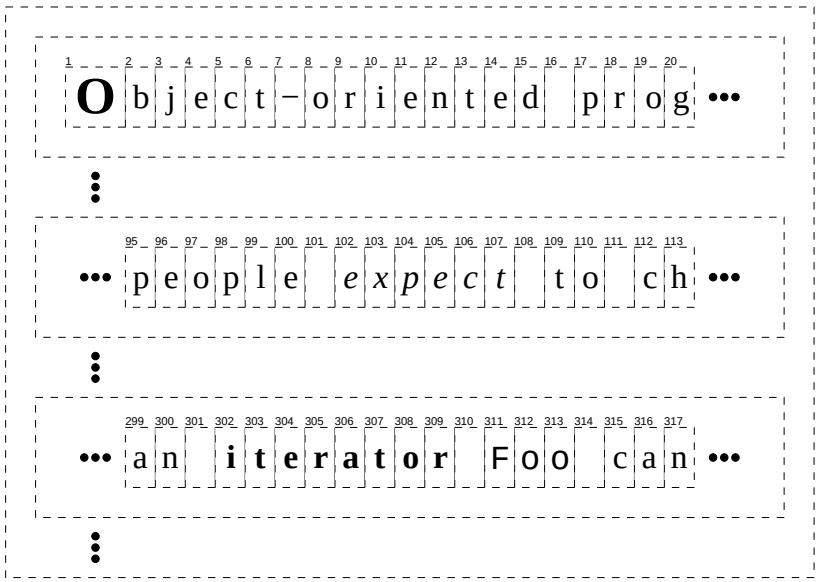


```
class GlyphContext {
public:
    GlyphContext();
    virtual ~GlyphContext();

    virtual void Next(int step = 1);
    virtual void Insert(int quantity = 1);

    virtual Font* GetFont();
    virtual void SetFont(Font*, int span = 1);
private:
    int _index;
    BTree* _fonts;
};
```

`GlyphContext` must be kept informed of the current position in the glyph structure during traversal. `GlyphContext::Next` increments `_index` as the traversal proceeds. `Glyph` subclasses that have children (e.g., `Row` and `Column`) must implement `Next` so that it calls `GlyphContext::Next` at each point in the traversal.

`GlyphContext::GetFont` uses the index as a key into a `BTree` structure that stores the glyph-to-font mapping. Each node in the tree is labeled with the length of the string for which it gives font information. Leaves in the tree point to a font, while interior nodes break the string into substrings, one for each child.

Consider the following excerpt from a glyph composition:



The `BTree` structure for font information might look like