# SICStus Prolog User's Manual

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# Introduction

Prolog is a simple but powerful programming language developed at the University of Marseille [Roussel 75], as a practical tool for programming in logic [Kowalski 74]. From a user's point of view the major attraction of the language is ease of programming. Clear, readable, concise programs can be written quickly with few errors.

For an introduction to programming in Prolog, readers are recommended to consult [Sterling & Shapiro 86]. However, for the benefit of those who do not have access to a copy of this book, and for those who have some prior knowledge of logic programming, a summary of the language is included. For a more general introduction to the field of Logic Programming see [Kowalski 79]. See Chapter 4 [Prolog Intro], page 43.

This manual describes a Prolog system developed at the Swedish Institute of Computer Science. Parts of the system were developed by the project "Industrialization of SICStus Prolog" in collaboration with Ericsson Telecom AB, NobelTech Systems AB, Infologics AB and Televerket. The system consists of a *WAM* emulator written in C, a library and runtime system written in C and Prolog and an interpreter and a compiler written in Prolog. The Prolog engine is a Warren Abstract Machine (WAM) emulator [Warren 83]. Two modes of compilation are available: in-core i.e. incremental, and file-to-file. When compiled, a predicate will run about 8 times faster and use memory more economically. Implementation details can be found in [Carlsson 90] and in several technical reports available from SICS.

SICStus Prolog follows the mainstream Prolog tradition in terms of syntax and built-in predicates. As of release 3.8, SICStus Prolog provides two execution modes: the `iso` mode, which is fully compliant with the International Standard ISO/IEC 13211-1 (PROLOG: Part 1—General Core) (`http://webstore.ansi.org/ansidocstore/product.asp?sku=INCITS%2FISO%2FIEC+13211%2D1%2D1995`); and the `sicstus` mode, which is largely compatible with e.g. C-Prolog and Quintus Prolog, supports code written in earlier versions of SICStus Prolog.

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# 1 Notational Conventions

## 1.1 Keyboard Characters

When referring to keyboard characters, printing characters are written thus: `a`, while control characters are written like this: `^A`. Thus `^C` is the character you get by holding down the ⟨CTL⟩ key while you type `c`. Finally, the special control characters carriage-return, line-feed and space are often abbreviated to ⟨RET⟩, ⟨LFD⟩ and ⟨SPC⟩ respectively.

Throughout, we will assume that `^D` is the EOF character (it's usually `^Z` under Windows) and that `^C` is the interrupt character. In most contexts, the term `end_of_file` terminated by a full stop (`.`) can be typed instead of the EOF character.

## 1.2 Mode Spec

When introducing a built-in predicate, we shall present its usage with a *mode spec*, which has the form *name(arg, . . . , arg)*, where each *arg* denotes how that argument should be instantiated in goals, and has one of the following forms:

*:ArgName* This argument should be instantiated to a term denoting a goal or a clause or a predicate name, or that otherwise needs special handling of module prefixes. The argument is subject to *module name expansion* (see Section 5.5 [Meta Exp], page 61).

*+ArgName*
This argument should be instantiated to a non-variable term.

*-ArgName* This argument should be uninstantiated.

*?ArgName*
This argument may or may not be instantiated.

Mode specs are not only used in the manual, but are part of the syntax of the language as well. When used in the source code, however, the *ArgName* part must be omitted. That is, *arg* must be either '`:`', '`+`', '`-`', or '`?`'.

## 1.3 Development and Runtime Systems

The full Prolog system with top-level, compiler, debugger etc. is known as the *development system*.

It is possible to link user-written C code with a subset of SICStus Prolog to create *runtime systems*. When introducing a built-in predicate, any limitations on its use in runtime systems will be mentioned.

## 1.4 Function Prototypes

Whenever this manual documents a C function as part of SICStus Prolog's foreign language interface, the function prototype will be displayed in ANSI C syntax.

## 1.5 ISO Compliance

SICStus Prolog provides two execution modes: the `iso` mode, which is fully compliant with the International Standard ISO/IEC 13211-1 (PROLOG: Part 1—General Core) (`http://webstore.ansi.org/ansidocstore/product.asp?sku=INCITS%2FISO%2FIEC+13211%2D1%2D1995`); and the `sicstus` mode, which supports code written in earlier versions of SICStus Prolog. The execution mode can be changed using the Prolog flag `language`; see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175. Note, however, that SICStus Prolog does not offer a strictly conforming mode that rejects uses of implementation specific features.

To aid programmers who wish to write standard compliant programs, built-in predicates that are part of the ISO Prolog Standard are annotated with *[ISO]* in this manual. If such a predicate behaves differently in `sicstus` mode, an appropriate clarification is given. For the few predicates that have a completely different meaning in the two modes, two separate descriptions are given. The one for the `iso` mode is annotated with *[ISO only]*, while the `sicstus` mode version is annotated with *[SICStus only]*.

# 2 Glossary

*abolish* To abolish a predicate is to retract all the predicate's clauses and to remove all information about it from the Prolog system, to make it as if that predicate had never existed.

*advice-point*
A special case of breakpoint, the advice breakpoint. It is distinguished from spypoints in that it is intended for non-interactive debugging, such as checking of program invariants, collecting information, profiling, etc.

*alphanumeric*
An alphanumeric character is any of the lowercase characters from '`a`' to '`z`', the uppercase characters from '`A`' to '`Z`', the numerals from '`0`' to '`9`', or underscore ('`_`').

*ancestors* An ancestor of a goal is any goal that the system is trying to solve when it calls that goal. The most distant ancestor is the goal that was typed at the top-level prompt.

*anonymous variable*
An anonymous variable is one that has no unique name, and whose value is therefore inaccessible. An anonymous variable is denoted by an underscore ('`_`').

*argument* See predicate, structure, and arity.

*arity* The arity of a structure is its number of arguments. For example, the structure `customer(jones,85)` has an arity of 2.

*atom* A character sequence used to uniquely denote some entity in the problem domain. A number is *not* an atom. Unless character escapes have been switched off, examples of legal atoms are:

```
hello   *   :=   '#$%'   'New York'   'don\'t'
```

See Section 4.1.1.3 [Atoms], page 44. Atoms are recognized by the built-in predicate `atom/1`. Each Prolog atom is represented internally by a unique integer, represented in C as an `SP_atom`.

*atomic term*
Synonym for constant.

*backtrace* A collection of information on the control flow of the program, gathered by the debugger. Also the display of this information produced by the debugger. The backtrace includes data on goals that were called but not exited and also on goals that exited nondeterminately.

*backtracking*
The process of reviewing the goals that have been satisfied and attempting to resatisfy these goals by finding alternative solutions.

*binding* The process of assigning a value to a variable; used in unification.

*blocked goal*
: A goal that is suspended because it is not instantiated enough.

*body*
: The body of a clause consists of the part of a Prolog clause following the '`:-`' symbol.

*breakpoint*
: A description of certain invocations in the program where the user wants the debugger to stop, or to perform some other actions. A breakpoint is specific if it applies to the calls of a specific predicate, possibly under some conditions; otherwise, it is generic. Depending on the intended usage, breakpoints can be classified as debugger breakpoints, also known as spypoints, or advice breakpoints, also called advice-points; see Section 7.6 [Advanced Debugging], page 86.

*breakpoint spec*
: A term describing a breakpoint. Composed of a test part, specifying the conditions under which the breakpoint should be applied, and an action part, specifying the effects of the breakpoint on the execution.

*buffer*
: A temporary workspace in Emacs that contains a file being edited.

*built-in predicate*
: A predicate that comes with the system and that does not have to be explicitly loaded before it is used.

*callable term*
: A callable term is either a compound term or an atom. Callable terms are recognized by the built-in predicate `callable/1`.

*char-list*
: A char-list is a list of one-char atoms.

*character code*
: An integer that is the numeric representation of a character. SICStus Prolog supports character codes in the range 0..2147483647 (i.e. 2^31-1). However, to be able to input or output character codes larger than 255, one needs to use the appropriate wide character external encoding.

*character code set*
: A subset of the set `{0, ..., 2^31-1}` that can be handled by the external encoding. SICStus Prolog assumes that the character code set is an extension of the ASCII code set, i.e. it includes codes 0..127, and these codes are interpreted as ASCII characters

*character-conversion mapping*
: SICStus Prolog maintains a character-conversion mapping, which is used while reading terms and programs. Initially, the mapping prescribes no character conversions. It can be modified by the built-in predicate `char_conversion(`*`In`*`,` *`Out`*`)`, following which *In* will be converted to *Out*. Character coversion can be switched off by the `char_conversion` Prolog flag.

*character-type mapping*
: A function mapping each element of the character code set to one of the character categories (layout, letter, symbol-char, etc.), required for parsing tokens.

*choicepoints*
A memory block representing outstanding choices for some goals or disjunctions.

*clause* A fact or a rule. A rule comprises a *head* and a body. A fact consists of a head only, and is equivalent to a rule with the body `true`.

*code-list* A code-list is a list of character codes.

*conjunction*
A series of goals connected by the connective "and" (that is, a series of goals whose principal operator is '`,`').

*compactcode*
Virtual code representation of compiled code. A reasonable compromise between performance and space requirement. A valid value for the `compiling` Prolog flag.

*compile* To load a program (or a portion thereof) into Prolog through the compiler. Compiled code runs more quickly than interpreted code, but you cannot debug compiled code in as much detail as interpreted code.

*compound term*
A compound term is a term that is an atom together with one or more arguments. For example, in the term `father(X)`, `father` is the name, and `X` is the first and only argument. The argument to a compound term can be another compound term, as in `father(father(X))`. Compound terms are recognized by the built-in predicate `compound/1`.

*console-based executable*
An executable that inherits the standard streams from the process that invoked it, e.g. a UNIX shell or a DOS-prompt.

*constant* An integer (for example: 1, 20, -10), a floating-point number (for example: 12.35), or an atom. Constants are recognized by the built-in predicate `atomic/1`.

*consult* To load a program (or a portion thereof) into Prolog through the interpreter. Interpreted code runs more slowly than compiled code, but you can debug interpreted code in more detail than compiled code.

*creep* What the debugger does in trace mode, also known as single-stepping. It goes to the next port of a procedure box and prints the goal, then prompts you for input. See Section 7.2 [Basic Debug], page 77.

*cursor* The point on the screen at which typed characters appear. This is usually highlighted by a line or rectangle the size of one space, which may or may not blink.

*cut* Written as `!`. A built-in predicate that succeeds when encountered; if backtracking should later return to the cut, the goal that matched the head of the clause containing the cut fails immediately.

*database* The Prolog database comprises all of the clauses that have been loaded or asserted into the Prolog system or that have been asserted, except those clauses that have been retracted or abolished.

*database reference*
A compound term denoting a unique reference to a dynamic clause.

*debug* A mode of program execution in which the debugger stops to print the current goal only at predicates that have spypoints set on them (see leap).

*debugcode* Interpreted representation of compiled code. A valid value for the `compiling` Prolog flag.

*declaration*
A declaration looks like a directive, but is not executed but conveys information about predicates about to be loaded.

*deinit function*
A function in a foreign resource that is called prior to unloading the resource.

*determinate*
A predicate is determinate if it can supply only one answer.

*development system*
A stand-alone executable with the full programming environment, including top-level, compiler, debugger etc. The default `sicstus` executable is a development system; new development systems containing pre-linked foreign resources can also be created.

*directive* A directive is a goal preceded by the prefix operator '`:-`', whose intuitive meaning is "execute this as a query, but do not print out any variable bindings."

*disjunction*
A series of goals connected by the connective "or" (that is, a series of goals whose principal operator is '`;`').

*dynamic predicate*
A predicate that can be modified while a program is running. The semantics of such updates is described in Section 8.9 [Modify Prog], page 189. A predicate must explicitly be declared to be dynamic or it must be added to the database via one of the assertion predicates.

*encoded string*
A sequence of bytes representing a sequence of possibly wide character codes, using the UTF-8 encoding.

*escape sequence*
A sequence of characters beginning with '\' inside certain syntactic tokens (see Section 50.5 [Escape Sequences], page 794).

*export* A module exports a predicate so that other modules can import it.

*extended runtime system*
A stand-alone executable. In addition to the normal set of built-in runtime system predicates, extended runtime systems include the compiler. Extended runtime systems require the extended runtime library, available from SICS as an add-on product.

*external encoding (of wide characters)*
A way of encoding sequences of wide characters as sequences of (8-bit) bytes, used in stream input and output.

*fact* A clause with no conditions—that is, with an empty body. A fact is a statement that a relationship exists between its arguments. Some examples, with possible interpretations, are:

```
king(louis, france).   % Louis was king of France.
have_beaks(birds).     % Birds have beaks.
employee(nancy, data_processing, 55000).
                       % Nancy is an employee in the
                       % data processing department.
```

*fastcode* Native code representation of compiled code. The fastest, but also the most space consuming representation. Only available for Sparc platforms. A valid value for the `compiling` Prolog flag.

*file specification*
An atom or a compound term denoting the name of a file. The rules for mapping such terms to absolute file names are described in Section 8.1 [Input Output], page 131.

*floundered query*
A query where all unsolved goals are blocked.

*foreign predicate*
A predicate that is defined in a language other than Prolog, and explicitly bound to Prolog predicates by the Foreign Language Interface.

*foreign resource*
A named set of foreign predicates.

*functor* The functor of a compound term is its name and arity. For example, the compound term `foo(a,b)` is said to have "the functor `foo` of arity two", which is generally written `foo/2`.

The functor of a constant is the term itself paired with zero. For example, the constant `nl` is said to have "the functor `nl` of arity zero", which is generally written `nl/0`.

*garbage collection*
The freeing up of space for computation by making the space occupied by terms that are no longer available for use by the Prolog system.

*generalized predicate spec*
A generalized predicate spec is a term of one of the following forms. It is always interpreted wrt. a given module context:

*Name* all predicates called *Name* no matter what arity, where *Name* is an atom for a specific name or a variable for all names, or

*Name/Arity*
the predicate of that name and arity, or

*Name/[Arity,. . .,Arity]*
: the predicates of that name with one of the given arities, or

*Module:Spec*
: specifying a particular module *Module* instead of the default module, where *Module* is an atom for a specific module or a variable for all modules, or

[Spec,. . .,Spec]
: the set of all predicates covered by the *Specs*.

*glue code* Interface code between the Prolog engine and foreign predicates. Automatically generated by the foreign language interface as part of building a linked foreign resource.

*goal* A simple goal is a predicate call. When called, it will either succeed or fail.

A compound goal is a formula consisting of simple goals connected by connectives such as "and" ('`,`') or "or" ('`;`').

A goal typed at the top-level is called a query.

*ground* A term is ground when it is free of (unbound) variables. Ground terms are recognized by the built-in predicate `ground/1`.

*guarded clause*
A clause of the form

```
Head :- Goals, !, Goals.
```

*head* The head of a clause is the single goal, which will be satisfied if the conditions in the body (if any) are true; the part of a rule before the '`:-`' symbol. The head of a list is the first element of the list.

*extendible predicate*
An extendible predicate is a dynamic, multifile predicate, to which new clauses can be added by the user.

*hook predicate*
A hook predicate is a predicate that somehow alters or customizes the behavior of a hookable predicate.

*hookable predicate*
A hookable predicate is a built-in predicate whose behavior is somehow altered or customized by a hook predicate.

*import* Exported predicates in a module can be imported by other modules. Once a predicate has been imported by a module, it can be called, or exported, as if it were defined in that module.

There are two kinds of importation: predicate-importation, in which only specified predicates are imported from a module; and module-importation, in which all the predicates made exported by a module are imported.

*indexing* The process of filtering a set of potentially matching clauses of a predicate given a goal. For interpreted and compiled code, indexing is done on the principal functor of the first argument. Indexing is coarse wrt. large integers and floats.

*init function*
A function in a foreign resource that is called upon loading the resource.

*initialization*
An initialization is a goal that is executed when the file in which the initialization is declared is loaded. An initialization is declared as a directive `:-initialization` *`Goal`*.

*instantiation*
A variable is instantiated if it is bound to a non-variable term; that is, to an atomic term or a compound term.

*internal encoding (of wide characters)*
A way of encoding wide character sequences internally within the Prolog system. SICStus Prolog uses a technique known as the UTF-8 encoding for this purpose.

*interpret* Load a program or set of clauses into Prolog through the interpreter (also known as consulting). Interpreted code runs more slowly than compiled code, but more extensive facilities are available for debugging interpreted code.

*invocation box*
Same as procedure box.

*large integer*
An integer that is not a small integer.

*leap* What the debugger does in debug mode. The debugger shows only the ports of predicates that have spypoints on them. It then normally prompts you for input, at which time you may leap again to the next spypoint (see trace).

*leashing* Determines how frequently the debugger will stop and prompt you for input when you are tracing. A port at which the debugger stops is called a "leashed port".

*linked foreign resource*
A foreign resource that is ready to be installed in an atomic operation, normally represented as a shared object or DLL.

*list* A list is written as a set of zero or more terms between square brackets. If there are no terms in a list, it is said to be empty, and is written as '`[]`'. In this first set of examples, all members of each list are explicitly stated:

```
[aa, bb,cc]  [X, Y]  [Name]  [[x, y], z]
```

In the second set of examples, only the first several members of each list are explicitly stated, while the rest of the list is represented by a variable on the right-hand side of the "rest of" operator, '`|`':

```
[X | Y]  [a, b, c | Y]  [[x, y] | Rest]
```

'`|`' is also known as the "list constructor." The first element of the list to the left of '`|`' is called the head of the list. The rest of the list, including the variable following '`|`' (which represents a list of any length), is called the *tail* of the list.

*load* To load a Prolog clause or set of clauses, in source or binary form, from a file or set of files.

*meta-call* The process of interpreting a callable term as a goal. This is done e.g. by the built-in predicate `call/1`.

*meta-logical predicate*
A predicate that performs operations that require reasoning about the current instantiation of terms or decomposing terms into their constituents. Such operations cannot be expressed using predicate definitions with a finite number of clauses.

*meta-predicate*
A meta-predicate is one that calls one or more of its arguments; more generally, any predicate that needs to assume some module in order to operate is called a meta-predicate. Some arguments of a meta-predicate are subject to module name expansion.

*mode spec* A term *name(arg, . . . , arg)* where each *arg* denotes how that argument should be instantiated in goals. See Section 1.2 [Mode Spec], page 5.

*module* A module is a set of predicates in a module-file. The name of a module is an atom. Some predicates in a module are exported. The default module is `user`.

*module name expansion*
The process by which certain arguments of meta-predicates get prefixed by the source module. See Section 5.5 [Meta Exp], page 61.

*module-file*
A module-file is a file that is headed with a module declaration of the form:

```
:- module(ModuleName, ExportedPredList).
```

which must appear as the first term in the file.

*multifile predicate*
A predicate whose definition is to be spread over more than one file. Such a predicate must be preceded by an explicit multifile declaration in all files containing clauses for it.

*mutable term*
A special form of compound term subject to destructive assignment. See Section 8.8 [Modify Term], page 188. Mutable terms are recognized by the built-in predicate `is_mutable/1`.

*name clash*
A name clash occurs when a module attempts to define or import a predicate that it has already defined or imported.

*occurs-check*
A test to ensure that binding a variable does not bind it to a term where that variable occurs.

*one-char atom*
An atom that consists of a single character.

*operator* A notational convenience that allows you to express any compound term in a different format. For example, if `likes` in

```
| ?- likes(sue, cider).
```

is declared an infix operator, the query above could be written:

```
| ?- sue likes cider.
```

An operator does not have to be associated with a predicate. However, certain built-in predicates are declared as operators. For example,

```
| ?- =..(X, Y).
```

can be written as

```
| ?- X =.. Y.
```

because `=..` has been declared an infix operator.

Those predicates that correspond to built-in operators are written using infix notation in the list of built-in predicates at the beginning of the part that contains the reference pages.

Some built-in operators do *not* correspond to built-in predicates; for example, arithmetic operators. See [Standard Operators], page 797 for a list of built-in operators.

*pair* A compound term `K-V`. Pairs are used by the built-in predicate `keysort/2` and by many library modules.

*parent* The parent of the current goal is a goal that, in its attempt to obtain a successful solution to itself, is calling the current goal.

*port* One of the seven key points of interest in the execution of a Prolog predicate. See Section 7.1 [Procedure Box], page 75 for a definition.

*pre-linked foreign resource*
A linked foreign resource that is linked into a stand-alone executable as part of building the executable.

*precedence*
A number associated with each Prolog operator, which is used to disambiguate the structure of the term represented by an expression containing a number of operators. Operators of lower precedence are applied before those of higher precedence; the operator with the highest precedence is considered the principal functor of the expression. To disambiguate operators of the same precedence, the associativity type is also necessary. See Section 4.6 [Operators], page 54.

*predicate* A functor that specifies some relationship existing in the problem domain. For example, `< /2` is a built-in predicate specifying the relationship of one number being less than another. In contrast, the functor `+ /2` is not (normally used as) a predicate.

A predicate is either built-in or is implemented by a procedure.

*predicate spec*
A compound term `name/arity` or `module:name/arity` denoting a predicate.

*procedure* A set of clauses in which the head of each clause has the same predicate. For instance, a group of clauses of the following form:

```
connects(san_francisco, oakland, bart_train).
connects(san_francisco, fremont, bart_train).
connects(concord, daly_city, bart_train).
```

is identified as belonging to the predicate `connects/3`.

*procedure box*
: A way of visualizing the execution of a Prolog procedure, A procedure box is entered and exited via ports.

*profiledcode*
: Virtual code representation of compiled code, instrumented for profiling. A valid value for the `compiling` Prolog flag.

*profiling*
: The process of gathering execution statistics of parts of the program, essentially counting the times selected program points have been reached.

*program*
: A set of procedures designed to perform a given task.

*PO file*
: A PO (Prolog object) file contains a binary representation of a set of modules, predicates, clauses and directives. They are portable between different platforms, except between 32-bit and 64-bit platforms. They are created by `save_files/2`, `save_modules/2`, and `save_predicates/2`.

*QL file*
: A QL (quick load) file contains an intermediate representation of a compiled source file. They are portable between different platforms, but less efficient than PO files, and are therefore obsolescent. They are created by `fcompile/1`.

*query*
: A query is a question put by the user to the Prolog system. A query is written as a goal followed by a full-stop in response to the Prolog system prompt. For example,

```
| ?- father(edward, ralph).
```

refers to the predicate `father/2`. If a query has no variables in it, the system will respond either '`yes`' or '`no`'. If a query contains variables, the system will try to find values of those variables for which the query is true. For example,

```
| ?- father(edward, X).
X = ralph
```

After the system has found one answer, the user can direct the system to look for additional answers to the query by typing `;`.

*recursion*
: The process in which a running predicate calls itself, presumably with different arguments and for the purpose of solving some subset of the original problem.

*region*
: The text between the cursor and a previously set mark in an Emacs buffer.

*rule*
: A clause with one or more conditions. For a rule to be true, all of its conditions must also be true. For example,

```
has_stiff_neck(ralph) :-
   hacker(ralph).
```

This rule states that if the individual `ralph` is a hacker, then he must also have a stiff neck. The constant `ralph` is replaced in

```
has_stiff_neck(X) :-
   hacker(X).
```

by the variable `X`. `X` unifies with anything, so this rule can be used to prove that any hacker has a stiff neck.

*runtime kernel*
: A shared object or DLL containing the SICStus virtual machine and other runtime support for stand-alone executables.

*runtime system*
: A stand-alone executable with a restricted set of built-in predicates and no top-level. Stand-alone applications containing debugged Prolog code and destined for end-users are typically packaged as runtime systems.

*saved-state*
: A snapshot of the state of Prolog saved in a file by `save_program/[1,2]`. The state consists of all predicates and modules except built-in predicates and clauses of volatile predicates, the current operator declarations, the current character-conversion mapping, the values of all writable Prolog flags except `debug`, `debugging`, `double_quotes`, `char_conversion`, `informational`, `source_info`, `wcx`, and the `user_*` stream aliases (see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175), any blackboard data (see Section 8.11 [Blackboard Primitives], page 192), database data (see Section 8.10 [Database], page 191), and profiling data (see Section 8.16 [Profiling], page 211), but no information for source-linked debugging.

*semantics*
: The relation between the set of Prolog symbols and their combinations (as Prolog terms and clauses), and their meanings. Compare syntax.

*sentence*
: A clause or directive.

*side-effect*
: A predicate that produces a side-effect is one that has any effect on the "outside world" (the user's terminal, a file, etc.), or that changes the Prolog database.

*simple term*
: A simple term is a constant or a variable. Simple terms are recognized by the built-in predicate `simple/1`.

*small integer*
: An integer in the range `[-2^25,2^25-1]` on 32-bit platforms, or `[-2^56,2^56-1]` on 64-bit platforms.

*source code*
: The human-readable, as opposed to the machine-executable, representation of a program.

*source module*
: The module that is the context of a file being loaded. For module-files, the source module is named in the file's module declaration. For other files, the source module is inherited from the context.

*SP_term_ref*
: A "handle" object providing an interface from C to Prolog terms.

*spypoint* A special case of breakpoint, the *debugger breakpoint*, intended for interactive debugging. Its simplest form, the *plain spypoint* instructs the debugger to stop at all ports of all invocations of a specified predicate. *Conditional spypoints* apply to a single predicate, but are more selective: the user can supply applicability *tests* and prescribe the *actions* to be carried out by the debugger. A *generic spypoint* is like a conditional spypoint, but not restricted to a single predicate. See Section 7.6 [Advanced Debugging], page 86.

*stand-alone executable*
A binary program that can be invoked from the operating system, containing the SICStus runtime kernel. A stand-alone executable is a development system (e.g. the default `sicstus` executable), or a runtime system. Both kinds are created by the application builder. A stand-alone executable does not itself contain any Prolog code; all Prolog code must be loaded upon startup.

*static predicate*
A predicate that can be modified only by being reloaded or by being abolished. See dynamic predicate.

*stream* An input/output channel. See Section 8.1 [Input Output], page 131.

*stream alias*
A name assigned to a stream at the time of opening, which can be referred to in I/O predicates. Must be an atom. There are also three predefined aliases for the standard streams: `user_input`, `user_output` and `user_error`.

*stream position*
A term representing the current position of a stream. This position is determined by the current byte, character and line counts and line position. Standard term comparison on stream position terms works as expected. When `SP1` and `SP2` refer to positions in the same stream, `SP1@<SP2` if and only if `SP1` is before `SP2` in the stream. You should not otherwise rely on their internal representation.

*string* A special syntactic notation, which, by default, denotes a code-list, e.g.:

```
"SICStus"
```

In `iso` execution mode, by setting the Prolog flag `double_quotes`, the meaning of strings can be changed. With an appropriate setting, a string can be made to denote a char-list, or an atom. Strings are *not* a separate data type.

*subterm selector*
A list of argument positions selecting a subterm within a term (i.e. the subterm can be reached from the term by successively selecting the argument positions listed in the selector). Example: within the term `q, (r, s; t)` the subterm `s` is selected by the selector `[2, 1, 2]`.

*syntax* The part of Prolog grammar dealing with the way in which symbols are put together to form legal Prolog terms. Compare semantics.

*system encoding (of wide characters)*
A way of encoding wide character strings, used or required by the operating system environment.

*term* A basic data object in Prolog. A term can be a constant, a variable, or a compound term.

*trace* A mode of program execution in which the debugger creeps to the next port and prints the goal.

*type-in module*
The module that is the context of queries.

*unblocked goal*
A goal that is not blocked.

*unbound* A variable is unbound if it has not yet been instantiated.

*unification* The process of matching a goal with the head of a clause during the evaluation of a query, or of matching arbitrary terms with one another during program execution.

The rules governing the unification of terms are:

- Two constants unify with one another if they are identical.
- A variable unifies with a constant or a compound term. As a result of the unification, the variable is instantiated to the constant or compound term.
- A variable unifies with another variable. As a result of the unification, they become the same variable.
- A compound term unifies with another compound term if they have the same functor and if all of the arguments can be unified.

*unit clause*
See fact.

*UTF-8 encoding*
See internal encoding

*variable* A logical variable is a name that stands for objects that may or may not be determined at a specific point in a Prolog program. When the object for which the variable stands is determined in the Prolog program, the variable becomes instantiated. A logical variable may be unified with a constant, a compound term, or another variable. Variables become uninstantiated when the predicate they occur in backtracks past the point at which they were instantiated.

Variables may be written as any sequence of alphanumeric characters starting with either a capital letter or '_'; e.g.:

```
X   Y   Z   Name   Position   _c   _305  One_stop
```

See Section 4.1.1.4 [Variables], page 44.

*volatile* Predicate property. The clauses of a volatile predicate are not saved in saved-states.

*windowed executable*
An executable that pops up its own window when run, and that directs the standard streams to that window.

*zip* Same as debug mode, except no debugging information is collected while zipping.

# 3 How to Run Prolog

SICStus Prolog offers the user an interactive programming environment with tools for incrementally building programs, debugging programs by following their executions, and modifying parts of programs without having to start again from scratch.

The text of a Prolog program is normally created in a file or a number of files using one of the standard text editors. The Prolog interpreter can then be instructed to read in programs from these files; this is called *consulting* the file. Alternatively, the Prolog compiler can be used for *compiling* the file.

## 3.1 Getting Started

Under UNIX, SICStus Prolog is normally started from one of the shells. On other platforms, it is normally started by clicking on an icon. However, it is often convenient to run SICStus Prolog under GNU Emacs instead. A GNU Emacs interface for SICStus Prolog is described later (see Section 3.11 [Emacs Interface], page 32). From a shell, SICStus Prolog is started by typing:

```
% sicstus [options] [-a argument...]
```

where *options* have the following meaning:

'`-f`' Fast start. Don't read any initialization file on startup. If the option is omitted and the initialization file exists, SICStus Prolog will consult it on startup after running any initializations and printing the version banners. The initialization file is '`.sicstusrc`' or '`.sicstus.ini`' in the users home directory, i.e. '`~/.sicstusrc`' or '`~/.sicstus.ini`'. See Section 8.1 [Input Output], page 131, for an explanation of how a file specification starting with '`~/`' is interpreted.

'`-i`' Forced interactive. Prompt for user input, even if the standard input stream does not appear to be a terminal.

'`--iso`'
'`--sicstus`'
Set the initial value of the `language`, i.e. select ISO Prolog or SICStus Prolog mode respectively. The flag is set before any *prolog-file* or initialization file is loaded or any *saved-state* is restored.

'`--noinfo`'
Start with the `informational` Prolog flag set to `off` initially, suppressing informational messages. The flag is set before any *prolog-file* or initialization file is loaded or any *saved-state* is restored.

'`--nologo`'
Start without the initial version message.

'`-m`' For compatibility with previous versions. Ignored.

'`-l` *`prolog-file`*'
: Ensure that the file *prolog-file* is loaded on startup. This is done before any initialization file is loaded. Only one '`-l`' option is allowed.

'`-r` *`saved-state`*'
: Restore the saved-state *saved-state* on startup. This is done before any *prolog-file* or initialization file is loaded. Only one '`-r`' option is allowed.

'`--goal` *`Goal`*'
: Read a term from the text *Goal* and pass the resulting term to `call/1` after all files have been loaded. As usual *Goal* should be terminated by a full stop ('`.`'). Only one '`--goal`' option is allowed.

'`-a` *`argument...`*'
: where the arguments can be retrieved from Prolog by `prolog_flag(argv, Args)`, which will unify *Args* with *argument...* represented as a list of atoms.

'`-B[`*`abspath`*`]`'
: Creates a saved-state for a development system. This option is not needed for normal use. If *abspath* is given, it specifies the absolute pathname for the saved-state. **Please note**: There must not be a space before the path, lest it be interpreted as a separate option.

'`-R[`*`abspath`*`]`'
: Equivalent to the '`-B`' option, except that it builds a saved-state for a runtime system instead.

Under UNIX, a saved-state *file* can be executed directly by typing:

```
% file argument...
```

This is equivalent to:

```
% sicstus -r file [-a argument...]
```

**Please note**: As of release 3.7, saved-states do not store the complete path of the binary `sp.exe`. Instead, they call the main executable `sicstus`, which is assumed to be found in the shell's path. If there are several versions of SICStus installed, it is up to the user to make sure that the correct start-script is found.

Notice that the flags are not available when executing saved-states—all the command-line arguments are treated as Prolog arguments.

The development system checks that a valid SICStus license exists and, unless the '`--nologo`' option was used, responds with a message of identification and the prompt '`| ?- `' as soon as it is ready to accept input, thus:

```
SICStus 3.12.7 ...
Licensed to SICS
| ?-
```

At this point the top-level is expecting input of a *query*. You cannot type in clauses or directives immediately (see Section 3.3 [Inserting Clauses], page 25). While typing in a query, the prompt (on following lines) becomes '  '. That is, the '`| ?-` ' appears only for the first line of the query, and subsequent lines are indented.

### 3.1.1 Environment Variables

The following environment variables can be set before starting SICStus Prolog. Some of these override the default sizes of certain areas. The sizes are given in bytes, but may be followed by '`K`' or '`M`' meaning kilobytes or megabytes respectively.

`SP_CSETLEN`
: Selects the sub-code-set lengths when the EUC character set is used. For the details, see Section 12.4 [WCX Environment Variables], page 304.

`SP_CTYPE`
: Selects the appropriate character set standard: The supported values are `euc` (for EUC), `utf8` (for Unicode) and `iso_8859_1` (for ISO 8859/1). The latter is the default. For the details, see Section 12.4 [WCX Environment Variables], page 304.

`SP_PATH`
: This environment variable can be used to specify the location of the Runtime Library (corresponding to the third argument to `SP_initialize()`). In most cases there is no need to use it, but see Section 9.1 [CPL Notes], page 217.

`TMPDIR`
: If set, indicates the pathname where temporary files should be created. Defaults to '`/usr/tmp`'.

`GLOBALSTKSIZE`
: Governs the initial size of the global stack.

`LOCALSTKSIZE`
: Governs the initial size of the local stack.

`CHOICESTKSIZE`
: Governs the initial size of the choicepoint stack.

`TRAILSTKSIZE`
: Governs the initial size of the trail stack.

`PROLOGINITSIZE`
: Governs the size of Prolog's initial memory allocation.

`PROLOGMAXSIZE`
: Defines a limit on the amount of data space that Prolog will use.

`PROLOGINCSIZE`
: Governs the amount of space Prolog asks the operating system for in any given memory expansion.

`PROLOGKEEPSIZE`
: Governs the size of space Prolog retains after performing some computation. By default, Prolog gets memory from the operating system as the user program

executes and returns all free memory back to the operating system when the user program does not need it any more. If the programmer knows that her program, once it has grown to a certain size, is likely to need as much memory for future computations, then she can advise Prolog not to return all the free memory back to the operating system by setting this variable. Only memory that is allocated above and beyond `PROLOGKEEPSIZE` is returned to the OS; the rest will be kept.

`SP_ULIMIT_DATA_SEGMENT_SIZE`
: Sets the maximum size of the data segment of the Prolog process. The value can be unlimited or a numeric value as described in the first paragraph in this section. A numeric value of zero (0) is equivalent to unlimited.

In addition the following environment variables are set automatically on startup.

`SP_APP_DIR`
: The absolute path to the directory that contains the executable. Also available as the `application` file search path.

`SP_RT_DIR`
: The full path to the directory that contains the SICStus run-time. If the application has linked statically to the SICStus run-time then `SP_RT_DIR` is the same as `SP_APP_DIR`. Also available as the `runtime` file search path.

`SP_LIBRARY_DIR`
: The absolute path to the directory that contains the SICStus library files. Also available as the initial value of the `library` file search path.

Send bug reports to `sicstus-support@sics.se` or use the form at `http://www.sics.se/sicstus/bugreport/bugreport.html`. Bugs tend actually to be fixed if they can be isolated, so it is in your interest to report them in such a way that they can be easily reproduced.

The mailing list `sicstus-users@sics.se` is a mailing list for communication among users and implementors. To subscribe, write a message to `majordomo@sics.se` with the following line in the message body:

```
subscribe sicstus-users
```

## 3.2 Reading in Programs

A program is made up of a sequence of clauses and directives. The clauses of a predicate do not have to be immediately consecutive, but remember that their relative order may be important (see Section 4.3 [Procedural], page 50).

To input a program from a file *file*, just type the filename inside list brackets (followed by `.` and ⟨RET⟩), thus:

```
| ?- [file].
```

This instructs the interpreter to read in (consult) the program. Note that it may be necessary to enclose the filename *file* in single quotes to make it a legal Prolog atom; e.g.:

```
| ?- ['myfile.pl'].

| ?- ['/usr/prolog/somefile'].
```

The specified file is then read in. Clauses in the file are stored so that they can later be interpreted, while any directives are obeyed as they are encountered. When the end of the file is found, the system displays on the standard error stream the time spent. This indicates the completion of the query.

Predicates that expect the name of a Prolog source file as an argument use `absolute_file_name/3` (see Section 8.1.5 [Stream Pred], page 154) to look up the file. If no explicit extension is given, this predicate will look for a file with the default extension '`.pl`' added as well as for a file without extension. There is also support for libraries.

In general, this query can be any list of filenames, such as:

```
| ?- [myprog,extras,tests].
```

In this case all three files would be consulted.

The clauses for all the predicates in the consulted files will replace any existing clauses for those predicates, i.e. any such previously existing clauses in the database will be deleted.

Note that `consult/1` in SICStus Prolog behaves like `reconsult/1` in DEC-10 Prolog.

## 3.3 Inserting Clauses at the Terminal

Clauses may also be typed in directly at the terminal, although this is only recommended if the clauses will not be needed permanently, and are few in number. To enter clauses at the terminal, you must give the special query:

```
| ?- [user].
|
```

and the new prompt '`|  `' shows that the system is now in a state where it expects input of clauses or directives. To return to top level, type `^D`. The system responds thus:

```
% consulted user in module user, 20 msec 200 bytes
```

## 3.4 Queries and Directives

Queries and directives are ways of directing the system to execute some goal or goals.

In the following, suppose that list membership has been defined by loading the following clauses from a file:

```
member(X, [X|_]).
member(X, [_|L]) :- member(X, L).
```

(Notice the use of anonymous variables written '_'.)

### 3.4.1 Queries

The full syntax of a query is '?-' followed by a sequence of goals. The top-level expects queries. This is signaled by the initial prompt '| ?- '. Thus a query at top-level looks like:

```
| ?- member(b, [a,b,c]).
```

Remember that Prolog terms must terminate with a full stop ('.', possibly followed by layout text), and that therefore Prolog will not execute anything until you have typed the full stop (and then ⟨RET⟩) at the end of the query.

If the goal(s) specified in a query can be satisfied, and if there are no variables as in this example, then the system answers

```
yes
```

and execution of the query terminates.

If variables are included in the query, then the final value of each variable is displayed (except for variables whose names begin with '_'). Thus the query

```
| ?- member(X, [a,b,c]).
```

would be answered by

```
X = a
```

At this point, the development system accepts one-letter commands corresponding to certain actions. To execute an action simply type the corresponding character (lower or upper case) followed by ⟨RET⟩. The available commands in development systems are:

⟨RET⟩
*y* "accepts" the solution; the query is terminated and the development system responds with 'yes'.

*;*
*n* "rejects" the solution; the development system backtracks (see Section 4.3 [Procedural], page 50) looking for alternative solutions. If no further solutions can be found it outputs 'no'.

*b* invokes a recursive top-level.

`<` In the top-level, a global *printdepth* is in effect for limiting the subterm nesting level when printing bindings The limit is initially 10.

This command, without arguments, resets the printdepth to 10. With an argument of *n*, the printdepth is set to *n*, treating 0 as infinity. This command works by changing the value of the `toplevel_print_options` Prolog flag (see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175).

`^` A local *subterm selector*, initially `[]`, is maintained. The subterm selector provides a way of zooming in to some subterm of each binding. For example, the subterm selector `[2,3]` causes the 3rd subterm of the 2nd subterm of each binding to be selected.

This command, without arguments, resets the subterm selector to `[]`. With an argument of 0, the last element of the subterm selector is removed. With an argument of *n* (> 0), *n* is added to the back of the subterm selector. With a list of arguments, the arguments are applied from left to right.

*h*
*?* lists available commands.

While the variable bindings are displayed, all variables occurring in the values are replaced by terms of the form `'$VAR'(N)` to yield friendlier variable names. Such names come out as a sequence of letters and digits preceded by '_'. The outcome of some queries is shown below.

```
| ?- member(X, [tom,dick,harry]).

X = tom ;
X = dick ;
X = harry ;

no
| ?- member(X, [a,b,f(Y,c)]), member(X, [f(b,Z),d]).

X = f(b,c),
Y = b,
Z = c

| ?- member(X, [f(_),g]).

X = f(_A)
```

Directives are like queries except that:

1. Variable bindings are not displayed if and when the directive succeeds.
2. You are not given the chance to backtrack through other solutions.

### 3.4.2 Directives

Directives start with the symbol '`:-`'. Any required output must be programmed explicitly; e.g. the directive:

```
:- member(3, [1,2,3]), write(ok).
```

asks the system to check whether `3` belongs to the list `[1,2,3]`. Execution of a directive terminates when all the goals in the directive have been successfully executed. Other alternative solutions are not sought. If no solution can be found, the system prints:

```
* Goal - goal failed
```

as a warning.

The principal use for directives (as opposed to queries) is to allow files to contain directives that call various predicates, but for which you do not want to have the answers printed out. In such cases you only want to call the predicates for their effect, i.e. you don't want terminal interaction in the middle of consulting the file. A useful example would be the use of a directive in a file that consults a whole list of other files, e.g.:

```
:- [ bits, bobs, main, tests, data, junk ].
```

If a directive like this were contained in the file '`myprog`' then typing the following at top-level would be a quick way of reading in your entire program:

```
| ?- [myprog].
```

When simply interacting with the top-level, this distinction between queries and directives is not normally very important. At top-level you should just type queries normally. In a file, queries are in fact treated as directives, i.e. if you wish to execute some goals then the directive in the file must be preceded by '`:-`' or '`?-`'; otherwise, it would be treated as a clause.

## 3.5 Syntax Errors

Syntax errors are detected during reading. Each clause, directive or in general any term read in by the built-in predicate `read/1` that fails to comply with syntax requirements is displayed on the standard error stream as soon as it is read, along with its position in the input stream and a mark indicating the point in the string of symbols where the parser has failed to continue analysis, e.g.:

```
| member(X, X$L).
! Syntax error
! , or ) expected in arguments
! in line 5
! member ( X , X
! <<here>>
! $ L ) .
```

if '$' has not been declared as an infix operator.

Note that any comments in the faulty line are not displayed with the error message. If you are in doubt about which clause was wrong you can use the `listing/1` predicate to list all the clauses that were successfully read in, e.g.:

```
| ?- listing(member/2).
```

**Please note**: The built-in predicates `read/[1,2]` normally raise an exception on syntax errors (see Section 8.5 [Exception], page 173). The behavior is controlled by the Prolog flag `syntax_errors`.

## 3.6 Undefined Predicates

There is a difference between predicates that have no definition and predicates that have no clauses. The latter case is meaningful e.g. for dynamic predicates (see Section 6.2 [Declarations], page 68) that clauses are being added to or removed from. There are good reasons for treating calls to undefined predicates as errors, as such calls easily arise from typing errors.

The system can optionally catch calls to predicates that have no definition. First the user defined predicate `user:unknown_predicate_handler/3` (see Section 8.5 [Exception], page 173) is called. If undefined or if the call fails the action is governed by the state of the `unknown` Prolog flag, which can be:

`trace` which causes calls to undefined predicates to be reported and the debugger to be entered at the earliest opportunity.

`error` which causes calls to such predicates to raise an exception (the default state). See Section 8.5 [Exception], page 173.

`warning` which causes calls to such predicates to display a warning message and then fail.

`fail` which causes calls to such predicates to fail.

Calls to predicates that have no clauses are not caught.

The built-in predicate `unknown(?OldState, ?NewState)` unifies *OldState* with the current state and sets the state to *NewState*. The built-in predicate `debugging/0` prints the value

of this state along with its other information. This state is also controlled by the `unknown` Prolog flag.

## 3.7 Program Execution And Interruption

Execution of a program is started by giving the system a query that contains a call to one of the program's predicates.

Only when execution of one query is complete does the system become ready for another query. However, one may interrupt the normal execution of a query by typing `^C`. This `^C` interruption has the effect of suspending the execution, and the following message is displayed:

```
Prolog interruption (h or ? for help) ?
```

At this point, the development system accepts one-letter commands corresponding to certain actions. To execute an action simply type the corresponding character (lower or upper case) followed by ⟨RET⟩. The available commands in development systems are:

`a` aborts the current computation.

`c` continues the execution.

`e` exits from SICStus Prolog, closing all files.

`h`
`?` lists available commands.

`b` invokes a recursive top-level.

`d`
`z`
`t` switch on the debugger. See Chapter 7 [Debug Intro], page 75.

If the standard input stream is not connected to the terminal, e.g. by redirecting standard input to a file or a pipe, the above `^C` interrupt options are not available. Instead, typing `^C` causes SICStus Prolog to exit, and no terminal prompts are printed.

## 3.8 Exiting From The Top-Level

To exit from the top-level and return to the shell, either type `^D` at the top-level, or call the built-in predicate `halt/0`, or use the `e` (exit) command following a `^C` interruption.

## 3.9 Nested Executions—Break

The Prolog system provides a way to suspend the execution of your program and to enter a new incarnation of the top-level where you can issue queries to solve goals etc. This is achieved by issuing the query (see Section 3.7 [Execution], page 30):

```
| ?- break.
```

This invokes a recursive top-level, indicated by the message:

```
% Break level 1
```

You can now type queries just as if you were at top-level.

If another call of `break/0` is encountered, it moves up to level 2, and so on. To close the break and resume the execution that was suspended, type `^D`. The debugger state and current input and output streams will be restored, and execution will be resumed at the predicate call where it had been suspended after printing the message:

```
% End break
```

## 3.10 Saving and Restoring Program States

Once a program has been read, the system will have available all the information necessary for its execution. This information is called a *program state*.

The saved-state of a program may be saved on disk for future execution. To save a program into a file *File*, type the following query. On UNIX platforms, the file becomes executable:

```
| ?- save_program(File).
```

You can also specify a goal to be run when a saved program is restored. This is done by:

```
| ?- save_program(File, start).
```

where `start/0` is the predicate to be called.

Once a program has been saved into a file *File*, the following query will restore the system to the saved-state:

```
| ?- restore(File).
```

If a saved-state has been moved or copied to another machine, the path names of foreign resources and other files needed upon restore are typically different at restore time from their save time values. To solve this problem, certain atoms will be relocated during restore as follows:

- Atoms that had '`$SP_PATH/library`' (the name of the directory containing the Prolog Library) as prefix at save time will have that prefix replaced by the corresponding restore time value.
- Atoms that had the name of the directory containing *File* as prefix at save time will have that prefix replaced by the corresponding restore time value.

The purpose of this procedure is to be able to build and deploy an application consisting of a saved-state and other files as a directory tree with the saved-state at the root: as long as the other files maintain their relative position in the deployed copy, they can still be found upon restore.

> **Please note**: Foreign resources, see Section 9.2 [Calling C from Prolog], page 218, are unloaded by `save_program/[1,2]`. The names and paths of the resources, typically '`$SP_PATH/library`' relative, are however included in the saved-state. After the save, and after restoring a saved-state, this information is used to reload the foreign resources again. The state of the foreign resource in terms of global C variables and allocated memory is thus not preserved. Foreign resources may define init and deinit functions to take special action upon loading and unloading; see Section 9.2.7 [Init and Deinit Functions], page 227.

As of SICStus Prolog 3.8, partial saved-states corresponding to a set of source files, modules, and predicates can be created by the built-in predicates `save_files/2`, `save_modules/2`, and `save_predicates/2` respectively. These predicates create files in a binary format, by default with the prefix '`.po`' (for Prolog object file), which can be loaded by `load_files/[1,2]`. For example, to compile a program split into several source files into a single object file, type:

```
| ?- compile(Files), save_files(Files, Object).
```

For each filename given, the first goal will try to locate a source file with the default suffix '`.pl`' and compile it into memory. The second goal will save the program just compiled into an object file whose default suffix is '`.po`'. Thus the object file will contain a partial memory image.

> **Please note**: Prolog object files can be created with any suffix, but cannot be loaded unless the suffix is '`.po`'!

## 3.11 Emacs Interface

This section explains how to use the GNU Emacs interface for SICStus Prolog, and how to customize your GNU Emacs environment for it.

Emacs is a powerful programmable editor especially suitable for program development. It is available for free for many platforms, including various UNIX dialects, Windows and MacOS X. For information specific to GNU Emacs or XEmacs, see `http://www.gnu.org` and `http://www.xemacs.org` respectively. For information on run-

ning Emacs under Windows, see the 'GNU Emacs FAQ For Windows 98/ME/NT/XP and 2000' at http://www.gnu.org/software/emacs/windows/ntemacs.html, much of which applies to both GNU Emacs and XEmacs.

The advantages of using SICStus in the Emacs environment are source-linked debugging, auto indentation, syntax highlighting, help on predefined predicates (requires the SICStus info files to be installed), loading code from inside Emacs, auto-fill mode, and more.

The Emacs interface is not part of SICStus Prolog proper, but is included in the distribution for convenience. It was written by Emil Åström and Milan Zamazal, based on an earlier version of the mode written by Masanobu Umeda. Contributions has also been made by Johan Andersson, Peter Olin, Mats Carlsson, Johan Bevemyr, Stefan Andersson, and Per Danielsson, Henrik Båkman, and Tamás Rozmán. Some ideas and also a few lines of code have been borrowed (with permission) from 'Oz.el' by Ralf Scheidhauer and Michael Mehl, the Emacs major mode for the Oz programming language. More ideas and code have been taken from the SICStus debugger mode by Per Mildner.

### 3.11.1 Installation

See section "The Emacs Interface" in *SICStus Prolog Release Notes*, for more information about installing the Emacs interface.

There are some differences between GNU Emacs and XEmacs. This will be indicated with Emacs-Lisp comments in the examples.

#### 3.11.1.1 Quick-Start

Assuming the Emacs interface for SICStus Prolog has been installed in the default location, inserting a single line in your '~/.emacs' will make Emacs use the SICStus Prolog mode automatically when editing files with a '.pl' extension. It will also ensure Emacs can find the SICStus executables and on-line documentation, etc.

Note to Windows users: '~/.emacs' denotes a file '.emacs' in whatever Emacs considers to be your *home* directory. See 'GNU Emacs FAQ For Windows 98/ME/NT/XP and 2000' at http://www.gnu.org/software/emacs/windows/ntemacs.html, for details.

Under UNIX, assuming SICStus 3.12.7 was installed in '/usr/local/', add the following line:

```
(load "/usr/local/lib/sicstus-3.12.7/emacs/sicstus_emacs_init")
```

Under Windows, assuming SICStus 3.12.7 was installer in 'C:\Program Files\SICStus Prolog 3.12.7\', add the following line:

```
(load "C:/Program Files/SICStus Prolog
3.12.7/emacs/sicstus_emacs_init")
```

No other configuration should be needed to get started. If you want to customize things, look in the 'sictus_emacs_init.el' file and the rest of this section.

#### 3.11.1.2 Customizing Emacs

Version 20 of GNU Emacs and XEmacs introduced a new method for editing and storing user settings. This feature is available from the menu bar as 'Customize' and particular Emacs variables can be customized with *M-x customize-variable*. Using 'Customize' is the preferred way to modify the settings for Emacs and the appropriate customize commands will be indicated below, sometimes together with the old method of directly setting Emacs variables.

#### 3.11.1.3 Enabling Emacs Support for SICStus

This section is for reference only; it will let you understand the setup that is performed by the 'sictus_emacs_init.el' file.

Assuming the Emacs interface for SICStus Prolog has been installed in the default location, inserting the following lines in your '~/.emacs' will make Emacs use this mode automatically when editing files with a '.pl' extension:

```
(setq load-path
   (cons (expand-file-name "/usr/local/lib/sicstus-3.12.7/emacs")
         load-path))
(autoload 'run-prolog "prolog" "Start a Prolog sub-process." t)
(autoload 'prolog-mode "prolog" "Major mode for editing Prolog programs." t)
(setq prolog-use-sicstus-sd t)
(setq auto-mode-alist (cons '("\\.pl$" . prolog-mode) auto-mode-alist))
```

where the path in the first line is the file system path to 'prolog.el' (the generic Prolog mode) and 'sicstus-support.el' (SICStus specific code). For example, '~/emacs' means that the file is in the user's home directory, in directory emacs. Windows paths can be written like 'C:/Program Files/SICStus Prolog 3.12.7/emacs'.

The last line above makes sure that files ending with '.pl' are assumed to be Prolog files and not Perl, which is the default Emacs setting. If this is undesirable, remove that line. It is then necessary for the user to manually switch to prolog mode by typing *M-x prolog-mode* after opening a prolog file, for an alternative approach, see Section 3.11.4 [Mode Line], page 38.

If the shell command sicstus is not available in the default path, then it is necessary to set the value of the environment variable EPROLOG to a shell command to invoke SICStus Prolog. This is an example for C Shell:

```
% setenv EPROLOG /usr/local/bin/sicstus
```

#### 3.11.1.4 Enabling Emacs Support for SICStus Documentation

If you follow the steps in Section Quick Start, above, you can skip this section.

It is possible to look up the documentation for any built-in or library predicate from within Emacs (using *C-c ?* or the menu). For this to work Emacs must be told about the location of the '`info`'-files that make up the documentation.

The default location for the '`info`'-files are '`<prefix>/lib/sicstus-3.12.7/doc/info/`' on UNIX platforms and '`C:/Program Files/SICStus Prolog 3.12.7/doc/info/`' under Windows.

Add the following to your '`~/.emacs`' file, assuming INFO is the path to the info files, e.g. '`C:/Program Files/SICStus Prolog 3.12.7/doc/info/`'

```
(setq Info-default-directory-list
   (append Info-default-directory-list '("INFO")))
```

for GNU Emacs, or

```
(setq Info-directory-list
   (append Info-directory-list '("INFO")))
```

for XEmacs. You can also use *M-x customize-group* ⟨RET⟩ *info* ⟨RET⟩ if your Emacs is new enough. You may have to quit and restart Emacs for these changes to take effect.

### 3.11.2 Basic Configuration

If the following lines are not present in '`~/.emacs`', we suggest they are added, so that the font-lock mode (syntax coloring support) is enabled for all major modes in Emacs that support it.

```
(global-font-lock-mode t)       ; GNU Emacs
(setq font-lock-auto-fontify t) ; XEmacs
(setq font-lock-maximum-decoration t)
```

These settings and more are also available through *M-x customize-group* ⟨RET⟩ *font-lock*.

If one wants to add font-locking only to the prolog mode, the two lines above could be replaced by:

```
(add-hook 'prolog-mode-hook 'turn-on-font-lock)
```

Similarly, to turn it off only for prolog mode use:

```
(add-hook 'prolog-mode-hook 'turn-off-font-lock)
```

### 3.11.3 Usage

A prolog process can be started by choosing `Run Prolog` from the `Prolog` menu, by typing *C-c* ⟨RET⟩, or by typing *M-x run-prolog*. It is however not strictly necessary to start a prolog process manually since it is automatically done when consulting or compiling, if needed. The process can be restarted (i.e. the old one is killed and a new one is created) by typing *C-u C-c* ⟨RET⟩.

Programs are run and debugged in the normal way, with terminal I/O via the `*prolog*` buffer. The most common debugging predicates are available from the menu or via key-bindings.

A particularly useful feature under the Emacs interface is source-linked debugging. This is enabled or disabled using the `Prolog/Source level debugging` menu entry. It can also be enabled by setting the Emacs variable `prolog-use-sicstus-sd` to `t` in '`~/.emacs`'. Both these methods set the Prolog flag `source_info` to `emacs`. Its value should be `emacs` while loading the code to be debugged and while debugging. If so, the debugger will display the source code location of the current goal when it prompts for a debugger command, by overlaying the beginning of the current line of code with an arrow. If `source_info` was `off` when the code was loaded, or if it was asserted or loaded from `user`, the current goal will still be shown but out of context.

Note that if the code has been modified since it was last loaded, Prolog's line number information may be invalid. If this happens, just reload the relevant buffer.

Consultation and compilation is either done via the menu or with the following key-bindings:

*C-c C-f* Consult file.

*C-c C-b* Consult buffer.

*C-c C-r* Consult region.

*C-c C-p* Consult predicate.

*C-c C-c f* Compile file.

*C-c C-c b* Compile buffer.

*C-c C-c r* Compile region.

*C-c C-c p* Compile predicate.

The boundaries used when consulting and compiling predicates are the first and last clauses of the predicate the cursor is currently in.

Other useful key-bindings are:

*M-n* Go to the next clause.

*M-p* Go to the previous clause.

*M-a* Go to beginning of clause.

*M-e* Go to end of clause.

*M-C-c* Mark clause.

*M-C-a* Go to beginning of predicate.

*M-C-e* Go to end of predicate.

*M-C-h* Mark predicate.

*M-{* Go to the previous paragraph (i.e. empty line).

*M-}* Go to the next paragraph (i.e. empty line).

*M-h* Mark paragraph.

*M-C-n* Go to matching right parenthesis.

*M-C-p* Go to matching left parenthesis.

*M-;* Creates a comment at `comment-column`. This comment will always stay at this position when the line is indented, regardless of changes in the text earlier on the line, provided that `prolog-align-comments-flag` is set to `t`.

*C-c C-t*
*C-u C-c C-t*
Enable and disable creeping, respectively.

*C-c C-d*
*C-u C-c C-d*
Enable and disable leaping, respectively.

*C-c C-z*
*C-u C-c C-z*
Enable and disable zipping, respectively.

*C-x SPC*
*C-u C-x SPC*
Set and remove a line breakpoint. This uses the advanced debugger features introduced in SICStus 3.8; see Section 7.6 [Advanced Debugging], page 86.

*C-c C-s* Insert the *PredSpec* of the current predicate into the code.

*C-c C-n* Insert the name of the current predicate into the code. This can be useful when writing recursive predicates or predicates with several clauses. See also the `prolog-electric-dot-flag` variable below.

*C-c C-v a* Convert all variables in a region to anonymous variables. This can also be done using the `Prolog/Transform/All variables to '_'` menu entry. See also the `prolog-electric-underscore-flag` Emacs variable.

*C-c ?* Help on predicate. This requires the SICStus info files to be installed. If the SICStus info files are installed in a nonstandard way, you may have to change the Emacs variable `prolog-info-predicate-index`.

### 3.11.4 Mode Line

If working with an application split into several modules, it is often useful to let files begin with a "mode line":

```
%%% -*- Mode: Prolog; Module: ModuleName; -*-
```

The Emacs interface will look for the mode line and notify the SICStus Prolog module system that code fragments being incrementally reconsulted or recompiled should be imported into the module *ModuleName*. If the mode line is missing, the code fragment will be imported into the type-in module. An additional benefit of the mode line is that it tells Emacs that the file contains Prolog code, regardless of the setting of the Emacs variable `auto-mode-alist`. A mode line can be inserted by choosing `Insert/Module modeline` in the `Prolog` menu.

### 3.11.5 Configuration

The behavior of the Emacs interface can be controlled by a set of user-configurable settings. Some of these can be changed on the fly, while some require Emacs to be restarted. To set a variable on the fly, type *M-x set-variable* ⟨RET⟩ *VariableName* ⟨RET⟩ *Value* ⟨RET⟩. Note that variable names can be completed by typing a few characters and then pressing ⟨TAB⟩.

To set a variable so that the setting is used every time Emacs is started, add lines of the following format to '`~/.emacs`':

```
(setq VariableName Value)
```

Note that the Emacs interface is presently not using the '`Customize`' functionality to edit the settings.

The available settings are:

`prolog-system`
: The Prolog system to use. Defaults to `'sicstus`, which will be assumed for the rest of this chapter. See the on-line documentation for the meaning of other settings. For other settings of `prolog-system` the variables below named `sicstus-`*something* will not be used, in some cases corresponding functionality is available through variables named `prolog-`*something*.

`sicstus-version`
: The version of SICStus that is used. Defaults to `'(3 . 8)`. Note that the spaces are significant!

`prolog-use-sicstus-sd`
: Set to `t` (the default) to enable the source-linked debugging extensions by default. The debugging can be enabled via the `Prolog` menu even if this variable

is `nil`. Note that the source-linked debugging only works if `sicstus-version` is set correctly.

`pltrace-port-arrow-assoc` **obsolescent**

Only relevant for source-linked debugging, this controls how the various ports of invocation boxes (see Section 7.1 [Procedure Box], page 75) map to arrows that point into the current line of code in source code buffers. Initialized as:

```
'(("call" . ">>>") ("exit" . "+++") ("ndexit" . "?++")
  ("redo" . "<<<") ("fail" . "---") ("exception" . "==>"))
```

where `ndexit` is the nondeterminate variant of the Exit port. Do not rely on this variable. It will change in future releases.

`prolog-indent-width`

How many positions to indent the body of a clause. Defaults to `tab-width`, normally 8.

`prolog-paren-indent`

The number of positions to indent code inside grouping parentheses. Defaults to 4, which gives the following indentation.

```
p :-
        (   q1
        ;   q2,
            q3
        ).
```

Note that the spaces between the parentheses and the code are automatically inserted when ⟨TAB⟩ is pressed at those positions.

`prolog-align-comments-flag`

Set to `nil` to prevent single `%`-comments from being automatically aligned. Defaults to `t`.

Note that comments with one `%` are indented to comment-column, comments with two `%` to the code level, and that comments with three `%` are never changed when indenting.

`prolog-indent-mline-comments-flag`

Set to `nil` to prevent indentation of text inside `/* ... */` comments. Defaults `t`.

`prolog-object-end-to-0-flag`

Set to nil to indent the closing `}` of an object definition to `prolog-indent-width`. Defaults to `t`.

`sicstus-keywords`

This is a list with keywords that are highlighted in a special color when used as directives (i.e. as `:-` *`keyword`*). Defaults to

```
'((sicstus
     ("block" "discontiguous" "dynamic" "initialization"
      "meta_predicate" "mode" "module" "multifile" "public"
      "volatile")))
```

`prolog-electric-newline-flag`
: Set to `nil` to prevent Emacs from automatically indenting the next line when pressing ⟨RET⟩. Defaults to `t`.

`prolog-hungry-delete-key-flag`
: Set to `t` to enable deletion of all white space before the cursor when pressing ⟨DEL⟩ (unless inside a comment, string, or quoted atom). Defaults to `nil`.

`prolog-electric-dot-flag`
: Set to `t` to enable the electric dot function. If enabled, pressing `.` at the end of a non-empty line inserts a dot and a newline. When pressed at the beginning of a line, a new head of the last predicate is inserted. When pressed at the end of a line with only whitespace, a recursive call to the current predicate is inserted. The function respects the arity of the predicate and inserts parentheses and the correct number of commas for separation of the arguments. Defaults to `nil`.

`prolog-electric-underscore-flag`
: Set to `t` to enable the electric underscore function. When enabled, pressing underscore (`_`) when the cursor is on a variable, replaces the variable with the anynomous variable. Defaults to `nil`.

`prolog-old-sicstus-keys-flag`
: Set to `t` to enable the key-bindings of the old Emacs interface. These bindings are not used by default since they violate GNU Emacs recommendations. Defaults to `nil`.

`prolog-use-prolog-tokenizer-flag`
: Set to `nil` to use built-in functions of Emacs for parsing the source code when indenting. This is faster than the default but does not handle some of the syntax peculiarities of Prolog. Defaults to `t`.

`prolog-parse-mode`
: What position the parsing is done from when indenting code. Two possible settings: `'beg-of-line` and `'beg-of-clause`. The first is faster but may result in erroneous indentation in `/* ... */` comments. The default is `'beg-of-line`.

`prolog-imenu-flag`
: Set to `t` to enable a new `Predicate` menu that contains all predicates of the current file. Choosing an entry in the menu moves the cursor to the start of that predicate. Defaults to `nil`.

`prolog-info-predicate-index`
: The info node for the SICStus predicate index. This is important if the online help function is to be used (by pressing *C-c ?*, or choosing the `Prolog/Help on predicate` menu entry). The default setting is `"(sicstus)Predicate Index"`.

`prolog-underscore-wordchar-flag`
: Set to `nil` to not make underscore (`_`) a word-constituent character. Defaults to `t`.

### 3.11.6 Tips

Some general tips and tricks for using the SICStus mode and Emacs in general are given here. Some of the methods may not work in all versions of Emacs.

#### 3.11.6.1 Font-locking

When editing large files, it might happen that font-locking is not done because the file is too large. Typing *M-x lazy-lock-mode* results in only the visible parts of the buffer being highlighted, which is much faster, see its Emacs on-line documentation for details.

If the font-locking seems to be incorrect, choose `Fontify Buffer` from the `Prolog` menu.

#### 3.11.6.2 Auto-fill Mode

Auto-fill mode is enabled by typing *M-x auto-fill-mode*. This enables automatic line breaking with some features. For example, the following multiline comment was created by typing *M-;* followed by the text. The second line was indented and a '`%`' was added automatically.

```
dynamics([]).        % A list of pit furnace
                     % dynamic instances
```

#### 3.11.6.3 Speed

There are several things to do if the speed of the Emacs environment is a problem:

- First of all, make sure that '`prolog.el`' and '`sicstus-support.el`' are compiled, i.e. that there is a '`prolog.elc`' and a '`sicstus-support.elc`' file at the same location as the original files. To do the compilation, start Emacs and type *M-x byte-compile-file* ⟨RET⟩ *path* ⟨RET⟩, where *path* is the path to the '`*.el`' file. Do not be alarmed if there are a few warning messages as this is normal. If all went well, there should now be a compiled file, which is used the next time Emacs is started.
- The next thing to try is changing the setting of `prolog-use-prolog-tokenizer-flag` to `nil`. This means that Emacs uses built-in functions for some of the source code parsing, thus speeding up indentation. The problem is that it does not handle all peculiarities of the Prolog syntax, so this is a trade-off between correctness and speed.
- The setting of the `prolog-parse-mode` variable also affects the speed, `'beg-of-line` being faster than `'beg-of-clause`.
- Font locking may be slow. You can turn it off using customization, available through *M-x customize-group* ⟨RET⟩ *font-lock* ⟨RET⟩. An alternative is to enable one of the lazy font locking modes. You can also turn it off completely; see Section 3.11.2 [Basic Configuration], page 35.

### 3.11.6.4 Changing Colors

The prolog mode uses the default Emacs colors for font-locking as far as possible. The only custom settings are in the prolog process buffer. The default settings of the colors may not agree with your preferences, so here is how to change them.

If your emacs support it, use '`Customize`', *M-x customize-group* ⟨RET⟩ *font-lock* ⟨RET⟩ will show the '`Customize`' settings for font locking and also contains pointers to the '`Customize`' group for the font lock (type)faces. The rest of this section outlines the more involved methods needed in older versions of Emacs.

First of all, list all available faces (a face is a combined setting of foreground and background colors, font, boldness, etc.) by typing *M-x list-faces-display*.

There are several functions that change the appearance of a face, the ones you will most likely need are:

- `set-face-foreground`
- `set-face-background`
- `set-face-underline-p`
- `make-face-bold`
- `make-face-bold-italic`
- `make-face-italic`
- `make-face-unbold`
- `make-face-unitalic`

These can be tested interactively by typing *M-x function-name*. You will then be asked for the name of the face to change and a value. If the buffers are not updated according to the new settings, then refontify the buffer using the `Fontify Buffer` menu entry in the `Prolog` menu.

Colors are specified by a name or by RGB values. Available color names can be listed with *M-x list-colors-display*.

To store the settings of the faces, a few lines must be added to '`~/.emacs`'. For example:

```
;; Customize font-lock faces
(add-hook 'font-lock-mode-hook
          '(lambda ()
             (set-face-foreground font-lock-variable-name-face "#00a000")
             (make-face-bold font-lock-keyword-face)
             (set-face-foreground font-lock-reference-face "Blue")
             ))
```

# 4 The Prolog Language

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the syntax and semantics of a certain subset of logic (*definite clauses*, also known as *Horn clauses*), and indicates how this subset forms the basis of Prolog.

## 4.1 Syntax, Terminology and Informal Semantics

### 4.1.1 Terms

The data objects of the language are called *terms*. A term is either a *constant*, a *variable* or a *compound term*.

#### 4.1.1.1 Integers

The constants include *integers* such as

```
0   1   999   -512
```

Besides the usual decimal, or base 10, notation, integers may also be written in other base notations. In `sicstus` mode, any base from 2 to 36 can be specified, while in `iso` mode bases 2 (binary), 8 (octal), and 16 (hex) can be used. Letters '`A`' through '`Z`' (upper or lower case) are used for bases greater than 10. E.g.:

```
15   2'1111   8'17  16'f  % sicstus mode
15   0b1111   0o17  0xf   % iso mode
```

all represent the integer fifteen. Except for the first, decimal, notation, the forms in the first line are only acceptable in `sicstus` mode, while those in the second line are only valid in `iso` mode.

There is also a special notation for character constants. E.g.:

```
0'A   0'\x41   0'\101
```

are all equivalent to `65` (the character code for '`A`'). '`0'`' followed by any character except '\' (backslash) is thus read as an integer. Unless character escapes have been switched off, if '`0'`' is followed by '\', the '\' denotes the start of an escape sequence with special meaning (see Section 50.5 [Escape Sequences], page 794).

#### 4.1.1.2 Floats

Constants also include *floats* such as

```
1.0   -3.141   4.5E7   -0.12e+8   12.0e-9
```

Note that there must be a decimal point in floats written with an exponent, and that there must be at least one digit before and after the decimal point.

#### 4.1.1.3 Atoms

Constants also include atoms such as

```
a   void   =   :=   'Algol-68'   []
```

Atoms are definite elementary objects, and correspond to proper nouns in natural language. For reference purposes, here is a list of the possible forms that an atom may take:

1. Any sequence of alphanumeric characters (including '_'), starting with a lower case letter.
2. Any sequence from the following set of characters:

   ```
   + - * / \ ^ < > = ~ : . ? @ # $ &
   ```

   This set can in fact be larger; see Section 50.4 [Token String], page 790 for a precise definition.
3. Any sequence of characters delimited by single quotes. Unless character escapes have been switched off, backslashes in the sequence denote escape sequences (see Section 50.5 [Escape Sequences], page 794), and if the single quote character is included in the sequence it must be escaped, e.g. `'can\'t'`.
4. Any of:

   ```
   ! ; [] {}
   ```

   Note that the bracket pairs are special: '`[]`' and '`{}`' are atoms but '`[`', '`]`', '`{`', and '`}`' are not. However, when they are used as functors (see below) the form `{X}` is allowed as an alternative to `{}(X)`. The form `[X]` is the normal notation for lists, as an alternative to `.(X,[])`.

#### 4.1.1.4 Variables

Variables may be written as any sequence of alphanumeric characters (including '_') starting with either a capital letter or '_'; e.g.:

```
X   Value   A   A1   _3   _RESULT
```

If a variable is only referred to once in a clause, it does not need to be named and may be written as an anonymous variable, indicated by the underline character '_'. A clause may contain several anonymous variables; they are all read and treated as distinct variables.

A variable should be thought of as standing for some definite but unidentified object. This is analogous to the use of a pronoun in natural language. Note that a variable is not simply

a writable storage location as in most programming languages; rather it is a local name for some data object, cf. the variable of pure LISP and identity declarations in Algol68.

#### 4.1.1.5 Compound Terms

The structured data objects of the language are the compound terms. A compound term comprises a *functor* (called the principal functor of the term) and a sequence of one or more terms called arguments. A functor is characterized by its name, which is an atom, and its arity or number of arguments. For example the compound term whose functor is named `point` of arity 3, with arguments `X`, `Y` and `Z`, is written

```
point(X, Y, Z)
```

Note that an atom is considered to be a functor of arity 0.

Functors are generally analogous to common nouns in natural language. One may think of a functor as a record type and the arguments of a compound term as the fields of a record. Compound terms are usefully pictured as trees. For example, the term

```
s(np(john),vp(v(likes),np(mary)))
```

would be pictured as the compound term

```
        s
      /   \
   np       vp
   |       /  \
 john     v     np
          |     |
        likes  mary
```

Sometimes it is convenient to write certain functors as operators—2-ary functors may be declared as infix operators and 1-ary functors as prefix or postfix operators. Thus it is possible to write e.g.:

```
X+Y     (P;Q)     X<Y      +X     P;
```

as optional alternatives to

```
+(X,Y)   ;(P,Q)   <(X,Y)   +(X)   ;(P)
```

The use of operators is described fully below (see Section 4.6 [Operators], page 54).

Lists form an important class of data structures in Prolog. They are essentially the same as the lists of LISP: a list either is the atom `[]` representing the empty list, or is a compound term with functor `.` and two arguments, which are respectively the head and tail of the list. Thus a list of the first three natural numbers is the compound term

```
      .
     / \
    1    .
        / \
       2    .
           / \
          3   []
```

which could be written, using the standard syntax, as

```
.(1,.(2,.(3,[])))
```

but which is normally written, in a special list notation, as

```
[1,2,3]
```

The special list notation in the case when the tail of a list is a variable is exemplified by

```
[X|L]      [a,b|L]
```

representing

```
      .                .
     / \              / \
    X     L          a     .
                           / \
                          b     L
```

respectively.

Note that this notation does not add any new power to the language; it simply makes it more readable. e.g. the above examples could equally be written

```
.(X,L)     .(a,.(b,L))
```

For convenience, a further notational variant is allowed for lists of integers that correspond to character codes or one-char atoms. Lists written in this notation are called *strings*. E.g.:

```
"SICStus"
```

which, by default, denotes exactly the same list as

```
[83,73,67,83,116,117,115]
```

The Prolog flag `double_quotes` can be used to change the way strings are interpreted. The default value of the flag is `codes`, which implies the above interpretation. If the flag is set to `chars`, a string is transformed to a char-list. E.g. with this setting the above string represents the list:

```
['S','I','C','S',t,u,s]
```

Finally if `double_quotes` has the value `atom`, then the string is made equivalent to the atom formed from its characters: the above sample string is then the same as the atom `'SICStus'`.

Unless character escapes have been switched off, backslashes in the sequence denote escape sequences (see Section 50.5 [Escape Sequences], page 794). As for quoted atoms, if a double quote character is included in the sequence it must be escaped, e.g. `"can\"t"`.

### 4.1.2 Programs

A fundamental unit of a logic program is the *goal* or procedure call. E.g.

```
gives(tom, apple, teacher)   reverse([1,2,3], L)   X<Y
```

A goal is merely a special kind of term, distinguished only by the context in which it appears in the program. The (principal) functor of a goal identifies what *predicate* the goal is for. It corresponds roughly to a verb in natural language, or to a procedure name in a conventional programming language.

A logic program consists simply of a sequence of statements called *sentences*, which are analogous to sentences of natural language. A sentence comprises a *head* and a *body*. The head either consists of a single goal or is empty. The *body* consists of a sequence of zero or more goals (i.e. it too may be empty). If the head is not empty, the sentence is called a *clause*.

If the body of a clause is empty, the clause is called a *unit clause*, and is written in the form

```
P.
```

where $P$ is the head goal. We interpret this declaratively as

> Goals matching $P$ are true.

and procedurally as

> Goals matching $P$ are satisfied.

If the body of a clause is non-empty, the clause is called a *rule*, and is written in the form

```
P :- Q, R, S.
```

where $P$ is the head goal and $Q$, $R$ and $S$ are the goals that make up the body. We can read such a clause either declaratively as

> $P$ is true if $Q$ and $R$ and $S$ are true.

or procedurally as

> To satisfy goal $P$, satisfy goals $Q$, $R$ and $S$.

A sentence with an empty head is called a *directive* (see Section 3.4.2 [Directives], page 28), and is written in the form

```
:- P, Q.
```

where $P$ and $Q$ are the goals of the body. Such a query is read declaratively as

> Are $P$ and $Q$ true?

and procedurally as

> Satisfy goals $P$ and $Q$.

Sentences generally contain variables. Note that variables in different sentences are completely independent, even if they have the same name—i.e. the *lexical scope* of a variable is limited to a single sentence. Each distinct variable in a sentence should be interpreted as standing for an arbitrary entity, or value. To illustrate this, here are some examples of sentences containing variables, with possible declarative and procedural readings:

1. `employed(X) :- employs(Y,X).`

   "Any $X$ is employed if any $Y$ employs $X$."

   "To find whether a person $X$ is employed, find whether any $Y$ employs $X$."
2. `derivative(X,X,1).`

   "For any $X$, the derivative of $X$ with respect to $X$ is 1."

   "The goal of finding a derivative for the expression $X$ with respect to $X$ itself is satisfied by the result 1."
3. `?- ungulate(X), aquatic(X).`

   "Is it true, for any $X$, that $X$ is an ungulate and $X$ is aquatic?"

   "Find an $X$ that is both an ungulate and aquatic."

In any program, the predicate for a particular (principal) functor is the sequence of clauses in the program whose head goals have that principal functor. For example, the predicate for a 3-ary functor `concatenate/3` might well consist of the two clauses

```
concatenate([], L, L).
concatenate([X|L1], L2, [X|L3]) :- concatenate(L1, L2, L3).
```

where `concatenate(L1,L2,L3)` means "the list *L1* concatenated with the list *L2* is the list *L3*". Note that for predicates with clauses corresponding to a base case and a recursive case, the preferred style is to write the base case clause first.

In Prolog, several predicates may have the same name but different arities. Therefore, when it is important to specify a predicate unambiguously, the form *name/arity* is used; e.g. `concatenate/3`.

Certain predicates are predefined by the Prolog system. Such predicates are called built-in predicates.

As we have seen, the goals in the body of a sentence are linked by the operator '`,`', which can be interpreted as conjunction ("and"). It is sometimes convenient to use an additional operator '`;`', standing for disjunction ("or"). (The precedence of '`;`' is such that it dominates '`,`' but is dominated by '`:-`'.) An example is the clause

```
grandfather(X, Z) :-
        (mother(X, Y); father(X, Y)),
        father(Y, Z).
```

which can be read as

> For any $X$, $Y$ and $Z$, $X$ has $Z$ as a grandfather if either the mother of $X$ is $Y$ or the father of $X$ is $Y$, and the father of $Y$ is $Z$.

Such uses of disjunction can always be eliminated by defining an extra predicate—for instance the previous example is equivalent to

```
grandfather(X,Z) :- parent(X,Y), father(Y,Z).

parent(X,Y) :- mother(X,Y).
parent(X,Y) :- father(X,Y).
```

—and so disjunction will not be mentioned further in the following, more formal, description of the semantics of clauses.

The token '`|`', when used outside a list, is an alias for '`;`'. The aliasing is performed when terms are read in, so that

```
a :- b | c.
```

is read as if it were

```
a :- b ; c.
```

Note the double use of the '`.`' character. On the one hand it is used as a sentence terminator, while on the other it may be used in a string of symbols making up an atom (e.g. the list functor `./2`). The rule used to disambiguate terms is that a '`.`' followed by *layout-text* is regarded as a sentence terminator (see Section 50.4 [Token String], page 790).

## 4.2 Declarative Semantics

The semantics of definite clauses should be fairly clear from the informal interpretations already given. However it is useful to have a precise definition. The *declarative semantics* of definite clauses tells us which goals can be considered true according to a given program, and is defined recursively as follows.

> A goal is true if it is the head of some clause instance and each of the goals (if any) in the body of that clause instance is true, where an instance of a clause

(or term) is obtained by substituting, for each of zero or more of its variables, a new term for all occurrences of the variable.

For example, if a program contains the preceding procedure for `concatenate/3`, then the declarative semantics tells us that

```
?- concatenate([a], [b], [a,b]).
```

is true, because this goal is the head of a certain instance of the first clause for `concatenate/3`, namely,

```
concatenate([a], [b], [a,b]) :- concatenate([], [b], [b]).
```

and we know that the only goal in the body of this clause instance is true, since it is an instance of the unit clause that is the second clause for `concatenate/3`.

## 4.3 Procedural Semantics

Note that the declarative semantics makes no reference to the sequencing of goals within the body of a clause, nor to the sequencing of clauses within a program. This sequencing information is, however, very relevant for the *procedural semantics* that Prolog gives to definite clauses. The procedural semantics defines exactly how the Prolog system will execute a goal, and the sequencing information is the means by which the Prolog programmer directs the system to execute the program in a sensible way. The effect of executing a goal is to enumerate, one by one, its true instances. Here then is an informal definition of the procedural semantics. We first illustrate the semantics by the simple query

```
?- concatenate(X, Y, [a,b]).
```

We find that it matches the head of the first clause for `concatenate/3`, with *X* instantiated to `[a|X1]`. The new variable *X1* is constrained by the new query produced, which contains a single recursive procedure call:

```
?- concatenate(X1, Y, [b]).
```

Again this goal matches the first clause, instantiating *X1* to `[b|X2]`, and yielding the new query:

```
?- concatenate(X2, Y, [])
```

Now the single goal will only match the second clause, instantiating both *X2* and *Y* to `[]`. Since there are no further goals to be executed, we have a solution

```
X = [a,b]
Y = []
```

i.e. a true instance of the original goal is

```
concatenate([a,b], [], [a,b])
```

If this solution is rejected, backtracking will generate the further solutions

```
X = [a]
Y = [b]

X = []
Y = [a,b]
```

in that order, by re-matching, against the second clause for concatenate, goals already solved once using the first clause.

Thus, in the procedural semantics, the set of clauses

```
H :- B1, ..., Bm.
H' :- B1', ..., Bm'.
...
```

are regarded as a *procedure definition* for some predicate *H*, and in a query

```
?- G1, ..., Gn.
```

each *Gi* is regarded as a *procedure call*. To execute a query, the system selects by its *computation rule* a goal, *Gj* say, and searches by its *search rule* a clause whose head matches *Gj*. Matching is done by the *unification* algorithm (see [Robinson 65]), which computes the most general unifier, *mgu*, of *Gj* and *H*). The *mgu* is unique if it exists. If a match is found, the current query is *reduced* to a new query

```
?- (G1, ..., Gj-1, B1, ..., Bm, Gj+1, ..., Gn)mgu.
```

and a new cycle is started. The execution terminates when the empty query has been produced.

If there is no matching head for a goal, the execution backtracks to the most recent successful match in an attempt to find an alternative match. If such a match is found, an alternative new query is produced, and a new cycle is started.

In SICStus Prolog, as in other Prolog systems, the search rule is simple: "search forward from the beginning of the program".

The computation rule in traditional Prolog systems is also simple: "pick the leftmost goal of the current query". However, SICStus Prolog and other modern implementations have a somewhat more complex computation rule "pick the leftmost unblocked goal of the current query".

A goal can be blocked on one ore more uninstantiated variables, and a variable may block several goals. Thus binding a variable can cause blocked goals to become unblocked, and backtracking can cause currently unblocked goals to become blocked again. Moreover, if the current query is

```
?- G1, ..., Gj-1, Gj, Gj+1, ..., Gn.
```

where *Gj* is the first unblocked goal, and matching *Gj* against a clause head causes several blocked goals in *G1*, . . . , *Gj-1* to become unblocked, then these goals may become reordered. The internal order of any two goals that were blocked on the *same* variable is retained, however.

Another consequence is that a query may be derived consisting entirely of blocked goals. Such a query is said to have *floundered*. The top-level checks for this condition. If detected, the outstanding blocked subgoals are printed on the standard error stream along with the answer substitution, to notify the user that the answer (s)he has got is really a speculative one, since it is only valid if the blocked goals can be satisfied.

A goal is blocked if certain arguments are uninstantiated and its predicate definition is annotated with a matching block declaration (see Section 6.2.5 [Block Declarations], page 70). Goals of certain built-in predicates may also be blocked if their arguments are not sufficiently instantiated.

When this mechanism is used, the control structure resembles that of coroutines, suspending and resuming different threads of control. When a computation has left blocked goals behind, the situation is analogous to spawning a new suspended thread. When a blocked goal becomes unblocked, the situation is analogous to temporarily suspending the current thread and resuming the thread to which the blocked goal belongs.

## 4.4 Occurs-Check

It is possible, and sometimes useful, to write programs that unify a variable to a term in which that variable occurs, thus creating a cyclic term. The usual mathematical theory behind Logic Programming forbids the creation of cyclic terms, dictating that an *occurs-check* should be done each time a variable is unified with a term. Unfortunately, an occurs-check would be so expensive as to render Prolog impractical as a programming language. Thus cyclic terms may be created and may cause loops trying to print them.

SICStus Prolog mitigates the problem by its ability to unify, compare (see Section 8.3 [Term Compare], page 168), assert, and copy cyclic terms without looping. The `write_term/[2,3]` built-in predicate can optionally handle cyclic terms; see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142. Unification with occurs-check is available as a built-in predicate; see Section 8.17 [Misc Pred], page 213. Predicates testing (a)cyclicity are available in a library package; see Chapter 21 [Term Utilities], page 367. Other predicates usually do not handle cyclic terms well.

## 4.5 The Cut Symbol

Besides the sequencing of goals and clauses, Prolog provides one other very important facility for specifying control information. This is the *cut* symbol, written `!`. It is inserted

in the program just like a goal, but is not to be regarded as part of the logic of the program and should be ignored as far as the declarative semantics is concerned.

The effect of the cut symbol is as follows. When first encountered as a goal, cut succeeds immediately. If backtracking should later return to the cut, the effect is to fail the *parent goal*, i.e. the goal that matched the head of the clause containing the cut, and caused the clause to be activated. In other words, the cut operation *commits* the system to all choices made since the parent goal was invoked, and causes other alternatives to be discarded. The goals thus rendered *determinate* are the parent goal itself, any goals occurring before the cut in the clause containing the cut, and any subgoals that were executed during the execution of those preceding goals.

For example:

```
member(X, [X|_]).
member(X, [_|L]) :- member(X, L).
```

This predicate can be used to test whether a given term is in a list. E.g.:

```
| ?- member(b, [a,b,c]).
```

returns the answer '`yes`'. The predicate can also be used to extract elements from a list, as in

```
| ?- member(X, [d,e,f]).
```

With backtracking this will successively return each element of the list. Now suppose that the first clause had been written instead:

```
member(X, [X|_]) :- !.
```

In this case, the above call would extract only the first element of the list (`d`). On backtracking, the cut would immediately fail the whole predicate.

```
x :- p, !, q.
x :- r.
```

This is equivalent to

```
x := if p then q else r;
```

in an Algol-like language.

It should be noticed that a cut discards all the alternatives since the parent goal, even when the cut appears within a disjunction. This means that the normal method for eliminating a disjunction by defining an extra predicate cannot be applied to a disjunction containing a cut.

A proper use of the cut is usually a major difficulty for new Prolog programmers. The usual mistakes are to over-use cut, and to let cuts destroy the logic. A cut that doesn't destroy

the logic is called a *green cut*; a cut that does is called a *red cut*. We would like to advise all users to follow these general rules. Also see Chapter 13 [Writing Efficient Programs], page 319.

- Write each clause as a self-contained logic rule, which just defines the truth of goals that match its head. Then add cuts to remove any fruitless alternative computation paths that may tie up memory.
- Cuts are usually placed right after the head, sometimes preceded by simple tests.
- Cuts are hardly ever needed in the last clause of a predicate.

## 4.6 Operators

Operators in Prolog are simply a *notational convenience*. For example, the expression `2+1` could also be written `+(2,1)`. This expression represents the compound term

```
    +
  /   \
 2     1
```

and *not* the number 3. The addition would only be performed if the term were passed as an argument to an appropriate predicate such as `is/2` (see Section 8.2 [Arithmetic], page 164).

The Prolog syntax caters for operators of three main kinds—*infix*, *prefix* and *postfix*. An infix operator appears between its two arguments, while a prefix operator precedes its single argument and a postfix operator is written after its single argument.

Each operator has a precedence, which is a number from 1 to 1200. The precedence is used to disambiguate expressions where the structure of the term denoted is not made explicit through the use of parentheses. The general rule is that it is the operator with the *highest* precedence that is the principal functor. Thus if '`+`' has a higher precedence than '`/`', then

```
a+b/c      a+(b/c)
```

are equivalent and denote the term `+(a,/(b,c))`. Note that the infix form of the term `/(+(a,b),c)` must be written with explicit parentheses, i.e.

```
(a+b)/c
```

If there are two operators in the subexpression having the same highest precedence, the ambiguity must be resolved from the types of the operators. The possible types for an infix operator are

```
xfx     xfy     yfx
```

Operators of type `xfx` are not associative: it is a requirement that both of the two subexpressions that are the arguments of the operator must be of *lower* precedence than the operator

itself, i.e. their principal functors must be of lower precedence, unless the subexpression is explicitly parenthesized (which gives it zero precedence).

Operators of type `xfy` are right-associative: only the first (left-hand) subexpression must be of lower precedence; the right-hand subexpression can be of the *same* precedence as the main operator. Left-associative operators (type `yfx`) are the other way around.

A functor named *name* is declared as an operator of type *type* and precedence *precedence* by the directive:

```
:- op(precedence, type, name).
```

The argument name can also be a list of names of operators of the same type and precedence.

It is possible to have more than one operator of the same name, so long as they are of different kinds, i.e. infix, prefix or postfix. Note that the ISO Prolog standard contains a limitation that there should be no infix and postfix operators with the same name, however, SICStus Prolog lifts this restriction.

An operator of any kind may be redefined by a new declaration of the same kind. This applies equally to operators that are provided as standard, except for the `','` operator. Declarations of all the standard operators can be found elsewhere (see [Standard Operators], page 797).

For example, the standard operators `+` and `-` are declared by

```
:- op(500, yfx, [ +, - ]).
```

so that

```
a-b+c
```

is valid syntax, and means

```
(a-b)+c
```

i.e.

```
      +
    /   \
   -     c
  / \
 a   b
```

The list functor `./2` is not a standard operator, but if we declare it thus:

```
:- op(900, xfy, .).
```

then `a.b.c` would represent the compound term

```
    .
   / \
  a   .
     / \
    b   c
```

Contrasting this with the diagram above for `a-b+c` shows the difference between `yfx` operators where the tree grows to the left, and `xfy` operators where it grows to the right. The tree cannot grow at all for `xfx` operators; it is simply illegal to combine `xfx` operators having equal precedences in this way.

The possible types for a prefix operator are

```
fx      fy
```

and for a postfix operator they are

```
xf      yf
```

The meaning of the types should be clear by analogy with those for infix operators. As an example, if `not` were declared as a prefix operator of type `fy`, then

```
not not P
```

would be a permissible way to write `not(not(P))`. If the type were `fx`, the preceding expression would not be legal, although

```
not P
```

would still be a permissible form for `not(P)`.

If these precedence and associativity rules seem rather complex, remember that you can always use parentheses when in any doubt.

Note that the arguments of a compound term written in standard syntax must be expressions of precedence *below* 1000. Thus it is necessary to parenthesize the expression `P :- Q` in

```
| ?- assert((P :- Q)).
```

## 4.7 Syntax Restrictions

Note carefully the following syntax restrictions, which serve to remove potential ambiguity associated with prefix operators.

1. In a term written in standard syntax, the principal functor and its following '`(`' must *not* be separated by any intervening *layout-text*. Thus

   ```
   point (X,Y,Z)
   ```

is invalid syntax.

2. If the argument of a prefix operator starts with a '(', this '(' must be separated from the operator by at least one *layout-char*. Thus

```
:-(p;q),r.
```

(where ':-' is the prefix operator) is invalid syntax. The system would try to interpret it as the compound term:

```
      ,
     / \
  :-    r
   |
   ;
  / \
 p   q
```

That is, it would take ':-' to be a functor of arity 1. However, since the arguments of a compound term are required to be expressions of precedence below 1000, this interpretation would fail as soon as the ';' (precedence 1100) was encountered.

In contrast, the term:

```
:- (p;q),r.
```

is valid syntax and represents the following compound term:

```
     :-
      |
      ,
     / \
    ;   r
   / \
  p   q
```

## 4.8 Comments

Comments have no effect on the execution of a program, but they are very useful for making programs more readily comprehensible. Two forms of comment are allowed in Prolog:

1. The character '%' followed by any sequence of characters up to end of line.
2. The symbol '/*' followed by any sequence of characters (including new lines) up to '*/'.

# 5 The Module System

By making use of the module systems facilities, programs can be divided into different modules. Each module has its own independent predicate name space. This is an important feature for the development of larger programs. The module system of SICStus Prolog is predicate based. This means that only the predicates are local to a module, whereas terms are global. The module system is flat, not hierarchical, so all modules are visible to one another. It is non-strict, i.e. the normal visibility rules can be overridden by special syntax. No overhead is incurred on compiled calls to predicates in other modules. It is modeled after and compatible with the Quintus Prolog module system. Finally, using the module system is optional, and SICStus Prolog may be used without the user being aware of the module system at all.

Modules in SICStus Prolog can also be used for object-oriented programming. See Chapter 37 [Obj Intro], page 547, for details.

## 5.1 Basic Concepts

Each predicate in the Prolog system, whether built-in or user defined, belongs to a module. A predicate is generally only visible in the module where it is defined. However a predicate may be *imported* by another module. It is thereby made visible in that module too. Built-in predicates are visible in every module. Predicates declared as public in a module declaration (see below) are *exported*. Normally only public predicates may be imported by another module.

For any given goal, the *source module* is the module in which the corresponding predicate must be visible. Similarly, for any given clause, the source module of its head is the module into which the clause is loaded.

For goals occurring in a source file with a module declaration, the source module is the declared module. For goals occurring in a source file without a module declaration, the source module is the module that the file is being loaded into. For goals typed at the top-level, the source module is the *type-in module*. The type-in module is by default the `user` module but may be changed by the built-in predicate `module/1`.

The other predefined module is the `prolog` module where all the built-in predicates reside. The exported built-in predicates are automatically imported into each new module as it is created.

## 5.2 Module Prefixing

Notwithstanding the visibility rules, any predicate can be called from any other module by prefixing the goal with the module name and the colon operator, thus overriding the source module of the goal:

```
| ?- foo:bar(X).
```

This feature is intended mainly for debugging purposes, since it defies the purposes of the module system. If the prefixed goal is a meta-predicate, however, the prefixed module name may affect the module name expansion of the goal (see Section 5.5 [Meta Exp], page 61). If multiple module prefixes are used, the innermost one has priority.

It is also possible to override the source module of clauses and directives by module prefixing. For example,

```
:- dynamic mod:p/1.
p(X) :- mod:(q(X), r(X)).
mod:(q(X) :- r(X)).
mod:s(X) :- t(X).
```

declares `mod:p/1` as dynamic, whatever the source module is; defines `p/1` in the source module as calling `mod:q/1` and `mod:r/1`; defines `mod:q/1` as calling `mod:r/1`; and defines `mod:s/1` as calling `t/1` in the source module. The latter technique is particularly useful when the prefix is `user` and the predicate is a hook predicate such as `user:portray/1`, which must be defined in the `user` module, but the rest of the file consists of predicates belonging to some other module.

## 5.3 Defining Modules

A module is normally defined by putting a module declaration in a source file. A module declaration has the form:

```
:- module(ModuleName, ExportList[, Options]).
```

where *ModuleName* is an atom, and should precede all other clauses and directives of that file.

When the file is loaded, all predicates in the file go into *ModuleName* and the predicates of the *ExportList* are exported. When a module declaration is processed, all existing predicates in the module are erased before the new ones are loaded. A file that contains a module declaration is henceforth called a *module-file*.

*Options* is an optional argument, and should be a list. The only available option is `hidden(Boolean)`, where *Boolean* is `false` (the default) or *true*. In the latter case, tracing of the predicates of the module is disabled (although spypoints can be set), and no source information is generated at compile time.

A module can also be defined dynamically by asserting or loading predicates to it:

```
| ?- assert(m:p(x)).
```

creates the module `m`, if it does not already exists, and asserts `p(x)` to it.

```
| ?- compile(m:f).
```

creates the module `m` and loads `f` into `m`.

Dynamically created modules have no public predicates.

## 5.4 Importation

When a module-file is loaded by `load_files/[1,2]` or one of its shorthands (see Section 8.1.1 [Read In], page 134), by default all the public predicates of the module-file are imported by the receiving module. An explicit list of predicates to import may also be specified.

Name clashes with already existing predicates, local or imported from other modules, are handled in two different ways: If the receiving module is the `user` module, the user is asked for redefinition of the predicate. For other receiving modules, a warning is issued and the importation is canceled. In the first case redefinition silently takes place if the `redefine_warnings` Prolog flag has the value `off`. The binding of an imported predicate remains, even if the origin is reloaded or deleted. However, `abolish/[1,2]` break up the importation binding. When a module-file is reloaded, a check is made that the predicates imported by other modules are still in the public list. If that is not the case, a warning is issued. Note that an imported predicate may be re-exported.

## 5.5 Module Name Expansion

Some predicates take goals as arguments (i.e. meta-predicates). These arguments must include a module specification stating which module the goal refers. Some other predicates also need module information i.e. `compile/1`. The property of needing module information is declared with a meta-predicate declaration (see Section 5.6 [Meta Decl], page 62). Goals for these predicates are module name expanded to ensure the module information. Goals appearing in queries and meta-calls are expanded prior to execution while goals in the bodies of clauses and directives are expanded at compile time. The expansion is made by preceding the relevant argument with '*Module*:'. If the goal is prefixed by '*Module* :', *Module* is used for the expansion; otherwise, the source/type-in module is used. An argument is not expanded if:

- It already has a module prefix, or
- It is a variable appearing in an expandable position in the head of the clause.

Some examples:

```
| ?- [user].
| :- meta_predicate p(:), q(:).
| r(X) :- p(X).
| q(X) :- p(X).
| ^D
% consulted user in module user, 0 msec 424 bytes

| ?- listing.

r(A) :-
        p(user:A).

q(A) :-
        p(A).
```

Here, `p/1` and `q/1` are declared as meta-predicates while `r/1` is not. Thus the clause `r(X) :- p(X)` will be transformed to `r(X) :- p(`*M*`:X)`, by item 2 above, where *M* is the type-in module, whereas `q(X) :- p(X)` will not.

```
| ?- m:assert(f(1)).
```

Here, `assert/1` is called in the module `m`. However, this does not ensure that `f(1)` is asserted into `m`. The fact that `assert/1` is a meta-predicate makes the system module name expand the goal, transforming it to `m:assert(m:f(1))` before execution. This way, `assert/1` is supplied the correct module information.

## 5.6 Meta-Predicate Declarations

The fact that a predicate needs module name expansion is declared in a meta-predicate declaration:

```
:- meta_predicate MetaPredSpec, ..., MetaPredSpec.
```

where each *MetaPredSpec* is a mode spec. E.g.:

```
:- meta_predicate p(:, +).
```

which means that the first argument of `p/2` shall be module name expanded. The arguments in the mode spec are interpreted as:

`:`
*An integer*
: This argument, in any call to the declared predicate, shall be expanded. (Integers are allowed for compatibility reasons).

*Anything else e.g.* `+`, `-` *or* `?`
: This argument shall not be expanded

A number of built-in predicates have predefined meta-predicate declarations, as indicated by the mode specs in this manual, e.g. `call(:Term)`.

# 6 Loading Programs

Programs can be loaded in three different ways: consulted or compiled from source file, or loaded from object files. The latter is the fastest way of loading programs, but of course requires that the programs have been compiled to object files first. Object files may be handy when developing large applications consisting of many source files, but are not strictly necessary since it is possible to save and restore entire execution states (see Section 8.17 [Misc Pred], page 213).

Consulted, or interpreted, predicates are equivalent to, but slower than, compiled ones. Although they use different representations, the two types of predicates can call each other freely.

The SICStus Prolog compiler produces compact and efficient code, running about 8 times faster than consulted code, and requiring much less runtime storage. Compiled Prolog programs are comparable in efficiency with LISP programs for the same task. However, against this, compilation itself takes about twice as long as consulting, and tracing of goals that compile in-line are not available in compiled code.

The compiler operates in four different modes, controlled by the `compiling` Prolog flag. The possible states of the flag are:

`compactcode`
: Compilation produces byte-coded abstract instructions. This is the default unless SICStus Prolog has been installed with support for fastcode compilation.

`fastcode`
: Compilation produces native machine instructions. Currently only available for Sparc platforms. Fastcode runs about 3 times faster than compactcode. This is the default if SICStus Prolog has been installed with support for fastcode compilation.

`profiledcode`
: Compilation produces byte-coded abstract instructions instrumented to produce execution profiling data. See Section 8.16 [Profiling], page 211. Profiling is not available in runtime systems.

`debugcode`
: Compilation produces *interpreted* code, i.e. compiling is replaced by consulting.

The compilation mode can be changed by issuing the query:

```
| ?- prolog_flag(compiling, OldValue, NewValue).
```

A Prolog program consists of a sequence of *sentences* (see Section 50.2 [Sentence], page 788). Directives encountered among the sentences are executed immediately as they are encountered, unless they can be interpreted as *declarations* (see Section 6.2 [Declarations], page 68), which affect the treatment of forthcoming clauses, or as initializations, which build up a set of goals to be executed after the program has been loaded. Clauses are loaded as they are encountered.

A Prolog program may also contain a list of sentences (including the empty list). This is treated as equivalent to those sentences occurring in place of the list. This feature makes it possible to have `user:term_expansion/[2,4]` (see Section 8.1.2 [Term and Goal Expansion], page 137) "return" a list of sentences, instead of a single sentence.

## 6.1 Predicates that Load Code

This section contains a summary of the relevant predicates. For a more precise description, see Section 8.1.1 [Read In], page 134.

To consult a program, issue the query:

```
| ?- consult(Files).
```

where *Files* is either a filename or a list of filenames, instructs the processor to read in the program that is in the files. For example:

```
| ?- consult([dbase,'extras.pl',user]).
```

When a directive is read it is immediately executed. Any predicate defined in the files erases any clauses for that predicate already present. If the old clauses were loaded from a different file than the present one, the user will be queried first whether (s)he really wants the new definition. However, if a `multifile` declaration (see Section 6.2 [Declarations], page 68) is read and the corresponding predicate exists and has previously been declared as `multifile`, new clauses will be added to the predicate, rather than replacing the old clauses. If clauses for some predicate appear in more than one file, the later set will effectively overwrite the earlier set. The division of the program into separate files does not imply any module structure—any predicate can call any other (see Chapter 5 [Module Intro], page 59).

`consult/1`, used in conjunction with `save_program/[1,2]` and `restore/1`, makes it possible to amend a program without having to restart from scratch and consult all the files that make up the program. The consulted file is normally a temporary "patch" file containing only the amended predicate(s). Note that it is possible to call `consult(user)` and then enter a patch directly on the terminal (ending with `^D`). This is only recommended for small, tentative patches.

```
| ?- [File|Files].
```

This is a shorthand way of consulting a list of files. (The case where there is just one filename in the list was described earlier (see Section 3.2 [Reading In], page 24).

To compile a program in-core, use the built-in predicate:

```
| ?- compile(Files).
```

where *Files* is specified just as for `consult/1`.

The effect of `compile/1` is very much like that of `consult/1`, except all new predicates will be stored in compiled rather than consulted form. However, predicates declared as dynamic (see below) will be stored in consulted form, even though `compile/1` is used.

Programs can be compiled into an intermediate representation known as '`.ql`' (for Quick Load file). As of SICStus Prolog 3.8, this feature is obsolescent with the introduction of partial saved-states ('`.po`' files; see Section 3.10 [Saving], page 31), which can be handled much more efficiently.

To compile a program into a '`.ql`' file, use the built-in predicate:

```
| ?- fcompile(Files).
```

where *Files* is specified just as for `consult/1`. For each filename in the list, the compiler will append the suffix '`.pl`' to it and try to locate a source file with that name and compile it to a '`.ql`' file. The filename is formed by appending the suffix '`.ql`' to the specified name. The internal state of SICStus Prolog is not changed as result of the compilation. See Section 6.4 [Considerations], page 72.

To load a program from a set of source or object files, use the built-in predicates `load_files/[1,2]` (the latter is controlled by an options list):

```
| ?- load_files(Files).
```

where *Files* is either a single filename or a list of filenames, optionally with '`.pl`' or '`.po`' or '`.ql`' extensions. This predicate takes the following action for each *File* in the list of filenames:

1. If the *File* is `user`, `compile(user)` or `[user]` is performed;
2. If *File* cannot be found, not even with an extension, an existence error is signaled;
3. If a '`.po`' file is found, the file is loaded;
4. If a '`.ql`' file is found, the file is loaded;
5. If a source file is found, the file is compiled or consulted.
6. If more than one file is found for *File*, item 3 or 4 or 5 applies depending on which file was modified most recently.
7. If *File* cannot be found, not even with an extension, an existence error is signaled.
8. Source files are compiled, unless `load_files/1` was called from a directive of a file being consulted.

Finally, to ensure that some files have been loaded, use the built-in predicate:

```
| ?- ensure_loaded(Files).
```

Same as `load_files(Files)`, except if the file to be loaded has already been loaded and has not been modified since that time, in which case the file is not loaded again. If a source file has been modified, `ensure_loaded/1` does *not* cause any object file to become recompiled.

## 6.2 Declarations

When a program is to be loaded, it is sometimes necessary to tell the system to treat some of the predicates specially. This information is supplied by including *declarations* about such predicates in the source file, preceding any clauses for the predicates that they concern. A declaration is written just as a directive, beginning with '`:-`'. A declaration is effective from its occurrence through the end of file.

Although declarations that affect more than one predicate may be collapsed into a single declaration, the recommended style is to write the declarations for a predicate immediately before its first clause.

Operator declarations are not declarations proper, but rather directives that modify the global table of syntax operators. Operator declarations are executed as they are encountered while loading programs.

The rest of this section details the available forms of predicate declarations.

### 6.2.1 Multifile Declarations

A declaration

`:- multifile` *`PredSpec, ..., PredSpec.`* *ISO*

where each *PredSpec* is a predicate spec, causes the specified predicates to become *multifile*. This means that if more clauses are subsequently loaded from other files for the same predicate, then the new clauses will not replace the old ones, but will be added at the end instead. As of release 3, multifile declarations are required in all files from where clauses to a multifile predicate are loaded.

An example when multifile declarations are particularly useful is in defining *hook predicates*. A hook predicate is a user-defined predicate that somehow alters or customizes the behavior of SICStus Prolog. A number of such hook predicates are described in this manual. Often, an application needs to combine the functionality of several software modules, some of which define clauses for such hook predicates. By simply declaring every hook predicates as multifile, the functionality of the clauses for the hook predicates is automatically combined. If this is not done, the last software module to define clauses for a particular hook predicate will effectively supersede any clauses defined for the same hook predicate in a previous module. By default, hook predicates must be defined in the `user` module, and only their first solution is relevant.

If a file containing clauses for a multifile predicate is reloaded, the old clauses from the same file are removed. The new clauses are added at the end.

If a multifile predicate is loaded from a file with no multifile declaration for it, the predicate is redefined as if it were an ordinary predicate (i.e. the user is asked for confirmation).

Clauses of multifile predicates are (currently) always loaded in interpreted form, even if they were processed by the compiler. If performance is an issue, define the multifile predicates as unit clauses or as clauses with a single goal that just calls an auxiliary compiled predicate to perform any time-critical computation.

If a multifile predicate is declared dynamic in one file, it must also be done so in the other files from where it is loaded. Hook predicates should always be declared as multifile and dynamic, as this is the convention followed in the library modules.

Multifile declarations *must precede* any other declarations for the same predicate(s)!

### 6.2.2 Dynamic Declarations

A declaration

`:- dynamic` *`PredSpec, ..., PredSpec.`* *ISO*

where each *PredSpec* is a predicate spec, causes the specified predicates to become dynamic, which means that other predicates may inspect and modify them, adding or deleting individual clauses. Dynamic predicates are always stored in consulted form even if a compilation is in progress. This declaration is meaningful even if the file contains no clauses for a specified predicate—the effect is then to define a dynamic predicate with no clauses.

The semantics of dynamic code is described in Section 8.9 [Modify Prog], page 189.

### 6.2.3 Volatile Declarations

A declaration

`:- volatile` *`PredSpec, ..., PredSpec.`*

where each *PredSpec* is a predicate spec, causes the specified predicates to become *volatile*.

A predicate should be declared as volatile if it refers to data that cannot or should not be saved in a saved-state. In most cases a volatile predicate will be dynamic, and it will be used to keep facts about streams or memory references. When a program state is saved at runtime, the clauses of all volatile predicates will be left unsaved. The predicate definitions will be saved though, which means that the predicates will keep all properties, that is volatile and maybe dynamic or multifile, when the saved-state is restored.

### 6.2.4 Discontiguous Declarations

A declaration

`:- discontiguous` *`PredSpec, ..., PredSpec.`* *ISO*

where each *PredSpec* is a predicate spec, disables warnings about clauses not being together for the specified predicates. By default, such warnings are issued in development systems unless disabled selectively for specific predicates, or globally by setting the `discontiguous_warnings` flag to `off`.

### 6.2.5 Block Declarations

The declaration

```
:- block BlockSpec, ..., BlockSpec.
```

where each *BlockSpec* is a mode spec, specifies conditions for blocking goals of the predicate referred to by the mode spec (`f/3` say). When a goal for `f/3` is to be executed, the mode specs are interpreted as conditions for blocking the goal, and if at least one condition evaluates to `true`, the goal is blocked.

A block condition evaluates to `true` iff all arguments specified as '`-`' are uninstantiated, in which case the goal is blocked until at least one of those variables is instantiated. If several conditions evaluate to `true`, the implementation picks one of them and blocks the goal accordingly.

The recommended style is to write the block declarations in front of the source code of the predicate they refer to. Indeed, they are part of the source code of the predicate, and must precede the first clause. For example, with the definition:

```
:- block merge(-,?,-), merge(?,-,-).

merge([], Y, Y).
merge(X, [], X).
merge([H|X], [E|Y], [H|Z]) :- H @< E,  merge(X, [E|Y], Z).
merge([H|X], [E|Y], [E|Z]) :- H @>= E, merge([H|X], Y, Z).
```

calls to `merge/3` having uninstantiated arguments in the first *and* third position *or* in the second *and* third position will suspend.

The behavior of blocking goals for a given predicate on uninstantiated arguments cannot be switched off, except by abolishing or redefining the predicate.

Block declarations generalize the "wait declarations" of earlier versions of SICStus Prolog. A declaration '`:- wait f/3`' in the old syntax corresponds to '`:- block f(-,?,?)`' in the current syntax. See Section 13.9.6 [Use Of Term Exp], page 340, for a simple way to extend the system to accept the old syntax.

### 6.2.6 Meta-Predicate Declarations

A declaration

```
:- meta_predicate MetaPredSpec, ..., MetaPredSpec.
```

where each *MetaPredSpec* is a mode spec, informs the compiler that certain arguments of the declared predicates are used for passing goals. To ensure the correct semantics in the context of multiple modules, clauses or directives containing goals for the declared predicates may need to have those arguments module name expanded. See Section 5.5 [Meta Exp], page 61, for details.

### 6.2.7 Module Declarations

A declaration

```
:- module(ModuleName, ExportList[, Options]).
```

where *ExportList* is a list of predicate specs, declares that the forthcoming predicates should go into the module named *ModuleName* and that the predicates listed should be exported. See Section 5.3 [Def Modules], page 60, for details.

### 6.2.8 Public Declarations

The only effect of a declaration

```
:- public PredSpec, ..., PredSpec.
```

where each *PredSpec* is a predicate spec to give the SICStus cross-referencer (see Section 13.10 [The Cross-Referencer], page 342) a starting point for tracing reachable code. In some Prologs, this declaration is necessary for making compiled predicates visible. In SICStus Prolog, predicate visibility is handled by the module system. See Chapter 5 [Module Intro], page 59.

### 6.2.9 Mode Declarations

A declaration

```
:- mode ModeSpec, ..., ModeSpec.
```

where each *ModeSpec* is a mode spec, has no effect whatsoever, but is accepted for compatibility reasons. Such declarations may be used as a commenting device, as they express the programmer's intention of data flow in predicates.

### 6.2.10 Include Declarations

A declaration

```
:- include(Files).                                                    ISO
```

where *Files* is a file name or a list of file names, instructs the processor to literally embed the Prolog clauses and directives in *Files* into the file being loaded. This means that the effect of the `include` directive is such as if the `include` directive itself was replaced by the text in the *Files*. Including some files is thus different from loading them in several respects:

- The embedding file counts as the source file of the predicates loaded, e.g. with respect to the built-in predicate `source_file/2`; see Section 8.1.1 [Read In], page 134.
- Some clauses of a predicate can come from the embedding file, and some from included files.
- When including a file twice, all the clauses in it will be entered twice into the program (although this is not very meaningful).

SICStus Prolog uses the included file name (as opposed to the embedding file name) only in source-linked debugging and error reporting. Note that source-linked debugging information is not kept for included files compiled to '`.ql`' format; in such cases the debugger will show the `include` directive itself as the source information.

## 6.3 Initializations

A directive

```
:- initialization :Goal.                                              ISO
```

in a file includes *Goal* to the set of goals that shall be executed after that file has been loaded.

`initialization/1` is actually callable at any point during loading of a file. Initializations are saved by `save_modules/2` and `save_program/[1,2]`, and so are executed after loading or restoring such files too.

*Goal* is associated with the file loaded, and with a module, if applicable. When a file, or module, is going to be reloaded, all goals earlier installed by that file, or in that module, are removed first.

## 6.4 Considerations for File-To-File Compilation

When compiling a source file to a '`.ql`' file, remember that clauses are loaded and directives are executed at *run time*, not at compile time. Only predicate declarations are processed at compile time. For instance, it does not work to include operator declarations or clauses of `user:term_expansion/[2,4]` or `user:goal_expansion/3` or any auxiliary predicates that they might need, and rely on the new transformations to be effective for subsequent clauses of the same file or subsequent files of the same compilation.

Any directives or clauses that affect the compile-time environment must be loaded prior to compiling source files to '`.ql`' files. This also holds for meta-predicates called by the source files but defined elsewhere, for module name expansion to work correctly. If this separation into files is unnatural or inconvenient, one can easily ensure that the compile-time environment is up to date by doing:

```
| ?- ensure_loaded(Files), fcompile(Files).
```

Since module name expansion takes place at compile time, the module into which the file is to be loaded must be known when compiling to '`.ql`' files. This is no problem for module-files because the module name is picked from the module declaration. When non-module-files are compiled, the file name may be prefixed with the module name that is to be used for expansion:

```
| ?- fcompile(Module:Files).
```

If a '`.ql`' file is loaded into a different module from which it was compiled for, a warning is issued.

# 7 Debugging

This chapter describes the debugging facilities that are available in development systems. The purpose of these facilities is to provide information concerning the control flow of your program.

The main features of the debugging package are as follows:

- The *Procedure Box* model of Prolog execution, which provides a simple way of visualizing control flow, especially during backtracking. Control flow is viewed at the predicate level, rather than at the level of individual clauses.
- The ability to exhaustively trace your program or to selectively set *spypoints*. Spypoints allow you to nominate interesting predicates at which, for example, the program is to pause so that you can interact.
- The ability to set advice-points. An advice-point allows you to carry out some actions at certain points of execution, independently of the tracing activity. Advice-points can be used, e.g. for checking certain program invariants (cf. the assert facility of the C programming language), or for gathering profiling or branch coverage information. Spypoints and advice-points are collectively called breakpoints.
- The wide choice of control and information options available during debugging.

The Procedure Box model of execution is also called the Byrd Box model after its inventor, Lawrence Byrd.

Much of the information in this chapter is also in Chapter eight of [Clocksin & Mellish 81], which is recommended as an introduction.

Unless otherwise stated, the debugger prints goals using `write_term/3` with the value of the Prolog flag `debugger_print_options` (see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175).

The debugger is not available in runtime systems and the predicates defined in this chapter are undefined; see Section 9.8.1 [Runtime Systems], page 254.

## 7.1 The Procedure Box Control Flow Model

During debugging, the debugger prints out a sequence of goals in various states of instantiation in order to show the state the program has reached in its execution. However, in order to understand what is occurring it is necessary to understand when and why the debugger prints out goals. As in other programming languages, key points of interest are predicate entry and return, but in Prolog there is the additional complexity of backtracking. One of the major confusions that novice Prolog programmers have to face is the question of what actually happens when a goal fails and the system suddenly starts backtracking. The Procedure Box model of Prolog execution views program control flow in terms of movement about the program text. This model provides a basis for the debugging mechanism in devel-

opment systems, and enables the user to view the behavior of the program in a consistent way.

Let us look at an example Prolog predicate :

```
                *-------------------------------------*
   Call         |                                     |    Exit
---------> +  descendant(X,Y) :- offspring(X,Y).  + --------->
                |                                     |
                |  descendant(X,Z) :-                 |
<--------- +     offspring(X,Y), descendant(Y,Z). + <---------
   Fail         |                                     |    Redo
                *-------------------+-----------------*
                                    |
<------------------------------+
   Exception
```

The first clause states that $Y$ is a descendant of $X$ if $Y$ is an offspring of $X$, and the second clause states that $Z$ is a descendant of $X$ if $Y$ is an offspring of $X$ and if $Z$ is a descendant of $Y$. In the diagram a box has been drawn around the whole predicate and labeled arrows indicate the control flow in and out of this box. There are five such arrows, which we shall look at in turn.

*Call* This arrow represents initial invocation of the predicate. When a goal of the form `descendant(X,Y)` is required to be satisfied, control passes through the *Call* port of the descendant box with the intention of matching a component clause and then satisfying the subgoals in the body of that clause. Note that this is independent of whether such a match is possible; i.e. first the box is called, and then the attempt to match takes place. Textually we can imagine moving to the code for descendant when meeting a call to descendant in some other part of the code.

*Exit* This arrow represents a successful return from the predicate. This occurs when the initial goal has been unified with one of the component clauses and the subgoals have been satisfied. Control now passes out of the *Exit* port of the descendant box. Textually we stop following the code for descendant and go back to the place we came from.

*Redo* This arrow indicates that a subsequent goal has failed and that the system is backtracking in an attempt to find alternatives to previous solutions. Control passes through the *Redo* port of the descendant box. An attempt will now be made to resatisfy one of the component subgoals in the body of the clause that last succeeded; or, if that fails, to completely rematch the original goal with an alternative clause and then try to satisfy any subgoals in the body of this new clause. Textually we follow the code backwards up the way we came looking for new ways of succeeding, possibly dropping down on to another clause and following that if necessary.

*Fail* This arrow represents a failure of the initial goal, which might occur if no clause is matched, or if subgoals are never satisfied, or if any solution produced is always rejected by later processing. Control now passes out of the *Fail* port of the descendant box and the system continues to backtrack. Textually we move back to the code that called this predicate and keep moving backwards up the code looking for choicepoints.

*Exception* This arrow represents an exception that was raised in the initial goal, either by a call to `throw/1` or `raise_exception/1` or by an error in a built-in predicate. See Section 8.5 [Exception], page 173. Control now passes out of the *Exception* port of the descendant box and the system continues to pass the exception to outer levels. Textually we move back to the code that called this predicate and keep moving backwards up the code looking for a call to `catch/3` or `on_exception/3`.

In terms of this model, the information we get about the procedure box is only the control flow through these five ports. This means that at this level we are not concerned with which clause matches, and how any subgoals are satisfied, but rather we only wish to know the initial goal and the final outcome. However, it can be seen that whenever we are trying to satisfy subgoals, what we are actually doing is passing through the ports of *their* respective boxes. If we were to follow this, then we would have complete information about the control flow inside the procedure box.

Note that the box we have drawn round the predicate should really be seen as an *invocation box*. That is, there will be a different box for each different invocation of the predicate. Obviously, with something like a recursive predicate, there will be many different *Calls* and *Exits* in the control flow, but these will be for different invocations. Since this might get confusing each invocation box is given a unique integer identifier.

In addition to the five basic ports discussed above, there are two more ports for invocations involving a blocked goal:

*Block* This port is passed through when a goal is blocked.

*Unblock* This port is passed through when a previously blocked goal is unblocked.

## 7.2 Basic Debugging Predicates

Development systems provide a range of built-in predicates for control of the debugging facilities. The most basic predicates are as follows:

`debug` *development*

Switches the debugger on, and ensures that the next time control reaches a spypoint, it will be activated. In basic usage this means that a message will be produced and you will be prompted for a command. In order for the full range of control flow information to be available it is necessary to have the debugger on from the start. When it is off the system does not remember invocations

that are being executed. (This is because it is expensive and not required for normal running of programs.) You can switch *Debug Mode* on in the middle of execution, either from within your program or after a `^C` (see `trace/0` below), but information prior to this will be unavailable.

`zip` *development*

Same as `debug/0`, except no debugging information is being collected, and so is almost as fast as running with the debugger switched off.

`trace` *development*

Switches the debugger on, and ensures that the next time control enters an invocation box, a message will be produced and you will be prompted for a command. The effect of `trace/0` can also be achieved by typing `t` after a `^C` interruption of a program.

At this point you have a number of options. See Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81. In particular, you can just type ⟨RET⟩ to creep (or single-step) into your program. If you continue to creep through your program you will see every entry and exit to/from every invocation box, including compiled code, except for code belonging to hidden modules (see Section 5.3 [Def Modules], page 60). You will notice that the debugger stops at all ports. However, if this is not what you want, the following built-in predicate gives full control over the ports at which you are prompted:

`leash(+Mode)` *development*

Leashing Mode is set to *Mode*. Leashing Mode determines the ports of invocation boxes at which you are to be prompted when you creep through your program. At unleashed ports a tracing message is still output, but program execution does not stop to allow user interaction. Note that `leash/1` does not apply to spypoints, the leashing mode of these can be set using the advanced debugger features; see Section 7.6 [Advanced Debugging], page 86. Block and Unblock ports cannot be leashed. *Mode* can be a subset of the following, specified as a list of the following:

`call` Prompt on Call.

`exit` Prompt on Exit.

`redo` Prompt on Redo.

`fail` Prompt on Fail.

`exception`
Prompt on Exception.

The following shorthands are also allowed:

`leash(full).`
Same as `leash([call,exit,redo,fail,exception]).`.

`leash(half).`
Same as `leash([call,redo]).`.

`leash(none).`
Same as `leash([]).`.

The initial value of *Leashing Mode* is `[call,exit,redo,fail,exception]` (full leashing).

`nodebug` *development*
`notrace` *development*
`nozip` *development*

Switches the debugger off. If there are any spypoints set then they will be kept but will never be activated.

`debugging` *development*

Prints information about the current debugging state. This will show:

1. Whether undefined predicates are being trapped.
2. What breakpoints have been set (see below).
3. What mode of leashing is in force (see above).

## 7.3 Plain Spypoints

For programs of any size, it is clearly impractical to creep through the entire program. Spypoints make it possible to stop the program whenever it gets to a particular predicate of interest. Once there, one can set further spypoints in order to catch the control flow a bit further on, or one can start creeping.

In this section we discuss the simplest form of spypoints, the *plain spypoints*. The more advanced forms, the *conditional* and *generic spypoints* will be discussed later; see Section 7.6 [Advanced Debugging], page 86.

Setting a plain spypoint on a predicate indicates that you wish to see all control flow through the various ports of its invocation boxes, except during skips. When control passes through any port of an invocation box with a spypoint set on it, a message is output and the user is asked to interact. Note that the current mode of leashing does not affect plain spypoints: user interaction is requested on *every* port.

Spypoints are set and removed by the following built-in predicates. The first two are also standard operators:

`spy` *:Spec* *development*

Sets plain spypoints on all the predicates given by the generalized predicate spec *Spec*.

Examples:

```
| ?- spy [user:p, m:q/[2,3]].
| ?- spy m:[p/1, q/1].
```

If you set some spypoints when the debugger is switched off then it will be automatically switched on, entering zip mode.

`nospy` *:Spec* *development*

Similar to `spy` *Spec* except that all the predicates given by *Spec* will have all previously set spypoints removed from them (including conditional spypoints; see Section 7.6.1 [Creating Breakpoints], page 87).

`nospyall` *development*

Removes all the spypoints that have been set, including the conditional and generic ones.

The commands available when you arrive at a spypoint are described later. See Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81.

## 7.4 Format of Debugging Messages

We shall now look at the exact format of the message output by the system at a port. All trace messages are output to the standard error stream, using the `print_message/2` predicate; see Section 8.13 [Messages and Queries], page 195. This allows you to trace programs while they are performing file I/O. The basic format is as follows:

```
N S    23     6 Call: T foo(hello,there,_123) ?
```

*N* is only used at Exit ports and indicates whether the invocation could backtrack and find alternative solutions. Unintended nondeterminacy is a source of inefficiency, and this annotation can help spot such efficiency bugs. It is printed as '`?`', indicating that `foo/3` could backtrack and find alternative solutions, or ' ' otherwise.

*S* is a spypoint indicator. If there is a plain spypoint on `foo/3`, it is printed as '`+`'. In case of conditional and generic spypoints it takes the form '`*`' and '`#`', respectively. Finally, it is printed as ' ', if there is no spypoint on the predicate being traced.

The first number is the unique invocation identifier. It is increasing regardless of whether or not debugging messages are output for the invocations (provided that the debugger is switched on). This number can be used to cross correlate the trace messages for the various ports, since it is unique for every invocation. It will also give an indication of the number of procedure calls made since the start of the execution. The invocation counter starts again for every fresh execution of a command, and it is also reset when retries (see later) are performed.

The number following this is the *current depth*; i.e. the number of direct ancestors this goal has, for which a procedure box has been built by the debugger.

The next word specifies the particular port (Call, Exit, Redo, Fail, or Exception).

*T* is a subterm trace. This is used in conjunction with the '`^`' command (set subterm), described below. If a subterm has been selected, *T* is printed as the sequence of commands used to select the subterm. Normally, however, *T* is printed as ' ', indicating that no subterm has been selected.

The goal is then printed so that you can inspect its current instantiation state.

The final '?' is the prompt indicating that you should type in one of the commands allowed (see Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81). If this particular port is unleashed then you will not get this prompt since you have specified that you do not wish to interact at this point.

At Exception ports, the trace message is preceded by a message about the pending exception, formatted as if it would arrive uncaught at the top level.

Note that calls that are compiled in-line and built-in predicates at depth 1 (e.g. those called directly from the top-level) are not traced.

Block and Unblock ports are exceptions to the above debugger message format. A message

```
S -  -  Block: p(_133)
```

indicates that the debugger has encountered a blocked goal, i.e. one which is temporarily suspended due to insufficiently instantiated arguments (see Section 4.3 [Procedural], page 50). By default, no interaction takes place at this point, and the debugger simply proceeds to the next goal in the execution stream. The suspended goal will be eligible for execution once the blocking condition ceases to exist, at which time a message

```
S -  -  Unblock: p(_133)
```

is printed. Although Block and Unblock ports are unleashed by default in trace mode, you can make the debugger interact at these ports by using conditional spypoints.

## 7.5 Commands Available during Debugging

This section describes the particular commands that are available when the system prompts you after printing out a debugging message. All the commands are one or two letter mnemonics, some of which can be optionally followed by an argument. They are read from the standard input stream with any blanks being completely ignored up to the end of the line (⟨RET⟩).

The only command that you really have to remember is 'h' (followed by ⟨RET⟩). This provides help in the form of the following list of available commands.

```
<cr>   creep            c      creep
 l     leap             z      zip
 s     skip             s <i>  skip i
 o     out              o <n>  out n
 q     q-skip           q <i>  q-skip i
 r     retry            r <i>  retry i
 f     fail             f <i>  fail i
 j<p>  jump to port     j<p><i>jump to port i
 d     display          w      write
 p     print            p <i>  print partial
 g     ancestors        g <n>  ancestors n
 t     backtrace        t <n>  backtrace n
 &     blocked goals    & <n>  nth blocked goal
 n     nodebug          =      debugging
 +     spy this         *      spy conditionally
 -     nospy this       \ <i>  remove brkpoint
 D <i> disable brkpoint E <i>  enable brkpoint
 a     abort            b      break
 @     command          u      unify
 e     raise exception  .      find this
 <     reset printdepth < <n>  set printdepth
 ^     reset subterm    ^ <n>  set subterm
 ?     help             h      help
```

*c*

⟨RET⟩ *creep* causes the debugger to single-step to the very next port and print a message. Then if the port is leashed (see Section 7.2 [Basic Debug], page 77), the user is prompted for further interaction. Otherwise, it continues creeping. If leashing is off, creep is the same as *leap* (see below) except that a complete trace is printed on the standard error stream.

*l* *leap* causes the debugger to resume running your program, only stopping when a spypoint is reached (or when the program terminates). Leaping can thus be used to follow the execution at a higher level than exhaustive tracing. All you need to do is to set spypoints on an evenly spread set of pertinent predicates, and then follow the control flow through these by leaping from one to the other. Debugging information is collected while leaping, so when a spypoint is reached, it is possible to inspect the ancestor goals, or creep into them upon entry to Redo ports.

*z* *zip* is like *leap*, except no debugging information is being collected while zipping, resulting in significant savings in memory and execution time.

*s* *skip* is only valid for Call and Redo ports. It skips over the entire execution of the predicate. That is, you will not see anything until control comes back to this predicate (at either the Exit port or the Fail port). Skip is particularly useful while creeping since it guarantees that control will be returned after the (possibly complex) execution within the box. If you skip then no message at all will appear until control returns. This includes calls to predicates with spy-

points set; they will be masked out during the skip. No debugging information is being collected while skipping.

If you supply an integer argument, then this should denote an invocation number of an ancestral goal. The system tries to get you to the Exit or Fail port of the invocation box you have specified.

`o` *out* is a shorthand for skipping to the Exit or Fail port of the immediate ancestor goal. If you supply an integer argument *n*, it denotes skipping to the Exit or Fail port of the *n*th ancestor goal.

`q` *quasi-skip* is like a combination of *zip* and *skip*: execution stops when either control comes back to this predicate, or a spypoint is reached. No debugging information is being collected while quasi-skipping.

An integer argument can be supplied as for *skip*.

`r` *retry* can be used at any port (although at the Call port it has no effect). It transfers control back to the Call port of the box. This allows you to restart an invocation when, for example, you find yourself leaving with some weird result. The state of execution is exactly the same as when you originally called, (unless you use side-effects in your program; i.e. asserts etc. will not be undone). When a retry is performed the invocation counter is reset so that counting will continue from the current invocation number regardless of what happened before the retry. This is in accord with the fact that you have, in executional terms, returned to the state before anything else was called.

If you supply an integer argument, then this should denote an invocation number of an ancestral goal. The system tries to get you to the Call port of the box you have specified. It does this by continuously failing until it reaches the right place. Unfortunately this process cannot be guaranteed: it may be the case that the invocation you are looking for has been cut out of the search space by cuts (`!`) in your program. In this case the system fails to the latest surviving Call port before the correct one.

`f` *fail* can be used at any of the four ports (although at the Fail port it has no effect). It transfers control to the Fail port of the box, forcing the invocation to fail prematurely.

If you supply an integer after the command, then this is taken as specifying an invocation number and the system tries to get you to the Fail port of the invocation box you have specified. It does this by continuously failing until it reaches the right place. Unfortunately this process cannot be guaranteed: it may be the case that the invocation you are looking for has been cut out of the search space by cuts (`!`) in your program. In this case the system fails to the latest surviving Fail port before the correct one.

`j<p>` *jump to port* transfers control back to the prescribed port `<p>`. Here, `<p>` is one of: '`c`', '`e`', '`r`', '`f`', standing for Call, Exit, Redo and Fail ports. Takes an optional integer argument, an invocation number.

Jumping to a Call port is the same as retrying it, i.e. '`jc`' is the same as the '`r`' debugger command; and similarly '`jf`' is the same as '`f`'.

The '`je`' *jump to Exit port* command transfers control back to the Exit port of the box. It can be used at a Redo or an Exit port (although at the latter it has no effect). This allows you to restart a computation following an Exit port, which you first leapt over, but because of its unexpected failure you arrived at the Redo port. When you supply an integer argument, then this should denote an *exact* invocation number of an exited invocation present in the backtrace, and then the system will get you to the specified Exit port. The debugger requires here an exact invocation number so that it does not jump too far back in the execution (if an Exit port is not present in the backtrace, it may be be a better choice to jump to the preceding Call port, rather than to continue looking for another Exit port).

The '`jr`' *jump to Redo port* command transfers control back to the Redo port of the box. It can be used at an Exit or a Redo port (although at the latter it has no effect). This allows you to force the goal in question to try to deliver another solution. When you supply an integer argument, then this should denote an *exact* invocation number of an exited invocation present in the backtrace, and then the system will get you to the specified Redo port.

*d* *display goal* displays the current goal using `display/1`. See Write (below).

*p* *print goal* displays the current goal using `print/1`. An argument will override the default printdepth, treating 0 as infinity.

*w* *write goal* displays the current goal using `writeq/1`.

*g* *print ancestor goals* provides you with a list of ancestors to the current goal, i.e. all goals that are hierarchically above the current goal in the calling sequence. You can always be sure of jumping to the Call or Fail port of any goal in the ancestor list (by using retry etc). If you supply an integer *n*, then only that number of ancestors will be printed. That is to say, the last *n* ancestors will be printed counting back from the current goal. Each entry is displayed just as they would be in a trace message.

*t* *print backtrace* is the same as the above, but also shows any goals that have exited nondeterminately and their ancestors. This information shows where there are outstanding choices that the program could backtrack to. If you supply an integer *n*, then only that number of goals will be printed.

Ancestors to the current goal are annotated with the '`Call:`' port, as they have not yet exited, whereas goals that have exited are annotated with the '`Exit:`' port. You can always be sure of jumping to the Exit or Redo port of any goal shown to be exited in the backtrace listing.

The backtrace is a tree rather than a stack: to find the parent of a given goal with depth indicator *d*, look for the closest goal above it with depth indicator *d-1*.

*&* *print blocked goals* prints a list of the goals that are currently blocked in the current debugging session together with the variable that each such goal is blocked on (see Section 4.3 [Procedural], page 50). The goals are enumerated from 1 and up. If you supply an integer *n*, then only that goal will be printed. Each entry is preceded by the goal number followed by the variable name.

`n` *nodebug* switches the debugger off. Note that this is the correct way to switch debugging off at a trace point. You cannot use the `@` or `b` commands because they always return to the debugger.

`=` *debugging* outputs information concerning the status of the debugging package. See Section 8.15 [Debug Pred], page 209, the built-in predicate `debugging/0`.

`+` *spy this* sets a plain spypoint on the current goal.

`*` *spy this conditionally* sets a conditional spypoint on the current goal. Prompts for the *Conditions*, and calls the

```
spy(Func, Conditions)
```

goal, where *Func* is the predicate spec of the current invocation. For `spy/2`, see Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116.

`-` *nospy this* removes all spypoints applicable to the current goal. Equivalent to `nospy Func`, where *Func* is the predicate spec of the current invocation.

`\` *remove this* removes the spypoint that caused the debugger to interact at the current port. With an argument *n*, it removes the breakpoint with identifier *n*. Equivalent to `remove_breakpoints(BID)`, where *BID* is the current breakpoint identifier, or the supplied argument (see Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116).

`D` *disable this* disables the spypoint that caused the debugger to interact at the current port. With an argument *n*, it disables the breakpoint with identifier *n*. Equivalent to `disable_breakpoints(BID)`, where *BID* is the current breakpoint identifier, or the supplied argument (see Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116).

`E` *enable this* enables all specific spypoints for the predicate at the current port. With an argument *n*, it enables the breakpoint with identifier *n*. Equivalent to `enable_breakpoints(BID)`, where *BID* is the breakpoint identifiers for the current predicate, or the supplied argument (see Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116).

`.` *find this* outputs information about where the predicate being called is defined.

`a` *abort* causes an abort of the current execution. All the execution states built so far are destroyed and you are put right back at the top-level. (This is the same as the built-in predicate `abort/0`.)

`b` *break* calls the built-in predicate `break/0`, thus putting you at a recursive top-level with the execution so far sitting underneath you. When you end the break (`^D`) you will be reprompted at the port at which you broke. The new execution is completely separate from the suspended one; the invocation numbers will start again from 1 during the break. The debugger is temporarily switched off as you call the break and will be re-switched on when you finish the break and go back to the old execution. However, any changes to the leashing or to spypoints will remain in effect.

`@` *command* gives you the ability to call arbitrary Prolog goals. It is effectively a one-off *break* (see above). The initial message '`| :- `' will be output on the standard error stream, and a command is then read from the standard input stream and executed as if you were at top-level. If the term read is of form `Pattern ^ Body`, then *Pattern* is unified with the current goal and *Body* is executed.

`u` *unify* is available at the Call port and gives you the option of providing a solution to the goal from the standard input stream rather than executing the goal. This is convenient e.g. for providing a "stub" for a predicate that has not yet been written. A prompt will be output on the standard error stream, and the solution is then read from the standard input stream and unified with the goal. If the term read in is of the form `Head :- Body`, then *Head* will be unified with the current goal, and *Body* will be executed in its place.

`e` *raise exception* is available at all ports. A prompt will be output on the standard error stream, and an exception term is then read from the standard input stream and raised in the program being debugged.

`<` This command, without arguments, resets the printdepth to 10. With an argument of *n*, the printdepth is set to *n*, treating 0 as infinity. This command works by changing the value of the `debugger_print_options` Prolog flag (see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175).

`^` While at a particular port, a current *subterm* of the current goal is maintained. It is the current subterm that is displayed, printed, or written when prompting for a debugger command. Used in combination with the printdepth, this provides a means for navigating in the current goal for focusing on the part of interest. The current subterm is set to the current goal when arriving at a new port. This command, without arguments, resets the current subterm to the current goal. With an argument of *n* (> 0), the current subterm is replaced by its *n*:th subterm. With an argument of *0*, the current subterm is replaced by its parent term. With a list of arguments, the arguments are applied from left to right.

`?`
`h` *help* displays the table of commands given above.

The user can define new debugger commands or modify the behavior of the above ones using the `debugger_command_hook` hook predicate, see Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116.

## 7.6 Advanced Debugging — an Introduction

This section gives an overview of the advanced debugger features. These center around the notion of breakpoint. Breakpoints can be classified as either spypoints (a generalization of the plain spypoint introduced earlier) or advice-points (e.g. for checking program invariants independently from tracing). The first five subsections will deal with spypoints only. Nev-

ertheless we will use the term breakpoint, whenever a statement is made that applies to both spypoints and advice-points.

Section 7.8 [Breakpoint Processing], page 118 describes the breakpoint processing mechanism in full detail. Reference style details of built-in predicates dealing with breakpoints are given in Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116 and in Section 7.9 [Breakpoint Conditions], page 120.

### 7.6.1 Creating Breakpoints

Breakpoints can be created using the `add_breakpoint/2` built-in predicate. Its first argument should contain the description of the breakpoint, the so called *breakpoint spec*. It will return the *breakpoint identifier* (BID) of the created breakpoint in its second argument. For example:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint(pred(foo/2), BID).
% Plain spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
BID = 1
```

Here, we have a simple breakpoint spec, prescribing that the debugger should stop at all ports of all invocations of the predicate `foo/2`. Thus the above goal actually creates a *plain spypoint*, exactly as `?- spy foo/2.` does.

A slightly more complicated example follows:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(foo/2),line('/myhome/bar.pl',123)], _).
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
```

This breakpoint will be activated only for those calls of `foo/2` that occur in line 123 of the Prolog program file `'/myhome/bar.pl'`. Because of the additional condition, this is called a *conditional spypoint*.

The breakpoint identifier (BID) returned by `add_breakpoint/2` is an integer, assigned in increasing order, i.e. more recent breakpoints receive higher identifier values. When looking for applicable breakpoints, the debugger tries the breakpoints in descending order of BIDs, i.e. the most recent applicable breakpoint is used. Breakpoint identifiers can be used for referring to breakpoints to be deleted, disabled or enabled (see later).

Generally, the breakpoint spec is a pair *`Tests-Actions`*. Here, the *Tests* part describes the conditions under which the breakpoint should be activated, while the *Actions* part contains instructions on what should be done at activation. The test part is built from tests, while the action part from actions and tests. Test, actions and composite constructs built from these are generally referred to as *breakpoint conditions*, or simply conditions.

The action part can be omitted, and then the breakpoint spec consists of tests only. For spypoints, the default action part is `[show(print),command(ask)]`. This instructs the debugger to print the goal in question and then ask the user what to do next, exactly as described in Section 7.4 [Debug Format], page 80. To illustrate other possibilities let us

explain the effect of the `[show(display),command(proceed)]` action part: this will use `display/1` for presenting the goal (just as the '`d`' debugger command does, see Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81), and will then proceed with execution without stopping (i.e. the spypoint is unleashed).

### 7.6.2 Processing Breakpoints

We first give a somewhat simplified sketch of how the debugger treats the breakpoints. This description will be refined in the sequel.

The debugger allows us to prescribe some activities to be performed at certain points of execution, namely at the ports of procedure boxes. In principle, the debugger is entered at each port of each procedure invocation. It then considers the current breakpoints one by one, most recent first. The first breakpoint for which the evaluation of the test part succeeds is then activated, and the execution continues according to its action part. The activated breakpoint "hides" the remaining (older) ones, i.e. those are not tried here. If none of the current breakpoints is activated, the debugger behaves according to the actual debugging mode (trace, debug or zip).

Both the test and the action part can be simple or composite. Evaluating a simple test amounts to checking whether it holds in the current state of execution, e.g. `pred(foo/2)` holds if the debugger is at a port of predicate `foo/2`.

Composite conditions can be built from simple ones by forming lists, or using the '`,`', '`;`', '`->`', and '`\+`' operators, with the usual meaning of conjunction, disjunction, if-then-else and negation. A list of conditions is equivalent to a conjunction of the same conditions. For example, the condition `[pred(foo/2), \+port(fail)]` will hold for all ports of `foo/2`, except for the Fail port.

### 7.6.3 Breakpoint Tests

This section gives a tour of the most important simple breakpoint tests. In all examples here the action part will be empty. Note that the examples are independent, so if you want to try out these you should get rid of the old breakpoints (e.g. using `?- nospyall.`) before you enter a new one.

The `goal(...)` test is a generalization of the `pred(...)` test, as it allows us to check the arguments of the invocation. For example:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint(goal(foo(1,_)), _).
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
```

The `goal(G)` breakpoint test specifies that the breakpoint should be applied only if the current goal is an instance of `G`, i.e. `G` and the current goal can be unified without substituting any variables in the latter. This unification is then carried out. The `goal(G)`

condition is thus equivalent to the `subsumes(G,CurrentGoal)` test (`subsumes/2` is defined in `library(terms)`, see Chapter 21 [Term Utilities], page 367).

In the above example the debugger will stop if `foo/2` is called with `1` as its first argument, but not if the first argument is, say, `2`, nor if it is a variable.

You can use non-anonymous variables in the `goal` test, and then put further constraints on these variables using the `true` condition:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([goal(foo(X,_)),true(X>1)], _).
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
```

Here the first test, `goal`, specifies that we are only interested in invocations of `foo/2`, and names the first argument of the goal as `X`. The second, the `true/1` test, specifies a further condition stated as a Prolog goal: `X` is greater than `1` (we assume here that the argument is numeric). Thus this breakpoint will be applicable if and only if the first argument of `foo/2` is *greater* than `1`. Generally, an arbitrary Prolog goal can be placed inside the `true` test: the test will succeed iff the goal completes successfully.

Any variable instantiations in the test part will be undone before executing the action part, as the evaluation of the test part is enclosed in a double negation (`\+ \+ (...)`). This ensures that the test part has no effect on the variables of the current goal.

Both the `pred` and the `goal` tests may include a module name. In fact, the first argument of `add_breakpoint` is module name expanded, and the (explicit or implicit) module name of this argument is then inherited by default by the `pred`, `goal`, and `true` tests. Notice the module qualification inserted in front of the breakpoint spec of the last example, as shown in the output of the `debugging/0` built-in predicate:

```
| ?- debugging.
(...)
Breakpoints:
      1 *  user:foo/2 if user:[goal(foo(A,B)),true(A>1)]
```

As no explicit module qualifications were given in the tests, this breakpoint spec is transformed to the following form:

```
[goal(user:foo(A,B)),true(user:(A>1))]
```

For exported predicates, a `pred` or `goal` test will be found applicable for all invocations of the predicate, irrespective of the module the call occurs in. When you add the breakpoint you can use the defining or an importing module name, but this information is not remembered: the module name is "normalized", i.e. it is changed to the defining module. The example below shows this: although the spypoint is placed on `user:append`, the message and the breakpoint list both mention `lists:append`.

```
| ?- use_module(library(lists)).
(...)
% module lists imported into user
(...)
| ?- spy user:append.
% Plain spypoint for lists:append/3 added, BID=1
| ?- debugging.
(...)
Breakpoints:
      1 +  lists:append/3
```

Note that the debugger does not stop inside a library predicate when doing an exhaustive trace. This is because the library modules are declared hidden (cf. Chapter 5 [Module Intro], page 59), and no trace is produced for calls inside hidden modules that invoke predicates defined in hidden modules. However, a spypoint is always shown in the trace, even if it occurs in a hidden module:

```
 +      1      1 Call: append([1,2],[3,4],_531) ? ⟨RET⟩
 +      2      2 Call: lists:append([2],[3,4],_1182) ? ⟨RET⟩
 +      3      3 Call: lists:append([],[3,4],_1670) ? ⟨RET⟩
 +      3      3 Exit: lists:append([],[3,4],[3,4]) ? ⟨RET⟩
(...)
```

You can narrow a breakpoint to calls from within a particular module by using the `module` test, e.g.

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(append/3),module(user)], _).
% The debugger will first zip -- showing spypoints (zip)
% Conditional spypoint for lists:append/3 added, BID=1
% zip
| ?- append([1,2], [3,4], L).
 *      1      1 Call: append([1,2],[3,4],_531) ? ⟨RET⟩
 *      1      1 Exit: append([1,2],[3,4],[1,2,3,4]) ? ⟨RET⟩
L = [1,2,3,4]
```

With this spypoint, the debugger will only stop at the invocations of `append/3` from the `user` module.

Note that calling module information is not kept by the compiler for the built-in predicates, therefore the `module` test will always unify its argument with `prolog` in case of compiled calls to built-in predicates.

There are two further interesting breakpoint tests related to invocations: `inv(Inv)` and `depth(Depth)`. These unify they arguments with the invocation number and the depth, respectively (the two numbers shown at the beginning of each trace message). Such tests are most often used in more complex breakpoints, but there may be some simple cases when they are useful.

Assume you put a plain spypoint on `foo/2`, and start leaping through your program. After some time, you notice some inconsistency at an Exit port, but you cannot go back to the Call port for retrying this invocation, because of side-effects. So you would like to restart the whole top-level goal and get back to the Call port of the suspicious goal as fast as possible. Here is what you can do:

```
| ?- spy foo/2.
% Plain spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
| ?- debug, foo(23, X).
% The debugger will first leap -- showing spypoints (debug)
 +      1      1 Call: foo(23,_414) ? l
(...)
 +     81     17 Call: foo(7,_9151) ? l
 +     86     18 Call: foo(6,_9651) ? l
 +     86     18 Exit: foo(6,8) ? -
% Plain spypoint for user:foo/2, BID=1, removed (last)
       86     18 Exit: foo(6,8) ? *
Placing spypoint on user:foo/2 with conditions: inv(86).
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
 *     86     18 Exit: foo(6,8) ? a
% Execution aborted
% source_info
| ?- debug, foo(23, X).
% The debugger will first leap -- showing spypoints (debug)
 *     86     18 Call: foo(6,_2480) ? ⟨RET⟩
```

When you reach the Exit port of the suspicious invocation (number 86), you remove the plain spypoint (via the `-` debugger command), and add a conditional one using the '`*`' debugger command. This automatically includes `pred(foo/2)` among the conditions and displays the prompt '`Placing spypoint ... with conditions:`', requesting further ones. You enter here the `inv` test with the invocation number in question, resulting in a breakpoint with the `[pred(foo/2),inv(86)]` conditions. If you restart the original top-level goal in debug mode, the debugger immediately positions you at the invocation with the specified number.

Note that when the debugger executes a *skip* or a *zip* command, no procedure boxes are built. Consequently, the invocation and depth counters are not incremented. If *skip* and/or *zip* commands were used during the first execution, then the suspicious invocation gets an invocation number higher than 86 in the second run. Therefore it is better to supply the `inv(I),true(I>=86)` condition to the '`*`' debugger command, which will bring you to the first call of `foo/2` at, or after invocation number 86 (which still might not be the suspicious invocation).

In the examples, the `inv` test was used both with a numeric and a variable argument (`inv(86)` and `inv(I)`). This is possible because the debugger *unifies* the given feature with the argument of the test. This holds for most tests, we will mention the exceptions.

Another similar example: if you suspect that a given predicate goes into an infinite recursion, and would like the execution to stop when entering this predicate somewhere inside the recursion, then you can do the following:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(foo/2),depth(_D),true(_D>=100)], _).
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
% zip,source_info
| ?- debug, foo(200, X).
% The debugger will first leap -- showing spypoints (debug)
 *    496    100 Call: foo(101,_12156) ?
```

The above breakpoint spec will cause the debugger to stop at the first invocation of `foo/2` at depth 100 or greater. Note again that debug mode has to be entered for this to work (in zip mode no debugging information is kept, so the depth does not change).

We now continue with tests that restrict the breakpoint to an invocation at a specific place in the code.

Assume file `/home/bob/myprog.pl` contains the following Prolog program:

```
                                                  % /home/bob/myprog.pl
p(X, U) :-                                % line 1
        q(X, Y),                          % line 2
        q(Y, Z),                          % line 3
        (   \+ q(Z, _)                    % line 4
        ->  q(Z+1, U)                     % line 5
        ;   q(Z+2, U)                     % line 6
        ).                                % ...

q(X, Y) :-
        X < 10, !, Y is X+1.              % line 10
q(X, Y) :-
        Y is X+2.                         % line 12
```

If you are interested only in the last invocation of `q/2` within `p/2`, you can use the following breakpoint:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(q/2),line('/home/bob/myprog.pl',6)], _).
% Conditional spypoint for user:q/2 added, BID=1
```

Generally, the test `line(File,Line)` holds if the current invocation was in line number `Line` of a file whose absolute name is `File`. This test (as well as the `line/1` and `file/1` tests, see below) require the presence of source information: the file in question had to be consulted or compiled with the `source_info` Prolog flag switched on (i.e. set to `on` or `emacs`).

If e.g. `q/2` is called only from a single file, then the file name need not be mentioned and a `line/1` test suffices: `line(6)`. On the other hand, if we are interested in all invocations of a predicate within a file, then we can omit the line number and use the `file(File)` test.

For Prolog programs that are interpreted (consulted or asserted), further positioning information can be obtained, even in the absence of source information. The test `parent_pred(Pred)` unifies the module name expanded `Pred` with a predicate spec (of form *`Module:PredName/Arity`*) identifying the predicate in which the current invocation resides. The test `parent_pred(Pred,N)` will additionally unify `N` with the serial number of the clause containing the current goal.

For example, assuming the above `myprog.pl` file is consulted, the breakpoint below will cause the execution to stop when the call of `is/2` in the second clause of `q/2` is reached:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(is/2),parent_pred(q/2,2)], _).
% Conditional spypoint for prolog:is/2 added, BID=1
* Predicate prolog:is/2 compiled inline, breakable only in inter-
preted code
% zip,source_info
| ?- p(20, X).
in scope of a goal at line 12 in /home/bob/myprog.pl
 *      1      1 Call: _579 is 20+2 ?
```

Notice the warning issued by `add_breakpoint/2`: there are some built-in predicates (e.g. arithmetic, `functor/3`, `arg/3`, etc.), for which the compiler generates specific inline translation, rather than the generic predicate invocation code. Therefore compiled calls to such predicates are not visible to the debugger.

More exact positioning information can be obtained for interpreted programs by using the `parent_clause(Cl,Sel,I)` test. This unifies `Cl` with the clause containing the current invocation, while `Sel` and `I` both identify the current invocation within the body of this clause. `Sel` is unified with a *subterm selector*, while `I` with the serial number of the call. This test has variants `parent_clause/[1,2]`, in which only the `Cl` argument, or the `Cl,Sel` arguments are present.

As an example, two further alternatives of putting a breakpoint on the last call of `q/2` within `myprog.pl` (line 6) are shown below, together with a listing showing the selectors and call serial numbers for the body of `p/2`:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(q/2),parent_clause((p(_,_):-_),[2,2,2])],_).

| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(q/2),parent_clause((p(_,_):-_),_,5)],_).

p(X, U) :-                  % line  % call no.  % subterm selector
        q(X, Y),            %  2        1       [1]
        q(Y, Z),            %  3        2       [2,1]
        (   \+ q(Z, _)      %  4        3       [2,2,1,1,1]
        ->  q(Z+1, U)       %  5        4       [2,2,1,2]
        ;   q(Z+2, U)       %  6        5       [2,2,2]
        ).                  %  7
```

Here, the first argument of the `parent_clause` test ensures that the current invocation is in (the only clause of) `p/2`. If `p/2` had more clauses, we would have to use an additional

test, say `parent_pred(user:p/2,1)`, and then the first argument of `parent_clause` could be an anonymous variable.

In the examples so far the breakpoint tests referred only to the goal in question. Therefore, the breakpoint was found applicable at all ports of the procedure box of the predicate. We can distinguish between ports using the `port` breakpoint test:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(foo/2),port(call)], _).
```

With this breakpoint, the debugger will stop at the Call port of `foo/2`, but not at other ports. Note that the `port(call)` test can be simplified to `call` — `add_breakpoint/2` will recognize this as a port name, and treat it as if it were enclosed in a `port/1` functor.

Here are two equivalent formulations for a breakpoint that will cause the debugger to stop only at the Call and Exit ports of `foo/2`:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(foo/2),(call;exit)], _).

| ?-
add_breakpoint([pred(foo/2),port(P),true((P=call;P=exit(_)))], _).
```

In both cases we have to use disjunction. In the first example we have a disjunctive breakpoint condition of the two simple tests `port(call)` and `port(exit)` (with the `port` functor omitted). In the second case the disjunction is inside the Prolog test within the `true` test.

Notice that the two examples refer to the Exit port differently. When you use `port(P)`, where `P` is a variable, then, at an exit port, `P` will be unified with either `exit(nondet)` or `exit(det)`, depending on the determinacy of the exited predicate. However, for convenience, the test `port(exit)` will also succeed at Exit ports. So in the first example above, `exit` can be replaced by `exit(_)`, but the `exit(_)` in the second can not be replaced by `exit`.

Finally, there is a subtle point to note with respect to activating the debugger at non Call ports. Let us look at the following breakpoint:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(foo/2),fail], _).
```

The intention here is to have the debugger stop at only the Fail port of `foo/2`. This is very useful if `foo/2` is not supposed to fail, but we suspect that it does. The above breakpoint will behave as expected when the debugger is leaping, but not while zipping. This is because for the debugger to be able to stop at a non Call port, a procedure box has to be built at the Call port of the given invocation. However, no debugging information is collected in zip mode by default, i.e. procedure boxes are not built. Later we will show how to achieve the required effect, even in zip mode.

### 7.6.4 Specific and Generic Breakpoints

In all the examples so far a breakpoint was put on a specific predicate, described by a `goal` or `pred` test. Such breakpoints are called *specific*, as opposed to *generic* ones.

Generic breakpoints are the ones that do not specify a concrete predicate. This can happen when the breakpoint spec does not contain `goal` or `pred` tests at all, or their argument is not sufficiently instantiated. Here are some examples of generic breakpoints:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint(line('/home/bob/myprog.pl',6), _).
% Generic spypoint added, BID=1
| ?- add_breakpoint(pred(foo/_), _).
% Generic spypoint added, BID=2
| ?- add_breakpoint([goal(G),true((arg(1,G,X),X==bar))], _).
% Generic spypoint added, BID=3
```

The first breakpoint will stop at all calls in line 6 of the given file, the second at all calls of a predicate `foo`, irrespective of the number of arguments, while the third one will stop at any predicate with `bar` as its first argument. However, there is an additional implicit condition: the module name expansion inserts the type-in module as the default module name in the `goal` and `pred` conditions. Consequently, the second and third breakpoint applies only to predicates in the type-in module (`user` by default). If you would like the breakpoint to cover all modules you have to include an anonymous module prefix in the argument of the `goal` or `pred` test:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint(pred(_:foo/_), _).
% Generic spypoint added, BID=1
% zip
| ?- add_breakpoint([goal(_:G),true((arg(1,G,X),X==bar))], _).
% Generic spypoint added, BID=2
```

Generic breakpoints are very powerful, but there is a price to pay: the zip mode is slowed down considerably.

As said earlier, in principle the debugger is entered at each port of each procedure invocation. As an optimization, the debugger can request the underlying Prolog engine to run at full speed and invoke the debugger only when one of the specified predicates is called. This optimization is used in zip mode, provided there are no generic breakpoints. In the presence of generic breakpoints, however, the debugger has to be entered at each call, to check their applicability. Consequently, with generic breakpoints, zip mode execution will not give much speed-up over debug mode, although its space requirements will still be much lower.

It is therefore advisable to give preference to specific breakpoints over generic ones, whenever possible. For example, if your program includes predicates `foo/2` and `foo/3`, then it is much better to create two specific breakpoints, rather than a single generic one with conditions `[pred(foo/_),...]`.

`spy/2` is a built-in predicate that will create specific breakpoints only. Its first argument is a generalized predicate spec, much like in `spy/1`, and the second argument is a breakpoint spec. `spy/2` will expand the first argument to one or more predicate specs, and for each of these will create a breakpoint, with a `pred` condition added to the *test* part of the supplied breakpoint spec. For example, in the presence of predicates `foo/2` and `foo/3`

```
| ?- spy(foo/_, file(...))
```

is equivalent to:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(foo/2),file(...)], _),
     add_breakpoint([pred(foo/3),file(...)], _).
```

Note that with `spy/[1,2]` it is not possible to put a breakpoint on a (yet) undefined predicate. On the other hand, `add_breakpoint/2` is perfectly capable of creating such breakpoints.

### 7.6.5 Breakpoint Actions

The action part of a breakpoint spec supplies information to the debugger as to what should be done when the breakpoint is activated. This is achieved by setting the three so called *debugger action variables*. These are listed below, together with their most important values.

- The `show` variable prescribes how the debugged goal should be displayed:

  `print` write the goal according to the `debugger_print_options` Prolog flag.

  `silent` do not display the goal.

- The `command` variable prescribes what should the debugger do:

  `ask` ask the user.

  `proceed` continue the execution without stopping, creating a procedure box for the current goal at the Call port,

  `flit` continue the execution without stopping, without creating a procedure box for the current goal at the Call port.

- The `mode` variable prescribes in what mode the debugger should continue the execution:

  `trace` creeping.

  `debug` leaping.

  `zip` zipping.

  `off` without debugging.

For example, the breakpoint below specifies that whenever the Exit port of `foo/2` is reached, no trace message should be output, no interaction should take place and the debugger should be switched off.

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(foo/2),port(exit)]-
                    [show(silent),command(proceed),mode(off)], _).
```

Here, the action part consists of three actions, setting the three action variables. This breakpoint spec can be simplified by omitting the wrappers around the variable values, as the sets of possible values of the variables are all disjoint. If we use `spy/2` then the `pred` wrapper goes away, too, resulting in a much more concise, equivalent formulation of the above breakpoint:

```
| ?- spy(foo/2,exit-[silent,proceed,off]).
```

Let us now revisit the process of breakpoint selection. When the debugger arrives at a port it first initializes the action variables according to the current debugging and leashing modes, as shown below:

| debugging mode | leashing mode | Action variables: show | command | mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| trace | at leashed port | print | ask | trace |
| trace | at unleashed port | print | proceed | trace |
| debug | - | silent | proceed | debug |
| zip | - | silent | flit | zip |

It then considers each breakpoint, most recent first, until it finds a breakpoint whose test part succeeds. If such a breakpoint is found, its action part is evaluated, normally changing the action variable settings. A failure of the action part is ignored, in the sense that the breakpoint is still treated as the selected one. However, as a side-effect, a procedure box will always be built in such cases. More precisely, the failure of the action part causes the `flit` command value to be changed to `proceed`, all other command values being left unchanged. This is to facilitate the creation of breakpoints that stop at non-Call ports (see below for an example).

If no applicable breakpoint is found, then the action variables remain unchanged.

The debugger then executes the actions specified by the action variables. This process, referred to as the *action execution*, means the following:

- The current debugging mode is set to the value of the `mode` action variable.
- A trace message is displayed according to the `show` variable.
- The program continues according to the `command` variable.

Specifically, if `command` is `ask`, then the user is prompted for a debugger command, which in turn is converted to new assignments to the action variables. The debugger will then repeat the action execution process, described above. For example, the '`c`' (creep) inter-

active command is converted to `[silent,proceed,trace]`, the '`d`' (display) command to `[display,ask]` (when command is `ask`, the mode is irrelevant), etc.

The default values of the action variables correspond to the standard debugger behavior described in Section 7.2 [Basic Debug], page 77. For example, when an unleashed port is reached in trace mode, a trace message is printed and the execution proceeds in trace mode, without stopping. In zip mode, no trace message is shown, and execution continues in zip mode, without building procedure boxes at Call ports.

Note that a spypoint action part that is empty (`[]` or not present) is actually treated as `[print,ask]`. Again, this is the standard behavior of spypoints, as described in Section 7.2 [Basic Debug], page 77.

If an action part is nonempty, but it does not set the action variables, the only effect it will have is to hide the remaining older spypoints, as the debugger will behave in the standard way, according to the debugging mode. Still, such breakpoints may be useful if they have side-effects, e.g.

```
| ?- spy(foo/2, -[parent_pred(P),
                  goal(G),
                  true(format('~q called from:~w~n',[G,P]))]).
% The debugger will first zip -- showing spypoints (zip)
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
true
% zip
| ?- foo(3,X).
foo(2,_701) called from:bar/3
foo(1,_1108) called from:bar/3
foo(0,_1109) called from:bar/3
foo(1,_702) called from:bar/3
X = 2 ? ;
no
```

This spypoint produces some output at ports of `foo/2`, but otherwise will not influence the debugger. Notice that a breakpoint spec with an empty test part can be written `-`*Actions*.

Let us look at some simple examples of what other effects can be achieved by appropriate action variable settings:

```
| ?- spy(foo/2, -[print,proceed]).
```

This is an example of an unleashed spypoint: it will print a trace message passing each port of `foo/2`, but will not stop there. Note that because of the `proceed` command a procedure box will be built, even in zip mode, and so the debugger will be activated at non-Call ports of `foo/2`.

The next example is a variant of the above:

```
| ?- spy(foo/2, -[print,flit]).
```

This will print a trace message at the Call port of `foo/2` and will then continue the execution in the current debugging mode, without building a procedure box for this call. This means that the debugger will not be able to notice any other ports of `foo/2`.

Now let us address the task of stopping at a specific non-Call port of a predicate. For this to work in zip mode, one has to ensure that a procedure box is built at the Call port. In the following example, the first spypoint causes a box to be built for each call of `foo/2`, while the second one makes the debugger stop when the Fail port of `foo/2` is reached.

```
| ?- spy(foo/2, call-proceed), spy(foo/2, fail).
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=2
```

You can achieve the same effect with a single spypoint, by putting the `fail` condition (which is a shortcut for `port(fail)`) in the *action* part, rather than in the *test* part.

```
| ?- spy(foo/2, -[fail,print,ask]).
```

Here, when the execution reaches the Call port of `foo/2`, the test part (which contains the `pred(foo/2)` condition only) succeeds, so the breakpoint is found applicable. However, the action part fails at the Call port. This has a side-effect in zip mode, as the default `flit` command value is changed to `proceed`. In other modes the action variables are unaffected. The net result is that a procedure box is always built for `foo/2`, which means that the debugger will actually reach the Fail port of this predicate. When this happens, the action part succeeds, and executing the actions `print,ask` will cause the debugger to stop.

Note that we have to explicitly mention the `print,ask` actions here, because the action part is otherwise nonempty (contains the `fail` condition). It is only the empty or missing action part, which is replaced by the default `[print,ask]`. If you want to include a condition in the action part, you have to explicitly mention all action variable settings you need.

To make this simpler, the debugger handles breakpoint condition macros, which expand to other conditions. For example `leash` is a macro that expands to `[print,ask]`. Consequently, the last example can be simplified to:

```
| ?- spy(foo/2, -[fail,leash]).
```

Similarly, the macro `unleash` expands to `[print,proceed]`, while `hide` to `[silent,proceed]`.

We now briefly describe further possible settings to the action variables.

The `mode` variable can be assigned the values `skip(`*Inv*`)` and `qskip(`*Inv*`)`, meaning skipping and quasi-skipping until a port is reached whose invocation number is less or equal to *Inv*. When the debugger arrives at this port it sets the `mode` variable to `trace`.

It may be surprising that `skip(...)` is a mode, rather than a command. This is because commands are executed and immediately forgotten, but skipping has a lasting effect: the

program is to be run with no debugging until a specific point, without creating new procedure boxes, and ignoring the existing ones in the meantime.

Here is an example using the `skip` mode:

```
| ?- spy(foo/2,call-[print,proceed,inv(Inv),skip(Inv)]).
```

This breakpoint will be found applicable at Call ports of `foo/2`. It will print a trace message there and will skip over to the Exit or Fail port without stopping. Notice that the number of the current invocation is obtained in the action part, using the `inv` condition with a variable argument. A variant of this example follows:

```
| ?- spy(foo/2,-[silent,proceed,
                        (   call -> inv(Inv), skip(Inv)
                        ;   true
                        )]).
```

This spypoint makes `foo/2` invisible in the output of the debugger: at all ports we silently proceed (i.e. display nothing and do not stop). Furthermore, at the Call port we perform a skip, so neither `foo/2` itself, nor any predicate called within it will be shown by the debugger.

Notice the use of the `true/0` test in the above conditional! This is a breakpoint test that always succeeds. The debugger also recognizes `false` as a test that always fails. Note that while `false` and `fail` are synonyms as built-in predicates, they are completely different as breakpoint conditions: the latter is a shortcut for `port(fail)`.

The `show` variable has four additional value patterns. Setting it to `display`, `write`, or `write_term(`*`Options`*`)` will result in the debugged goal *G* being shown using `display(`*`G`*`)`, `writeq(`*`G`*`)`, or `write_term(`*`G, Options`*`)`, respectively. The fourth pattern, *`Method-Sel`* , can be used for replacing the goal in the trace message by one of its subterms, the one pointed to by the selector *Sel*.

For example, the following spypoint instructs the debugger to stop at each port of `foo/2`, and to only display the first argument of `foo/2` in the trace message, instead of the complete goal.

```
| ?- spy(foo/2, -[print-[1],ask]).
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
| ?- foo(5,X).
 *      1      1 Call: ^1 5 ?
```

The `command` variable has several further value patterns. The variable can be set to `proceed(`*`OldGoal,NewGoal`*`)`. At a Call port this instructs the debugger to first build a procedure box for the current goal, then to unify it with *OldGoal* and finally execute *NewGoal* in its place (cf. the '`u`' (unify) interactive debugger command). At non-Call ports this command first goes back to the Call port (cf. the '`r`' (retry) command), and then does the above activities.

A variant of the `proceed/2` command is `flit(OldGoal,NewGoal)`. This has the same effect, except for not building a procedure box for *OldGoal*.

We now just briefly list further command values (for the details, see Section 7.9.9 [Action Variables], page 126). Setting `command` to `exception(E)` will raise an exception *E*, `abort` will abort the execution. The values `retry(Inv)`, `reexit(Inv)`, `redo(Inv)`, `fail(Inv)` will cause the debugger to go back to an earlier Call, Exit, Redo, or Fail port with invocation number *Inv* (cf. the '`j`' (jump) interactive debugger command).

Sometimes it may be useful to access the value of an action variable. This can be done with the `get` condition: e.g. `get(mode(M))` will unify `M` with the current execution mode. The `get(...)` wrapper can be omitted in the test part, but not in the action part (since there a `mode(M)` action will set, rather than read, the mode action variable). For example:

```
| ?- spy(foo/2, mode(trace)-show(print-[1])).
```

This spypoint will be found applicable only in trace mode (and will cause the first argument of `foo/2` to appear in the trace message). (The `mode` and `show` wrappers can also be omitted in the above example, they are used only to help interpreting the breakpoint spec.)

### 7.6.6 Advice-points

As mentioned earlier, there are two kinds of breakpoints: spypoints and advice-points. The main purpose of spypoints is to support interactive debugging. In contrast with this, advice-points can help you to perform non-interactive debugging activities. For example, the following advice-point will check a program invariant: whether the condition `Y-X<3` always holds at exit from `foo(X,Y)`.

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([pred(foo/2),advice]
                    -[exit,goal(foo(X,Y)),\+true(Y-X<3),trace], _).
% Conditional advice point for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
% advice
| ?- foo(4, Y).
Y = 3
% advice
| ?- foo(9, Y).
        3      3 Exit: foo(7,13) ? n
        2      2 Exit: foo(8,21) ?
```

The test part of the above breakpoint contains a `pred` test, and the `advice` condition, making it an advice-point. (You can also include the `debugger` condition in spypoint specs, although this is the default interpretation.)

The action part starts with the `exit` port condition. Because of this the rest of the action part is evaluated only at Exit ports. By placing the port condition in the action part, we ensure the creation of a procedure box at the Call port, as explained earlier.

Next, we get hold of the goal arguments using the `goal` condition, and use the `\+true(Y-X<3)` test to check if the invariant is violated. If this happens, the last condition sets the `mode` action variable to `trace`, switching on the interactive debugger.

Following the `add_breakpoint/2` call the above example shows two top-level calls to `foo/2`. The invariant holds within the first goal, but is violated within the second. Notice that the advice mechanism works with the interactive debugger switched off.

You can ask the question, why do we need advice-points? The same task could be implemented using a spypoint. For example:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint(pred(foo/2)
                    -[exit,goal(foo(X,Y)),\+true(Y-X<3),leash], _).
% The debugger will first zip -- showing spypoints (zip)
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
% zip
| ?- foo(4, X).
X = 3
% zip
| ?- foo(9, X).
 *      3      3 Exit: foo(7,13) ? z
 *      2      2 Exit: foo(8,21) ?
```

The main reason to have a separate advice mechanism is to be able to perform checks independently of the interactive debugging. With the second solution, if you happen to start some interactive debugging, you cannot be sure that the invariant is always checked. For example, no spypoints will be activated during a skip. In contrast with this, the advice mechanism is watching the program execution all the time, independently of the debugging mode.

Advice-points are handled in very much the same way as spypoints are. When arriving at a port, advice-point selection takes place first, followed by spypoint selection. This can be viewed as the debugger making two passes over the current breakpoints, considering advice-points only in the first pass, and spypoints only in the second.

In both passes the debugger tries to find a breakpoint that can be activated, checking the test and action parts, as described earlier. However, there are some differences between the two passes:

- Advice processing is performed if there are any (non-disabled) advice-points. Spypoint processing is only done if the debugger is switched on, and is not doing a skip.
- For advice-points, the action variables are initialized as follows: `mode` is set to current debugging mode, `command = proceed`, `show = silent`. Note that this is done independently of the debugging mode (in contrast with the spypoint search initialization).
- The default action part for advice-points is `[]`. This means that if no action part is given, then the only effect of the advice-point will be to build a procedure box (because of the `command = proceed` initialization).
- If no advice-point was found applicable, then `command` is set to `flit`.

Having performed advice processing, the debugger inspects the `command` variable. The command values different from `proceed` and `flit` are called *divertive*, as they alter the normal flow of control (e.g. `proceed(...,...)`), or involve user interaction (`ask`). If the `command` value is divertive, then the prescribed action is performed immediately, without executing the spypoint selection process. Otherwise, if `command = proceed`, it is noted that the advice part requests the building of a procedure box. Next, the second, spypoint processing pass is carried out, and possible user interaction takes place, as described earlier. A procedure box is built if either the advice-point or the spypoint search requests this.

Let us conclude this section by another example, a generic advice-point for collecting branch coverage information:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint(
      (advice,call) -
          (   line(F,L) -> true(assert(line_reached(F,L))), flit
          ;   flit
          ), _).
% Generic advice point added, BID=1
% advice,source_info
| ?- foo(4,X).
X = 3 ? ;
no
% advice,source_info
| ?- setof(X, line_reached(F,X), S).
F = '/home/bob/myprog.pl',
S = [31,33,34,35,36]
```

This advice-point will be applicable at every Call port. It will then assert a fact with the file name and the line number if source information is available. Finally, it will set the `command` variable to `flit` on both branches of execution. This is to communicate the fact that the advice-point does not request the building of a procedure box.

It is important to note that this recording of the line numbers reached is performed independently of the interactive debugging.

In this example we used the `','/2` operator, rather than list notation, for describing the conjunction of conditions, as this seems to fit better the if-then-else expression used in the action part. We could have still used lists in the tests part, and in the "then" part of the actions. Note that if we omit the "else" branch, the action part will fail if no source information is available for the given call. This will cause a procedure box to be built, which is an unnecessary overhead. An alternative solution, using the `line/2` test twice, is the following:

```
| ?- add_breakpoint([advice,call,line(_,_)]-
                    [line(F,L),true(assert(line_reached(F,L))),flit], _).
```

Further examples of advice-points are available in `library(debugger_examples)`.

### 7.6.7 Built-in Predicates for Breakpoint Handling

This section introduces built-in predicates for evaluating breakpoint conditions, and for retrieving, deleting, disabling and enabling breakpoints.

The breakpoint spec of the last advice-point example was quite complex. And, to be practical, it should be improved to assert only line numbers not recorded so far. For this you will write a Prolog predicate for the conditional assertion of file/line information, `assert_line_reached(File,Line)`, and use it instead of the `assert(line_reached(F,L))` condition.

Because of the complexity of the breakpoint spec, it looks like a good idea to move the if-then-else condition into Prolog code. This requires that we test the `line(F,L)` condition from Prolog. The built-in predicate `execution_state/1` serves for this purpose. It takes a simple or a composite breakpoint condition as its argument and evaluates it, as if in the test part of a breakpoint spec. The predicate will succeed iff the breakpoint condition evaluates successfully. Thus `execution_state/1` allows you to access debugging information from within Prolog code. For example, you can write a Prolog predicate, `assert_line_reached/0`, which queries the debugger for the current line information and then processes the line number:

```
assert_line_reached :-
        (   execution_state(line(F,L)) -> assert_line_reached(F,L).
        ;   true
        ).

| ?- add_breakpoint([advice,call]-
[true(assert_line_reached),flit], _).
```

Arbitrary tests can be used in `execution_state/1`, if it is called from within a `true` condition. It can also be called from outside the debugger, but then only a subset of conditions is available. Furthermore, the built-in predicate `execution_state/2` allows accessing information from past debugger states (see Section 7.6.8 [Accessing Past Debugger States], page 105).

The built-in predicates `remove_breakpoints(`*BIDs*`)`, `disable_breakpoints(`*BIDs*`)` and `enable_breakpoints(`*BIDs*`)` serve for removing, disabling and enabling the given breakpoints. Here *BIDs* can be a single breakpoint identifier, a list of these, or one of the atoms `all`, `advice`, `debugger`.

We now show an application of `remove_breakpoints/1` for implementing one-off breakpoints, i.e. breakpoints that are removed when first activated.

For this we need to get hold of the currently selected breakpoint identifier. The `bid(BID)` condition serves for this purpose: it unifies its argument with the identifier of the breakpoint being processed. The following is an example of a one-off breakpoint.

```
| ?- spy(foo/2, -[bid(BID),true(remove_breakpoints(BID)),leash]).
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=1
% zip
| ?- foo(2, X).
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2, BID=1, removed (last)
        1      1 Call: foo(2,_402) ? z
X = 1
```

The action part of the above breakpoint calls the `bid` test to obtain the breakpoint identifier. It then uses this number as the argument to the built-in predicate `remove_breakpoints/1`, which removes the activated breakpoint.

The built-in predicate `current_breakpoint(`*`Spec`*`, `*`BID`*`, `*`Status`*`, `*`Kind`*`, `*`Type`*`)` enumerates all breakpoints present in the debugger. For example, if we call `current_breakpoint/5` before the invocation of `foo/2` in the last example, we get this:

```
| ?- current_breakpoint(Spec, BID, Status, Kind, Type).
Spec = [pred(user:foo/2)]-
[bid(_A),true(remove_breakpoints(_A)),leash],
BID = 1,
Status = on,
Kind = conditional(user:foo/2),
Type = debugger
```

Here *Spec* is the breakpoint spec of the breakpoint with identifier *BID*. *Status* is `on` for enabled breakpoints and `off` for disabled ones. *Kind* is one of `plain(`*`MFunc`*`)`, `conditional(`*`MFunc`*`)` or `generic`, where *MFunc* is the module qualified functor of the specific breakpoint. Finally *Type* is the breakpoint type: `debugger` or `advice`.

The *Spec* returned by `current_breakpoint/5` is exactly the same as the one given in `add_breakpoint/2`. If the breakpoint was created by `spy/2`, then the test part is extended by a `pred` condition, as exemplified above. Earlier we described some pre-processing steps that the spec goes through, such as moving the module qualification of the spec to certain conditions. These transformations are performed on the copy of the breakpoint used for testing. Independently of this, the debugger also stores the original breakpoint, which is returned by `current_breakpoint/5`.

### 7.6.8 Accessing Past Debugger States

In this section we introduce the built-in predicates for accessing past debugger states, and the breakpoint conditions related to these.

The debugger collects control flow information about the goals being executed, more precisely about those goals, for which a procedure box is built. This collection of information, the backtrace, includes the invocations that were called but not exited yet, as well as those that exited nondeterminately. For each invocation, the main data items present in the

backtrace are the following: the goal, the module, the invocation number, the depth and the source information, if any.

Furthermore, as you can enter a new break level from within the debugger, there can be multiple backtraces, one for each active break level.

You can access all the information collected by the debugger using the built-in predicate `execution_state(Focus, Tests)`. Here *Focus* is a ground term specifying which break level and which invocation to access. It can be one of the following:

- `break_level(BL)` selects the *current* invocation within the break level *BL*.
- `inv(Inv)` selects the invocation number *Inv* within the current break level.
- A list containing the above two elements, selects the invocation with number *Inv* within break level *BL*.

Note that the top-level counts as break level 0, while the invocations are numbered from 1 upwards.

The second argument of `execution_state/2`, *Tests*, is a simple or composite breakpoint condition. Most simple tests can appear inside *Tests*, with the exception of the `port`, `bid`, `advice`, `debugger`, and `get` tests. These tests will be interpreted in the context of the specified past debugger state. Specifically, if a `true/1` condition is used, then any `execution_state/1` queries appearing in it will be evaluated in the past context.

To illustrate the use of `execution_state/2`, we now define a predicate `last_call_arg(ArgNo, Arg)`, which is to be called from within a break, and which will look at the last debugged goal of the previous break level, and return in `Arg` the `ArgNo`th argument of this goal.

```
last_call_arg(ArgNo, Arg) :-
        execution_state(break_level(BL1)),
        BL is BL1-1,
        execution_state(break_level(BL), goal(Goal)),
        arg(ArgNo, Goal, Arg).
```

We see two occurrences of the term `break_level(...)` in the above example. Although these look very similar, they have different roles. The first one, in `execution_state/1`, is a breakpoint test, which unifies the current break level with its argument. Here it is used to obtain the current break level and store it in `BL1`. The second use of `break_level(...)`, in the first argument of `execution_state/2`, is a focus condition, whose argument has to be instantiated, and which prescribes the break level to focus on. Here we use it to obtain the goal of the current invocation of the previous break level.

Note that the goal retrieved from the backtrace is always in its latest instantiation state. For example, it not possible to get hold of the goal instantiation at the Call port, if the invocation in question is at the Exit port.

Here is an example run, showing how `last_call_arg/2` can be used:

```
        5      2 Call: _937 is 13+8 ? b
% Break level 1
% 1
| ?- last_call_arg(2, A).
A = 13+8
```

There are some further breakpoint tests that are primarily used in looking at past execution states.

The test `max_inv(MaxInv)` returns the maximal invocation number within the current (or selected) break level. The test `exited(Boolean)` unifies *Boolean* with `true` if the invocation has exited, and with `false` otherwise.

The following example predicate lists those goals in the backtrace, together with their invocation numbers, that have exited. These are the invocations that are listed by the `t` interactive debugger command (print backtrace), but not by the `g` command (print ancestor goals). Note that the predicate `between(`$N, M, I$`)` enumerates all integers such that $N \leq I \leq M$.

```
exited_goals :-
     execution_state(max_inv(Max)),
     between(1, Max, Inv),
     execution_state(inv(Inv), [exited(true),goal(G)]),
     format('~t~d~6| ~p\n', [Inv,G]),
     fail.
exited_goals.
(...)

?*     41     11 Exit: foo(2,1) ? @
| :- exited_goals.
    26 foo(3,2)
    28 bar(3,1,1)
    31 foo(2,1)
    33 bar(2,1,0)
    36 foo(1,1)
    37 foo(0,0)
    39 foo(1,1)
    41 foo(2,1)
    43 bar(2,1,0)
    46 foo(1,1)
    47 foo(0,0)
?*     41     11 Exit: foo(2,1) ?
```

Note that similar output can be obtained by entering a new break level and calling `exited_goals` from within an `execution_state/2`:

```
% 1
| ?- execution_state(break_level(0), true(exited_goals)).
```

The remaining two breakpoint tests allow you to find parent and ancestor invocations in the backtrace. The `parent_inv(Inv)` test unifies *Inv* with the invocation number of the youngest ancestor present in the backtrace, called *debugger-parent* for short. The test `ancestor(AncGoal,Inv)` looks for the youngest ancestor in the backtrace that is an instance of *AncGoal*. It then unifies the ancestor goal with *AncGoal* and its invocation number with *Inv*.

Assume you would like to stop at all invocations of `foo/2` that are somewhere within `bar/1`, possibly deeply nested. The following two breakpoints achieve this effect:

```
| ?- spy(bar/1, advice), spy(foo/2, ancestor(bar(_),_)).
% Plain advice point for user:bar/1 added, BID=3
% Conditional spypoint for user:foo/2 added, BID=4
```

We added an advice-point for `bar/1` to ensure that all calls to it will have procedure boxes built, and so become part of the backtrace. Advice-points are a better choice than spypoints for this purpose, as with `?- spy(bar/1, -proceed)` the debugger will not stop at the call port of `bar/1` in trace mode. Note that it is perfectly all right to create an advice-point using `spy/2`, although this is a bit of terminological inconsistency.

Further examples of accessing past debugger states can be found in `library(debugger_examples)`.

### 7.6.9 Storing User Information in the Backtrace

The debugger allows the user to store some private information in the backtrace. It allocates a Prolog variable in each break level and in each invocation. The breakpoint test `private(Priv)` unifies *Priv* with the private information associated with the break level, while the test `goal_private(GPriv)` unifies *GPriv* with the Prolog variable stored in the invocation.

Both variables are initially unbound, and behave as if they were passed around the program being debugged in additional arguments. This implies that any variable assignments done within these variables are undone on backtracking.

The `private` condition practically gives you access to a Prolog variable shared by all invocations of a break level. This makes it possible to remember a term and look at it later, in a possibly more instantiated form, as shown by the following example.

```
memory(Term) :-
        execution_state(private(P)),
        memberchk(myterm(Term), P).

| ?- trace, append([1,2,3,4], [5,6], L).
        1      1 Call: append([1,2,3,4],[5,6],_514) ? @
| :- append(_,_,L)^memory(L).
        1      1 Call: append([1,2,3,4],[5,6],_514) ? c
        2      2 Call: append([2,3,4],[5,6],_2064) ? c
        3      3 Call: append([3,4],[5,6],_2422) ? c
        4      4 Call: append([4],[5,6],_2780) ? @
| :- memory(L), write(L), nl.
[1,2,3|_2780]
        4      4 Call: append([4],[5,6],_2780) ?
```

The predicate `memory/1` receives the term to be remembered in its argument. It gets hold of the private field associated with the break level in variable `P`, and calls `memberchk/2` (see Chapter 20 [Lists], page 363), with the term to be remembered, wrapped in `myterm`, as the list element, and the private field, as the list. Thus the latter, initially unbound variable, is used as an open-ended list. For example, when `memory/1` is called for the first time, the private field gets instantiated to `[myterm(Term)|_]`. If later you call `memory/1` with an uninstantiated argument, it will retrieve the term remembered earlier and unify it with the argument.

The above trace excerpt shows how this utility predicate can be used to remember an interesting Prolog term. Within invocation number 1 we call `memory/1` with the third, output argument of `append/3`, using the '`@`' command (see Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81). A few tracing steps later, we retrieve the term remembered and print it, showing its current instantiation. Being able to access the instantiation status of some terms of interest can be very useful in debugging. In `library(debugger_examples)` we describe new debugger commands for naming Prolog variables and providing name-based access to these variables, based on the above technique.

We could have avoided the use of `memberchk/2` in the example by simply storing the term to be remembered in the private field itself (`memory(Term) :- execution_state(private(Term)).`). But this would have made the private field unusable for other purposes. For example, the finite domain constraint debugger (see Chapter 36 [FDBG], page 519) would stop working, as it relies on the private fields.

There is only a single private variable of both kinds within the given scope. Therefore the convention of using an open ended list for storing information in private fields, as shown in the above example, is very much recommended. The different users of the private field are distinguished by the wrapper they use (e.g. `myterm/1` above, `fdbg/1` for the constraint debugger, etc.). Future SICStus Prolog releases may enforce this convention by providing appropriate breakpoint tests.

We now present an example of using the goal private field. Earlier we have shown a spypoint definition that made a predicate invisible in the sense that its ports are silently passed

through and it is automatically skipped over. However, with that earlier solution, execution always continues in trace mode after skipping. We now improve the spypoint definition: the mode in which the Call port was reached is remembered in the goal private field, and the mode action variable is reset to this value at the Exit port.

```
mode_memory(Mode) :-
        execution_state(goal_private(GP)),
        memberchk(mymode(Mode), GP).

| ?- spy(foo/2, -[silent,proceed,
                 true(mode_memory(MM)),
                (   call -> get(mode(MM)), inv(Inv), skip(Inv)
                ;   exit -> mode(MM)
                ;   true
                )]).
```

Here, we first define an auxiliary predicate `mode_memory/1`, which uses the open list convention for storing information in the goal private field, applying the `mymode/1` wrapper. We then create a spypoint for `foo/2`, whose action part first sets the `print` and `command` action variables. Next, the `mode_memory/1` predicate is called, unifying the mode memory with the `MM` variable. We then branch in the action part: at Call ports the uninstantiated `MM` is unified with the current mode, and a `skip` command is issued. At Exit ports `MM` holds the mode saved at the Call port, so the `mode(MM)` action re-activates this mode. At all other ports we just silently proceed without changing the debugger mode.

### 7.6.10 Hooks Related to Breakpoints

There are two hooks related to breakpoints.

The hook `breakpoint_expansion(`*`Macro`*`,`*`Body`*`)` makes it possible for the user to extend the set of allowed conditions. This hook is called, at breakpoint addition time, with each simple test or action within the breakpoint spec, as the *Macro* argument. If the hook succeeds, then the term returned in the *Body* argument is substituted for the original test or action. Note that *Body* can not span both the test and the action part, i.e. it cannot contain the `-/2` operator. The whole *Body* will be interpreted either as a test or as an action, depending on the context of the original condition.

We now give a few examples for breakpoint macros. The last example defines a condition making a predicate invisible, a reformulation of the last example of the previous subsection.

```
:- multifile user:breakpoint_expansion/2.
user:breakpoint_expansion(
            skip, [inv(I),skip(I)]).

user:breakpoint_expansion(
            gpriv(Value),
            [goal_private(GP),true(memberchk(Value,GP))]).

user:breakpoint_expansion(
            invisible,
            [silent,proceed,
                (   call -> get(mode(M)), gpriv(mymode(M)), skip
                ;   exit -> gpriv(mymode(MM)), mode(MM)
                ;   true
                )]).

| ?- spy(foo/2, -invisible).
```

We first define the `skip` macro, instructing the debugger to skip the current invocation. This macro is only meaningful in the action part.

The second clause defines the `gpriv/2` macro, a generalization of the earlier `mode_memory/1` predicate. For example, `gpriv(mymode(M))` expands to `goal_private(GP),true(memberchk(mymode(M),GP))`. This embodies the convention of using open-ended lists for the goal private field.

Finally, the last clause implements the action macro `invisible/0`, which makes the predicate in question to disappear from the trace. The last line shows how this macro can be used to make `foo/2` invisible.

Below is an alternative implementation of the same macro. Here we use a Prolog predicate that returns the list of action variable settings to be applied at the given port. Notice that a variable can be used as a breakpoint condition, as long as this variable gets instantiated to a (simple or composite) breakpoint condition by the time it is reached in the process of breakpoint evaluation.

```
user:breakpoint_expansion(invisible,
                          [true(invisible(Settings)),Settings]).

invisible([proceed,silent,NewMode]) :-
        execution_state([mode(M),port(P),inv(Inv),goal_private(GP)]),
        memberchk(mymode(MM), GP),
        (   P == call -> MM = M, NewMode = skip(Inv)
        ;   P = exit(_) -> NewMode = MM
        ;   NewMode = M
        ).
```

The second hook related to breakpoints is `debugger_command_hook(DCommand, Actions)`. This hook serves for customizing the behavior of the interactive debugger, i.e. for introducing new interactive debugger commands. The hook is called for each debugger command read in by the debugger. *DCommand* contains the abstract format of the debugger command read in, as returned by the query facility (see Section 8.13.3 [Query Processing], page 200). If the hook succeeds, it should return in *Actions* an action part to be evaluated as the result of the command.

If you want to redefine an existing debugger command, you should study `library('SU_messages')` to learn the abstract format of this command, as returned by the query facility. If you want to add a new command, it suffices to know that unrecognized debugger commands are returned as `unknown(Line,Warning)`. Here, `Line` is the cude-list typed in, with any leading layout removed, and `Warning` is a warning message.

The following example defines the '`S`' interactive debugger command to behave as skip at Call and Redo ports, and as creep otherwise:

```
:- multifile user:debugger_command_hook/2.
user:debugger_command_hook(unknown([0'S|_],_), Actions) :-
        execution_state([port(P),inv(I)]),
        Actions = [Mode,proceed,silent],
        (   P = call -> Mode = skip(I)
        ;   P = redo -> Mode = skip(I)
        ;   Mode = trace
        ).
```

Note that the `silent` action is needed above; otherwise, the trace message will be printed a second time, before continuing the execution.

`library(debugger_examples)` contains some of the above hooks, as well as several others.

### 7.6.11 Programming Breakpoints

We will show two examples using the advanced features of the debugger.

The first example defines a `hide_exit(Pred)` predicate, which will hide the Exit port for `Pred` (i.e. it will silently proceed), provided the current goal was already ground at the Call port, and nothing was traced inside the given invocation. The `hide_exit(Pred)` goal creates two spypoints for predicate `Pred`:

```
:- meta_predicate hide_exit(:).
hide_exit(Pred) :-
        add_breakpoint([pred(Pred),call]-
                        true(save_groundness), _),
        add_breakpoint([pred(Pred),exit,true(hide_exit)]-hide, _).
```

The first spypoint is applicable at the Call port, and it calls `save_groundness` to check if the given invocation was ground, and if so, it stores a term `hide_exit(ground)` in the `goal_private` attribute of the invocation.

```
save_groundness :-
        execution_state([goal(_:G),goal_private(Priv)]),
        ground(G), !, memberchk(hide_exit(ground), Priv).
save_groundness.
```

The second spypoint created by `hide_exit/1` is applicable at the Exit port and it checks whether the `hide_exit/0` condition is true. If so, it issues a `hide` action, which is a breakpoint macro expanding to `[silent,proceed]`.

```
hide_exit :-
        execution_state([inv(I),max_inv(I),goal_private(Priv)]),
        memberchk(hide_exit(Ground), Priv), Ground == ground.
```

Here, `hide_exit` encapsulates the tests that the invocation number is the same as the last invocation number used (`max_inv`), and that the `goal_private` attribute of the invocation is identical to `ground`. The first test ensures that nothing was traced inside the current invocation.

If we load the above code, as well as the small example below, then the following interaction can take place. Note that the `hide_exit` predicate is called with the `_:_` argument, resulting in generic spypoints being created.

```
| ?- [user].
| cnt(0) :- !.
| cnt(N) :-
        N > 0, N1 is N-1, cnt(N1).
| ^D
% consulted user in module user, 0 msec 424 bytes

| ?- hide_exit(_:_), trace, cnt(1).
% The debugger will first zip -- showing spypoints (zip)
% Generic spypoint added, BID=1
% Generic spypoint added, BID=2
% The debugger will first creep -- showing everything (trace)
 #      1      1 Call: cnt(1) ? c
 #      2      2 Call: 1>0 ? c
 #      3      2 Call: _2019 is 1-1 ? c
        3      2 Exit: 0 is 1-1 ? c
 #      4      2 Call: cnt(0) ? c
        1      1 Exit: cnt(1) ? c

% trace
| ?-
```

Invocation 1 is ground, its Exit port is not hidden, because further goals were traced inside it. On the other hand, Exit ports of ground invocations 2 and 4 are hidden.

Our second example defines a predicate `call_backtrace(Goal, BTrace)`, which will execute `Goal` and build a backtrace showing the successful invocations executed during the solution of `Goal`.

The advantages of such a special backtrace over the one incorporated in the debugger are the following:

- it has much lower space consumption;
- the user can control what is put on and removed from the backtrace (e.g. in this example all goals are kept, even the ones that exited determinately);
- the interactive debugger can be switched on and off without affecting the "private" backtrace being built.

The `call_backtrace/2` predicate is based on the advice facility. It uses the variable accessible via the `private(_)` condition to store a mutable holding the backtrace (see Section 8.7 [Meta Logic], page 183). Outside the `call_backtrace` predicate the mutable will have the value `off`.

The example is a module-file, so that internal invocations can be identified by the module name. We load the `lists` library, because `memberchk/2` will be used in the handling of the private field.

```
:- module(backtrace, [call_backtrace/2]).
:- use_module(library(lists)).

:- meta_predicate call_backtrace(:, ?).
call_backtrace(Goal, BTrace) :-
        Spec = [advice,call]
               -[true((goal(M:G),store_goal(M,G))),flit],
        (   current_breakpoint(Spec, _, on, _, _) -> B = []
        ;   add_breakpoint(Spec, B)
        ),
        call_cleanup(call_backtrace1(Goal, BTrace),
                     remove_breakpoints(B)).
```

`call_backtrace(Goal, BTrace)` is a meta-predicate, which first sets up an appropriate advice-point for building the backtrace. The advice-point will be activated at each Call port, will call the `store_goal/2` predicate with arguments containing the module and the goal in question. Note that the advice-point will not build a procedure box (cf. the `flit` command in the action part).

The advice-point will be added just once: any further (recursive) calls to `call_backtrace/2` will notice the existence of the breakpoint and will skip the `add_breakpoint/2` call.

Having ensured the appropriate advice-point exists, `call_backtrace/2` calls `call_backtrace1/2` with a cleanup operation that removes the breakpoint added, if any.

```
:- meta_predicate call_backtrace1(:, ?).
call_backtrace1(Goal, BTrace) :-
        execution_state(private(Priv)),
        memberchk(backtrace_mutable(Mut), Priv),
        (   is_mutable(Mut) -> get_mutable(Old, Mut),
            update_mutable([], Mut)
        ;   create_mutable([], Mut), Old = off
        ),
        call(Goal),
        get_mutable(BTrace, Mut), update_mutable(Old, Mut).
```

The predicate `call_backtrace1/2` retrieves the private field of the execution state and uses it to store a mutable, wrapped in `backtrace_mutable`. When first called within a top-level the mutable is created with the value `[]`. In later calls the mutable is re-initialized to `[]`. Having set up the mutable, `Goal` is called. In the course of the execution of the `Goal` the debugger will accumulate the backtrace in the mutable. Finally, the mutable is read, its value is returned in `BTrace`, and it is restored to its old value (or `off`).

```
store_goal(M, G) :-
        M \== backtrace,
        G \= call(_),
        execution_state(private(Priv)),
        memberchk(backtrace_mutable(Mut), Priv),
        is_mutable(Mut),
        get_mutable(BTrace, Mut),
        BTrace \== off, !,
        update_mutable([M:G|BTrace], Mut).
store_goal(_, _).
```

`store_goal/2` is the predicate called by the advice-point, with the module and the goal as arguments. We first ensure that calls from within the `backtrace` module and those of `call/1` get ignored. Next, the module qualified goal term is prepended to the mutable value retrieved from the private field, provided the mutable exists and its value is not `off`.

Below is an example run, using a small program:

```
| ?- [user].
| cnt(N):- N =< 0, !.
| cnt(N) :-
    N > 0, N1 is N-1, cnt(N1).
| ^D
% consulted user in module user, 0 msec 424 bytes

| ?- call_backtrace(cnt(1), B).
% Generic advice point added, BID=1
% Generic advice point, BID=1, removed (last)

B = [user:(0=<0),user:cnt(0),user:(0 is 1-1),user:(1>0),user:cnt(1)]

| ?-
```

Note that the backtrace produced by `call_backtrace/2` can not contain any information regarding failed branches. For example, the very first invocation within the above execution, `1 =< 0`, is first put on the backtrace at its Call port, but this is immediately undone because the goal fails. If you would like to build a backtrace that preserves failed branches, you have to use side-effects, e.g. dynamic predicates.

Further examples of complex breakpoint handling are contained in `library(debugger_examples)`.

This concludes the tutorial introduction of the advanced debugger features.

## 7.7 Breakpoint Handling Predicates

This section describes the advanced built-in predicates for creating and removing breakpoints.

`add_breakpoint(`*:Spec, ?BID*`)` *development*

Adds a breakpoint with a spec *Spec*, the breakpoint identifier assigned is unified with *BID*. *Spec* is one of the following:

*Tests*`-`*Actions*

*Tests* standing for *Tests*`-[]`

`-`*Actions* standing for `[]-`*Actions*

Here, both *Tests* and *Actions* are either a simple *Condition*, see Section 7.9 [Breakpoint Conditions], page 120, or a composite Condition. Conditions can be composed by forming lists, or by using the '`,`', '`;`', '`->`', and '`\+`' operators, with the usual meaning of conjunction, disjunction, if-then-else, and negation, respectively. A list of conditions is equivalent to a conjunction of the same conditions (`[A|B]` is treated as `(A,B)`).

The `add_breakpoint/2` predicate performs some transformations and checks before adding the breakpoint. All condition macros invoked are expanded into

their bodies, and this process is repeated for the newly introduced bodies. The `goal` and `pred` conditions are then extracted from the outermost conjunctions of the *test* part and moved to the beginning of the conjunction. If these are inconsistent, a consistency error is signalled. Module name expansion is performed for certain tests, as described below.

Both the original and the transformed breakpoint spec is recorded by the debugger. The original is returned in `current_breakpoint/5`, while the transformed spec is used in determining the applicability of breakpoints.

There can only be a single plain spypoint for each predicate. If a plain spypoint is added, and there is already a plain spypoint for the given predicate, then:

a. the old spypoint is deleted and a new added as the most recent breakpoint, if this change affects the breakpoint selection mechanism.
b. otherwise, the old spypoint is kept and enabled if needed.

`spy(:PredSpec, :Spec)` *development*

Adds a conditional spypoint with a breakpoint spec formed by adding `pred(Pred)` to the test part of *Spec*, for each predicate *Pred* designated by the generalized predicate spec *PredSpec*.

`current_breakpoint(:Spec, ?BID, ?Status, ?Kind, ?Type)` *development*

There is a breakpoint with breakpoint spec *Spec*, identifier *BID*, status *Status*, kind *Kind*, and type *Type*. *Status* is one of `on` or `off`, referring to enabled and disabled breakpoints. *Kind* is one of `plain(MFunc)`, `conditional(MFunc)` or `generic`, where *MFunc* is the module qualified functor of the specific breakpoint. *Type* is the breakpoint type: `debugger` or `advice`.

`current_breakpoint/5` enumerates all breakpoints on backtracking.

The *Spec* as returned by `current_breakpoint/5` is exactly the same as supplied at the creation of the breakpoint,

`remove_breakpoints(+BIDs)` *development*
`disable_breakpoints(+BIDs)` *development*
`enable_breakpoints(+BIDs)` *development*

Removes, disables or enables the breakpoints with identifiers specified by *BIDs*. *BIDs* can be a number, a list of numbers or one of the atoms: `all`, `debugger`, `advice`. The atoms specify all breakpoints, debugger type breakpoints and advice type breakpoints, respectively.

`execution_state(:Tests)` *development*

*Tests* are satisfied in the current state of the execution. Arbitrary tests can be used in this predicate, if it is called from inside the debugger, i.e. from within a `true` condition. Otherwise only those tests can be used, which query the data stored in the backtrace. An exception is raised if the latter condition is violated, i.e. a non-backtraced test (see Section 7.9 [Breakpoint Conditions], page 120) occurs in a call of `execution_state/1` from outside the debugger.

`execution_state(+FocusConditions, :Tests)` *development*

*Tests* are satisfied in the state of the execution pointed to by *FocusConditions* (see Section 7.9.7 [Past States], page 126). An exception is raised if there is a non-backtraced test among *Tests*.

Note that the predicate arguments holding a breakpoint spec (*Spec* or *Tests* above) are subject to module name expansion. The first argument within simple tests `goal(_)`, `pred(_)`, `parent_pred(_)`, `parent_pred(_,_)`, `ancestor(_,_)`, and `true(_)` will inherit the module name from the (module name expanded) breakpoint spec/tests predicate argument, if there is no explicit module qualification within the simple test. Within the `proceed(Old,New)` and `flit(Old,New)` command value settings, *Old* will get the module name from the `goal` or `pred` condition by default, while *New* from the whole breakpoint spec argument.

The following hook predicate can be used to customize the behavior of the interactive debugger.

`debugger_command_hook(+DCommand,?Actions)` *hook,development*
`user:debugger_command_hook(+DCommand,?Actions)`

This predicate is called for each debugger command SICStus Prolog reads in. The first argument is the abstract format of the debugger command *DCommand*, as returned by the query facility (see Section 8.13.3 [Query Processing], page 200). If it succeeds, *Actions* is taken as the list of actions (see Section 7.9.6 [Action Conditions], page 125) to be done for the given debugger command. If it fails, the debugger command is interpreted in the standard way.

Note that if a line typed in in response to the debugger prompt can not be parsed as a debugger command, `debugger_command_hook/2` is called with the term `unknown(Line,Warning)`. Here, `Line` is the code-list typed in, with any leading layout removed, and `Warning` is a warning message. This allows the user to define new debugger commands, see Section 7.6.10 [Hooks Related to Breakpoints], page 110 for an example.

## 7.8 The Processing of Breakpoints

This section describes in detail how the debugger handles the breakpoints. For the purpose of this section disabled breakpoints are not taken into account: whenever we refer to the existence of some breakpoint(s), we always mean the existence of *enabled* breakpoint(s).

The Prolog engine can be in one of the following three states with respect to the debugger:

*no debugging*
: if there are no advice-points and the debugger is either switched off, or doing a skip;

*full debugging*
: if the debugger is in trace or debug mode (creeping or leaping), or there are any generic breakpoints;

*selective debugging*
: in all other cases.

In the *selective debugging* state only those predicate invocations are examined, for which there exists a specific breakpoint. In the *full debugging* state all invocations are examined,

except those calling a predicate of a hidden module (but even these will be examined, if there is a specific breakpoint for them). In the *no debugging* state the debugger is not entered at predicate invocations.

Now we describe what the debugger does when examining an invocation of a predicate, i.e. executing its Call port. The debugger activities can be divided into three stages: advice-point processing, spypoint processing and interaction with the user. The last stage may be repeated several times before program execution continues.

The first two stages are similar, as they both search for an applicable breakpoint (spypoint or advice-point). This common breakpoint search is carried out as follows. The debugger considers all breakpoints of the given type, most recent first. For each breakpoint, the test part of the spec is evaluated, until one successful is found. Any variable bindings created in this successful evaluation are then discarded (this is implemented by enclosing it in double negation). The first breakpoint, for which the evaluation of the test part succeeds is selected. If such a breakpoint can be found, then the breakpoint search is said to have completed successfully, otherwise it is said to have failed.

If a breakpoint has been selected then its action part is evaluated, normally setting some debugger action variables. If the action part fails, then, as a side-effect, it is ensured that a procedure box will be built. This is achieved by changing the value of the `command` action variable from `flit` to `proceed`.

Having described the common breakpoint search, let us look at the details of the first stage, advice-point processing. This stage is executed only if there are any advice-points set. First, the debugger action variables are initialized: `mode` is set to the current debugger mode, `command` to `proceed` and `show` to `silent`. Next, advice-point search takes place. If this fails, `command` is set to `flit`, otherwise its value is unchanged.

After completing the advice-point search the `command` variable is examined. If its value is divertive, i.e. different from `proceed` and `flit`, then the spypoint search stage is omitted, and the debugger continues with the third stage. Otherwise, it is noted if the advice-point processing has requested the building of a procedure box (i.e. `command = proceed`), and the debugger continues with the second stage.

The second stage is spypoint processing. This stage is skipped if the debugger is switched off or doing a skip (`mode` is `off` or `skip(_)`). First the the `show` and `command` variables are re-assigned, based on the hiddenness of the predicate being invoked, the debugger mode and the leashing status of the port. If the predicate is both defined in, and called from a hidden module, then their values will be `silent` and `flit`. An example of this is when a built-in predicate is called from a hidden module, e.g. from a library. Otherwise, in trace mode, their values are `print` and `ask` for leashed ports, and `print` and `proceed` for unleashed ports. In debug mode, the variables are set to `silent` and `proceed`, while in zip mode to `silent` and `flit` (Section 7.6.5 [Breakpoint Actions], page 96 contains a tabulated listing of these initialization values).

Having initialized the debugger action variables, the spypoint search phase is performed. If an empty action part has been selected in a successful search, then `show` and `command` are set to `print` and `ask`. The failure of the search is ignored.

The third stage is the interactive part. First, the goal in question is displayed according to the value of `show`. Next, the value of `command` is checked: if it is other than `ask`, then the interactive stage ends. Otherwise, (it is `ask`), the variable `show` is re-initialized to `print`, or to `print-`*`Sel`*, if its value was of form *`Method-Sel`*. Next, the debugger prompts the user for a command, which is interpreted either in the standard way, or through `user:debugger_command_hook/2`. In both cases the debugger action variables are modified as requested, and the interactive part is repeated.

After the debugger went through all the three stages, it decides whether to build a procedure box. This will happen if either the advice-point stage or the other two stages require it. The latter is decided by checking the `command` variable: if that is `flit` or `flit(`*`Old`*`,`*`New`*`)`, then no procedure box is required by the spypoint part. If the advice-point does require the building of a procedure box, then the above `command` values are replaced by `proceed` and `proceed(`*`Old`*`,`*`New`*`)`, respectively.

At the end of the process the value of `mode` will be the new debugging mode, and `command` will determine what the debugger will do; see Section 7.9.9 [Action Variables], page 126.

A similar three-stage process is carried out when the debugger arrives at a non-Call port of a predicate. The only difference is that the building of a procedure box is not considered (`flit` is equivalent to `proceed`), and the hiddenness of the predicate is not taken into account.

While the Prolog system is executing the above three-stage process for any of the ports, it is said to be *inside the debugger*. This is relevant, because some of the conditions can only be evaluated in this context.

## 7.9 Breakpoint Conditions

This section describes the format of simple breakpoint conditions. We first list the tests that can be used to enquire the state of execution. We then proceed to describe the conditions usable in the action part and the options for focusing on past execution states. Finally, we describe condition macros and the format of the values of the debugger action variables.

We distinguish between two kinds of tests, based on whether they refer to information stored in the backtrace or not. The latter category, the *non-backtraced tests*, contains the conditions related to the current port (`port`, `bid`, `mode`, `show`, `command`, `get`) and the breakpoint type selection conditions (`advice` and `debug`). All remaining tests refer to information stored in the backtrace.

Non-backtraced tests will raise an exception, if they appear in calls to `execution_state/1` from outside the debugger, or in queries about past execution state, in `execution_state/2`.

Backtraced tests are allowed both inside and outside the debugger. However such tests can fail if the given query is not meaningful in the given context, e.g. if `execution_state(goal(G))` is queried before any breakpoints were encountered.

Note that if a test is used in the second argument of `execution_state/2`, then the term *current*, in the following descriptions, should be interpreted as referring to the execution state focused on (described by the first argument of `execution_state/2`).

### 7.9.1 Tests Related to the Current Goal

The following tests give access to basic information about the current invocation.

`inv(Inv)` The invocation number of the current goal is *Inv*. Invocation numbers start from 1.

`depth(Depth)`
The current execution depth is *Depth*.

`goal(MGoal)`
The current goal is an instance of the module name expanded *MGoal* template. The current goal and *MGoal* are unified. This condition is equivalent to the `subsumes(MGoal,CurrentGoal)` test (`subsumes/2` is defined in `library(terms)`, see Chapter 21 [Term Utilities], page 367).

`pred(MFunc)`
The module name expanded *MFunc* template matches (see notes below) the functor (*M*:*F*/*N*) of the current goal. The unification required for matching is carried out.

`module(Module)`
The current goal is invoked from module *Module*. For compiled calls to built-in predicates *Module* will always be `prolog`.

`goal_private(GoalPriv)`
The private information associated with the current goal is *GoalPriv*. This is initialized to an unbound variable at the Call port. It is strongly recommended that *GoalPriv* be used as an open ended list, see Section 7.6.9 [Storing User Information in the Backtrace], page 108.

`exited(Boolean)`
*Boolean* is `true` if the the current invocation has exited, and `false` otherwise. This condition is mainly used for looking at past execution states.

`parent_inv(Inv)`
The invocation number of the *debugger-parent* (see notes below) of the current goal is *Inv*.

`ancestor(AncGoal,Inv)`
The youngest debugger-ancestor of the current goal, which is an instance of the module name expanded *AncGoal* template, is at invocation number *Inv*. The unification required for matching is carried out.

Notes:

The *debugger-parent* of a goal is the youngest ancestor of the goal present on the backtrace. This will differ from the ordinary parent if not all goals are traced, e.g. if the goal in question is reached in zip mode. A *debugger-ancestor* of a goal is any of its ancestors on the backtrace.

In the `goal` and `ancestor` tests above, there is a given module qualified goal template, say *ModT*:*GoalT*, and it is matched against a concrete goal term *Mod*:*Goal* in the execution state. This matching is carried out as follows:

a. It is checked that *Goal* is an instance of *GoalT*.
b. *Goal* and *GoalT* are unified.
c. It is checked that *Mod* and *ModT* are either unifiable (and are unified), or name such modules in which *Goal* has the same meaning, i.e. either one of *Mod*:*Goal* and *ModT*:*Goal* is an exported variant of the other, or both are imported from the same module.

Similar matching rules apply for predicate functors, in the `pred` condition. In this test the argument holds a module qualified functor template, say *ModT*:*Name*/*Arity*, and this is matched against a concrete goal term *Mod*:*Goal* in the execution state.

a. It is checked that the functor of *Goal* unifies with *Name*/*Arity*, and this unification is carried out.
b. It is checked that *Mod* and *ModT* are either unifiable (and are unified), or name such modules in which *Goal* has the same meaning.

### 7.9.2 Tests Related to Source Information

These tests provide access to source related information. The `file` and `line` tests will fail if no source information is present. The `parent_clause` and `parent_pred` tests are available for interpreted code only, they will fail in compiled code.

`file(`*`File`*`)`
: The current goal is invoked from a file whose absolute name is *File*.

`line(`*`File`*`,`*`Line`*`)`
: The current goal is invoked from line *Line*, from within a file whose absolute name is *File*.

`line(`*`Line`*`)`
: The current goal is invoked from line *Line*.

`parent_clause(`*`Cl`*`)`
: The current goal is invoked from clause *Cl*.

`parent_clause(`*`Cl`*`,`*`Sel`*`)`
: The current goal is invoked from clause *Cl* and within its body it is pointed to by the subterm selector *Sel*.

`parent_clause(Cl,Sel,I)`
: The current goal is invoked from clause *Cl*, it is pointed to by the subterm selector *Sel* within its body, and it is the *I*th goal within it. The goals in the body are counted following their textual occurrence.

`parent_pred(Pred)`
: The current goal is invoked from predicate *Pred*.

`parent_pred(Pred,N)`
: The current goal is invoked from predicate *Pred*, clause number *N*.

The `parent_pred` tests match their first argument against the functor of the parent predicate in the same way as the `pred` test does, see the notes in the previous section (Section 7.9.1 [Goal Tests], page 121).

### 7.9.3 Tests Related to the Current Port

These tests can only be used inside the debugger and only when focused on the current invocation. If they appear in `execution_state/2` or in `execution_state/1` called from outside the debugger, an exception will be raised.

The notion of port in breakpoint handling is more general than outlined earlier in Section 7.1 [Procedure Box], page 75. Here, the following terms are used to describe a port:

```
call, exit(nondet), exit(det), redo, fail,
exception(Exception), block, unblock
```

Furthermore, the atoms `exit` and `exception` can be used in the `port` condition (see below), to denote any of the two exit ports and an arbitrary exception port, respectively.

`port(Port)`
: The current execution port matches *Port* in the following sense: either *Port* and the current port unify, or *Port* is the functor of the current port (e.g. `port(exit)` holds for both `exit(det)` and `exit(nondet)` ports).

  As explained earlier, the port condition for a non Call port is best placed in the action part. This is because the failure of the action part will cause the debugger to pass through the Call port silently, and to build a procedure box, even in zip mode. The following idiom is suggested for creating breakpoints at non Call ports:

  ```
  add_breakpoint(Tests-[port(Port),Actions], BID).
  ```

`bid(BID)`
: The breakpoint being examined has a breakpoint identifier *BID*. (*BID* = `none` if no breakpoint was selected.)

`mode(Mode)`
: *Mode* is the value of the `mode` variable, which normally reflects the current debugger mode.

`command(Command)`
: *Command* is the value of the `command` variable, which is the command to be executed by default, if the breakpoint is selected.

`show(Show)`
: *Show* is the value of the `show` variable, i.e. the default show method (the method for displaying the goal in the trace message).

The last three of the above tests access the *debugger action variables*. These breakpoint conditions have a different meaning in the action part. For example, the condition `mode(trace)`, if it occurs in the tests, *checks* if the current debugger mode is `trace`. On the other hand, if the same term occurs within the action part, it *sets* the debugger mode to `trace`.

To support the querying of the action variables in the action part, the following breakpoint condition is provided:

`get(ActVar)`
: Equivalent to *ActVar*, where this is an action variable test, i.e. one of the terms `mode(Mode)`, `command(Command)`, `show(Show)`. It has this meaning in the action part as well.

For the `port`, `mode`, `command` and `show` conditions, the condition can be replaced by its argument, if that is not a variable. For example the condition `call` can be used instead of `port(call)`. Conditions matching the terms listed above as valid port values will be converted to a `port` condition. Similarly, any valid value for the three debugger action variables is converted to an appropriate condition. These valid values are described in Section 7.9.9 [Action Variables], page 126.

### 7.9.4 Tests Related to the Break Level

These tests can be used both inside and outside the condition evaluation process, and also can be used in queries about past break levels.

`break_level(N)`
: We are at (or focused on) break level $N$ ($N = 0$ for the outermost break level).

`max_inv(MaxInv)`
: The last invocation number used within the current break level is *MaxInv*. Note that this invocation number may not be present in the backtrace (because the corresponding call exited determinately).

`private(Priv)`
: The private information associated with the break level is *Priv*. Similarly to `goal_private/1`, this condition refers initially to an unbound variable and can be used to store an arbitrary Prolog term. However, it is strongly recommended that *Priv* be used as an open ended list, see Section 7.6.9 [Storing User Information in the Backtrace], page 108.

### 7.9.5 Other Conditions

The following conditions are for prescribing or checking the breakpoint type. They cause an exception if used outside the debugger or in `execution_state/2`.

`advice` The breakpoint in question is of advice type.

`debugger` The breakpoint in question is of debugger type.

The following construct converts an arbitrary Prolog goal into a condition.

`true(`*`Cond`*`)`
: The Prolog goal *Cond* is true, i.e. `once(`*`Cond`*`)` is executed and the condition is satisfied iff this completes successfully. If an exception is raised during execution, then an error message is printed and the condition fails.

  The substitutions done on executing *Cond* are carried out. *Cond* is subject to module name expansion. If used in the test part of spypoint conditions, the goal should not have any side-effects, as the test part may be evaluated several times.

The following conditions represent the Boolean constants.

`true`

`[]` A condition that is always true. Useful e.g. in conditionals.

`false` A condition that is always false.

### 7.9.6 Conditions Usable in the Action Part

The meaning of the following conditions, if they appear in the action part, is different from their meaning in the test part.

`mode(`*`Mode`*`)`
: Set the debugger mode to *Mode*.

`command(`*`Command`*`)`
: Set the command to be executed to *Command*.

`show(`*`Show`*`)`
: Set the show method to *Show*.

The values admissible for *Mode*, *Command* and *Show* are described in Section 7.9.9 [Action Variables], page 126.

Furthermore, any other condition can be used in the action part, except for the ones specifying the breakpoint type (`advice` and `debugger`). Specifically, the `get` condition can be used to access the value of an action variable.

### 7.9.7 Options for Focusing on a Past State

The following ground terms can be used in the first argument of `execution_state/2` (see Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116). Alternatively, a list containing such terms can be used. If a given condition occurs multiple times, only the last one is considered. The order of conditions within the list does not matter.

`break_level(BL)`
: Focus on the current invocation of break level *BL*. *BL* is the break level number, the top-level being `break_level(0)`. For past break levels, the current invocation is the one from which the next break level was entered.

`inv(Inv)` Focus on the invocation number *Inv* of the currently focused break level.

### 7.9.8 Condition Macros

There are a few condition macros expanding to a list of other conditions:

`unleash` Expands to `[show(print),command(proceed)]`

`hide` Expands to `[show(silent),command(proceed)]`

`leash` Expands to `[show(print),command(ask)]`

The user can also define condition macros using the hook predicate below.

`breakpoint_expansion(+Macro, -Body)` *hook,development*
`user:breakpoint_expansion(+Macro, -Body)`
: This predicate is called with each (non-composite) breakpoint test or action, as its first argument. If it succeeds, then the term returned in the second argument (`Body`) is substituted for the original condition. The expansion is done at the time the breakpoint is added.

  Note that *Body* can be composite, but it cannot be of form *`Tests-Actions`*. This means that the whole *Body* will be interpreted as being in either the test or the action part, depending on the context.

  The built-in breakpoint conditions can not be redefined using this predicate.

### 7.9.9 The Action Variables

In this section we list the possible values of the debugger action variables, and their meaning.

Note that the Prolog terms, supplied as values, are copied when a variable is set. This is relevant primarily in case of the `proceed/2` and `flit/2` values.

Values allowed in the `show` condition:

`print` Write using options stored in the `debugger_print_options` Prolog flag.

`silent` Display nothing.

`display` Write using `display`.

`write` Write using `writeq`.

`write_term(`*`Options`*`)`
Write using options *Options*.

*`Method-Sel`*
Display only the subterm selected by *Sel*, using *Method*. Here, *Method* is one of the methods above, and *Sel* is a subterm selector.

Values allowed in the `command` condition:

`ask` Ask the user what to do next.

`proceed` Continue the execution without interacting with the user (cf. unleashing).

`flit` Continue the execution without building a procedure box for the current goal (and consequently not encountering any other ports for this invocation). Only meaningful at Call ports, at other ports it is equivalent to `proceed`.

`proceed(`*`Goal,New`*`)`
Unless at call port, first go back to the call port (retry the current invocation, see the `retry(`*`Inv`*`)` command value below). Next, unify the current goal with *Goal* and execute the goal *New* in its place. Create (or keep) a procedure box for the current goal.

This construct is used by the '`u`' (unify) interactive debugger command.

Both the *Goal* and *New* arguments are module name expanded when the breakpoint is added: the module of *Goal* defaults to the module of the current goal, while that of *New* to the module name of the breakpoint spec. If the command value is created during run time, then the module name of both arguments defaults to the module of the current goal.

The term `proceed(`*`Goal,New`*`)` will be copied when the `command` action variable is set. Therefore breakpoint specs of form

```
Tests - [goal(foo(X)),...,proceed(_,bar(X))]
```

should be avoided, and

```
Tests - [goal(foo(X)),...,proceed(foo(Y),bar(Y))
```

should be used instead. The first variant will not work as expected if `X` is non-ground, as the variables in the `bar/1` call will be detached from the original ones in `foo/1`. Even if `X` is ground, the first variant may be much less efficient, as it will copy the possibly huge term `X`.

`flit(`*`Goal,New`*`)`
Same as `proceed(`*`Goal,New`*`)`, but do not create (or discard) a procedure box for the current goal. (Consequently no other ports will be encountered for this invocation.)

Notes for `proceed/2`, on module name expansion and copying, also apply to `flit/2`.

`exception(E)`
: Raise the exception *E*.

`abort`
: Abort the execution.

`retry(Inv)`
: Retry the the most recent goal in the backtrace with an invocation number less or equal to *Inv* (go back to the Call port of the goal). This is used by the interactive debugger command '`r`', retry; see Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81.

`reexit(Inv)`
: Re-exit the the invocation with number *Inv* (go back to the Exit port of the goal). *Inv* must be an exact reference to an exited invocation present in the backtrace (exited nondeterminately, or currently being exited). This is used by the interactive debugger command '`je`', jump to Exit port; see Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81.

`redo(Inv)`
: Redo the the invocation with number *Inv* (go back to the Redo port of the goal). *Inv* must be an exact reference to an exited invocation present in the backtrace. This is used by the interactive debugger command '`jr`', jump to Redo port; see Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81.

`fail(Inv)`
: Fail the most recent goal in the backtrace with an invocation number less or equal to *Inv* (transfer control back to the Fail port of the goal). This is used by the interactive debugger command '`f`', fail; see Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81.

Values allowed in the `mode` condition:

`qskip(Inv)`
: Quasi-skip until the first port with invocation number less or equal to *Inv* is reached. Having reached that point, `mode` is set to `trace`. Valid only if $Inv \geq 1$ and furthermore $Inv \leq CurrInv$ for entry ports (Call, Redo), and $Inv < CurrInv$ for all other ports, where *CurrInv* is the invocation number of the current port.

`skip(Inv)`
: Skip until the first port with invocation number less or equal to *Inv* is reached, and set `mode` to `trace` there. *Inv* should obey the same rules as for `qskip`.

`trace`
: Creep.

`debug`
: Leap.

`zip`
: Zip.

`off`
: Continue without debugging.

## 7.10 Consulting during Debugging

It is possible, and sometimes useful, to consult a file whilst in the middle of program execution. Predicates that have been successfully executed and are subsequently redefined by a consult and are later reactivated by backtracking, will not notice the change of their definitions. In other words, it is as if every predicate, when called, creates a copy of its definition for backtracking purposes.

## 7.11 Catching Exceptions

Usually, exceptions that occur during debugging sessions are displayed only in trace mode and for invocation boxes for predicates with spypoints on them, and not during skips. However, it is sometimes useful to make exceptions trap to the debugger at the earliest opportunity instead. The hook predicate `user:error_exception/1` provides such a possibility:

`error_exception(+`*`Exception`*`)` *hook*
`user:error_exception(+`*`Exception`*`)`

This predicate is called at all Exception ports. If it succeeds, the debugger enters trace mode and prints an exception port message. Otherwise, the debugger mode is unchanged and a message is printed only in trace mode or if a spypoint is reached, and not during skips.

Note that this hook takes effect when the debugger arrives at an Exception port. For this to happen, procedure boxes have to be built, e.g. by running (the relevant parts of) the program in debug mode.

# 8 Built-In Predicates

SICStus Prolog provides a wide range of built-in predicates to perform all kinds of tasks; see the Table of Contents.

It is not possible to redefine built-in predicates. An attempt to do so will raise an exception. See [Pred Summary], page 769.

When introducing a built-in predicate, we shall present its usage with a mode spec, and optionally with an annotation containing one or more of:

*ISO* The predicate complies with the ISO Prolog Standard.

*ISO only* The predicate variant described complies with the ISO Prolog Standard and is valid in the `iso` execution mode only.

*SICStus only*
The predicate variant described is valid in the `sicstus` execution mode only.

*declaration*
A declaration that can't be redefined as a predicate.

*development*
The predicate is not available in runtime systems.

*extendible* The predicate is an extendible predicate.

*hook* The predicate is a hook predicate.

*hookable* The predicate is a hookable predicate.

*obsolescent*
The predicate is obsolescent and should be avoided in new code.

*reserved* A reserved construct that can't be defined as a predicate.

The following descriptions of the built-in predicates are grouped according to the above categorization of their tasks.

## 8.1 Input / Output

There are two sets of file manipulation predicates in SICStus Prolog. One set is inherited from DEC-10 Prolog. These predicates always refer to a file by specification. The other set of predicates is modeled after Quintus Prolog and refer to files as streams. Streams correspond to the file pointers used at the operating system level.

This second set of file manipulation predicates, the one involving streams, is supported by the ISO Prolog standard. Note that the notion of file is used here in a generalized sense; it may refer to a named file, the user's terminal, or some other device. The ISO Prolog standard refers to this generalized notion of file using the term *source/sink*.

A stream can be opened and connected to a file specification or file descriptor for input or output by calling the predicates `open/[3,4]`. These predicates will return a reference to a stream, which may then be passed as an argument to various I/O predicates. Alternatively, a stream can be assigned an alias at the time of opening, and referred to by this alias afterwards. The predicate `close/1` is used for closing a stream.

There are two types of streams, *binary* or *text*. Binary streams are seen as a sequence of bytes, i.e. integers in the range 0–255. Text streams, on the other hand, are considered a sequence of characters, represented by their character codes. SICStus Prolog handles wide characters, i.e. characters with codes larger than 255. The WCX (Wide Character eXtension) component of SICStus Prolog allows selecting various encoding schemes via environment variables or hook predicates; see Chapter 12 [Handling Wide Characters], page 301.

The predicates `current_stream/3` and `stream_property/2` are used for retrieving information about a stream, and for finding the currently existing streams.

Prolog streams can be accessed from C functions as well. See Section 9.6 [SICStus Streams], page 247, for details.

The possible formats of a stream are:

`'$stream'(`*X*`)`
: A stream connected to some file. *X* is an integer.

*Atom*
: A stream alias. Aliases can be associated with streams using the `alias(`*Atom*`)` option of `open/4`. There are also three predefined aliases:

  `user_input`
  : An alias initially referring to the UNIX `stdin` stream. The alias can be changed with `prolog_flag/3` and accessed by the C variable `SP_stdin`.

  `user_output`
  : An alias initially referring to the UNIX `stdout` stream. The alias can be changed with `prolog_flag/3` and accessed by the C variable `SP_stdout`.

  `user_error`
  : An alias initially referring to the UNIX `stderr` stream. The alias can be changed with `prolog_flag/3` and accessed by the C variable `SP_stderr`.

    This stream is used by the Prolog top-level and debugger, and for system messages.

Certain I/O predicates manipulate streams implicitly, by maintaining the notion of a *current input stream* and a *current output stream*. The current input and output streams are set to the `user_input` and `user_output` initially and for every new break (see Section 3.9 [Nested], page 31). The predicate `see/1` (`tell/1`) can be used for setting the current input (output) stream to newly opened streams for particular files. The predicate `seen/0` (`told/0`) closes

the current input (output) stream, and resets it to the standard input (output) stream. The predicate `seeing/1` (`telling/1`) is used for retrieving the file name associated with the current input (output) streams.

The file specification `user` stands for the standard input or output stream, depending on context. Terminal output is only guaranteed to be displayed if the output stream is explicitly flushed.

A file specification *FileSpec* other than `user` must be an atom or a compound term. It is subject to *syntactic rewriting*. Depending on the operation, the resulting absolute filename is subject to further processing. Syntactic rewriting is performed wrt. a context directory *Context*, in the follows steps:

- If *FileSpec* has the form `Path(File)`, it is rewritten by first looking up a clause of the hook predicate `user:file_search_path(Path,Expansion)`. If such a clause is found, and *Expansion* can be rewritten to the atomic file name *FirstPart*, and *File* can be rewritten to the atomic file name *SecondPart*, then *FileSpec* is rewritten to `FirstPart/SecondPart`.
- Under Windows, all '\' characters are converted to '`/`'.
- If *FileSpec* is a relative file name, *Context* is prepended to it.
- *FileSpec* is normalized by dividing it into components and processing these components. A component is defined to be those characters:
  1. Between the beginning of the file name and the end of the file name if there are no '`/`'s in the file name.
  2. Between the beginning of the file name and the first '`/`'.
  3. Between any two successive '`/`'-groups (where a '`/`'-group is defined to be a sequence of one or more '`/`'s with no non-'`/`' character interspersed.) Each '`/`'-group is replaced by a single '`/`'. Under Windows, however, a '`//`' prefix is not replaced by a single '`/`'.
  4. Between the last '`/`' and the end of the file name.

  To give the absolute file name, the following rules are applied to each component of *FileSpec*.
  1. The component '`~user`', if encountered as the first component of *FileSpec*, is replaced by the absolute path of the home directory of *user*. If *user* doesn't exist, a permission error is raised. Not yet applicable under Windows.
  2. The component '`~`', if encountered as the first component of *FileSpec*, is replaced by the absolute path of the home directory of the current user. Under Windows, '`~`' is replaced by the user's home directory using the environment variables `HOMEDRIVE` and `HOMEPATH`.
  3. The component '`$var`', if encountered as the first component of *FileSpec*, is replaced by the value of the environment variable *var*. If *var* doesn't exist, a permission error is raised.
  4. The component '`.`' is deleted.
  5. The component '`..`' is deleted together with the directory name syntactically preceding it. For example, '`a/b/../c`' is rewritten as '`a/c`'.

6. Any trailing '/' is deleted.
7. Under Windows, the normalization process ensures that the absolute file name is either a *network path* '`//hostname/sharename/...`' or begins with a drive letter followed by ':'.

For example, asssuming the user's home directory is '`/users/clyde`' and given the clauses

```
file_search_path(home, '$HOME').
file_search_path(demo, home(prolog(demo))).
file_search_path(prolog, prolog).
```

the file specification `demo(mydemo)` would be rewritten to `'/users/clyde/prolog/demo/mydemo'`, since `$HOME` is interpreted as an environment variable (Under UNIX, this is the user's home directory).

Failure to open a file normally causes an exception to be raised. This behavior can be turned off and on by of the built-in predicates `nofileerrors/0` and `fileerrors/0` described below.

### 8.1.1 Reading-in Programs

When the predicates discussed in this section are invoked, file specifications are treated as relative to the current working directory. While loading code, however, file specifications are treated as relative to the directory containing the file being read in. This has the effect that if one of these predicates is invoked recursively, the file specification of the recursive load is relative to the directory of the enclosing load. See Chapter 6 [Load Intro], page 65, for an introduction to these predicates.

Directives will be executed in order of occurrence. Be aware of the rules governing relative file specifications, as they could have an effect on the semantics of directives. Only the first solution of directives is produced, and variable bindings are not displayed. Directives that fail or raise exceptions give rise to warning or error messages, but do not terminate the load. However, these warning or error messages can be intercepted by the hook `user:portray_message/2`, which can call `abort/0` to terminate the load, if that is the desired behavior.

Predicates loading source code are affected by the character-conversion mapping, cf. `char_conversion/2`; see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142.

Most of the predicates listed below take an argument *Files*, which is a single file specification or a list of file specifications. Source, object and QL files usually end with a '`.pl`', '`.po`' and '`.ql`' suffix respectively. These suffixes are optional. Each file specification may optionally be prefixed by a module name. The module name specifies where to import the exported predicates of a module-file, or where to store the predicates of a non-module-file. The module is created if it doesn't exist already.

`absolute_file_name/3` (see Section 8.1.5 [Stream Pred], page 154) is used for resolving the file specifications. The file specification `user` is reserved and denotes the standard input stream.

These predicates are available in runtime systems with the following limitations:

- The compiler is not available, so compiling is replaced by consulting.
- The Prolog flags `discontiguous_warnings`, `redefine_warnings` and `single_var_warnings` have no effect.
- The `informational` Prolog flag is off by default, suppressing informational messages.
- The user is not prompted in the event of name clashes etc.

`load_files(:Files)`
`load_files(:Files, +Options)`

A generic predicate for loading the files specified by *Files* with a list of options to provide extra control. This predicate in fact subsumes the other predicates except `use_module/3`, which also returns the name of the loaded module, or imports a set of predicates from an existing module. *Options* is a list of zero or more of the following:

`if(X)`
: `true` (the default) to always load, or `changed` to load only if the file has not yet been loaded or if it has been modified since it was last loaded. A non-module-file is not considered to have been previously loaded if it was loaded into a different module. The file `user` is never considered to have been previously loaded.

`when(When)`
: `always` (the default) to always load, or `compile_time` to load only if the goal is not in the scope of another `load_files/[1,2]` directive occurring in a '`.po`' or '`.ql`' file.

  The latter is intended for use when the file only defines predicates that are needed for proper term or goal expansion during compilation of other files.

`load_type(LoadType)`
: `source` to load source files only, `object` to load object ('`.po`') files only, `ql` (**obsolescent**) to load '`.ql`' files only, or `latest` (the default) to load any type of file, whichever is newest. If the file is `user`, `source` is forced.

`imports(Imports)`
: `all` (the default) to import all exported predicates if the file is a module-file, or a list of predicates to import.

`compilation_mode(Mode)`
: `compile` to translate into compiled code, `consult` to translate into static, interpreted code, or `assert_all` to translate into dynamic, interpreted code.

  The default is the compilation mode of any ancestor `load_files/[1,2]` goal, or `compile` otherwise. Note that *Mode* has no effect when a '`.po`' or '`.ql`' file is loaded, and that it is recommended to use `assert_all` in conjunction with `load_type(source)`, to en-

sure that the source file will be loaded even in the presence of a '`.po`' or '`.ql`' file.

`wcx(Wcx)` To pass the term *Wcx* to the wide character extension component; see Section 12.3 [Prolog Level WCX Features], page 303.

`consult(:Files)`
`reconsult(:Files)` **obsolescent**
`[]`
`[:File|+Files]`

Consults the source file or list of files specified by *File* and *Files*. Same as `load_files(Files, [load_type(source),compilation_mode(consult)])`.

`compile(:Files)`

Compiles the source file or list of files specified by *Files*. The compiled code is placed in-core, i.e. is added incrementally to the Prolog database. Same as `load_files(Files, [load_type(source),compilation_mode(compile)])`.

`load(:Files)` **obsolescent**

Loads the '`.ql`' file or list of files specified by *Files*. Same as `load_files(Files, [load_type(ql)])`.

`ensure_loaded(:Files)` *ISO*

Compiles or loads the file or files specified by *Files* that have been modified after the file was last loaded, or that have not yet been loaded. The recommended style is to use this predicate for non-module-files only, but if any module-files are encountered, their public predicates are imported. Same as `load_files(Files, [if(changed)])`.

`use_module(:File)`

Compiles or loads the module-file specified by *File* if it has been modified after it was last loaded, or not yet been loaded. Its public predicates are imported. The recommended style is to use this predicate for module-files only, but any non-module-files encountered are simply compiled or loaded. Same as `load_files(File, [if(changed)])`.

`use_module(:File, +Imports)`

Loads the module-file *File* like `ensure_loaded/1` and imports the predicates in *Imports*. If any of these are not public, a warning is issued. *Imports* may also be set to the atom `all` in which case all public predicates are imported. Same as `load_files(File, [if(changed),imports(Imports)])`.

`use_module(-Module, :File, +Imports)`
`use_module(+Module, :File, +Imports)`

If used with +*Module*, and that module has already been loaded, this merely imports *Imports* from that module. Otherwise, this is equivalent to `use_module(File, Imports)` with the addition that *Module* is unified with the loaded module.

`fcompile(:Files)` *development*, **obsolescent**

Compiles the source file or list of files specified by *Files*. If *Files* are prefixed by a module name, that module name will be used for module name expansion

during the compilation (see Section 6.4 [Considerations], page 72). The suffix '`.pl`' is added to the given file names to yield the real source file names. The compiled code is placed on the '`.ql`' file or list of files formed by adding the suffix '`.ql`' to the given file names.

`source_file(?File)`
*File* is the absolute name of a source file currently in the system.

`source_file(:Head,?File)`
`source_file(-Head,?File)`
*Head* is the most general goal for a predicate loaded from *File*.

`require(:PredSpecOrSpecs)` *development*, **obsolescent**
*PredSpecOrSpecs* is a predicate spec or a list or a conjunction of such. The predicate will check if the specified predicates are loaded and if not, will try to load or import them using `use_module/2`. The file containing the predicate definitions will be located in the following way:

- The directories specified with `user:library_directory/1` are searched for a file '`INDEX.pl`'. This file is taken to contain relations between all exported predicates of the module-files in the library directory and its subdirectories. If an '`INDEX.pl`' is not found, `require/1` will try to create one by loading the library package `mkindex` and calling `make_index:make_library_index(Directory)` (see Chapter 15 [The Prolog Library], page 347).
- The first index entry for the requested predicate will be used to determine the file to load. An exception is raised if the predicate can't be located.
- Once an '`INDEX.pl`' is read, it is cached internally for use in subsequent calls to `require/1`.
- Not available in runtime systems.

### 8.1.2 Term and Goal Expansion

When a program is being read in, SICStus Prolog provides hooks that enable the terms being read in to be source-to-source transformed before the usual processing of clauses or directives. The hooks consist in user-defined predicates that define the transformations. One transformation is always available, however: *definite clause grammars*, a convenient notation for expressing grammar rules. See [Colmerauer 75] and [Pereira & Warren 80].

Definite clause grammars are an extension of the well-known context-free grammars. A grammar rule in Prolog takes the general form

```
head --> body.
```

meaning "a possible form for *head* is *body*". Both *body* and *head* are sequences of one or more items linked by the standard Prolog conjunction operator '`,`'.

Definite clause grammars extend context-free grammars in the following ways:

1. A non-terminal symbol may be any Prolog term (other than a variable or number).

2. A terminal symbol may be any Prolog term. To distinguish terminals from non-terminals, a sequence of one or more terminal symbols is written within a grammar rule as a Prolog list. An empty sequence is written as the empty list '`[]`'. If the terminal symbols are character codes, such code-lists can be written (as elsewhere) as strings. An empty sequence is written as the empty list, '`[]`' or '`""`'.
3. Extra conditions, in the form of Prolog procedure calls, may be included in the right-hand side of a grammar rule. Such procedure calls are written enclosed in '`{}`' brackets.
4. The left-hand side of a grammar rule consists of a non-terminal, optionally followed by a sequence of terminals (again written as a Prolog list).
5. Disjunction, if-then, if-then-else, and not-provable may be stated explicitly in the right-hand side of a grammar rule, using the operators '`;`' ('`|`'), '`->`', and '`\+`' as in a Prolog clause.
6. The cut symbol may be included in the right-hand side of a grammar rule, as in a Prolog clause. The cut symbol does not need to be enclosed in '`{}`' brackets.

As an example, here is a simple grammar that parses an arithmetic expression (made up of digits and operators) and computes its value.

```
expr(Z) --> term(X), "+", expr(Y), {Z is X + Y}.
expr(Z) --> term(X), "-", expr(Y), {Z is X - Y}.
expr(X) --> term(X).

term(Z) --> number(X), "*", term(Y), {Z is X * Y}.
term(Z) --> number(X), "/", term(Y), {Z is X / Y}.
term(Z) --> number(Z).

number(C) --> "+", number(C).
number(C) --> "-", number(X), {C is -X}.
number(X) --> [C], {"0"=<C, C=<"9", X is C - "0"}.
```

In the last rule, $C$ is the character code of some digit.

The query

```
| ?- expr(Z, "-2+3*5+1", []).
```

will compute $Z$=14. The two extra arguments are explained below.

Now, in fact, grammar rules are merely a convenient "syntactic sugar" for ordinary Prolog clauses. Each grammar rule takes an input string, analyses some initial portion, and produces the remaining portion (possibly enlarged) as output for further analysis. The arguments required for the input and output strings are not written explicitly in a grammar rule, but the syntax implicitly defines them. We now show how to translate grammar rules into ordinary clauses by making explicit the extra arguments.

A rule such as

```
p(X) --> q(X).
```

translates into

```
p(X, S0, S) :- q(X, S0, S).
```

If there is more than one non-terminal on the right-hand side, as in

```
p(X, Y) -->
        q(X),
        r(X, Y),
        s(Y).
```

then corresponding input and output arguments are identified, as in

```
p(X, Y, S0, S) :-
        q(X, S0, S1),
        r(X, Y, S1, S2),
        r(Y, S2, S).
```

Terminals are translated using the built-in predicate `'C'(S1, X, S2)`, read as "point *S1* is connected by terminal *X* to point *S2*", and defined by the single clause

```
'C'([X|S], X, S).
```

(This predicate is not normally useful in itself; it has been given the name upper-case '`c`' simply to avoid using up a more useful name.) Then, for instance

```
p(X) --> [go,to], q(X), [stop].
```

is translated by

```
p(X, S0, S) :-
        'C'(S0, go, S1),
        'C'(S1, to, S2),
        q(X, S2, S3),
        'C'(S3, stop, S).
```

Extra conditions expressed as explicit procedure calls naturally translate as themselves, e.g.:

```
p(X) --> [X], {integer(X), X>0}, q(X).
```

translates to

```
p(X, S0, S) :-
        'C'(S0, X, S1),
        integer(X),
        X>0,
        q(X, S1, S).
```

Similarly, a cut is translated literally.

Terminals are translated using the built-in predicate `'C'(S1, X, S2)`, read as "point *S1* is connected by terminal *X* to point *S2*", and defined by the single clause

Terminals on the left-hand side of a rule are also translated using `'C'/3`, connecting them to the output argument of the head non-terminal, e.g.:

```
is(N), [not] --> [aint].
```

becomes

```
is(N, S0, S) :-
        'C'(S0, aint, S1),
        'C'(S, not, S1).
```

Disjunction has a fairly obvious translation, e.g.:

```
args(X, Y) -->
        (   dir(X), [to], indir(Y)
        ;   indir(Y), dir(X)
        ).
```

translates to

```
args(X, Y, S0, S) :-
        (   dir(X, S0, S1),
            'C'(S1, to, S2),
            indir(Y, S2, S)
        ;   indir(Y, S0, S1),
            dir(X, S1, S)
        ).
```

Similarly for if-then, if-then-else, and not-provable.

The built-in predicates that are concerned with grammar rules and other compile/consult time transformations are as follows:

`expand_term(+Term1,?Term2)`

If *Term1* is a term that can be transformed, *Term2* is the result. Otherwise *Term2* is just *Term1* unchanged. This transformation takes place automatically when grammar rules are read in, but sometimes it is useful to be able to perform it explicitly. Grammar rule expansion is not the only transformation available; the user may define clauses for the predicate `user:term_expansion/[2,4]` to perform other transformations. `user:term_expansion(Term1[,Layout1],Term2[,Layout2])` is called first, and only if it fails is the standard expansion used.

`term_expansion(+Term1,?TermOrTerms)` *hook*
`term_expansion(+Term1,+Layout1,?TermOrTerms,?Layout2)` *hook*
`user:term_expansion(+Term1,?TermOrTerms)`
`user:term_expansion(+Term1,+Layout1,?TermOrTerms,?Layout2)`

Defines transformations on terms read while a program is consulted or compiled. It is called for every *Term1* read, including at end of file, represented as the term `end_of_file`. If it succeeds, *TermOrTerms* is used for further processing; otherwise, the default grammar rule expansion is attempted. It is often useful to let a term expand to a list of directives and clauses, which will then be processed sequentially.

The 4 arguments version also defines transformations on the layout of the term read, so that the source-linked debugger can display accurate source code lines if the transformed code needs debugging. *Layout1* is the layout corresponding to *Term1*, and *Layout2* should be a valid layout of *TermOrTerms* (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142).

For accessing aspects of the load context, e.g. the name of the file being compiled, the predicate `prolog_load_context/2` (see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175) can be used.

`user:term_expansion/[2,4]` may also be used to transform queries entered at the terminal in response to the '`| ?-` ' prompt. In this case, it will be called with *Term1* = `?-(Query)` and should succeed with *TermOrTerms* = `?-(ExpandedQuery)`.

`goal_expansion(+Goal,+Module,?NewGoal)` *hook*
`user:goal_expansion(+Goal,+Module,?NewGoal)`

Defines transformations on goals while clauses are being consulted, compiled or asserted, *after* any processing by `user:term_expansion/[2,4]` of the terms being read in. It is called for every simple *Goal* in the calling context *Module* found while traversing the clause bodies. If it succeeds, *Goal* is replaced by *NewGoal*; otherwise, *Goal* is left unchanged. *NewGoal* may be an arbitrarily complex goal, and `user:goal_expansion/3` is recursively applied to its subgoals.

> **Please note**: the arguments of built-in meta-predicates such as `call/1`, `setof/3` and `on_exception/3` are *not* subject to such compile-time processing.

This predicate is also used to resolve any meta-calls to *Goal* at runtime via the same mechanism. If the transformation succeeds, *NewGoal* is simply called instead of *Goal*. Otherwise, if *Goal* is a goal of an existing predicate, that predicate is invoked. Otherwise, error recovery is attempted by `user:unknown_predicate_handler/3` as described below.

`user:goal_expansion/3` can be regarded as a macro expansion facility. It is used for this purpose to support the interface to attributed variables in `library(atts)`, which defines the predicates `M:get_atts/2` and `M:put_atts/2` to access module-specific variable attributes. These "predicates" are actually implemented via the `user:goal_expansion/3` mechanism. This has the effect

that calls to the interface predicates are expanded at compile time to efficient code.

For accessing aspects of the load context, e.g. the name of the file being compiled, the predicate `prolog_load_context/2` (see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175) can be used.

`phrase(:Phrase,?List)`
`phrase(:Phrase,?List,+Remainder)`

The list *List* is a phrase of type *Phrase* (according to the current grammar rules), where *Phrase* is either a non-terminal or more generally a grammar rule body. *Remainder* is what remains of the list after a phrase has been found. If called with 2 arguments, the remainder has to be the empty list.

`'C'(?S1,?Terminal,?S2)` **obsolescent**

Not normally of direct use to the user, this built-in predicate is used in the expansion of grammar rules (see above). It is defined as if by the clause `'C'([X|S], X, S).`

### 8.1.3 Input and Output of Terms

Most of the following predicates come in two versions, with or without a stream argument. Predicates without a stream argument operate on the current input or output stream, depending on context. Predicates with a stream argument can take stream reference or an alias in this argument position, the alias being replaced by the stream it was associated with.

Some of these predicates support a notation for terms containing multiple occurrences of the same subterm (cycles and DAGs). The notation is `@(Template,Substitution)` where *Substitution* is a list of *Var*=*Term* pairs where the *Var* occurs in *Template* or in one of the *Terms*. This notation stands for the instance of *Template* obtained by binding each *Var* to its corresponding *Term*. The purpose of this notation is to provide a finite printed representation of cyclic terms. This notation is not used by default, and `@/2` has no special meaning except in this context.

`read(?Term)` *ISO*
`read(+Stream,?Term)` *ISO*

The next term, delimited by a full-stop (i.e. a '`.`', possibly followed by layout text), is read from *Stream* and is unified with *Term*. The syntax of the term must agree with current operator declarations. If a call `read(Stream,Term)` causes the end of *Stream* to be reached, *Term* is unified with the term `end_of_file`. Further calls to `read/2` for the same stream will then raise an exception, unless the stream is connected to the terminal. The characters read are subject to character-conversion, see below.

`read_term(?Term,+Options)` *ISO*
`read_term(+Stream,?Term,+Options)` *ISO*

Same as `read/[1,2]` with a list of options to provide extra control or information about the term. *Options* is a list of zero or more of:

`syntax_errors(+Val)`
: Controls what action to take on syntax errors. *Val* must be one of the values allowed for the `syntax_errors` Prolog flag. The default is set by that flag.

`variables(?Vars)`
: *Vars* is bound to the list of variables in the term input, in left-to-right traversal order.

`variable_names(?Names)`
: *Names* is bound to a list of *Name*=*Var* pairs, where each *Name* is an atom indicating the name of a non-anonymous variable in the term, and *Var* is the corresponding variable.

`singletons(?Names)`
: *Names* is bound to a list of *Name*=*Var* pairs, one for each variable appearing only once in the term and whose name does not begin with '`_`'.

`cycles(+Boolean)`
: *Boolean* must be `true` or `false`. If selected, any occurrences of `@/2` in the term read in are replaced by the potentially cyclic terms they denote as described above. Otherwise (the default), *Term* is just unified with the term read in.

`layout(?Layout)`
: *Layout* is bound to a *layout term* corresponding to *Term*. The layout $Y$ of a term $X$ is one of:

- If $X$ is a variable or atomic term, $Y$ is the number of the line where $X$ occurs.
- If $X$ is a compound term, $Y$ is a list whose head is the number of the line where the first token of $X$ occurs, and whose remaining elements are the layouts of the arguments of $X$.
- `[]`, if no line number information is available for $X$.

`consume_layout(+Boolean)`
: *Boolean* must be `true` or `false`. If this option is `true`, `read_term/[2,3]` will consume the *layout-text-item* that follows the terminating '`.`' (this *layout-text-item* can either be a *layout-char* or a *comment* starting with a '`%`'). If the option is `false`, the *layout-text-item* will remain in the input stream, so that subsequent character input predicates will see it. The default of the `consume_layout` option is `true` in `sicstus` execution mode, and it is `false` in `iso` execution mode.

```
| ?- read_term(T, [layout(L), vari-
able_names(Va), singletons(S)]).
|: [
     foo(X),
     X = Y
     ].

L = [35,[36,36],[36,[37,37,37],38]],
S = ['Y'=_A],
T = [foo(_B),_B=_A],
Va = ['X'=_B,'Y'=_A]

| ?- read_term(T, [consume_layout(false)]), get_code(C).
|: 1.

C = 10,
T = 1

| ?- read_term(T, [consume_layout(true)]), get_code(C).
|: 1.
|: a

C = 97,
T = 1
```

`char_conversion(+InChar, +OutChar)` *ISO*

*InChar* and *OutChar* should be one-char atoms. If they are not the same, then the mapping of *InChar* to *OutChar* is added to the character-conversion mapping. This means that in all subsequent term and program input operations any *unquoted* occurrence of *InChar* will be replaced by *OutChar*. The rationale for providing this facility is that in some extended character sets (such as Japanese JIS character sets) the same character can appear several times and thus have several codes, which the users normally expect to be equivalent. It is advisable to always quote the arguments of `char_conversion/2`.

If *InChar* and *OutChar* are the same, the effect of `char_conversion/2` is to remove any mapping of *InChar* from the character-conversion mapping.

`current_char_conversion(?InChar, ?OutChar)` *ISO*

The character of one-char atom *InChar* is mapped to that of the one-char atom *OutChar* in the current character-conversion mapping. Enumerates all such pairs on backtracking.

`write(?Term)` *ISO*

`write(+Stream,?Term)` *ISO*

The term *Term* is written onto *Stream* according to current operator declarations. Same as `write_term([Stream,] Term, [numbervars(true)])`.

`display(?Term)`

The term *Term* is displayed onto the standard output stream (which is not necessarily the current output stream) in standard parenthesized prefix notation. Same as `write_term(user, Term, [ignore_ops(true)])`.

`write_canonical(?Term)` *ISO*
`write_canonical(+Stream,?Term)` *ISO*

Similar to `write(Stream,Term)`. The term will be written according to the standard syntax. The output from `write_canonical/2` can be parsed by `read/2` even if the term contains special characters or if operator declarations have changed. Same as `write_term([Stream,] Term, [quoted(true),ignore_ops(true)])`.

`writeq(?Term)` *ISO*
`writeq(+Stream,?Term)` *ISO*

Similar to `write(Stream,Term)`, but the names of atoms and functors are quoted where necessary to make the result acceptable as input to `read/2`, provided the same operator declarations are in effect. Same as `write_term([Stream,] Term, [quoted(true),numbervars(true)])`.

`print(?Term)` *hookable*
`print(+Stream,?Term)` *hookable*

Prints *Term* onto *Stream*. This predicate provides a handle for user defined pretty printing:

- If *Term* is a variable then it is output using `write(Stream,Term)`.
- If *Term* is non-variable then a call is made to the user defined predicate `user:portray/1`. If this succeeds then it is assumed that *Term* has been output.
- Otherwise, `print/2` is called recursively on the components of *Term*, unless *Term* is atomic in which case it is written via `write/2`.

In particular, the debugging package prints the goals in the tracing messages, and the top-level prints the final values of variables. Thus you can vary the forms of these messages if you wish.

Note that on lists (`[_|_]`), `print/2` will first give the whole list to `user:portray/1`, but if this fails it will only give each of the (top-level) elements to `user:portray/1`. That is, `user:portray/1` will not be called on all the tails of the list.

Same as `write_term([Stream,] Term, [portrayed(true),numbervars(true)])`.

`portray(+Term)` *hook*
`user:portray(+Term)`

This should either print the *Term* and succeed, or do nothing and fail. In the latter case, the default printer (`write/1`) will print the *Term*.

`portray_clause(?Clause)`
`portray_clause(+Stream,?Clause)`

Writes the clause *Clause* onto *Stream* exactly as `listing/[0,1]` would have written it. Same as `write_term([Stream,] Term,`

[quoted(true),numbervars(true),indented(true)]) followed by a period and a newline and binding variables to terms of the form '$VAR'(*N*) yielding friendlier variable names.

write_term(+*Term*,+*Options*) *ISO*
write_term(+*Stream*,+*Term*,+*Options*) *ISO*

Same as write/[1,2] etc. with a list of options to provide extra control. This predicate in fact subsumes the above output predicates except portray_clause/[1,2], which additionally prints a period and a newline, and removes module prefixes that are redundant wrt. the current type-in module. *Options* is a list of zero or more of the following, where *Boolean* must be true or false (false is the default).

quoted(+*Boolean*)
: If selected, functors are quoted where necessary to make the result acceptable as input to read/1. write_canonical/1, writeq/1, and portray_clause/1 select this.

ignore_ops(+*Boolean*)
: If selected, *Term* is written in standard parenthesized notation instead of using operators. write_canonical/1 and display/1 select this.

portrayed(+*Boolean*)
: If selected, user:portray/1 is called for each subterm. print/1 selects this.

numbervars(+*Boolean*)
: If selected, terms of the form '$VAR'(*N*) where *N* is an integer >= 0, an atom, or a code-list, are treated specially (see numbervars/3). print/1, write/1, writeq/1, and portray_clause/1 select this.

cycles(+*Boolean*)
: If selected, the potentially cyclic term is printed in finite @/2 notation, as discussed above.

indented(+*Boolean*)
: If selected, the term is printed with the same indentation as is used by portray_clause/1 and listing/[0,1].

max_depth(+*Depth*)
: Depth limit on printing. *Depth* is an integer. 0 (the default) means no limit.

character_escapes(+*Boolean*)
: If selected, quoted atoms containing special characters will be printed using escape sequences (see Section 50.5 [Escape Sequences], page 794). The default value depends on the character_escapes Prolog flag.

`float_format(+Spec)`
How to print floats. *Spec* should be an atom of the form '`~NC`', like one of the `format/[2,3]` character sequences for printing floats. The default is '`~H`'.

`priority(+Prio)`
The term is printed as if in the context of an associative operator of precedence *Prio*, where *Prio* is an integer. The default is 1200. See Section 4.6 [Operators], page 54.

`format(+Format,:Arguments)`
`format(+Stream,+Format,:Arguments)`
Prints *Arguments* onto *Stream* according to format *Format*. *Format* is an atom or a code-list of formatting characters. If *Format* is an atom, it will be converted to a code-list. Thus:

```
| ?- format("Hello world!\n", []).
```

has the same effect as

```
| ?- format('Hello world!\n', []).
```

no matter which value the `double_quotes` Prolog flag has.

`format/[2,3]` is the Prolog equivalent to the C `stdio` function `printf()`.

*Arguments* is a list of items to be printed. If there are no items then an empty list should be supplied.

The default action on a format character is to print it. The character '`~`' introduces a control sequence. To print a '`~`' repeat it:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~~world!\n', []).
Hello ~world!
```

Unless character escapes have been switched off, the escape sequence (see Section 50.5 [Escape Sequences], page 794) '`\c`' (c for continue) is useful when formatting a string for readability. It causes all characters up to, but not including, the next non-layout character to be ignored.

```
| ?- format('Hello \c
             world!\n', []).
Hello world!
```

The general format of a control sequence is '`~NC`'. The character *C* determines the type of the control sequence. *N* is an optional numeric argument. An alternative form of *N* is '`*`'. '`*`' implies that the next argument in *Arguments* should be used as a numeric argument in the control sequence. Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello~4cworld!\n', [0'x]).
Helloxxxxworld!

| ?- format('Hello~*cworld!\n', [4,0'x]).
Helloxxxxworld!
```

The following control sequences are available.

'`~a`' The argument is an atom. The atom is printed without quoting.

'~*N*c' (Print character.) The argument is a number that will be interpreted as a character code. *N* defaults to one and is interpreted as the number of times to print the character.

'~*N*e'
'~*N*E' (Print float in exponential notation.) The argument is a float, which will be printed in exponential notation with one digit before the decimal point and *N* digits after it. If *N* is zero, one digit appears after the decimal point. A sign and at least two digits appear in the exponent, which is introduced by the letter used in the control sequence. *N* defaults to 6. Examples:

```
| ?- Pi=3.14159265, for-
mat('~e ~2E ~0E\n', [Pi,Pi,Pi]).
3.141593e+00 3.14E+00 3.0E+00
```

'~*N*f'
'~*N*F' (Print float in fixed-point notation.) The argument is a float, which will be printed in fixed-point notation with *N* digits after the decimal point. *N* may be zero, in which case a zero appears after the decimal point. At least one digit appears before it and at least one after it. *N* defaults to 6. Examples:

```
| ?- Pi=3.14159265, for-
mat('~f, ~2F, ~0F\n', [Pi,Pi,Pi]).
3.141593, 3.14, 3.0
```

'~*N*g'
'~*N*G' (Print float in generic notation.) The argument is a float, which will be printed in 'f' or 'e' (or 'E' if 'G' is used) notation with *N* significant digits. If *N* is zero, one significant digit is printed. 'E' notation is used if the exponent from its conversion is less than -4 or greater than or equal to *N*, otherwise 'f' notation. Trailing zeroes are removed from the fractional part of the result. A decimal point and at least one digit after it always appear. *N* defaults to 6. Examples:

```
| ?- for-
mat('~g ~2G ~0G\n', [1.23456789e+10, 3.14159265, 0.0123]).
1.23457e+10 3.1 0.01
```

'~*N*h'
'~*N*H' (Print float precisely.) The argument is a float, which will be printed in 'f' or 'e' (or 'E' if 'H' is used) notation with *d* significant digits, where *d* is the smallest number of digits that will yield the same float when read in. 'E' notation is used if *N<0* or if the exponent is less than *-N-1* or greater than or equal to *N+d*, otherwise 'f' notation. *N* defaults to 3. Examples:

```
| ?- F = 123000.0, G = 0.000123,
     format('~h ~h ~2h ~2H ~-
1H\n', [F,G,F,G,3.14]).
123000.0 0.000123 1.23e+05 1.23E-04 3.14E+00
```

The intuition is that for numbers like 123000000.0, at most $N$ consecutive zeroes before the decimal point are allowed in '`f`' notation. Similarly for numbers like 0.000000123.

'`E`' notation is forced by using '`~-1H`'. '`F`' is forced by using '`~999H`'.

'`~Nd`' (Print decimal.) The argument is an integer. $N$ is interpreted as the number of digits after the decimal point. If $N$ is 0 or missing, no decimal point will be printed. Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~1d world!\n', [42]).
Hello 4.2 world!

| ?- format('Hello ~d world!\n', [42]).
Hello 42 world!
```

'`~ND`' (Print decimal.) The argument is an integer. Identical to '`~Nd`' except that '`,`' will separate groups of three digits to the left of the decimal point. Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~1D world!\n', [12345]).
Hello 1,234.5 world!
```

'`~Nr`' (Print radix.) The argument is an integer. $N$ is interpreted as a radix, $2 \leq N \leq 36$. If $N$ is missing the radix defaults to 8. The letters '`a-z`' will denote digits larger than 9. Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~2r world!\n', [15]).
Hello 1111 world!

| ?- format('Hello ~16r world!\n', [15]).
Hello f world!
```

'`~NR`' (Print radix.) The argument is an integer. Identical to '`~Nr`' except that the letters '`A-Z`' will denote digits larger than 9. Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~16R world!\n', [15]).
Hello F world!
```

'`~Ns`' (Print string.) The argument is a code-list. Exactly $N$ characters will be printed. $N$ defaults to the length of the string. Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~4s ~4s!\n', ["new","world"]).
Hello new  worl!

| ?- format('Hello ~s world!\n', ["new"]).
Hello new world!
```

'`~i`' (Ignore.) The argument, which may be of any type, is ignored. Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~i~s world!\n', ["old","new"]).
Hello new world!
```

'`~k`' (Print canonical.) The argument may be of any type. The argument will be passed to `write_canonical/1` (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142). Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~k world!\n', [[a,b,c]]).
Hello .(a,.(b,.(c,[]))) world!
```

'~p' (Print.) The argument may be of any type. The argument will be passed to `print/1` (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142). Example:

```
| ?- assert((portray([X|Y]) :- print(cons(X,Y)))).
| ?- format('Hello ~p world!\n', [[a,b,c]]).
Hello cons(a,cons(b,cons(c,[]))) world!
```

'~q' (Print quoted.) The argument may be of any type. The argument will be passed to `writeq/1` (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142). Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~q world!\n', [['A','B']]).
Hello ['A','B'] world!
```

'~w' (Write.) The argument may be of any type. The argument will be passed to `write/1` (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142). Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~w world!\n', [['A','B']]).
Hello [A,B] world!
```

'~@' (Call.) The argument is a goal, which will be called and expected to print on the current output stream. If the goal performs other side-effects or does not succeed determinately, the behavior is undefined. Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~@ world!\n', [write(new)]).
Hello new world!
```

'~~' (Print tilde.) Takes no argument. Prints '~'. Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~~ world!\n', []).
Hello ~ world!
```

'~*N*n' (Print newline.) Takes no argument. Prints *N* newlines. *N* defaults to 1. Example:

```
| ?- format('Hello ~n world!\n', []).
Hello
 world!
```

'~N' (Print Newline.) Prints a newline if not at the beginning of a line.

The following control sequences set column boundaries and specify padding. A column is defined as the available space between two consecutive column boundaries on the same line. A boundary is initially assumed at line position 0. The specifications only apply to the line currently being written.

When a column boundary is set ('~|' or '~+') and there are fewer characters written in the column than its specified width, the remaining space is divided equally amongst the pad sequences ('~t') in the column. If there are no pad sequences, the column is space padded at the end.

If '~|' or '~+' specifies a position preceding the current position, the boundary is set at the current position.

‘~*N*|’ Set a column boundary at line position *N*. *N* defaults to the current position.

‘~*N*+’ Set a column boundary at *N* positions past the previous column boundary. *N* defaults to 8.

‘~*N*t’ Specify padding in a column. *N* is the fill character code. *N* may also be specified as ‘*C* where *C* is the fill character. The default fill character is ⟨SPC⟩. Any (‘~t’) after the last column boundary on a line is ignored.

Example:

```
| ?-    format('~`*t NICE TABLE ~`*t~61|~n', []),
        format('*~t*~61|~n', []),
        format('*~t~a~20|~t~a~t~20+~a~t~20+~t*~61|~n',
               ['Right aligned','Centered','Left aligned']),
        format('*~t~d~20|~t~d~t~20+~d~t~20+~t*~61|~n',
               [123,45,678]),
        format('*~t~d~20|~t~d~t~20+~d~t~20+~t*~61|~n',
               [1,2345,6789]),
        format('~`*t~61|~n', []).

************************ NICE TA-
BLE *************************
*                                                            *
*      Right aligned      Cen-
tered      Left aligned        *
*                123         45         678                  *
*                  1        2345        6789                 *
**************************************************************
```

### 8.1.4 Character Input/Output

Most of character I/O predicates have several variants:

*bytes vs. characters*
: There are separate predicates for binary I/O, which work on bytes, and for text I/O, which work on characters. The former have the suffix ‘`_byte`’, e.g. `put_byte`.

*character codes vs. one-char atoms*
: The text I/O predicates come in two variants, those that use character codes (suffix ‘`_code`’, e.g. `put_code`), and those using one-char atoms (suffix ‘`_char`’, e.g. `put_char`).

*SICStus compatibility predicates*
: The SICStus compatibility predicates work on both binary and text streams and use character codes or bytes, depending on the stream type. They normally have no suffix (e.g. `put`), with the exception of `peek_char`.

*explicit vs. implicit stream*

Each of the above predicates comes in two variants: with an explicit first argument, which is the stream or alias to which the predicate applies (e.g. `put_byte(Stream, Byte)`), or without the stream argument, in which case the current input or output stream is used, depending on the context (e.g. `put_byte(Byte)`).

*I/O on standard streams*

These are variants of SICStus compatibility predicates that always work on the standard input or output. These predicates have the prefix `tty`, e.g. `ttyput(Code)`.

`nl` *ISO*
`nl(+Stream)` *ISO*

A new line is started on the text stream *Stream* by printing a ⟨LFD⟩. If *Stream* is connected to the terminal, its buffer is flushed.

`get_code(?Code)` *ISO*
`get_code(+Stream,?Code)` *ISO*

*Code* is the character code of the next character read from text stream *Stream*. If all characters of *Stream* have been read, *Code* is -1, and further calls to `get_code/2` for the same stream will normally raise an exception, unless the stream is connected to the terminal (but see the `eof_action` option of `open/4`; see Section 8.1.5 [Stream Pred], page 154).

`get_char(?Char)` *ISO*
`get_char(+Stream,?Char)` *ISO*

*Char* is the one-char atom naming the next character read from text stream *Stream*. If all characters of *Stream* have been read, *Char* is `end_of_file`, and further calls to `get_char/2` for the same stream will normally raise an exception, unless the stream is connected to the terminal (but see the `eof_action` option of `open/4`; see Section 8.1.5 [Stream Pred], page 154).

`get_byte(?Byte)` *ISO*
`get_byte(+Stream,?Byte)` *ISO*

*Byte* is the next byte read from the binary stream *Stream*. It has the same behavior at the end of stream as `get_code`.

`get0(?Code)` **obsolescent**
`get0(+Stream,?Code)` **obsolescent**

A combination of `get_code` and `get_byte`: *Code* is the next character code or byte read from the arbitrary stream *Stream*.

`get(?N)` **obsolescent**
`get(+Stream,?N)` **obsolescent**

Same as `get0/2`, except *N* is the character code of the next character that is not a *layout-char* (see Section 50.4 [Token String], page 790) read from *Stream*.

`peek_code(?Code)` *ISO*
`peek_code(+Stream,?Code)` *ISO*

*Code* is the character code of the next character from text stream *Stream*, or -1, if all characters of *Stream* have been read. The character is not actually read; it is only looked at and is still available for subsequent input.

`peek_char(?Char)` *ISO only*
`peek_char(+Stream,?Char)` *ISO only*

*Char* is the one-char atom naming the next character from text stream *Stream*, or `end_of_file`, if all characters of *Stream* have been read. The character is not actually read.

`peek_char(?Code)` *SICStus only*
`peek_char(+Stream,?Code)` *SICStus only*

Identical to `peek_code`.

`peek_byte(?Byte)` *ISO*
`peek_byte(+Stream,?Byte)` *ISO*

*Byte* is the next byte from binary stream *Stream*, or -1, if all bytes of *Stream* have been read. The byte is not actually read.

`skip(+Code)` **obsolescent**
`skip(+Stream,+Code)` **obsolescent**

Skips just past the next character code *Code* from *Stream*. *Code* may be an arithmetic expression.

`skip_line`
`skip_line(+Stream)`

Skips just past the next ⟨LFD⟩ from the text stream *Stream*.

`read_line(-Line)`
`read_line(+Stream, -Line)`

Reads one line of input from *Stream*, and returns the code-list *Line*. When the end of file is reached, *Line* is the atom `end_of_file`, and on subsequent calls an exception is raised.

`put_code(+Code)` *ISO*
`put_code(+Stream,+Code)` *ISO*

Character code *Code* is output onto text stream *Stream*.

`put_char(+Char)` *ISO*
`put_char(+Stream,+Char)` *ISO*

The character named by the one-char atom *Char* is output onto text stream *Stream*.

`put_byte(+Byte)` *ISO*
`put_byte(+Stream,+Byte)` *ISO*

Byte *Byte* is output onto binary stream *Stream*.

`put(+Code)` **obsolescent**
`put(+Stream,+Code)` **obsolescent**

A combination of `put_code` and `put_byte`: *Code* is output onto (an arbitrary stream) *Stream*. *Code* may be an arithmetic expression.

`tab(+N)` **obsolescent**
`tab(+Stream,+N)` **obsolescent**

*N* spaces are output onto text stream *Stream*. *N* may be an arithmetic expression.

The above predicates are the ones that are the most commonly used, as they can refer to any streams. The predicates listed below always refer to the standard input and output streams. They are provided for compatibility with DEC-10 character I/O, and are actually redundant and easily recoded in terms of the above predicates.

`ttynl` **obsolescent**

Same as `nl(user_output)`.

`ttyflush` **obsolescent**

Same as `flush_output(user_output)`.

`ttyget0(?N)` **obsolescent**

Same as `get0(user_input, N)`.

`ttyget(?N)` **obsolescent**

Same as `get(user_input, N)`.

`ttyput(+N)` **obsolescent**

Same as `put(user_output, N)`.

`ttyskip(+N)` **obsolescent**

Same as `skip(user_input, N)`.

`ttytab(+N)` **obsolescent**

Same as `tab(user_output, N)`.

### 8.1.5 Stream I/O

The following predicates are relevant to stream I/O. Character, byte and line counts are maintained per stream. All streams connected to the terminal, however, share the same set of counts. For example, writing to `user_output` will advance the counts for `user_input`, if both are connected to the terminal. Bidirectional streams use the same counters for input and output.

Wherever a stream argument appears as input (+*Stream*), a stream alias can be used instead.

`absolute_file_name(+FileSpec,-AbsFileName)`
`absolute_file_name(+FileSpec,-AbsFileName,+Options)`

If *FileSpec* is `user`, then *AbsFileName* is unified with `user`; this "file name" stands for the standard input or output stream, depending on context. Otherwise, unifies *AbsFileName* with the first absolute file name that corresponds to the relative file specification *FileSpec* and that satisfies the access modes given by *Options*. *Options* is a list of zero or more of the following, the default being the empty list:

`ignore_underscores(+Boolean)`
: *Boolean* must be `true` or `false`. If `true`, when constructing an absolute file name that matches the given access modes, two names are tried: First the absolute file name derived directly from *FileSpec*, and then the file name obtained by first deleting all underscores from *FileSpec*. If *false* (default), suppresses any deletion of underscores.

`extensions(+Ext)`
: Has no effect if *FileSpec* contains a file extension. *Ext* is an atom or a list of atoms, each atom representing an extension (e.g. `'.pl'`) that should be tried when constructing the absolute file name. The extensions are tried in the order they appear in the list. Default value is *Ext* = ['']], i.e. only the given *FileSpec* is tried, no extension is added. To specify `extensions('')` or `extensions([])` is equal to not giving any extensions option at all.

`file_type(+Type)`
: Picks an adequate extension for the operating system currently running, which means that programs using this option instead of `extensions(Ext)` will be more portable between operating systems. This extension mechanism has no effect if *FileSpec* contains a file extension. *Type* must be one of the following atoms:

  `text` implies *extensions(['']).* *FileSpec* is a file without any extension. (Default)

  `source` implies *extensions(['.pl','']).* *FileSpec* is a Prolog source file, maybe with a '`.pl`' extension.

  `object` implies *extensions(['.po']).* *FileSpec* is a Prolog object file.

  `ql` implies *extensions(['.ql']).* *FileSpec* is a QL file. **Obsolescent.**

  `saved_state`
  : implies *extensions(['.sav','']).* *FileSpec* is a saved-state, maybe with a '`.sav`' extension.

  `foreign_file`
  : *FileSpec* is a foreign language object file, maybe with a system dependent extension.

  `foreign_resource`
  : *FileSpec* is a foreign language shared object file, maybe with a system dependent extension.

  `directory`
  : implies *extensions(['']).* *FileSpec* is a directory, not a regular file. Only when this option is present can `absolute_file_name/3` access directories without raising an exception.

`access(+Mode)`

*Mode* must be an atom or a list of atoms. If a list is given, *AbsFileName* must obey every specified option in the list. This makes it possible to combine a read and write, or write and exist check, into one call. Each atom must be one of the following:

`read` *AbsFileName* must be readable.

`write`
`append` If *AbsFileName* exists, it must be writable. If it doesn't exist, it must be possible to create.

`exist` The file represented by *AbsFileName* must exist.

`none` The file system is not accessed. The first absolute file name that is derived from *FileSpec* is returned. Note that if this option is specified, no existence exceptions can be raised. (Default)

`file_errors(+Val)`
`fileerrors(+Val)`

*Val* is one of the following, where the default is determined by the current value of the `fileerrors` Prolog flag:

`error` Raise an exception if a file derived from *FileSpec* has the wrong permissions, that is, can't be accessed at all, or doesn't satisfy the the access modes specified with the `access` option.

`fail` Fail if a file derived from *FileSpec* has the wrong permissions. Normally an exception is raised, which might not always be a desirable behavior, since files that do obey the access options might be found later on in the search. When this option is given, the search space is guaranteed to be exhausted.

`solutions(+Val)`

*Val* is one of the following:

`first` As soon as a file derived from *FileSpec* is found, commit to that file. Makes *absolute_file_name/3* determinate. (Default)

`all` Return each file derived from *FileSpec* that is found. The files are returned through backtracking. This option is probably most useful in combination with the option `file_errors(fail)`.

`relative_to(+FileOrDirectory)`

*FileOrDirectory* should be an atom, and controls how to resolve relative filenames. If it is `''`, file names will be treated as relative to the current working directory. If a regular, existing file is given, file names will be treated as relative to the directory containing

*FileOrDirectory*. Otherwise, file names will be treated as relative to *FileOrDirectory*.

If `absolute_file_name/3` is called from a goal in a file being loaded, the default is the directory containing that file. Otherwise, the default is the current working directory.

The functionality of `absolute_file_name/3` is most easily described as a four phase process, in which each phase gets an infile from the preceding phase, and constructs one or more outfiles to be consumed by the succeeding phases. The phases are:

1. Syntactic rewriting
2. Underscore deletion
3. Extension expansion
4. Access checking

Each of the three first phases modifies the infile and produces variants that will be fed into the succeeding phases. The functionality of all phases but the first are decided with the option list. The last phase checks if the generated file exists, and if not asks for a new variant from the preceding phases. If the file exists, but doesn't obey the access mode option, a permission exception is raised. If the file obeys the access mode option, `absolute_file_name/3` commits to that solution, subject to the `solutions` option, and unifies *AbsFileName* with the file name. For a thorough description, see below.

Note that the relative file specification *FileSpec* may also be of the form *Path(FileSpec)*, in which case the absolute file name of the file *FileSpec* in one of the directories designated by *Path* is returned (see the description of each phase below).

**Phase 1** This phase translates the relative file specification given by *FileSpec* into the corresponding absolute file name. See Section 8.1 [Input Output], page 131, for a description of syntactic rewriting. The rewrite is done wrt. the value of the `relative_to` option. There can be more than one solution, in which case the outfile becomes the solutions in the order they are generated. If the succeeding phase fails, and there are no more solutions, an existence exception is raised.

**Phase 2** See the `ignore_underscores` option.

**Phase 3** See the `extensions` and `file_type` options.

**Phase 4** See the `access` option.

Comments:

- If an option is specified more than once the rightmost option takes precedence. This provides for a convenient way of adding default values by putting these defaults at the front of the list of options.
- If `absolute_file_name/3` succeeds, and the file access option was one of `{read, write, append}`, it is guaranteed that the file can be opened with

open/[3,4]. If the access option was exist, the file does exist, but might be both read and write protected.

- If file_type(directory) is not given, the file access option is other than none, and a specified file refers to a directory, then absolute_file_name/3 signals a permission error.
- absolute_file_name/[2,3] is sensitive to the fileerrors Prolog flag, which determines whether the predicate should fail or raise permission errors when encountering files with the wrong permission. Failing has the effect that the search space always is exhausted.
- If *FileSpec* contains a '..' component, the constructed absolute file name might be wrong. This occurs if the parent directory is not the same as the directory preceding '..' in the relative file specification, which only can happen if a soft link is involved.
- This predicate is used for resolving file specification by the built-in predicates:
  - open/[3,4]
  - see/1
  - tell/1
  - consult/1
  - reconsult/1
  - compile/1
  - fcompile/1
  - load/1
  - ensure_loaded/1
  - use_module/[1,2,3]
  - load_files/[1,2]
  - load_foreign_files/2
  - load_foreign_resource/1
  - unload_foreign_resource/1
  - save_modules/2
  - save_predicates/2
  - save_files/2
  - restore/1
  - save_program/[1,2]

To check whether the file 'my_text' exists in the home directory, with one of the extensions '.text' or '.txt', and is both writable and readable:

```
| ?- absolute_file_name('~/my_text', File,
                         [extensions(['.text','.txt']),
                         access([read,write])]).
```

To check if the Prolog file 'same_functor' exists in some library, and also check if it exists under the name 'samefunctor':

```
| ?- absolute_file_name(library(same_functor), File,
                        [file_type(source), access(exist),
                         ignore_underscores(true)]).
```

`file_search_path(+Path,-Expansion)` *hook*
`user:file_search_path(+Path,-Expansion)`

Specifies how to rewrite compound file specifications to atomic file names, as described in Section 8.1 [Input Output], page 131. *Path* should be an atom and *Expansions* a file name. The predicate may succeed nondeterminately in this search for an atomic file name.

The predicate is undefined at startup, but behaves as if it were a dynamic, multifile predicate with the following clauses. See Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175 for more info on the Prolog flag `host_type`. The environment variables `SP_APP_DIR` and `SP_RT_DIR` expand respectively to the absolute path of the directory that contains the executable and the directory that contains the SICStus runtime.

```
file_search_path(library, Path) :-
        library_directory(Path).
file_search_path(system, Platform) :-
        prolog_flag(host_type, Platform).
file_search_path(application, '$SP_APP_DIR').
file_search_path(runtime, '$SP_RT_DIR').
```

`library_directory(-Directory)` *hook*
`user:library_directory(-Directory)`

Specifies a directory to be searched when a file specification of the form `library(Name)` is used. The predicate is undefined at startup, but behaves as if it were a dynamic, multifile predicate with a single clause defining the location of the Prolog library. The initial value is the same as the value of the environment variable `SP_LIBRARY_DIR`. The predicate may succeed nondeterminately in this search for a library directory.

`open(+FileName,+Mode,-Stream)` *ISO*
`open(+FileName,+Mode,-Stream,+Options)` *ISO*

If *FileName* is a valid file specification, the file that it denotes is opened in mode *Mode* (invoking the UNIX function `fopen`) and the resulting stream is unified with *Stream*. *Mode* is one of:

`read` Open the file for input.

`write` Open the file for output. The file is created if it does not already exist, the file will otherwise be truncated.

`append` Open the file for output. The file is created if it does not already exist, the file will otherwise be appended to.

If *FileName* is an integer, it is assumed to be a file descriptor passed to Prolog from C. The file descriptor is connected to a Prolog stream (invoking the POSIX function `fdopen`) which is unified with *Stream*.

*Options* is a list of zero or more of:

`type(+T)` Specifies whether the stream is a `text` or `binary` stream. Default is `text`.

`reposition(+Boolean)`
Specifies whether repositioning is required for the stream (`true`), or not (`false`). The latter is the default.

`alias(+A)`
Specifies that the atom *A* is to be an alias for the stream.

`eof_action(+Action)`
Specifies what action is to be taken when the end of stream has already been reported (by returning -1 or `end_of_file`), and a further attempt to input is made. *Action* can have the following values:

`error` An exception is raised. This is the default.

`eof_code` An end of stream indicator (-1 or `end_of_file`) is returned again.

`reset` The stream is considered not to be at end of stream and another attempt is made to input from it.

`wcx(Wcx)` Specifies to pass the term *Wcx* to the wide character extension component; see Section 12.3 [Prolog Level WCX Features], page 303.

`close(+X)` *ISO*
`close(+X, +Options)` *ISO*
If *X* is a stream or alias, the stream is closed. If *X* is the name of a file opened by `see/1` or `tell/1`, the corresponding stream is closed. *Options* is a list possibly containing the following element:

`force(Boolean)`
Specifies whether SICStus Prolog is to close the stream forcefully, even in the presence of errors (`true`), or not (`false`). The latter is the default. Currently this option has no effect.

`current_input(?Stream)` *ISO*
*Stream* is the current input stream. The current input stream is also accessed by the C variable `SP_curin`.

`current_output(?Stream)` *ISO*
*Stream* is the current output stream. The current output stream is also accessed by the C variable `SP_curout`.

`current_stream(?FileName,?Mode,?Stream)`
*Stream* is a stream that was opened in mode *Mode* and that is connected to the absolute file name *Filename* (an atom) or to the file descriptor *Filename* (an integer). This predicate can be used for enumerating all currently open streams through backtracking.

`set_input(+Stream)` *ISO*
Sets the current input stream to *Stream*.

`set_output(+Stream)` *ISO*

Sets the current output stream to *Stream*.

`flush_output` *ISO*
`flush_output(+Stream)` *ISO*

Flushes all internally buffered characters or bytes for *Stream* to the operating system.

`open_null_stream(-Stream)`

Opens a text output stream. Everything written to this stream will be thrown away.

`character_count(+Stream,?N)`

*N* is the number of characters read/written on text stream *Stream*. The count is reset by `set_stream_position/2`.

`byte_count(+Stream,?N)`

*N* is the number of bytes read/written on stream *Stream*. Meaningful for both binary and text streams. In the latter case it will differ from the number returned by `character_count/2` in the presence of wide characters. The count is reset by `set_stream_position/2`.

`line_count(+Stream,?N)`

*N* is the number of lines read/written on text stream *Stream*. The count is reset by `set_stream_position/2`.

`line_position(+Stream,?N)`

*N* is the number of characters read/written on the current line of text stream *Stream*. The count is reset by `set_stream_position/2`.

`stream_position(+Stream,?Position)`

*Position* is a term representing the current stream position of *Stream*. This operation is available for any Prolog stream. You can retrieve certain data from a stream position term using `stream_position_data/3`.

`stream_position_data(?Field, +Pos, ?Data)`

The *Field* field of the *Pos* term is *Data*. *Pos* is a stream position; *Field* is one of: `line_count`, `character_count`, `line_position`, `byte_count`.

`stream_property(?Stream, ?Property))` *ISO*

Stream *Stream* has property *Property*. Enumerates through backtracking all currently open streams, including the standard input/output/error streams, and all their properties.

*Property* can be one of the following:

`file_name(?F)`
: *F* is the file name associated with the *Stream*.

`mode(?M)` *Stream* has been opened in mode *M*.

`input` *Stream* is an input stream.

`output` *Stream* is an output stream.

`alias(?A)`
: *Stream* has an alias *A*.

`position(?P)`
: *P* is a term representing the current stream position of *Stream*. Same as `stream_position(Stream, P)`.

`end_of_stream(?E)`
: *E* describes the position of the input stream *Stream*, with respect to the end of stream. If not all characters have been read, then *E* is unified with `not`; otherwise, (all characters read) but no end of stream indicator (-1 or `end_of_file`) was reported yet, then *E* is unified with `at`; otherwise, *E* is unified with `past`.

`eof_action(?A)`
: *A* is the end-of-file action applicable to *Stream*, cf. the `eof_action` option of `open/4`.

`type(?T)` *Stream* is of type *T*.

`wcx(?Wcx)`
: Wide character extension information *Wcx* was supplied at opening *Stream*; see Section 12.3 [Prolog Level WCX Features], page 303.

`set_stream_position(+Stream,+Position)` *ISO*

*Position* is a term representing a new stream position of *Stream*, which is then set to the new position. This operation is only available for Prolog streams connected to "seekable devices" (disk files, usually). If the option `reposition(true)` was supplied at the successful opening of the stream, then `set_stream_position/2` is guaranteed to be successful.

`seek(+Stream,+Offset,+Method,-NewLocation)`

True if the stream *Stream* can be set to the byte offset *Offset* relative to *Method*, and *NewLocation* is the new byte offset from the beginning of the file after the operation. *Method* must be one of:

`bof` Seek from the beginning of the file stream.

`current` Seek from the current position of the file stream.

`eof` Seek from the end of the file stream.

This operation is only available for Prolog streams connected to "seekable devices" (disk files, usually) and is an interface to the `stdio` functions `fseek` and `ftell`. After applying this operation, the character count, line count and line position aspects of the stream position of *Stream* will be undefined.

`at_end_of_stream` *ISO*

`at_end_of_stream(+Stream)` *ISO*

The end of stream has been reached for the input stream *Stream*. An input stream reaches end of stream when all characters (except '`EOF`', i.e. `-1`) of the stream have been read. These predicates peek ahead for next input character if there is no character available on the buffer of *Stream*. Unless the stream is to be treated as connected to the terminal (see `SP_force_interactive()`,

Section 9.8.4.1 [Initializing the Prolog Engine], page 275), a stream remains at end of stream after '`EOF`' has been read, and any further attempt to read from the stream will raise an existence error (see Section 8.5 [Exception], page 173).

`at_end_of_line`
`at_end_of_line(+Stream)`
: The end of stream or end of line has been reached for the input stream *Stream*. An input stream reaches end of line when all the characters except ⟨LFD⟩ of the current line have been read. These predicates peek ahead for next input character if there is no character available on the buffer of *Stream*.

`fileerrors` **obsolescent**
: Undoes the effect of `nofileerrors/0`.

`nofileerrors` **obsolescent**
: After a call to this predicate, failure to locate or open a file will cause the operation to fail instead of the default action, which is to raise an exception.

### 8.1.6 DEC-10 Prolog File I/O

The following predicates manipulate files.

`see(+File)`
: The file *File* becomes the current input stream. *File* may be a stream previously opened by `see/1` or a file specification. In the latter case, the following action is taken: If there is a stream opened by `see/1` associated with the same file already, then it becomes the current input stream. Otherwise, the file denoted by *File* is opened for input and made the current input stream.

`seeing(?FileName)`
: *FileName* is unified with the name of the current input file, if it was opened by `see/1`, with the current input stream, if it is not `user_input`; otherwise, with `user`.

`seen`
: Closes the current input stream, and resets it to `user_input`.

`tell(+File)`
: The file *File* becomes the current output stream. *File* may be a stream previously opened by `tell/1` or a file specification. In the latter case, the following action is taken: If there is a stream opened by `tell/1` associated with the same file already, then it becomes the current output stream. Otherwise, the file denoted by *File* is opened for output and made the current output stream.

`telling(?FileName)`
: *FileName* is unified with the name of the current output file, if it was opened by `tell/1`, with the current output stream, if it is not `user_output`; otherwise, with `user`.

`told`

Closes the current output stream, and resets it to `user_output`.

### 8.1.7 An Example

Here is an example of a common form of file processing:

```
process_file(F) :-
        seeing(OldInput),
        see(F),                 % Open file F
        repeat,
          read(T),              % Read a term
          process_term(T),      % Process it
          T == end_of_file,     % Loop back if not at end of file
        !,
        seen,                   % Close the file
        see(OldInput).
```

The above is an example of a *repeat loop*. Nearly all sensible uses of `repeat/0` follow the above pattern. Note the use of a cut to terminate the loop.

## 8.2 Arithmetic

Arithmetic is performed by built-in predicates, which take as arguments *arithmetic expressions* and evaluate them. An arithmetic expression is a term built from numbers, variables, and functors that represent arithmetic functions. At the time of evaluation, each variable in an arithmetic expression must be bound to a non-variable expression. An expression evaluates to a number, which may be an integer or a float.

The range of integers is `[-2^2147483616, 2^2147483616)`. Thus for all practical purposes, the range of integers can be considered infinite.

The range of floats is the one provided by the C `double` type, typically `[4.9e-324, 1.8e+308]` (plus or minus). In case of overflow or division by zero, `iso` execution mode will raise an evaluation error exception. In `sicstus` execution mode no exceptions will be raised, instead appropriate infinity values, as defined by the IEEE standard, will be used.

Only certain functors are permitted in an arithmetic expression. These are listed below, together with an indication of the functions they represent. $X$ and $Y$ are assumed to be arithmetic expressions. Unless stated otherwise, the arguments of an expression may be any numbers and its value is a float if any of its arguments is a float; otherwise, the value is an integer. Any implicit coercions are performed with the `integer/1` and `float/1` functions.

The arithmetic functors are annotated with *[ISO]*, *[ISO only]*, or *[SICStus only]*, with the same meaning as for the built-in predicates; see Section 1.5 [ISO Compliance], page 6.

`+(X)` The value is *X*.

`-X` The value is the negative of *X*. *ISO*

`X+Y` The value is the sum of *X* and *Y*. *ISO*

`X-Y` The value is the difference of *X* and *Y*. *ISO*

`X*Y` The value is the product of *X* and *Y*. *ISO*

`X/Y` The value is the *float* quotient of *X* and *Y*. *ISO*

`X//Y` *ISO* The value is the *integer* quotient of *X* and *Y*. The result is always truncated towards zero. In `iso` execution mode *X* and *Y* have to be integers.

`X rem Y` *ISO*
The value is the *integer* remainder after dividing *X* by *Y*, i.e. `integer(X)-integer(Y)*(X//Y)`. The sign of a nonzero remainder will thus be the same as that of the dividend. In `iso` execution mode *X* and *Y* have to be integers.

`X mod Y` *ISO only*
The value is *X* modulo *Y*, i.e. `integer(X)-integer(Y)*floor(X/Y)`. The sign of a nonzero remainder will thus be the same as that of the divisor. *X* and *Y* have to be integers.

`X mod Y` *SICStus only*
The value is the same as that of *X* rem *Y*.

`integer(X)`
The value is the closest integer between *X* and 0, if *X* is a float; otherwise, *X* itself.

`float_integer_part(X)` *ISO*
The same as `float(integer(X))`. In `iso` execution mode, *X* has to be a float.

`float_fractional_part(X)` *ISO*
The value is the fractional part of *X*, i.e. `X - float_integer_part(X)`. In `iso` execution mode, *X* has to be a float.

`float(X)` *ISO*
The value is the float equivalent of *X*, if *X* is an integer; otherwise, *X* itself.

`X/\Y` *ISO* The value is the bitwise conjunction of the integers *X* and *Y*. In `iso` execution mode *X* and *Y* have to be integers.

`X\/Y` *ISO* The value is the bitwise disjunction of the integers *X* and *Y*. In `iso` execution mode *X* and *Y* have to be integers.

`X#Y` The value is the bitwise exclusive or of the integers *X* and *Y*.

`\(X)` *ISO* The value is the bitwise negation of the integer *X*. In `iso` execution mode *X* has to be an integer.

`X<<Y` *ISO* The value is the integer *X* shifted left by *Y* places. In `iso` execution mode *X* and *Y* have to be integers.

`X>>Y` *ISO* The value is the integer *X* shifted right by *Y* places. In `iso` execution mode *X* and *Y* have to be integers.

`[X]` A list of just one number $X$ evaluates to $X$. Since a quoted string is just a list of integers, this allows a quoted character to be used in place of its character code; e.g. `"A"` behaves within arithmetic expressions as the integer 65.

SICStus Prolog also includes an extra set of functions listed below. These may not be supported by other Prologs. All trigonometric and transcendental functions take float arguments and deliver float values. The trigonometric functions take arguments or deliver values in radians.

`abs(X)` *ISO*

The value is the absolute value of $X$.

`sign(X)` *ISO*

The value is the sign of $X$, i.e. -1, if $X$ is negative, 0, if $X$ is zero, and 1, if $X$ is positive, coerced into the same type as $X$ (i.e. the result is an integer, iff $X$ is an integer).

`gcd(X,Y)` The value is the greatest common divisor of the two integers $X$ and $Y$. In `iso` execution mode $X$ and $Y$ have to be integers.

`min(X,Y)` The value is the lesser value of $X$ and $Y$.

`max(X,Y)` The value is the greater value of $X$ and $Y$.

`msb(X)` The value is the position of the most significant nonzero bit of the integer $X$, counting bit positions from zero. It is equivalent to, but more efficient than, `integer(log(2,X))`. $X$ must be greater than zero, and in `iso` execution mode, $X$ has to be an integer.

`round(X)` *ISO only*

The value is the closest integer to $X$. $X$ has to be a float. If $X$ is exactly half-way between two integers, it is rounded up (i.e. the value is the least integer greater than $X$).

`round(X)` *SICStus only*

The value is the float that is the closest integral value to $X$. If $X$ is exactly half-way between two integers, it is rounded to the closest even integral value.

`truncate(X)` *ISO only*

The value is the closest integer between $X$ and 0. $X$ has to be a float.

`truncate(X)` *SICStus only*

The value is the float that is the closest integer between $X$ and 0.

`floor(X)` *ISO only*

The value is the greatest integer less or equal to $X$. $X$ has to be a float.

`floor(X)` *SICStus only*

The value is the float that is the greatest integral value less or equal to $X$.

`ceiling(X)` *ISO only*

The value is the least integer greater or equal to $X$. $X$ has to be a float.

`ceiling(X)` *SICStus only*

The value is the float that is the least integral value greater or equal to $X$.

`sin(X)` *ISO*
The value is the sine of *X*.

`cos(X)` *ISO*
The value is the cosine of *X*.

`tan(X)` The value is the tangent of *X*.

`cot(X)` The value is the cotangent of *X*.

`sinh(X)` The value is the hyperbolic sine of *X*.

`cosh(X)` The value is the hyperbolic cosine of *X*.

`tanh(X)` The value is the hyperbolic tangent of *X*.

`coth(X)` The value is the hyperbolic cotangent of *X*.

`asin(X)` The value is the arc sine of *X*.

`acos(X)` The value is the arc cosine of *X*.

`atan(X)` *ISO*
The value is the arc tangent of *X*.

`atan2(X,Y)`
The value is the four-quadrant arc tangent of *X* and *Y*.

`acot(X)` The value is the arc cotangent of *X*.

`acot2(X,Y)`
The value is the four-quadrant arc cotangent of *X* and *Y*.

`asinh(X)` The value is the hyperbolic arc sine of *X*.

`acosh(X)` The value is the hyperbolic arc cosine of *X*.

`atanh(X)` The value is the hyperbolic arc tangent of *X*.

`acoth(X)` The value is the hyperbolic arc cotangent of *X*.

`sqrt(X)` *ISO*
The value is the square root of *X*.

`log(X)` *ISO*
The value is the natural logarithm of *X*.

`log(Base,X)`
The value is the logarithm of *X* in the base *Base*.

`exp(X)` *ISO*
The value is the natural exponent of *X*.

`X ** Y` *ISO*
`exp(X,Y)` The value is *X* raised to the power of *Y*.

`inf` *SICStus only*
The value is infinity as defined in the IEEE standard.

`nan` *SICStus only*
The value is not-a-number as defined in the IEEE standard.

Variables in an arithmetic expression to be evaluated may be bound to other arithmetic expressions rather than just numbers, e.g.:

```
evaluate(Expression, Answer) :- Answer is Expression.

| ?- evaluate(24*9, Ans).
Ans = 216
```

Arithmetic expressions, as described above, are just data structures. If you want one evaluated you must pass it as an argument to one of the built-in predicates listed below. Note that `is/2` only evaluates one of its arguments, whereas all the comparison predicates evaluate both of theirs. In the following, $X$ and $Y$ stand for arithmetic expressions, and $Z$ for some term.

*Z* `is` *X* *ISO*

$X$, which must be an arithmetic expression, is evaluated and the result is unified with $Z$.

*X* `=:=` *Y* *ISO*

The numeric values of $X$ and $Y$ are equal.

*X* `=\=` *Y* *ISO*

The numeric values of $X$ and $Y$ are not equal.

*X* `<` *Y* *ISO*

The numeric value of $X$ is less than the numeric value of $Y$.

*X* `>` *Y* *ISO*

The numeric value of $X$ is greater than the numeric value of $Y$.

*X* `=<` *Y* *ISO*

The numeric value of $X$ is less than or equal to the numeric value of $Y$.

*X* `>=` *Y* *ISO*

The numeric value of $X$ is greater than or equal to the numeric value of $Y$.

## 8.3 Comparison of Terms

These built-in predicates are meta-logical. They treat uninstantiated variables as objects with values that may be compared, and they never instantiate those variables. They should *not* be used when what you really want is arithmetic comparison (see Section 8.2 [Arithmetic], page 164) or unification.

The predicates make reference to a *standard total ordering* of terms, which is as follows:

- Variables, by age (oldest first—the order is *not* related to the names of variables).
- Floats, in numeric order (e.g. -1.0 is put before 1.0).
- Integers, in numeric order (e.g. -1 is put before 1).

- Atoms, in alphabetical (i.e. character code) order.
- Compound terms, ordered first by arity, then by the name of the principal functor, then by age for mutables and by the arguments in left-to-right order for other terms. Recall that lists are equivalent to compound terms with principal functor `./2`.

For example, here is a list of terms in standard order:

```
[ X, -1.0, -9, 1, fie, foe, X = Y, foe(0,2), fie(1,1,1) ]
```

**Please note**: the standard order is only well-defined for finite (acyclic) terms. There are infinite (cyclic) terms for which no order relation holds. Furthermore, blocking goals (see Section 4.3 [Procedural], page 50) on variables or modifying their attributes (see Chapter 18 [Attributes], page 355) does not preserve their order.

These are the basic predicates for comparison of arbitrary terms:

*Term1* `==` *Term2* *ISO*

The terms currently instantiating *Term1* and *Term2* are literally identical (in particular, variables in equivalent positions in the two terms must be identical). For example, the query

```
| ?- X == Y.
```

fails (answers '`no`') because *X* and *Y* are distinct uninstantiated variables. However, the query

```
| ?- X = Y, X == Y.
```

succeeds because the first goal unifies the two variables (see Section 8.17 [Misc Pred], page 213).

*Term1* `\==` *Term2* *ISO*

The terms currently instantiating *Term1* and *Term2* are not literally identical.

*Term1* `@<` *Term2* *ISO*

The term *Term1* is before the term *Term2* in the standard order.

*Term1* `@>` *Term2* *ISO*

The term *Term1* is after the term *Term2* in the standard order.

*Term1* `@=<` *Term2* *ISO*

The term *Term1* is not after the term *Term2* in the standard order.

*Term1* `@>=` *Term2* *ISO*

The term *Term1* is not before the term *Term2* in the standard order.

Some further predicates involving comparison of terms are:

`?=(?X,?Y)`

*X* and *Y* are either syntactically identical or syntactically non-unifiable.

`compare(?Op,?Term1,?Term2)`

The result of comparing terms *Term1* and *Term2* is *Op*, where the possible values for *Op* are:

`=` if *Term1* is identical to *Term2*,

`<` if *Term1* is before *Term2* in the standard order,

`>` if *Term1* is after *Term2* in the standard order.

Thus `compare(=,Term1,Term2)` is equivalent to `Term1 == Term2`.

`sort(+List1,?List2)`
The elements of the list *List1* are sorted into the standard order (see Section 8.3 [Term Compare], page 168) and any identical elements are merged, yielding the list *List2*. (The time and space complexity of this operation is at worst *O(N lg N)* where *N* is the length of *List1*.)

`keysort(+List1,?List2)`
The list *List1* must consist of pairs of the form *Key-Value*. These items are sorted into order according to the value of *Key*, yielding the list *List2*. No merging takes place. This predicate is *stable*, i.e. if `K-A` occurs before `K-B` in the input, then `K-A` will occur before `K-B` in the output. (The time and space complexity of this operation is at worst *O(N lg N)* where *N* is the length of *List1*.)

## 8.4 Control

`+P , +Q` *ISO*
*P* and *Q*.

`+P ; +Q` *ISO*
*P* or *Q*.

`!` *ISO*
See Section 4.5 [Cut], page 52.

`\+ +P` *ISO*
Fails if the goal *P* has a solution, and succeeds otherwise. This is not real negation ("*P* is false"), but a kind of pseudo-negation meaning "*P* is not provable". It is defined as if by

```
\+(P) :- P, !, fail.
\+(_).
```

**In `sicstus` execution mode no cuts are allowed in *P*.** In `iso` execution mode cuts are allowed in *P* and their scope is the goal *P*.

Remember that with prefix operators such as this one it is necessary to be careful about spaces if the argument starts with a '`(`'. For example:

```
| ?- \+ (P,Q).
```

is this operator applied to the conjunction of *P* and *Q*, but

```
| ?- \+(P,Q).
```

would require a predicate `\+ /2` for its solution. The prefix operator can however be written as a functor of one argument; thus

```
| ?- \+((P,Q)).
```

is also correct.

`+P -> +Q ; +R` *ISO*

Analogous to

if $P$ then $Q$ else $R$

and defined as if by

```
(P -> Q; R) :- P, !, Q.
(P -> Q; R) :- R.
```

except the scope of any cut in $Q$ or $R$ extends beyond the if-then-else construct. **In `sicstus` execution mode no cuts are allowed in $P$.** In `iso` execution mode cuts are allowed in $P$ and their scope is the goal $P$.

Note that this form of if-then-else only explores *the first* solution to the goal $P$.

Note also that the '`;`' is not read as a disjunction operator in this case; instead, it is part of the if-then-else construction.

The precedence of '`->`' is less than that of '`;`' (see Section 4.6 [Operators], page 54), so the expression is read as

```
;(->(P,Q),R)
```

`+P -> +Q` *ISO*

When occurring as a goal, this construction is read as equivalent to

```
(P -> Q; fail)
```

`if(+P,+Q,+R)`

Analogous to

if $P$ then $Q$ else $R$

but differs from `P -> Q ; R` in that `if(P, Q, R)` explores *all* solutions to the goal $P$. There is a small time penalty for this—if $P$ is known to have only one solution of interest, the form `P -> Q ; R` should be preferred.

**In `sicstus` execution mode no cuts are allowed in $P$.** In `iso` execution mode cuts are allowed in $P$ and their scope is the goal $P$.

`once(+P)` *ISO*

Finds the first solution, if any, of goal $P$. Fails if no solutions are found. Will not explore further solutions on backtracking. Equivalent to

```
(P -> true; fail)
```

`otherwise`
`true` *ISO*

These always succeed. Use of `otherwise/0` is discouraged, because it is not as portable as `true/0`, and because the former may suggest a completely different semantics than the latter.

`false`
`fail` *ISO*

These always fail. Use of `false/0` is discouraged, because it is not as portable as `fail/0`, and because the latter has a more procedural flavor to it.

`repeat` *ISO*

Generates an infinite sequence of backtracking choices. In sensible code, `repeat/0` is hardly ever used except in *repeat loops*. A repeat loop has the structure

```
Head :-
        ...
        save_state(OldState),
        repeat,
          generate(Datum),
          action(Datum),
          test(Datum),
        !,
        restore_state(OldState),
        ...
```

The purpose is to repeatedly perform some *action* on elements that are somehow *generate*d, e.g. by reading them from a stream, until some *test* becomes true. Usually, *generate*, *action*, and *test* are all determinate. Repeat loops cannot contribute to the logic of the program. They are only meaningful if the *action* involves side-effects.

The only reason for using repeat loops instead of a more natural tail-recursive formulation is efficiency: when the *test* fails back, the Prolog engine immediately reclaims any working storage consumed since the call to `repeat/0`.

`call(:Term)` *ISO*
`incore(:Term)` **obsolescent**
`:Term`

If *Term* is instantiated to a term that would be acceptable as the body of a clause, then the goal `call(Term)` is executed exactly as if that term appeared textually in its place, except that any cut (`!`) occurring in *Term* only cuts alternatives in the execution of *Term*. Use of `incore/1` is not recommended.

If *Term* is not instantiated as described above, an exception is raised.

`call_cleanup(:Goal,:Cleanup)`

This construction can be used to ensure that *Cleanup* is executed as soon as *Goal* has completed execution, no matter how it finishes. In more detail:

When `call_cleanup/2` with a continuation *C* is called or backtracked into, first *Goal* is called or backtracked into. Then there are four possibilities:

1. *Goal* succeeds determinately, possibly leaving some blocked subgoals. *Cleanup* is executed with continuation *C*.
2. *Goal* succeeds with some alternatives outstanding. Execution proceeds to *C*. If a cut that removes the outstanding alternatives is encountered, *Cleanup* is executed with continuation to proceed after the cut. Also, if an exception *E* that will be caught by an ancestor of the `call_cleanup/2` *Goal* is raised, *Cleanup* is executed with continuation `raise_exception(E)`.
3. *Goal* fails. *Cleanup* is executed with continuation `fail`.

4. *Goal* raises an exception *E*. *Cleanup* is executed with continuation `raise_exception(E)`.

In a typical use of `call_cleanup/2`, *Cleanup* succeeds determinately after performing some side-effect; otherwise, unexpected behavior may result.

Note that the Prolog top-level operates as a read-execute-fail loop, which backtracks into or cuts the query when the user types `;` or ⟨RET⟩ respectively. Also, the predicates `halt/0` and `abort/0` are implemented in terms of exceptions. All of these circumstances can trigger the execution of *Cleanup*.

## 8.5 Error and Exception Handling

The built-in predicates described in this section are used to alter the control flow to meet exception and error conditions. The equivalent of a `raise_exception/1` is also executed by the built-in predicates when errors occur.

`catch(:ProtectedGoal,?Pattern,:Handler)` *ISO*
`on_exception(?Pattern,:ProtectedGoal,:Handler)`
`throw(+Exception)` *ISO*
`raise_exception(+Exception)`

`catch/3` is the same as `on_exception/3` (but note different argument order), and `throw/1` is the same as `raise_exception/1`. `on_exception/3` calls *ProtectedGoal*. If this succeeds or fails, so does the call to `on_exception/3`. If however, during the execution of *ProtectedGoal*, there is a call to `raise_exception(Exception)`, then *Exception* is copied and the stack is unwound back to the call to `on_exception/3`, whereupon the copy of *Exception* is unified with *Pattern*. If this unification succeeds, then `on_exception/3` calls the goal *Handler* in order to determine the success or failure of `on_exception/3`. Otherwise, the stack keeps unwinding, looking for an earlier invocation of `on_exception/3`. *Exception* may be any term.

In a development system, any previously uncaught exception is caught and an appropriate error message is printed before returning to the top level. In recursive calls to Prolog from C, uncaught exceptions are returned back to C instead. The printing of these and other messages in a development system is handled by the predicate `print_message/2` (see Section 8.13 [Messages and Queries], page 195).

The format of the exception raised by the built-in predicates depends on the execution mode. In `iso` execution mode the format is

```
error(ISO_Error, SICStus_Error)
```

where *ISO_Error* is the error term prescribed by the ISO Prolog standard, while *SICStus_Error* is the part defined by the standard to be implementation dependent. In case of SICStus Prolog this is the SICStus error term, which normally contains additional in-

formation, such as the goal and the argument number causing the error. Arguments are numbered from 1 upwards.

In `sicstus` execution mode, the SICStus error term is used when raising an exception in a built-in predicate.

The list below itemizes the error terms, showing the *ISO_Error* and *SICStus_Error* form of each one, in that order. Note that the SICStus and ISO error terms do not always belong to the same error class, and that the context and consistency error classes are extensions to the ISO Prolog standard.

The goal part of the error term may optionally have the form `$@(Callable,PC)` where *PC* is an internal encoding of the line of code containing the culprit goal or one of its ancestors.

`instantiation_error`
`instantiation_error(Goal,ArgNo)`
: *Goal* was called with insufficiently instantiated variables.

`type_error(TypeName,Culprit)`
`type_error(Goal,ArgNo,TypeName,Culprit)`
: *Goal* was called with the wrong type of argument(s). *TypeName* is the expected type and *Culprit* what was actually found.

`domain_error(Domain,Culprit)`
`domain_error(Goal,ArgNo,Domain,Culprit)`
: *Goal* was called with argument(s) of the right type but with illegal value(s). *Domain* is the expected domain and *Culprit* what was actually found.

`existence_error(ObjectType,Culprit)`
`existence_error(Goal,ArgNo,ObjectType,Culprit,Reserved)`
: Something does not exist as indicated by the arguments. If the `unknown` Prolog flag is set to `error`, this error is raised with *ArgNo* set to 0 when an undefined predicate is called.

`permission_error(Operation,ObjectType,Culprit)`
`permission_error(Goal,Operation,ObjectType,Culprit,Reserved)`
: The *Operation* is not permitted on *Culprit* of the *ObjectType*.

`context_error(ContextType,CommandType)`
`context_error(Goal,ContextType,CommandType)`
: The *CommandType* is not permitted in *ContextType*.

`syntax_error(Message)`
`syntax_error(Goal,Position,Message,Tokens,AfterError)`
: A syntax error was found when reading a term with `read/[1,2]` or assembling a number from its characters with `number_chars/2`. In the former case this error is raised only if the `syntax_errors` flag is set to `error`.

`evaluation_error(ErrorType,Culprit)`
`evaluation_error(Goal,ArgNo,ErrorType,Culprit)`
: An incorrect arithmetic expression was evaluated. Only occurs in `iso` execution mode.

`representation_error(ErrorType)`
`representation_error(Goal,ArgNo,ErrorType)`
A representation error occurs when the program tries to compute some well-defined value that cannot be represented, such as a compound term with arity > 255.

`consistency_error(Culprit1,Culprit2,Message)`
`consistency_error(Goal,Culprit1,Culprit2,Message)`
A consistency error occurs when two otherwise valid values or operations have been specified that are inconsistent with each other.

`resource_error(ResourceType)`
`resource_error(Goal,ResourceType)`
A resource error occurs when SICStus Prolog has insufficient resources to complete execution. The only value for *ResourceType* that is currently in use is `memory`.

`system_error`
`system_error(Message)`
An error occurred while dealing with the operating system.

It is possible to handle a particular kind of existence errors locally: calls to undefined predicates. This can be done by defining clauses for:

`unknown_predicate_handler(+Goal,+Module,-NewGoal)` *hook*
`user:unknown_predicate_handler(+Goal,+Module,-NewGoal)`
Called as a result of a call to an undefined predicate. *Goal* is bound to the goal of the undefined predicate and *Module* to the module where the call was made. If this predicate succeeds, *Module:NewGoal* is called; otherwise, the action taken is governed by the `unknown` Prolog flag.

The following example shows an auto-loader for library packages:

```
user:unknown_predicate_handler(Goal, Module, Goal) :-
        functor(Goal, Name, Arity),
        require(Module:(Name/Arity)).
```

## 8.6 Information about the State of the Program

`listing`
Lists onto the current output stream all the clauses in the database (in the type-in module; see Section 5.2 [Module Spec], page 59). Clauses listed onto a file can be consulted back.

`listing(:Spec)`
Lists all interpreted predicates covered by the generalized predicate spec *Spec*. For example:

```
| ?- listing([concatenate/3, reverse, m:go/[2,3], bar:_]).
```

`current_atom(?Atom)` *meta-logical*

*Atom* is an atom known to SICStus Prolog. Can be used to enumerate (through backtracking) all currently known atoms, and return each one as *Atom*.

`current_predicate(?Name,:Head)`
`current_predicate(?Name,-Head)`

*Name* is the name of a user defined or library predicate, and *Head* is the most general goal for that predicate, possibly prefixed by a module name. This predicate can be used to enumerate all user defined or library predicates through backtracking.

`current_predicate(?Name/?Arity)` *ISO*

*Name* is the name of a user defined or library predicate, possibly prefixed by a module name and *Arity* is its arity. This predicate can be used to enumerate all user defined or library predicates through backtracking.

`predicate_property(:Head,?Property)`
`predicate_property(-Head,?Property)`

*Head* is the most general goal for an existing predicate, possibly prefixed by a module name, and *Property* is a property of that predicate, where the possible properties are

- one of the atoms `built_in` (for built-in predicates) or `compiled` or `interpreted` (for user defined predicates) or `fd_constraint` for FD predicates see Section 34.9 [Defining Primitive Constraints], page 479.
- the atom `dynamic` for predicates that have been declared dynamic (see Section 6.2.2 [Dynamic Declarations], page 69),
- the atom `multifile` for predicates that have been declared multifile (see Section 6.2.1 [Multifile Declarations], page 68),
- the atom `volatile` for predicates that have been declared volatile (see Section 6.2.3 [Volatile Declarations], page 69),
- one or more terms `(block Term)` for predicates that have block declarations (see Section 6.2.5 [Block Declarations], page 70),
- the atom `exported` or terms `imported_from(ModuleFrom)` for predicates exported or imported from modules (see Chapter 5 [Module Intro], page 59),
- the term `(meta_predicate Term)` for predicates that have meta-predicate declarations (see Section 5.6 [Meta Decl], page 62).

This predicate can be used to enumerate all existing predicates and their properties through backtracking.

`current_module(?Module)`

*Module* is a module in the system. It can be used to backtrack through all modules present in the system.

`current_module(?Module, ?File)`

*Module* is the module defined in *File*.

`module(+Module)`

The type-in module is set to *Module*.

`set_prolog_flag(+FlagName,+NewValue)` *ISO*
`prolog_flag(+FlagName,?OldValue,?NewValue)`

*OldValue* is the value of the Prolog flag *FlagName*, and the new value of *FlagName* is set to *NewValue*. The possible Prolog flag names and values are:

`agc_margin`
An integer *Margin*. The atoms will be garbage collected when *Margin* new atoms have been created since the last atom garbage collection. Initially 10000.

`argv` A read-only flag. The value is a list of atoms of the program arguments supplied when the current SICStus Prolog process was started. For example, if SICStus Prolog were invoked with:

```
% sicstus -a hello world 2001
```

then the value will be `[hello,world,'2001']`.

`bounded` *ISO*
A read-only flag, one of the flags defining the integer type. For SICStus, its value is `false`, indicating that the domain of integers is practically unbounded.

`char_conversion` *ISO*
If this flag is `on`, unquoted characters in terms and programs read in will be converted, as specified by previous invocations of `char_conversion/2`. If the flag is `off` no conversion will take place. The default value is `on`.

`compiling`
Governs the mode in which `compile/1` and `fcompile/1` operate (see Chapter 6 [Load Intro], page 65).

`compactcode`
Compilation produces byte-coded abstract instructions (the default).

`fastcode` Compilation produces native machine instructions. Currently only available for Sparc platforms.

`profiledcode`
Compilation produces byte-coded abstract instructions instrumented to produce execution profiling data.

`debugcode`
Compiling is replaced by consulting.

`debugging`
Corresponds to the predicates `debug/0`, `nodebug/0`, `tracee/0`, `notrace/0`, `zip/0`, `nozip/0` (see Section 8.15 [Debug Pred], page 209). The flag describes the mode the debugger is in, or is required to be switched to:

`trace` Trace mode (the debugger is creeping).

`debug` Debug mode (the debugger is leaping).

`zip` Zip mode (the debugger is zipping).

`off` The debugger is switched off (the default).

`debug` *ISO* The flag `debug`, prescribed by the ISO Prolog standard, is a simplified form of the `debugging` flag:

`off` The debugger is switched off (the default).

`on` The debugger is switched on (to trace mode, if previously switched off).

(The flags `debugging` and `debug` have no effect in runtime systems.)

`double_quotes` *ISO only*

Governs the interpretation of double quoted strings (see Section 4.1.1.5 [Compound Terms], page 45):

`codes` Code-list comprising the string.

`chars` Char-list comprising the string.

`atom` The atom composed of the same characters as the string.

`character_escapes`

`on` or `off`. If this flag is `on`, a backslash occurring inside integers in '`0''` notation or inside quoted atoms or strings has special meaning, and indicates the start of an escape sequence (see Section 50.5 [Escape Sequences], page 794). This flag is relevant when reading as well as when writing terms, and is initially `on`.

`debugger_print_options`

The value is a list of options for `write_term/3` (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142), to be used in the debugger's messages. The initial value is `[quoted(true),numbervars(true),portrayed(true),max_depth(10)]`.

`discontiguous_warnings`

`on` or `off`. Enable or disable warning messages when clauses are not together in source files. Initially `on`. (This warning is always disabled in runtime systems.)

`fileerrors`

`on` or `off`. Enables or disables raising of file error exceptions. Equivalent to `fileerrors/0` and `nofileerrors/0`, respectively (see Section 8.1.5 [Stream Pred], page 154). Initially `on` (enabled).

`gc` `on` or `off`. Enables or disables garbage collection of the global stack. Initially `on` (enabled).

`gc_margin`
: *Margin*: At least *Margin* kilobytes of free global stack space are guaranteed to exist after a garbage collection. Also, no garbage collection is attempted unless the global stack is at least *Margin* kilobytes. Initially 1000.

`gc_trace`
: Governs global stack garbage collection trace messages.

  `verbose` Turn on verbose tracing of garbage collection.

  `terse` Turn on terse tracing of garbage collection.

  `off` Turn off tracing of garbage collection (the default).

`host_type`
: A read-only flag. The value is an atom identifying the platform on which SICStus was compiled, such as `'x86-linux-glibc2.1'` or `'sparc-solaris-5.7'`.

`informational`
: `on` or `off`. Enables or disables the printing of informational messages. Initially `on` (printing enabled) in development systems, unless the '`--noinfo`' command line option was used; `off` (printing disabled) in runtime systems.

`integer_rounding_function` *ISO*
: A read-only flag, one of the flags defining the integer type. In SICStus Prolog its value is `toward_zero`, indicating that the integer division (`(//)/2`) and integer remainder (`rem/2`) arithmetic functions use rounding toward zero; see Section 8.2 [Arithmetic], page 164.

`language`
: `iso` or `sicstus`. Selects the execution mode specified. Initially `sicstus`, unless the '`--iso`' command line option was used.

`max_arity` *ISO*
: A read-only flag, specifying the maximum arity allowed for a compound term. In SICStus Prolog this is 255.

`max_integer` *ISO*
: A read-only flag, specifying the largest possible integer value. As in SICStus Prolog the range of integers in not bounded, `prolog_flag/3` and `current_prolog_flag/2` will fail, when accessing this flag.

`min_integer` *ISO*
: A read-only flag, specifying the smallest possible integer value. As in SICStus Prolog the range of integers in not bounded, `prolog_flag/3` and `current_prolog_flag/2` will fail, when accessing this flag.

`redefine_warnings`
: `on` or `off`. Enable or disable warning messages when :

- a module or predicate is being redefined from a different file than its previous definition. Such warnings are currently not issued when a '`.po`' file is being loaded.
- a predicate is being imported while it was locally defined already.
- a predicate is being redefined locally while it was imported already.
- a predicate is being imported while it was imported from another module already.

Initially `on`. (This warning is always disabled in runtime systems.)

`single_var_warnings`
: `on` or `off`. Enable or disable warning messages when a clause containing variables not beginning with '`_`' occurring once only is compiled or consulted. Initially `on`.

`source_info`
: `emacs` or `on` or `off`. If not `off` while source code is being loaded, information about line numbers and file names are stored with the loaded code. If the value is `on` while debugging, this information is used to print the source code location while prompting for a debugger command. If the value is `on` while printing an uncaught error exception message, the information is used to print the source code location of the culprit goal or one of its ancestors, as far as it can be determined. If the value is `emacs` in any of these cases, the appropriate line of code is instead highlighted, and no extra text is printed. The value is `off` initially, and that is its only available value in runtime systems.

`syntax_errors`
: Controls what action is taken upon syntax errors in `read/[1,2]`.

  `dec10` The syntax error is reported and the read is repeated.

  `error` An exception is raised. See Section 8.5 [Exception], page 173. (the default).

  `fail` The syntax error is reported and the read fails.

  `quiet` The read quietly fails.

`system_type`
: A read-only flag. The value is `development` in development systems and `runtime` in runtime systems.

`toplevel_print_options`
: The value is a list of options for `write_term/3` (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142), to be used when the toplevel displays variable bindings, answer constraints. It is also used when messages are displayed. The initial value is

`[quoted(true),numbervars(true),portrayed(true),max_depth(10)]`.

`typein_module`
: Permitted values are atoms. Controls the current type-in module (see Section 5.2 [Module Spec], page 59). Corresponds to the predicate `module/1`.

`unknown` *ISO*
: Corresponds to the predicate `unknown/2` (see Section 8.15 [Debug Pred], page 209).

  `trace` Causes calls to undefined predicates to be reported and the debugger to be entered at the earliest opportunity. (This setting is not possible in runtime systems.)

  `fail` Causes calls to such predicates to fail.

  `warning` Causes calls to such predicates to display a warning message and then fail.

  `error` Causes calls to such predicates to raise an exception (the default). See Section 8.5 [Exception], page 173.

`user_input`
: Permitted values are any stream opened for reading. Controls which stream is referenced by `user_input` and `SP_stdin`. It is initially set to a stream connected to UNIX `stdin`.

`user_output`
: Permitted values are any stream opened for writing. Controls which stream is referenced by `user_output` and `SP_stdout`. It is initially set to a stream connected to UNIX `stdout`.

`user_error`
: Permitted values are any stream opened for writing. Controls which stream is referenced by `user_error` and `SP_stderr`. It is initially set to a stream connected to UNIX `stderr`.

`version` A read-only flag. The value is an atom containing the banner text displayed on startup, such as `'SICStus 3 #0: Wed Mar 15 12:29:29 MET 1995'`.

`wcx` The value of the flag is the default term to be passed to the wide character extension component; see Section 12.3 [Prolog Level WCX Features], page 303.

`prolog_flag(?FlagName,?Value)`
`current_prolog_flag(?FlagName,?Value)` *ISO*
: *Value* is the current value of the Prolog flag *FlagName*. Can be used to enumerate all Prolog flags and their values by backtracking.

`prolog_load_context(?Key,?Value)`
: This predicate gives access to context variables during compilation and loading of Prolog files. It unifies *Value* with the value of the variable identified by *Key*. Possible keys are:

`source` The absolute path name of the file being compiled. During loading of a '`.po`' or '`.ql`' file, the corresponding source file name is returned.

`file` Outside included files (see Section 6.2.10 [Include Declarations], page 71) this is the same as the `source` key. In included files this is the absolute path name of the file being included.

`directory`
The absolute path name of the directory of the file being compiled/loaded. In included files this is the directory of the file being included.

`module` The source module (see Section 5.5 [Meta Exp], page 61). This is useful for example if you are defining clauses for `user:term_expansion/[2,4]` and need to access the source module at compile time.

`stream` The stream being compiled or loaded from.

`term_position`
A term representing the stream position of the last clause read.

`statistics`
Displays on the standard error stream statistics relating to memory usage, run time, garbage collection of the global stack and stack shifts. The printing is handled by `print_message/2`; see Section 8.13 [Messages and Queries], page 195.

`statistics(?Key,?Value)`
This allows a program to gather various execution statistics. For each of the possible keys *Key*, *Value* is unified with a list of values, as follows:

`global_stack`
`[`*size used*`,`*free*`]`
This refers to the global stack, where compound terms are stored. The values are gathered before the list holding the answers is allocated.

`local_stack`
`[`*size used*`,`*free*`]`
This refers to the local stack, where recursive predicate environments are stored.

`trail` `[`*size used*`,`*free*`]`
This refers to the trail stack, where conditional variable bindings are recorded.

`choice` `[`*size used*`,`*free*`]`
This refers to the choicepoint stack, where partial states are stored for backtracking purposes.

`core`
`memory` `[`*size used*`,0]`
These refer to the amount of memory actually allocated by the

Prolog engine. The zero is there for compatibility with other Prolog implementations.

`heap`
`program` [*size used,size free*]
These refer to the amount of memory allocated for the database, symbol tables, and the like.

`runtime` [*since start of Prolog,since previous statistics*] These refer to CPU time used while executing, excluding time spent garbage collecting, stack shifting, or in system calls. The second element is the time since the last call to `statistics/2` with this key. It is not affected by calls to `statistics/0`.

`walltime` [*since start of Prolog,since previous statistics*] These refer to absolute time elapsed. The second element is the time since the last call to `statistics/2` with this key. It is not affected by calls to `statistics/0`.

`garbage_collection`
[*no. of GCs,bytes freed,time spent*]

`stack_shifts`
[*no. of global shifts,no. of local/trailtrail shifts,time spent*]

`atoms` [*no. of atoms,bytes used,atoms free*] The number of atoms free is the number of atoms allocated (the first element in the list) subtracted from the maximum number of atoms, i.e. 262143 (33554431) on 32-bit (64-bit) architectures. Note that atom garbage collection may be able to reclaim some of the allocated atoms.

`atom_garbage_collection`
[*no. of AGCs,bytes freed,time spent*]

Times are in milliseconds, sizes of areas in bytes.

`trimcore`

Trims the stacks, reclaims any dead clauses and predicates, defragmentizes Prolog's memory, and attempts to return any unused memory to the operating system. It is called automatically at every top-level query, except the stacks are not trimmed then.

## 8.7 Meta-Logic

The predicates in this section are meta-logical and perform operations that require reasoning about the current instantiation of terms or decomposing terms into their constituents. Such operations cannot be expressed using predicate definitions with a finite number of clauses.

`var(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*

Tests whether $X$ is currently uninstantiated (`var` is short for variable). An uninstantiated variable is one that has not been bound to anything, except possibly another uninstantiated variable. Note that a compound term with some components that are uninstantiated is not itself considered to be uninstantiated. Thus the query

```
| ?- var(foo(X, Y)).
```

always fails, despite the fact that $X$ and $Y$ are uninstantiated.

`nonvar(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*

Tests whether $X$ is currently instantiated. This is the opposite of `var/1`.

`ground(?X)` *meta-logical*

Tests whether $X$ is completely instantiated, i.e. free of unbound variables. In this context, mutable terms are treated as nonground, so as to make `ground/1` a monotone predicate.

`atom(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*

Checks that $X$ is currently instantiated to an atom (i.e. a non-variable term of arity 0, other than a number).

`float(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*

Checks that $X$ is currently instantiated to a float.

`integer(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*

Checks that $X$ is currently instantiated to an integer.

`number(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*

Checks that $X$ is currently instantiated to a number.

`atomic(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*

Checks that $X$ is currently instantiated to an atom or number.

`simple(?X)` *meta-logical*

Checks that $X$ is currently uninstantiated or instantiated to an atom or number.

`compound(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*

Checks that $X$ is currently instantiated to a compound term.

`callable(?X)` *meta-logical*

Checks that $X$ is currently instantiated to a term valid as a goal i.e. a compound term or an atom.

`is_mutable(?X)` *meta-logical*

Checks that $X$ is currently instantiated to a mutable term (see Section 8.8 [Modify Term], page 188).

`functor(+Term,?Name,?Arity)` *ISO,meta-logical*
`functor(?Term,+Name,+Arity)` *ISO,meta-logical*

The principal functor of *Term* has name *Name* and arity *Arity*, where *Name* is either an atom or, provided *Arity* is 0, a number. Initially, either *Term* must be instantiated, or *Name* and *Arity* must be instantiated to, respectively, either an atom and an integer in [0,255] or an atomic term and 0. In the case where

*Term* is initially uninstantiated, the result of the call is to instantiate *Term* to the most general term having the principal functor indicated.

`arg(+ArgNo,+Term,?Arg)` *ISO,meta-logical*

*Arg* is the argument *ArgNo* of the compound term *Term*. The arguments are numbered from 1 upwards, *ArgNo* must be instantiated to a positive integer and *Term* to a compound term.

`+Term =.. ?List` *ISO*
`?Term =.. +List` *ISO*

*List* is a list whose head is the atom corresponding to the principal functor of *Term*, and whose tail is a list of the arguments of *Term*. e.g.

```
| ?- product(0, n, n-1) =.. L.

L = [product,0,n,n-1]

| ?- n-1 =.. L.

L = [-,n,1]

| ?- product =.. L.

L = [product]
```

If *Term* is uninstantiated, then *List* must be instantiated either to a list of determinate length whose head is an atom, or to a list of length 1 whose head is a number. Note that this predicate is not strictly necessary, since its functionality can be provided by `arg/3` and `functor/3`, and using the latter two is usually more efficient.

`name(+Const,?CharList)` **obsolescent**
`name(?Const,+CharList)` **obsolescent**

If *Const* is an atom or number, *CharList* is a code-list of the characters comprising the name of *Const*. e.g.

```
| ?- name(product, L).

L = [112,114,111,100,117,99,116]

| ?- name(product, "product").

| ?- name(1976, L).

L = [49,57,55,54]

| ?- name('1976', L).

L = [49,57,55,54]

| ?- name((:-), L).

L = [58,45]
```

If *Const* is uninstantiated, *CharList* must be instantiated to a code-list. If *CharList* can be interpreted as a number, *Const* is unified with that number; otherwise, with the atom whose name is *CharList*. E.g.:

```
| ?- name(X, [58,45]).

X = :-

| ?- name(X, ":-").

X = :-

| ?- name(X, [49,50,51]).

X = 123
```

Note that there are atoms for which `name(Const,CharList)` is true, but which will not be constructed if `name/2` is called with *Const* uninstantiated. One such atom is the atom `'1976'`. It is recommended that new programs use `atom_codes/2` or `number_codes/2`, as these predicates do not have this inconsistency.

`atom_codes(+Const,?CodeList)` *ISO*
`atom_codes(?Const,+CodeList)` *ISO*

The same as `name(Const,CodeList)`, but *Const* is constrained to be an atom.

`number_codes(+Const,?CodeList)` *ISO*
`number_codes(?Const,+CodeList)` *ISO*

The same as `name(Const,CodeList)`, but *Const* is constrained to be a number.

`atom_chars(+Const,?CharList)` *ISO only*
`atom_chars(?Const,+CharList)` *ISO only*

Analogous to `atom_codes/2`, but *CharList* is a char-list instead of a code-list.

`atom_chars(+Const,?CodeList)` *SICStus only*
`atom_chars(?Const,+CodeList)` *SICStus only*

The same as `atom_codes(Const,CharList)`.

`number_chars(+Const,?CharList)` *ISO only*
`number_chars(?Const,+CharList)` *ISO only*

Analogous to `number_codes/2`, but *CharList* is a char-list instead of a code-list.

`number_chars(+Const,?CodeList)` *SICStus only*
`number_chars(?Const,+CodeList)` *SICStus only*

The same as `number_codes(Const,CharList)`.

`char_code(+Char,?Code)` *ISO*
`char_code(?Char,+Code)` *ISO*

*Code* is the character code of the one-char atom *Char*.

`atom_length(+Atom,?Length)` *ISO*

*Length* is the number of characters of the atom *Atom*.

`atom_concat(+Atom1,+Atom2,?Atom12)` *ISO*
`atom_concat(?Atom1,?Atom2,+Atom12)` *ISO*

The characters of the atom *Atom1* concatenated with those of *Atom2* are the same as the characters of atom *Atom12*. If the last argument is instantiated, nondeterminately enumerates all possible atom-pairs that concatenate to the given atom, e.g.:

```
| ?- atom_concat(A, B, 'ab').

A = '',
B = ab ? ;

A = a,
B = b ? ;

A = ab,
B = '' ? ;

no
```

`sub_atom(+Atom,?Before,?Length,?After,?SubAtom)` *ISO*

The characters of *SubAtom* form a sublist of the characters of *Atom*, such that the number of characters preceding *SubAtom* is *Before*, the number of characters after *SubAtom* is *After*, and the length of *SubAtom* is *Length*. Capable of nondeterminately enumerating all sub-atoms and their all possible placements, e.g.:

```
| ?- sub_atom(abrakadabra, Before, _, After, ab).

After = 9,
Before = 0 ? ;

After = 2,
Before = 7 ? ;

no
```

`copy_term(?Term,?CopyOfTerm)` *ISO,meta-logical*

*CopyOfTerm* is a renaming of *Term*, such that brand new variables have been substituted for all variables in *Term*. If any of the variables of *Term* have goals blocked on them, the copied variables will have copies of the goals blocked on them as well. Similarly, independent copies are substituted for any mutable terms in *term*. It behaves as if defined by:

```
copy_term(X, Y) :-
        assert('copy of'(X)),
        retract('copy of'(Y)).
```

The implementation of `copy_term/2` conserves space by not copying ground subterms.

## 8.8 Modification of Terms

One of the tenets of logic programming is that terms are immutable objects of the Herbrand universe, and the only sense in which they can be modified is by means of instantiating non-ground parts. There are, however, algorithms where destructive assignment is essential for performance. Although alien to the ideals of logic programming, this feature can be defended on practical grounds.

SICStus Prolog provides an abstract datatype and three operations for efficient *backtrackable* destructive assignment. In other words, any destructive assignments are transparently undone on backtracking. Modifications that are intended to survive backtracking must be done by asserting or retracting dynamic program clauses instead. Unlike previous releases of SICStus Prolog, destructive assignment of arbitrary terms is not allowed.

A *mutable term* is represented as a compound terms with a reserved functor: `'$mutable'(Value,Timestamp)` where *Value* is the current value and *Timestamp* is reserved for bookkeeping purposes [Aggoun & Beldiceanu 90].

Any copy of a mutable term created by `copy_term/2`, `assert`, `retract`, a database predicate, or an all solutions predicate, is an independent copy of the original mutable term. Any destructive assignment done to one of the copies will not affect the other copy.

The following operations are provided:

`create_mutable(+Datum,-Mutable)`
: *Mutable* is a new mutable term with initial value *Datum*. *Datum* must not be an unbound variable.

`get_mutable(?Datum,+Mutable)`
: *Datum* is the current value of the mutable term *Mutable*.

`update_mutable(+Datum,+Mutable)`
: Updates the current value of the mutable term *Mutable* to become *Datum*. *Datum* must not be an unbound variable.

`is_mutable(?Mutable)`
: Checks that *Mutable* is currently instantiated to a mutable term.

**Please note**: the effect of unifying two mutables is undefined.

## 8.9 Modification of the Program

The predicates defined in this section allow modification of dynamic predicates. Dynamic clauses can be added (*asserted*) or removed from the program (*retracted*).

SICStus Prolog implements the "logical" view in updating dynamic predicates. This means that the definition of a dynamic predicate that is visible to a call is effectively frozen when the call is made. A predicate always contains, as far as a call to it is concerned, exactly the clauses it contained when the call was made.

A useful way to think of this is to consider that a call to a dynamic predicate makes a *virtual copy* of its clauses and then runs the copy rather than the original clauses. Any changes to the predicate made by the call are immediately reflected in the Prolog database, but not in the copy of the predicate being run. Thus, changes to a running predicate will not be visible on backtracking. A subsequent call, however, makes and runs a copy of the modified Prolog database. Any changes to the predicate that were made by an earlier call will now be visible to the new call.

For the predicates of this section, the argument *Head* must be instantiated to an atom or a compound term, with an optional module prefix. The argument *Clause* must be instantiated either to a term `Head :- Body` or, if the body part is empty, to *Head*, with an optional module prefix. An empty body part is represented as `true`.

Note that a term `Head :- Body` must be enclosed in parentheses when it occurs as an argument of a compound term, as '`:-`' is a standard infix operator with precedence greater than 1000 (see Section 4.6 [Operators], page 54), e.g.:

```
| ?- assert((Head :- Body)).
```

Like recorded terms (see Section 8.10 [Database], page 191), the clauses of dynamic predicates have a unique implementation-defined identifier. Some of the predicates below have an additional argument, which is this identifier. This identifier makes it possible to access clauses directly instead of requiring a normal database (hash-table) lookup.

`assert(:Clause)`
`assert(:Clause,-Ref)`

The current instance of *Clause* is interpreted as a clause and is added to the database. The predicate concerned must currently be dynamic or undefined and the position of the new clause within it is implementation-defined. *Ref* is a *database reference* to the asserted clause. Any uninstantiated variables in the *Clause* will be replaced by new private variables, along with copies of any subgoals blocked on these variables (see Section 4.3 [Procedural], page 50).

`asserta(:Clause)` *ISO*
`asserta(:Clause,-Ref)`

Like `assert/2`, except that the new clause becomes the *first* clause for the predicate concerned.

`assertz(:Clause)` *ISO*
`assertz(:Clause,-Ref)`

Like `assert/2`, except that the new clause becomes the *last* clause for the predicate concerned.

`clause(:Head,?Body)` *ISO*
`clause(:Head,?Body,?Ref)`
`clause(?Head,?Body,+Ref)`

The clause `(Head :- Body)` exists in the database, and its database reference is *Ref*. The predicate concerned must currently be dynamic. At the time of call, either *Ref* must be instantiated, or *Head* must be instantiated to an atom or a compound term. Thus `clause/3` can have two different modes of use.

`retract(:Clause)` *ISO*

The first clause in the database that matches *Clause* is erased. The predicate concerned must currently be dynamic. `retract/1` may be used in a nondeterminate fashion, i.e. it will successively retract clauses matching the argument through backtracking.

`retractall(:Head)`

Erases all clauses whose head matches *Head*, where *Head* must be instantiated to an atom or a compound term. The predicate concerned must currently be dynamic. The predicate definition is retained.

**Please note**: all predicates mentioned above first look for a predicate that is visible in the module in which the call textually appears. If no predicate is found, a new dynamic predicate (with no clauses) is created automatically. It is recommended to declare as dynamic predicates for which clauses will be asserted.

`abolish(:Spec)` *ISO*
`abolish(:Name,+Arity)`

Abolishes the predicates specified by the generalized predicate spec *Spec* or `Name/Arity`. *Name* may be prefixed by a module name (see Section 5.2 [Module Spec], page 59). In `iso` execution mode only dynamic predicates can be

abolished. In `sicstus` execution mode only built-in predicates cannot be abolished, the user-defined ones always can be, even when static.

`erase(+Ref)`
: The dynamic clause or recorded term (see Section 8.10 [Database], page 191) whose database reference is *Ref* is effectively erased from the database.

`instance(+Ref,?Term)`
: A (most general) instance of the dynamic clause or recorded term whose database reference is *Ref* is unified with *Term*.

## 8.10 Internal Database

The predicates described in this section were introduced in early implementations of Prolog to provide efficient means of performing operations on large quantities of data. The introduction of indexed dynamic predicates have rendered these predicates obsolete, and the sole purpose of providing them is to support existing code. There is no reason whatsoever to use them in new code.

These predicates store arbitrary terms in the database without interfering with the clauses that make up the program. The terms that are stored in this way can subsequently be retrieved via the key on which they were stored. Many terms may be stored on the same key, and they can be individually accessed by pattern matching. Alternatively, access can be achieved via a special identifier, which uniquely identifies each recorded term and which is returned when the term is stored.

`recorded(?Key,?Term,?Ref)` **obsolescent**
: The database is searched for terms recorded under the key *Key*. These terms are successively unified with *Term* in the order they occur in the database. At the same time, *Ref* is unified with the database reference to the recorded item. If the key is instantiated to a compound term, only its principal functor is significant. If the key is uninstantiated, all terms in the database are successively unified with *Term* in the order they occur.

`recorda(+Key,?Term,-Ref)` **obsolescent**
: The term *Term* is recorded in the database as the first item for the key *Key*, where *Ref* is its database reference. The key must be given, and only its principal functor is significant. Any uninstantiated variables in the *Term* will be replaced by new private variables, along with copies of any subgoals blocked on these variables (see Section 4.3 [Procedural], page 50).

`recordz(+Key,?Term,-Ref)` **obsolescent**
: Like `recorda/3`, except that the new term becomes the *last* item for the key *Key*.

`current_key(?KeyName,?KeyTerm)` **obsolescent**
: *KeyTerm* is the most general form of the key for a currently recorded term, and *KeyName* is the name of that key. This predicate can be used to enumerate in undefined order all keys for currently recorded terms through backtracking.

## 8.11 Blackboard Primitives

The predicates described in this section store arbitrary terms in a per-module repository known as the "blackboard". The main purpose of the blackboard was initially to provide a means for communication between branches executing in parallel, but the blackboard works equally well during sequential execution. The blackboard implements a mapping from keys to values. Keys are restricted to being atoms or small integers, whereas values are arbitrary terms. In contrast to the predicates described in the previous sections, a given key can map to at most a single term.

Each Prolog module maintains its own blackboard, so as to avoid name clashes if different modules happen to use the same keys. The "key" arguments of these predicates are subject to module name expansion, so the module name does not have to be explicitly given unless multiple Prolog modules are supposed to share a single blackboard.

The predicates below implement atomic blackboard actions.

`bb_put(:Key, +Term)`
: A copy of *Term* is stored under *Key*. Any previous term stored under the same *Key* is simply deleted.

`bb_get(:Key, ?Term)`
: If a term is currently stored under *Key*, a copy of it is unified with *Term*. Otherwise, `bb_get/2` silently fails.

`bb_delete(:Key, ?Term)`
: If a term is currently stored under *Key*, the term is deleted, and a copy of it is unified with *Term*. Otherwise, `bb_delete/2` silently fails.

`bb_update(:Key, ?OldTerm, ?NewTerm)`
: If a term is currently stored under *Key* and unifies with *OldTerm*, the term is replaced by a copy of *NewTerm*. Otherwise, `bb_update/3` silently fails. This predicate provides an atomic swap operation.

The following example illustrates how these primitives may be used to implement a "maxof" predicate that finds the maximum value computed by some nondeterminate goal, which may execute in parallel. We use a single key `max`. Note the technique of using `bb_update/3` in a repeat-fail loop, since other execution branches may be competing for updating the value, and we only want to store a new value if it is greater than the old value.

We assume that *Goal* does not produce any "false" solutions that would be eliminated by cuts in a sequential execution. Thus, *Goal* may need to include redundant checks to ensure that its solutions are valid, as discussed above.

```
maxof(Value, Goal, _) :-
        bb_put(max, -1),                % initialize max-so-far
        call(Goal),
        update_max(Value),
        fail.
maxof(_, _, Max) :-
        bb_delete(max, Max),
        Max > 1.

update_max(New):-
        repeat,
          bb_get(max, Old),
          compare(C, Old, New),
          update_max(C, Old, New), !.

update_max(<, Old, New) :- bb_update(max, Old, New).
update_max(=, _, _).
update_max(>, _, _).
```

## 8.12 All Solutions

When there are many solutions to a problem, and when all those solutions are required to be collected together, this can be achieved by repeatedly backtracking and gradually building up a list of the solutions. The following built-in predicates are provided to automate this process.

Note that the *Goal* argument to the predicates listed below is called as if by `call/1` at run-time. Thus if *Goal* is complex and if performance is an issue, define an auxiliary predicate, which can then be compiled, and let *Goal* call it.

`setof(?Template,:Goal,?Set)` *ISO*

Read this as "*Set* is the set of all instances of *Template* such that *Goal* is satisfied, where that set is non-empty". The term *Goal* specifies a goal or goals as in `call(Goal)` (see Section 8.4 [Control], page 170). *Set* is a set of terms represented as a list of those terms, without duplicates, in the standard order for terms (see Section 8.3 [Term Compare], page 168). If there are no instances of *Template* such that *Goal* is satisfied then the predicate fails.

The variables appearing in the term *Template* should not appear anywhere else in the clause except within the term *Goal*. Obviously, the set to be enumerated should be finite, and should be enumerable by Prolog in finite time. It is possible for the provable instances to contain variables, but in this case the list *Set* will only provide an imperfect representation of what is in reality an infinite set.

If there are uninstantiated variables in *Goal*, which do not also appear in *Template*, then a call to this built-in predicate may backtrack, generating alternative values for *Set* corresponding to different instantiations of the free variables of

*Goal*. (It is to cater for such usage that the set *Set* is constrained to be non-empty.) Two instantiations are different iff no renaming of variables can make them literally identical. For example, given the clauses:

```
likes(bill, cider).
likes(dick, beer).
likes(harry, beer).
likes(jan, cider).
likes(tom, beer).
likes(tom, cider).
```

the query

```
| ?- setof(X, likes(X,Y), S).
```

might produce two alternative solutions via backtracking:

```
S = [dick,harry,tom],
Y = beer ? ;

S = [bill,jan,tom],
Y = cider ? ;
```

The query:

```
| ?- setof((Y,S), setof(X, likes(X,Y), S), SS).
```

would then produce:

```
SS = [(beer,[dick,harry,tom]),(cider,[bill,jan,tom])]
```

Variables occurring in *Goal* will not be treated as free if they are explicitly bound within *Goal* by an existential quantifier. An existential quantification is written:

```
Y^Q
```

meaning "there exists a $Y$ such that $Q$ is true", where $Y$ is some Prolog variable. For example:

```
| ?- setof(X, Y^(likes(X,Y)), S).
```

would produce the single result:

```
S = [bill,dick,harry,jan,tom]
```

in contrast to the earlier example.

Note that in `iso` execution mode, only outermost existential quantification is accepted, i.e. if the *Goal* argument is of form `V1 ^ ... ^ N ^ SubGoal`. In `sicstus` execution mode existential quantification is handled also deeper inside *Goal*.

`bagof(?Template,:Goal,?Bag)` *ISO*

This is exactly the same as `setof/3` except that the list (or alternative lists) returned will not be ordered, and may contain duplicates. The effect of this relaxation is to save a call to `sort/2`, which is invoked by `setof/3` to return an ordered list.

`?X^:P`

The all solution predicates recognize this as meaning "there exists an $X$ such that $P$ is true", and treats it as equivalent to `P` (see Section 8.4 [Control],

page 170). The use of this explicit existential quantifier outside the `setof/3` and `bagof/3` constructs is superfluous and discouraged.

`findall(?Template,:Goal,?Bag)` *ISO*

*Bag* is a list of instances of *Template* in all proofs of *Goal* found by Prolog. The order of the list corresponds to the order in which the proofs are found. The list may be empty and all variables are taken as being existentially quantified. This means that each invocation of `findall/3` succeeds *exactly once*, and that no variables in *Goal* get bound. Avoiding the management of universally quantified variables can save considerable time and space.

`findall(?Template,:Goal,?Bag,?Remainder)`

Same as `findall/3`, except *Bag* is the list of solution instances appended with *Remainder*, which is typically unbound.

## 8.13 Messages and Queries

This section describes the two main aspects of user interaction, displaying messages and querying the user. We will deal with these two issues in turn.

### 8.13.1 Message Processing

Every message issued by the Prolog system is displayed using a single predicate:

```
print_message(+Severity, +Message)
```

*Message* is a term that encodes the message to be printed. The format of message terms is subject to change, but can be inspected in the file '`library('SU_messages')`' of the SICStus Prolog distribution.

The atom *Severity* specifies the type (or importance) of the message. The following table lists the severities known to the SICStus Prolog system, together with the line prefixes used in displaying messages of the given severity:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| `error` | `'! '` | for error messages |
| `warning` | `'* '` | for warning messages |
| `informational` | `'% '` | for informational messages |
| `help` | `''` | for help messages |
| `query` | `''` | for query texts (see Section 8.13.3 [Query Processing], page 200) |
| `silent` | `''` | a special kind of message, which normally does not produce any output, but can be intercepted by hooks |

`print_message/2` is a built-in predicate, so that users can invoke it to have their own messages processed in the same way as the system messages.

The processing and printing of the messages is highly customizable. For example, this allows the user to change the language of the messages, or to make them appear in dialog windows rather than on the terminal.

#### 8.13.1.1 Phases of Message Processing

Messages are processed in two major phases. The user can influence the behavior of each phase using appropriate hooks, described later.

The first phase is called the *message generation phase*: it determines the text of the message from the input (the abstract message term). No printing is done here. In this phase the user can change the phrasing or the language of the messages.

The result of the first phase is created in the form of a *format-command list*. This is a list whose elements are *format-commands*, or the atom `nl` denoting the end of a line. A format-command describes a piece of text not extending over a line boundary and it can be one of the following:

*FormatString-Args*
`format(`*FormatString*`, `*Args*`)`
: This indicates that the message text should appear as if printed by

```
format(FormatString, Args).
```

`write_term(`*Term*`, `*Options*`)`
: This indicates that the message text should appear as if printed by

```
write_term(Term, Options).
```

`write_term(`*Term*`)`
: Equivalent to `write_term(`*Term*`, `*Options*`)` where *Options* is the actual value of the Prolog flag `toplevel_print_options`.

As an example, let us see what happens in case of the toplevel call `_ =:= 3`. An instantiation error is raised by the Prolog system, which is caught, and the abstract message term `instantiation_error(_=:=3,1)` is generated (assuming `sicstus` execution mode)—the first argument is the goal, and the second argument is the position of the uninstantiated variable within the goal. In the first phase of message processing this is converted to the following format-command list:

```
['Instantiation error'-[],' in argument ~d of ~q'-[1,=:= /2],nl,
 'goal:  '-[],write_term(_=:=3),nl]
```

A minor transformation, so-called *line splitting* is performed on the message text before it is handed over to the second phase. The format-command list is broken up along the `nl` atoms into a list of lines, where each line is a list of format-commands. We will use the term format-command lines to refer to the result of this transformation.

In the example above, the result of this conversion is the following:

```
[['Instantiation error'-[],' in argument ~d of ~q'-[1,=:= /2]],
 ['goal:  '-[],write_term(_=:=3)]]
```

The above format-command lines term is the input of the second phase of message processing.

The second phase is called the *message printing phase*, this is where the message is actually displayed. The severity of the message is used here to prefix each line of the message with some characters indicating the type of the message, as listed above.

The user can change the exact method of printing (e.g. redirection of messages to a stream, a window, or using different prefixes, etc.) through appropriate hooks.

In our example the following lines are printed by the second phase of processing:

```
! Instantiation error in argument 1 of =:= /2
! goal:  _=:=3
```

The user can override the default message processing mechanism in the following two ways:

- A global method is to define the hook predicate `portray_message/2`, which is the first thing called by message processing. If this hook exists and succeeds, then it overrides all other processing—nothing further is done by `print_message/2`.
- If a finer method of influencing the behavior of message processing is needed, then there are several further hooks provided, which affect only one phase of the process. These are described in the following paragraphs.

### 8.13.1.2 Message Generation Phase

The default message generation predicates are located in the '`library('SU_messages')`' file, in the `'SU_messages'` module, together with other message and query related predicates. This is advantageous when these predicates have to be changed as a whole (for example when translating all messages to another language), because this can be done simply by replacing the file '`library('SU_messages')`' by a new one.

In the message generation phase three alternative methods are tried:

- First the hook predicate `generate_message_hook/3` is executed, if it succeeds, it is assumed to deliver the output of this phase.
- Next the default message generation is invoked via `'SU_messages':generate_message/3`.
- In the case that neither of the above methods succeed, a built-in fall-back message generation method is used.

The hook predicate `generate_message_hook/3` can be used to override the default behavior, or to handle new messages defined by the programmer, which do not fit the default

message generation schemes. The latter can also be achieved by adding new clauses to the extendible `'SU_messages':generate_message/3` predicate.

If both the hook and the default method refuses to handle the message, then the following simple format-command list is generated from the abstract message term *Message*:

```
['~q'-[Message],nl]
```

This will result in displaying the abstract message term itself, as if printed by `writeq/1`.

For messages of the severity `silent` the message generation phase is skipped, and the `[]` format-command list is returned as the output.

#### 8.13.1.3 Message Printing Phase

By default this phase is handled by the built-in predicate `print_message_lines/3`. Each line of the message is prefixed with a string depending on the severity, and is printed to `user_error`. The `query` severity is special—no newline is printed after the last line of the message.

This behavior can be overridden by defining the hook predicate `message_hook/3`, which is called with the severity of the message, the abstract message term and its translation to format-command lines. It can be used to make smaller changes, for example by calling `print_message_lines/3` with a stream argument other than `user_error`, or to implement a totally different display method such as using dialog windows for messages.

For messages of the severity `silent` the message printing phase consists of calling the hook predicate `message_hook/3` only. Even if the hook fails, no printing is done.

### 8.13.2 Message Handling Predicates

`print_message(+Severity, +Message)` *hookable*

Prints a *Message* of a given *Severity*. The behavior can be customized using the hooks `user:portray_message/2`, `user:generate_message_hook/3` and `user:message_hook/3`.

All messages from the system are printed by calling this predicate.

First `print_message/2` calls `user:portray_message/2` with the same arguments. If this does not succeed, the message is processed in the following phases:

- Message generation phase: the abstract message term *Message* is formatted, i.e. converted to a format-command list. First the hook predicate `user:generate_message_hook/3` is tried, then if it does not succeed, `'SU_messages':generate_message/3` is called. If that also fails or gives an exception, then the built-in default conversion is used, which gives the following result:

  ```
  ['~q'-[Message],nl]
  ```

- Line splitting transformation: the format-command list is converted to format-command lines—the list is broken up into a list of lists, each list containing format-commands for one line.
- Message printing phase: The text of the message (format-command lines generated in the previous stage) is printed. First the hook predicate `user:message_hook/3` is tried, then, if it does not succeed, the built-in predicate `print_message_lines/3` is called for the `user_error` stream.

`portray_message(+Severity, +Message)` *hook*
`user:portray_message(+Severity, +Message)`
Called by `print_message/2` before processing the message. If this succeeds, it is assumed that the message has been processed and nothing further is done.

`generate_message_hook(+Message, -L0, -L)` *hook*
`user:generate_message_hook(+Message, -L0, -L)`
A way for the user to override the call to `'SU_messages':generate_message/3` in the message generation phase in `print_message/2`.

`'SU_messages':generate_message(+Message, -L0, -L)` *extendible*
Defines how to transform a message term *Message* to a format-command list. For a given *Message*, generates a format-command list in the form of the difference list `L0-L`; this means, that `L0` is the generated list with `L` appended to it. This list will be translated into format-command lines, which will be passed to the message printing phase.

`message_hook(+Severity, +Message, +Lines)` *hook*
`user:message_hook(+Severity, +Message, +Lines)`
Overrides the call to `print_message_lines/3` in the message printing phase of `print_message/2`. A way for the user to intercept the abstract message term *Message* of type *Severity*, whose translation into format-command lines is *Lines*, before it is actually printed.

`print_message_lines(+Stream, +Severity, +Lines)`
Print the *Lines* to *Stream*, preceding each line with a prefix defined by *Severity*. *Lines* must be a valid format-command lines, *Severity* can be an arbitrary atom. If it is one of the predefined severities, the corresponding prefix is used in printing the message lines. Otherwise the *Severity* itself is interpreted as the prefix (this is for Quintus Prolog compatibility, where `print_message_lines/3` takes the prefix as its second argument). In case of the `query` severity no newline is written after the last line.

`goal_source_info(+AGoal, ?Goal, ?SourceInfo)`
Decompose the *AGoal* annotated goal into a *Goal* proper and the *SourceInfo* descriptor term, indicating the source position of the goal.

Annotated goals occur in most of error message terms, and carry information on the *Goal* causing the error and its source position. The *SourceInfo* term, retrieved by `goal_source_info/3` will be one of the following:

`[]` The goal has no source information associated with it.

`fileref(File,Line)`
The goal occurs in file *File*, line *Line*.

`clauseref(File,MFunc,ClauseNo,CallNo,Line)`
The goal occurs in file *File*, within predicate *MFunc*, clause number *ClauseNo*, call number *CallNo* and virtual line number *Line*. Here, *MFunc* is of form `Module:Name/Arity`, calls are numbered textually and the virtual line number shows the position of the goal within the listing of the predicate *MFunc*, as produced by `listing/1`. Such a term is returned for goals occurring in interpreted predicates, which do not have "real" line number information, e.g. because they were entered from the terminal, or created dynamically.

### 8.13.3 Query Processing

All user input in the Prolog system is handled by a single predicate:

```
ask_query(+QueryClass, +Query, +Help, -Answer)
```

*QueryClass*, described below, specifies the form of the query interaction. *Query* is an abstract message term specifying the query text, *Help* is an abstract message term used as a help message in certain cases, and *Answer* is the (abstract) result of the query.

`ask_query/4` is a built-in predicate, so that users can invoke it to have their own queries processed in the same way as the system queries.

The processing of queries is highly customizable. For example, this allows changing the language of the input expected from the user, or to make queries appear in dialog windows rather than on the terminal.

#### 8.13.3.1 Query Classes

Queries posed by the system can be classified according to the kind of input they expect, the way the input is processed, etc. Queries of the same kind form a *query class*.

For example, queries requiring a yes/no answer form a query class with the following characteristics:

- the text ' `(y or n)` ' is used as the prompt;
- a single line of text is input;
- if the first non-whitespace character of the input is `y` or `n` (possibly in capitals), then the query returns the atom `yes` or `no`, respectively, as the abstract answer;
- otherwise a help message is displayed and the query is repeated.

There are built-in query classes for reading in yes/no answers, toplevel queries, debugger commands, etc.

A query class is characterized by a ground Prolog term, which is supplied as the first argument to the query processing predicate `ask_query/4`. The characteristics of a query class are normally described by the extendible predicate

```
'SU_messages':query_class(+QueryClass, -Prompt, -InputMethod,
                          -MapMethod, -FailureMode).
```

The arguments of the `query_class` predicate have the following meaning:

- *Prompt*: an atom to be used for prompting the user.
- *InputMethod*: a non-variable term, which specifies how to obtain input from the user.

  For example, a built-in input method is described by the atom `line`. This requests that a line is input from the user, and the code-list is returned. Another built-in input method is `term(Options)`; here, a Prolog term is read and returned.

  The input obtained using *InputMethod* is called *raw input*, as it may undergo further processing.

  In addition to the built-in input methods, the user can define his/her own extensions.
- *MapMethod*: a non-variable term, which specifies how to process the raw input to get the abstract answer to the query.

  For example, the built-in map method `char([yes-"yY", no-"nN"])` expects a code-list as raw input, and gives the answer term `yes` or `no` depending on the first non-whitespace character of the input. As another example, the built-in map method `=` requests that the raw input itself is returned as the answer term—this is often used in conjunction with the input method `term(Options)`.

  In addition to the built-in map methods the user can define his/her own extensions.
- *FailureMode*

  This is used only when the mapping of raw input fails, and the query must be repeated. This happens for example if the user typed a character other than *y* or *n* in case of the `yes_or_no` query class. *FailureMode* determines what to print before re-querying the user. Possible values are:

  - `help_query`: print a help message, then print the text of the query again
  - `help`: only print the help message
  - `query`: only print the text of the query
  - `none`: do not print anything

### 8.13.3.2 Phases of Query Processing

Query processing is done in several phases, described below. We will illustrate what is done in each phase through a simple example: the question put to the user when the solution to the toplevel query '`X is 1+1`' is displayed, requesting a decision whether to find alternative answers or not:

```
| ?- X is 1+1.

X = 2 ? no
Please enter ";" for more choices; otherwise, <return>
 ? ;
```

We focus on the query '`X = 2 ?` ' in the above script.

The example query belongs to the class `next_solution`, its text is described by the message term `solutions([binding("X",2)])`, and its help text by the message term `bindings_help`. Accordingly, such a query is executed by calling:

```
ask_query(next_solution,                /* QueryClass */
          solutions([binding("X",2)]), /* Query */
          bindings_help,               /* Help */
          Answer)
```

In general, execution of `ask_query(+QueryClass, +Query, +Help, -Answer)` consists of the following phases:

- *Preparation phase*: The abstract message terms *Query* (for the text of the query) and *Help* (for the help message) are converted to format-command lines via the message generation and line splitting phases (see Section 8.13.1 [Message Processing], page 195). Let us call the results of the two conversions *QueryLines* and *HelpLines*, respectively. The text of the query, *QueryLines* is printed immediately (via the message printing phase, using `query` severity). *HelpLines* may be printed later, and *QueryLines* printed again, in case of invalid user input.

  The characteristics of *QueryClass* (described in the previous subsubsection) are retrieved to control the exact behavior of the further phases.

  In our example, the following parameters are sent in the preparation phase:

  *QueryLines* = `[[],['~s = '-["X"],write_term(2)]]`
  *HelpLines* =
  `[['Please enter ";" for more choices; otherwise, <return>'-[]]]`
  *Prompt* = `' ? '`
  *InputMethod* = `line`
  *MapMethod* = `char([yes-";", no-[0'\n]])`
  *FailureMode* = `help`

  *QueryLines* is displayed immediately, printing:

  ```
  X = 2
  ```

  (Note that the first element of *QueryLines* is `[]`, therefore the output is preceded by a newline. Also note that no newline is printed at the end of the last line, because the `query` severity is used.)

  The subsequent phases will be called repeatedly until the mapping phase succeeds in generating an answer.

- *Input phase*: By default, the input phase is implemented by the extendible predicate

  ```
  'SU_messages':query_input(+InputMethod, +Prompt, -RawInput).
  ```

This phase uses the *Prompt* and *InputMethod* characteristics of the query class. *InputMethod* specifies the method of obtaining input from the user. This method is executed, and the result (*RawInput*) is passed on to the next phase.

The use of *Prompt* may depend on *InputMethod*. For example, the built-in input method `line` prints the prompt unconditionally, while the input method `term(_)` passes *Prompt* to `prompt/2`.

In the example, first the ‘ `?` ’ prompt is displayed. Next, because *InputMethod* is `line`, a line of input is read, and the code-list is returned in *RawInput*. Supposing that the user typed *no*⟨RET⟩, *RawInput* becomes `" no"` = `[32,110,111]`.

- *Mapping phase*: By default, the mapping phase is implemented by the extendible predicate

```
'SU_messages':query_map(+MapMethod, +RawInput,
                        -Result, -Answer).
```

This phase uses the *MapMethod* parameter to control the method of converting the raw input to the abstract answer.

In some cases *RawInput* is returned as it is, but otherwise it has to be processed (parsed) to generate the answer.

The conversion process may have two outcomes indicated in the *Result* returned:

- success, in which case the query processing is completed with the *Answer* term returned;
- failure, the query has to be repeated.

In the latter case a message describing the cause of failure may be returned, to be printed before the query is repeated.

In our example, the map method is `char([yes-";", no-[0'\n]])`. The mapping phase fails for the *RawInput* passed on by the previous phase of the example, as the first non-whitespace character is *n*, which does not match any of the given characters.

- *Query restart phase*: This phase is executed only if the mapping phase returned with failure.

First, if a message was returned by the mapping, then it is printed. Subsequently, if requested by the *FailureMode* parameter, the help message *HelpLines* and/or the text of the query *QueryLines* is printed.

The query is then repeated—the input and mapping phase will be called again to try to get a valid answer.

In the above example, the user typed an invalid character, so the mapping failed. The `char(_)` mapping does not return any message in case of failure. The *FailureMode* of the query class is `help`, so the help message *HelpLines* is printed, but the query is not repeated:

```
Please enter ";" for more choices; otherwise, <return>
```

Having completed the query restart phase, the example script continues by re-entering the input phase: the prompt ‘ `?` ’ is printed, another line is read, and is processed by the mapping phase. If the user types the character `;` this time, then the mapping phase returns successfully and gives the abstract answer term `yes`.

### 8.13.3.3 Hooks in Query Processing

As explained above, the major parts of query processing are implemented in the `'SU_messages'` module in the file '`library('SU_messages')`' through the following extendible predicates:

- `'SU_messages':query_class(+QueryClass, -Prompt, -InputMethod, -MapMethod, -FailureMode)`
- `'SU_messages':query_input(+InputMethod, +Prompt, -RawInput)`
- `'SU_messages':query_map(+MapMethod, +RawInput, -Result, -Answer)`

This is to enable the user to change the language used, the processing done, etc., simply by changing or replacing the '`library('SU_messages')`' file.

To give more control to the user and to make the system more robust (for example if the `'SU_messages'` module is corrupt) the so-called *four step procedure* is used in the above three cases—obtaining the query class parameters, performing the query input and performing the mapping. The four steps of this procedure, described below, are tried in the given order until the first one that succeeds. Note that if an exception is raised within the first three steps, then a warning is printed and the step is considered to have failed.

- First a hook predicate is tried. The name of the hook is derived from the name of the appropriate predicate by appending '`_hook`' to it, e.g. `user:query_class_hook/5` in case of the query class. If this hook predicate exists and succeeds, then it is assumed to have done all necessary processing, and the following steps are skipped.
- Second, the predicate in the `'SU_messages'` module is called (this is the default case, these are the predicates listed above). Normally this should succeed, unless the module is corrupt, or an unknown query-class/input-method/map-method is encountered. These predicates are extendible, so new classes and methods can be added easily by the user.
- Third, as a fall-back, a built-in minimal version of the predicates in the original `'SU_messages'` is called. This is necessary because the '`library('SU_messages')`' file is modifiable by the user, therefore vital parts of the Prolog system (e.g. the toplevel query) could be damaged.
- If all the above steps fail, then nothing more can be done, and an exception is raised.

### 8.13.3.4 Default Input Methods

The following *InputMethod* types are implemented by the default `'SU_messages':query_input(+InputMethod, +Prompt, -RawInput)` (and these are the input methods known to the third, fall-back step):

`line` The *Prompt* is printed, a line of input is read using `read_line/2` and the code-list is returned as *RawInput*.

`term(Options)`
: *Prompt* is set to be the prompt (cf. `prompt/2`), and a Prolog term is read by `read_term/2` using the given *Options*, and is returned as *RawInput*.

`FinalTerm^term(Term,Options)`
: A Prolog term is read as above, and is unified with *Term*. *FinalTerm* is returned as *RawInput*. For example, the `T-Vs^term(T,[variable_names(Vs)])` input method will return the term read, paired with the list of variable names.

### 8.13.3.5 Default Map Methods

The following *MapMethod* types are known to `'SU_messages':query_map(+MapMethod, +RawInput, -Result, -Answer)` and to the built-in fall-back mapping:

`char(Pairs)`
: In this map method *RawInput* is assumed to be a code-list.

  *Pairs* is a list of `Name-Abbreviations` pairs, where *Name* is a ground term, and *Abbreviations* is a code-list. The first non-layout character of *RawInput* is used for finding the corresponding name as the answer, by looking it up in the abbreviation lists. If the character is found, then *Result* is `success`, and *Answer* is set to the *Name* found; otherwise, *Result* is `failure`.

`=`
: No conversion is done, *Answer* is equal to *RawInput* and *Result* is `success`.

`debugger`
: This map method is used when reading a single line debugger command. It parses the debugger command and returns the corresponding abstract command term. If the parse is unsuccessful, the answer `unknown(Line,Warning)` is returned. This is to allow the user to extend the debugger command language via `debugger_command_hook/2`, see Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81.

  The details of this mapping can be obtained from the '`library('SU_messages')`' file.

  Note that the fall-back version of this mapping is simplified, it only accepts parameterless debugger commands.

### 8.13.3.6 Default Query Classes

Most of the default query classes are designed to support some specific interaction with the user within the Prolog development environment. The full list of query classes can be inspected in the file '`library('SU_messages')`'. Here, we only describe the two classes defined by `'SU_messages':query_class/5` that may be of general use:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *QueryClass* | `yes_or_no` | `yes_no_proceed` |
| *Prompt* | `' (y or n) '` | `' (y, n, p, s, a, or ?) '` |
| *InputMethod* | `line` | `line` |
| *MapMethod* | `char([yes-"yY", no-"nN"])` | `char([yes-"yY", no-"nN", proceed-"pP", suppress-"sS", abort-"aA"])` |

*FailureMode* `help_query` `help_query`

### 8.13.4 Query Handling Predicates

`ask_query(+QueryClass, +Query, +Help, -Answer)` *hookable*

Prints the question *Query*, then reads and processes user input according to *QueryClass*, and returns the result of the processing, the abstract answer term *Answer*. The *Help* message may be printed in case of invalid input.

All queries made by the system are handled by calling this predicate.

First `ask_query/4` calls `query_hook/6` with the same arguments plus the *Query* and *Help* arguments converted to format-command lines. If this call succeeds, then it overrides all further processing done by `ask_query/4`. Otherwise, the query is processed in the following way:

- Preparation phase: The parameters of the query processing, defined by *QueryClass* (*Prompt*, *InputMethod*, *MapMethod* and *FailureMode*) are retrieved using the four step procedure described above. That is, the following alternatives are tried:
  - `user:query_class_hook/5`;
  - `'SU_messages':query_class/5`;
  - the built-in copy of `query_class/5`.
- Input phase: The user is prompted with *Prompt*, input is read according to *InputMethod*, and the result is returned in *RawInput*.

  The four step procedure is used for performing this phase, the predicates tried are the following:
  - `user:query_input_hook/3`;
  - `'SU_messages':query_input/3`;
  - the built-in copy of `query_input/3`.
- Mapping phase: The *RawInput* returned by the input phase is mapped to the *Answer* of the query. This mapping is defined by the *MapMethod* parameter, and the result of the conversion is returned in *Result*, which can be:
  - `success`—the mapping was successful, *Answer* is valid;
  - `failure`—the mapping was unsuccessful, the query has to be repeated;
  - `failure(Warning)`—same as `failure`, but first the given warning message has to be printed.

  The four step procedure is used for performing this phase, the predicates tried are the following:
  - `user:query_map_hook/4`;
  - `'SU_messages':query_map/4`;
  - the built-in copy of `query_map/4`.

  If the mapping phase succeeds, then `ask_query/4` returns with the *Answer* delivered by this phase.

- If the mapping does not succeed, then the query has to be repeated. If the *Result* returned by the mapping contains a warning message, then it is printed using `print_message/2`. *FailureMode* specifies whether to print the help message and whether to re-print the query text. Subsequently, the input and mapping phases are called again, and this is repeated until the mapping is successful.

`query_hook(+QueryClass, +Query, +QueryLines, +Help, +HelpLines, -Answer)` *hook*
`user:query_hook(+QueryClass, +Query, +QueryLines, +Help, +HelpLines, -Answer)`

Called by `ask_query/4` before processing the query. If this predicate succeeds, it is assumed that the query has been processed and nothing further is done.

`query_class_hook(+QueryClass, -Prompt, -InputMethod, -MapMethod, -FailureMode)` *hook*
`user:query_class_hook(+QueryClass, -Prompt, -InputMethod, -MapMethod, -FailureMode)`

Provides the user with a method of overriding the call to `'SU_messages':query_class/5` in the preparation phase of query processing. This way the default query class characteristics can be changed.

`'SU_messages':query_class(+QueryClass, -Prompt, -InputMethod, -MapMethod, -FailureMode)` *extendible*

Returns the parameters of the given *QueryClass*:

- *Prompt* - an atom to be used as prompt;
- *InputMethod* - a ground term, which specifies how to obtain input from the user;
- *MapMethod* - a ground term, which specifies how to process the input to get the abstract answer to the query;
- *FailureMode* - an atom determining what to print in case of an input error, before re-querying the user. Possible values are:
  - `help_query` - print the help message and print the query text again;
  - `help` - only print the help message;
  - `query` - only print the query text;
  - `none` - do not print anything.

For the list of default input- and map methods, see the "Default Input Methods" and "Default Map Methods" subsections in Section 8.13.3 [Query Processing], page 200.

`'SU_messages':query_abbreviation(+QueryClass, -Prompt, -Pairs)` *extendible*

This extendible predicate provides a shortcut for defining query classes with some fixed characteristics, where

- *QueryClass* is the query class being defined;
- *Prompt* is the prompt to be used;
- *Pairs* is the list of pairs defining the characters accepted and the corresponding abstract answers.

This defines a query class with the given prompt, the `line` input method, the `char(Pairs)` map method and `help_query` failure mode. The predicate is actually implemented by the first clause of `'SU_messages':query_class/5`:

```
query_class(QueryClass, Prompt, line,
            char(Pairs), help_query) :-
        query_abbreviation(QueryClass, Prompt, Pairs), !.
```

`query_input_hook(+InputMethod, +Prompt, -RawInput)` *hook*
`user:query_input_hook(+InputMethod, +Prompt, -RawInput)`

Provides the user with a method of overriding the call to `'SU_messages':query_input/3` in the input phase of query processing. This way the implementation of the default input methods can be changed.

`'SU_messages':query_input(+InputMethod, +Prompt, -RawInput)` *extendible*

Implements the input phase of query processing. The user is prompted with *Prompt*, input is read according to *InputMethod*, and the result is returned in *RawInput*.

See Section 8.13.3 [Query Processing], page 200, for details.

`query_map_hook(+MapMethod, +RawInput, -Result, -Answer)` *hook*
`user:query_map_hook(+MapMethod, +RawInput, -Result, -Answer)`

Provides the user with a method of overriding the call to `'SU_messages':query_map/4` in the mapping phase of query processing. This way the implementation of the default map methods can be changed.

`'SU_messages':query_map(+MapMethod, +RawInput, -Result, -Answer)` *extendible*

Implements the mapping phase of query processing. The *RawInput*, received from `query_input/3`, is mapped to the abstract answer term *Answer*. The mapping is defined by the *MapMethod* parameter, and one of the terms `success`, `failure` and `failure(Warning)`, describing the result of the conversion is returned in *Result*.

See Section 8.13.3 [Query Processing], page 200, for details.

## 8.14 Coroutining

The coroutining facility can be accessed by a number of built-in predicates. This makes it possible to use coroutines in a dynamic way, without having to rely on block declarations:

`when(+Condition,:Goal)`

Blocks *Goal* until the *Condition* is true, where *Condition* is a goal with the restricted syntax:

```
nonvar(X)
ground(X)
?=(X,Y)

Condition,Condition
Condition;Condition
```

For example:

```
| ?- when(((nonvar(X);?=(X,Y)),ground(T)), process(X,Y,T)).
```

`freeze(?X,:Goal)`

Blocks *Goal* until `nonvar(X)` (see Section 8.7 [Meta Logic], page 183) holds. This is defined as if by:

```
freeze(X, Goal) :- when(nonvar(X), Goal).
```

or

```
:- block freeze(-, ?).
freeze(_, Goal) :- Goal.
```

`frozen(-Var,?Goal)`

If some goal is blocked on the variable *Var*, or *Var* has attributes that can be interpreted as a goal (see Chapter 18 [Attributes], page 355), then that goal is unified with *Goal*. If no goals are blocked, *Goal* is unified with the atom `true`. If more than one goal is blocked, a conjunction is unified with *Goal*.

`dif(?X,?Y)`

Constrains *X* and *Y* to represent different terms i.e. to be non-unifiable. Calls to `dif/2` either succeed, fail, or are blocked depending on whether *X* and *Y* are sufficiently instantiated. It is defined as if by:

```
dif(X, Y) :- when(?=(X,Y), X\==Y).
```

`call_residue(:Goal,?Residue)` **obsolescent**

The *Goal* is executed as if by `call/1`. If during the execution some attributes or blocked goals were attached to some variables, then *Residue* is unified with a list of *VariableSet-Goal* pairs, and those variables no longer have attributes or blocked goals attached to them. Otherwise, *Residue* is unified with the empty list `[]`.

*VariableSet* is a set of variables such that when any of the variables is bound, *Goal* gets unblocked. Usually, a goal is blocked on a single variable, in which case *VariableSet* is a singleton.

*Goal* is an ordinary goal, sometimes module prefixed. For example:

```
| ?- call_residue((dif(X,f(Y)), X=f(Z)), Res).

X = f(Z),
Res = [[Y,Z]-(prolog:dif(f(Z),f(Y)))]
```

## 8.15 Debugging

Debugging predicates are not available in runtime systems.

`unknown(?OldState,?NewState)` *development*

*OldState* is the current state of the "Action on unknown predicates" flag, and sets the flag to *NewState*. This flag determines whether or not the system is to catch calls to undefined predicates (see Section 3.6 [Undefined Predicates], page 29), when `user:unknown_predicate_handler/3` cannot handle the goal. The possible states of the flag are:

`trace` Causes calls to undefined predicates to be reported and the debugger to be entered at the earliest opportunity.

`fail` Causes calls to such predicates to fail.

`warning` Causes calls to such predicates to display a warning message and then fail.

`error` Causes calls to such predicates to raise an exception (the default). See Section 8.5 [Exception], page 173.

`debug` *development*

The debugger is switched on in debug mode. See Section 7.2 [Basic Debug], page 77.

`trace` *development*

The debugger is switched on in trace mode. See Section 7.2 [Basic Debug], page 77.

`zip` *development*

The debugger is switched on in zip mode. See Section 7.2 [Basic Debug], page 77.

`nodebug` *development*
`notrace`
`nozip`

The debugger is switched off. See Section 7.2 [Basic Debug], page 77.

`leash(+Mode)` *development*

Leashing Mode is set to *Mode*. See Section 7.2 [Basic Debug], page 77.

`spy :Spec` *development*

Plain spypoints are placed on all the predicates given by *Spec*. See Section 7.3 [Plain Spypoint], page 79.

`spy(:Spec, :Conditions)` *development*

Spypoints with condition *Conditions* are placed on all the predicates given by *Spec*. See Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116.

`nospy :Spec` *development*

All spypoints (plain and conditional) are removed from all the predicates given by *Spec*. See Section 7.3 [Plain Spypoint], page 79.

`nospyall` *development*

Removes all the spypoints (including the generic ones) that have been set.

`debugging` *development*

Displays information about the debugger. See Section 7.2 [Basic Debug], page 77.

`add_breakpoint(:Conditions, ?BID)` *development*

Creates a breakpoint with *Conditions* and with identifier *BID*. See Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116.

`current_breakpoint(:Conditions, ?BID, ?Status, ?Kind, ?Type)` *development*

There is a breakpoint with conditions *Conditions*, identifier *BID*, enabledness *Status*, kind *Kind*, and type *Type*. See Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116.

`remove_breakpoints(+BIDs)` *development*
`disable_breakpoints(+BIDs)`
`enable_breakpoints(+BIDs)`

Removes, disables or enables the breakpoints specified by *BIDs*. See Section 7.7 [Breakpoint Predicates], page 116.

`execution_state(:Tests)` *development*

*Tests* are satisfied in the current state of the execution.

`execution_state(+FocusConditions, :Tests)` *development*

*Tests* are satisfied in the state of the execution pointed to by *FocusConditions*.

`debugger_command_hook(+DCommand,?Actions)` *hook,development*
`user:debugger_command_hook(+DCommand,?Actions)`

Allows the interactive debugger to be extended with user-defined commands. See Section 7.5 [Debug Commands], page 81.

`error_exception(+Exception)` *hook,development*
`user:error_exception(+Exception)`

Tells the debugger to enter trace mode on certain exceptions. See Section 7.6 [Advanced Debugging], page 86.

## 8.16 Execution Profiling

Execution profiling is a common aid for improving software performance. The SICStus Prolog compiler has the capability of instrumenting compiled code with *counters*, which are initially zero and incremented whenever the flow of control passes a given point in the compiled code. This way the number of calls, backtracks, choicepoints created, etc., can be counted for the instrumented predicates, and an estimate of the time spent in individual clauses and disjuncts can be calculated.

Gauge is a graphical user interface for inspecting execution profiles. It is available as a library module (see Chapter 41 [Gauge], page 687).

The original version of the profiling package was written by M.M. Gorlick and C.F. Kesselman at the Aerospace Corporation [Gorlick & Kesselman 87].

Only compiled code can be instrumented. To get an execution profile of a program, the compiler must first be told to produce instrumented code. This is done by issuing the query:

```
| ?- prolog_flag(compiling,_,profiledcode).
```

after which the program to be analyzed can be compiled as usual. Any new compiled code will be instrumented while the `compiling` Prolog flag has the value `profiledcode`.

The profiling data is generated by simply running the program. The predicate `profile_data/4` (see below) makes available a selection of the data as a Prolog term. The predicate `profile_reset/1` zeroes the profiling counters for a selection of the currently instrumented predicates.

`profile_data(:Spec,?Selection,?Resolution,-Data)` *development*

*Data* is profiling data collected from the predicates covered by the generalized predicate spec *Spec*.

The *Selection* argument determines the kind of profiling data to be collected. If uninstantiated, the predicate will backtrack over its possible values, which are:

`calls` All instances of entering a clause by a procedure call are counted. This is equivalent to counting all procedure calls *that have not been determined to fail by indexing on the first argument*.

`backtracks`
All instances of entering a clause by backtracking are counted.

`choice_points`
All instances of creating a choicepoint are counted. This occurs, roughly, when the implementation determines that there are more than one possibly matching clauses for a procedure call, and when a disjunction is entered.

`shallow_fails`
Failures in the "if" part of if-then-else statements, and in the "guard" part of guarded clauses, are counted as *shallow failures*. See Section 13.8 [Conditionals and Disjunction], page 336.

`deep_fails`
Any failures that do not classify as shallow as above are counted as *deep failures*. The reason for distinguishing shallow and deep failures is that the former are considerably cheaper to execute than the latter.

`execution_time`
The execution time for the selected predicates, clauses, or disjuncts is estimated in artificial units.

The *Resolution* argument determines the level of resolution of the profiling data to be collected. If uninstantiated, the predicate will backtrack over its possible values, which are:

`predicate`
*Data* is a list of `Module:PredName-Count`, where *Count* is a sum of the corresponding counts per clause.

`clause` *Data* is a list of `Module:ClauseName-Count`, where *Count* includes counts for any disjunctions occurring inside that clause. Note, however, that the selections `calls` and `backtracks` do *not* include counts for disjunctions.

`all` *Data* is a list of `Module:InternalName-Count`. This is the finest resolution level, counting individual clauses and disjuncts.

Above, *PredName* is a predicate spec, *ClauseName* is a compound term `PredName/ClauseNumber`, and *InternalName* is either
*ClauseName*—corresponding to a clause, or
`(ClauseName-DisjNo)/Arity/AltNo`—corresponding to a disjunct.

`profile_reset(:Spec)` *development*

Zeroes all counters for predicates covered by the generalized predicate spec *Spec*.

## 8.17 Miscellaneous

`?X = ?Y` *ISO*

Defined as if by the clause `Z=Z.`; i.e. *X* and *Y* are unified.

`?X \= ?Y` *ISO*

The same as `\+ X = Y`; i.e. *X* and *Y* are not unifiable.

`unify_with_occurs_check(?X, ?Y)` *ISO*

True if *X* and *Y* unify to a finite (acyclic) term. Runs in almost linear time.

`length(?List,?Length)`

If *List* is instantiated to a list of determinate length, then *Length* will be unified with this length.

If *List* is of indeterminate length and *Length* is instantiated to an integer, then *List* will be unified with a list of length *Length*. The list elements are unique variables.

If *Length* is unbound then *Length* will be unified with all possible lengths of *List*.

`numbervars(?Term,+N,?M)` *meta-logical*

Unifies each of the variables in *Term* with a special term, so that `write(Term)` (or `writeq(Term)`) (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142) prints those variables as (‘`A`’ `+` ($i$ mod 26))($i$/26) where $i$ ranges from $N$ to $M$-1. $N$ must be instantiated to an integer. If it is 0 you get the variable names A, B, . . ., Z, A1, B1, etc. This predicate is used by `listing/[0,1]` (see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175).

`undo(:Goal)`

The goal *Goal* is executed on backtracking. This predicate is useful if *Goal* performs some side-effect, which must be done on backtracking to undo another side-effect.

Note that this operation is immune to cuts. That is, `undo/1` does *not* behave as if it were defined by:

```
weak_undo(_).
weak_undo(Goal) :- Goal, fail.
```

since defining it that way would not guarantee that *Goal* be executed on backtracking.

Note also that the Prolog top-level operates as a read-call-fail loop, and backtracks implicitly for each new query. Raised exceptions and the predicates `halt/0` and `abort/0` cause implicit backtracking as well.

`halt` *ISO*

Causes Prolog to exit back to the shell. (In recursive calls to Prolog from C, this predicate will return back to C instead.)

`halt(+Code)` *ISO*

Causes the Prolog process to immediately exit back to the shell with the integer return code *Code*, even if it occurs in a recursive call from C.

`op(+Precedence,+Type,+Name)` *ISO*

Declares the atom *Name* to be an operator of the stated *Type* and *Precedence* (see Section 4.6 [Operators], page 54). *Name* may also be a list of atoms in which case all of them are declared to be operators. If *Precedence* is 0 then the operator properties of *Name* (if any) are cancelled.

`current_op(?Precedence,?Type,?Op)` *ISO*

The atom *Op* is currently an operator of type *Type* and precedence *Precedence*. Neither *Op* nor the other arguments need be instantiated at the time of the call; i.e. this predicate can be used to generate as well as to test.

`break` *development*

Invokes a recursive top-level. See Section 3.9 [Nested], page 31.

`abort`

Aborts the current execution. See Section 3.9 [Nested], page 31. (In recursive calls to Prolog from C, this predicate will return back to C instead.)

`save_files(+SourceFiles, +FileSpec)`

Any module declarations, predicates, multifile clauses, or directives encountered in *SourceFiles* are saved in object format into the file denoted by *FileSpec*. Source file information as provided by `source_file/[1,2]` for the relevant predicates and modules is also saved.

If *FileSpec* does not have an explicit suffix, the suffix '`.po`' will be appended to it. *SourceFiles* should denote a single file or a list of files. *FileSpec* can later be loaded by `load_files/[1,2]`, at which time any saved directives will be re-executed. If any of the *SourceFiles* declares a module, *FileSpec* too will behave as a module-file and export the predicates listed in the first module declaration encountered in *SourceFiles*. See Section 3.10 [Saving], page 31.

`save_modules(+Modules, +FileSpec)`

The module declarations, predicates, multifile clauses and initializations belonging to *Modules* are saved in object format into the file denoted by *FileSpec*. Source file information and embedded directives (except initializations) are *not* saved.

If *FileSpec* does not have an explicit suffix, the suffix '`.po`' will be appended to it. *Modules* should denote a single module or a list of modules. *FileSpec*

can later be loaded by `load_files/[1,2]` and will behave as a module-file and export any predicates exported by the first module in *Modules*. See Section 3.10 [Saving], page 31.

`save_predicates(:Spec, +FileSpec)`

The predicates specified by the generalized predicate spec *Spec* are saved in object format into the file denoted by *FileSpec*. Source file information and embedded directives are *not* saved. Thus, this predicate is intended for saving data represented as tables of dynamic facts, not for saving static code.

If *FileSpec* does not have an explicit suffix, the suffix '`.po`' will be appended to it. *FileSpec* can later be loaded by `load_files/[1,2]`. See Section 3.10 [Saving], page 31.

`save_program(+FileSpec)`
`save_program(+FileSpec, :Goal)`

The system saves the program state into the file denoted by *FileSpec*. If *FileSpec* does not have an explicit suffix, the suffix '`.sav`' will be appended to it. When the program state is restored, *Goal* is executed. *Goal* defaults to `true`. See Section 3.10 [Saving], page 31.

`restore(+FileSpec)`

The system is returned to the program state previously saved to the file denoted by *FileSpec* with start-up goal *Goal*. `restore/1` may succeed, fail or raise an exception depending on *Goal*. See Section 3.10 [Saving], page 31.

`garbage_collect`

Performs a garbage collection of the global stack immediately.

`garbage_collect_atoms`

Performs a garbage collection of the atoms immediately.

`gc` **obsolescent**

Enables garbage collection of the global stack (the default).

`nogc` **obsolescent**

Disables garbage collection of the global stack.

`prompt(?Old,?New)`

The sequence of characters (prompt) that indicates that the system is waiting for user input is represented as an atom, and unified with *Old*; the atom bound to New specifies the new prompt. In particular, the goal `prompt(X, X)` unifies the current prompt with *X*, without changing it. Note that this predicate only affects the prompt given when a user's program is trying to read from the standard input stream (e.g. by calling `read/1`). Note also that the prompt is reset to the default '`|: `' on return to top-level.

`version` *development*,**obsolescent**

Displays the introductory messages for all the component parts of the current system.

Prolog will display its own introductory message upon startup by calling `version/0`. If this message is required at some other time it can be obtained

using this predicate, which displays a list of introductory messages; initially this list comprises only one message (Prolog's), but you can add more messages using `version/1`.

`version(+Message)` *`development`*,**obsolescent**

Appends *Message* to the end of the message list that is output by `version/0`. *Message* must be an atom.

The idea of this message list is that, as systems are constructed on top of other systems, each can add its own identification to the message list. Thus `version/0` should always indicate which modules make up a particular package. It is not possible to remove messages from the list.

`help` *`hookable`*,*`development`*,**obsolescent**

Displays basic information, or a user defined help message. It first calls `user:user_help/0`, and only if that call fails is a default help message printed on the current output stream.

`user_help` *`hook`*,**obsolescent**
`user:user_help`

This may be defined by the user to print a help message on the current output stream.

# 9 Mixing C/C++ and Prolog

SICStus Prolog provides a bi-directional, procedural interface for program parts written in C and Prolog. The C side of the interface defines a number of functions and macros for various operations. On the Prolog side, you have to supply declarations specifying the names and argument/value types of C functions being called as predicates. These declarations are used by the predicate `load_foreign_resource/1`, which performs the actual binding of C functions to predicates.

In most cases, the argument/value type declaration suffice for making the necessary conversions of data automatically as they are passed between C and Prolog. However, it is possible to declare the type of an argument to be a Prolog term, in which case the receiving function will see it as a "handle" object, called an *SP_term_ref*, for which access functions are provided.

The C support routines are available in a development system as well as in runtime systems. The support routines include:

- Static and dynamic linking of C code into the Prolog environment.
- Automatic conversion between Prolog terms and C data with `foreign/[2,3]` declarations.
- Functions for accessing and creating Prolog terms, and for creating and manipulating SP_term_refs.
- The Prolog system may call C predicates, which may call Prolog back without limits on recursion. Predicates that call C may be defined dynamically from C.
- Support for creating stand-alone executables.
- Support for creating user defined Prolog streams.
- Functions to read and write on Prolog streams from C.
- Functions to install interrupt handlers that can safely call Prolog.
- Functions for manipulating mutual exclusion locks.
- User hooks that can be used to perform user defined actions on a number of occasions e.g. before reading a character from the standard input stream.

## 9.1 Notes

*ANSI Conformance*
: Only C compilers that support ANSI C (or similar) are supported.

*The SP_PATH variable*
: It is normally not necessary to set this environment variable, but its value will be used, as a fall-back, at runtime if no explicit boot path is given when initializing a runtime or development system. In this chapter, the environment variable `SP_PATH` is used as a shorthand for the SICStus Prolog installation directory, whose default location for SICStus 3.12.7 is '`/usr/local/lib/sicstus-3.12.7`') for

UNIX and '`C:\Program Files\SICStus Prolog 3.12.7`' for Windows. See Section 3.1.1 [Environment Variables], page 23.

> **Windows note**: Explicit use of the `SP_PATH` variable is discouraged, since Windows applications can find out for themselves where they were started from. `SP_PATH` is only used if the directory where '`sprt312.dll`' is loaded from does not contain `sp312` (a directory), '`sprt.sav`', or '`spre.sav`'. If `SP_PATH` is used, SICStus expects it to be set such that `%SP_PATH%\bin` contains '`sprt.sav`' or '`spre.sav`'. See Section 9.8.2 [Runtime Systems on Target Machines], page 254.

*Definitions and declarations*

Type definitions and function declarations for the interface are found in the header file '`<sicstus/sicstus.h>`'.

*Error Codes*

The value of many support functions is a return code, which is one of `SP_SUCCESS` for success, `SP_FAILURE` for failure, `SP_ERROR` if an error condition occurred, or if an uncaught exception was raised during a call from C to Prolog. If the value is `SP_ERROR`, the macro `SP_errno` will return a value describing the error condition:

```
int SP_errno
```

The function `SP_error_message()` returns a pointer to the diagnostic message corresponding to a specified error number:

```
char *SP_error_message(int errno)
```

*Wide Characters*

The foreign interface supports wide characters. Whenever a sequence of possibly wide character codes is to be passed to or from a C function it is encoded as a sequence of bytes, using the so called internal encoding of SICStus Prolog, the UTF-8 encoding; see Section 12.2 [WCX Concepts], page 301. Unless noted otherwise the encoded form is terminated by a NUL byte. This sequence of bytes will be called an *encoded string*, representing the given sequence of character codes. Note that it is a property of the UTF-8 encoding that it does not change ASCII character code sequences.

If a foreign function is specified to return an encoded string, an exception will be raised if, on return to Prolog, the actual string is malformed (is not a valid sequence of UTF-8 encoded characters). The exception raised is `representation_error(...,...,mis_encoded_string)`.

## 9.2 Calling C from Prolog

Functions written in the C language may be called from Prolog using an interface in which automatic type conversions between Prolog terms and common C types are declared as Prolog facts. Calling without type conversion can also be specified, in which case the arguments and values are passed as SP_term_refs. This interface is partly modeled after Quintus Prolog.

The functions installed using this foreign language interface may invoke Prolog code and use the support functions described in the other sections of this chapter.

Functions, or their equivalent, in any other language having C compatible calling conventions may also be interfaced using this interface. When referring to C functions in the following, we also include such other language functions. Note however that a C compiler is needed since a small amount of glue code (in C) must be generated for interfacing purposes.

### 9.2.1 Foreign Resources

A *foreign resource* is a set of C functions, defined in one or more files, installed as an atomic operation. The name of a foreign resource, the *resource name*, is an atom, which should uniquely identify the resource. Thus, two foreign resources with the same name cannot be installed at the same time, even if they correspond to different files.

The resource name of a foreign resource is derived from its file name by deleting any leading path and the suffix. Therefore the resource name is not the same as the absolute file name. For example, the resource name of both '`~john/foo/bar.so`' and '`~ringo/blip/bar.so`' is `bar`. If `load_foreign_resource('~john/foo/bar')` has been done '`~john/foo/bar.so`' will be unloaded if either `load_foreign_resource('~john/foo/bar')` or `load_foreign_resource('~ringo/blip/bar')` is subsequently called.

It is recommended that a resource name be all lowercase, starting with '`a`' to '`z`' followed by a sequence consisting of '`a`' to '`z`', underscore ('`_`'), and digits. The resource name is used to construct the file name containing the foreign resource.

For each foreign resource, a `foreign_resource/2` fact is used to declare the interfaced functions. For each of these functions, a `foreign/[2,3]` fact is used to specify conversions between predicate arguments and C-types. These conversion declarations are used for creating the necessary interface between Prolog and C.

The functions making up the foreign resource, the automatically generated glue code, and any libraries, are compiled and linked, using the `splfr` tool (see Section 9.2.5 [The Foreign Resource Linker], page 224), to form a *linked foreign resource*. A linked foreign resource exists in two different flavors, *static* and *dynamic*. A static resource is simply a relocatable object file containing the foreign code. A dynamic resource is a shared library ('`.so`' under most UNIX dialects, '`.dll`' under Windows), which is loaded into the Prolog executable at runtime.

Foreign resources can be linked into the Prolog executable either when the executable is built (*pre-linked*), or at runtime. Pre-linking can be done using static or dynamic resources. Runtime-linking can only be done using dynamic resources. Dynamic resources can also be unlinked.

In all cases, the declared predicates are installed by the built-in predicate `load_foreign_resource/1`. If the resource was pre-linked, only the predicate names are bound; otherwise, runtime-linking is attempted (using `dlopen()`, `LoadLibrary()`, or similar).

### 9.2.2 Conversion Declarations

Conversion declaration predicates:

`foreign_resource(+ResourceName,+Functions)` *hook*

Specifies that a set of foreign functions, to be called from Prolog, are to be found in the resource named by *ResourceName*. *Functions* is a list of functions exported by the resource. Only functions that are to be called from Prolog and optionally one *init function* and one *deinit function* should be listed. The init and deinit functions are specified as `init(Function)` and `deinit(Function)` respectively (see Section 9.2.7 [Init and Deinit Functions], page 227). This predicate should be defined entirely in terms of facts (unit clauses) and will be called in the relevant module, i.e. not necessarily in the `user` module. For example:

```
foreign_resource('terminal', [scroll,pos_cursor,ask]).
```

specifies that functions `scroll()`, `pos_cursor()` and `ask()` are to be found in the resource '`terminal`'.

`foreign(+CFunctionName, +Predicate)` *hook*
`foreign(+CFunctionName, +Language, +Predicate)` *hook*

Specify the Prolog interface to a C function. *Language* is at present constrained to the atom `c`, so there is no advantage in using `foreign/3` over `foreign/2`. *CFunctionName* is the name of a C function. *Predicate* specifies the name of the Prolog predicate that will be used to call *CFunction()*. *Predicate* also specifies how the predicate arguments are to be translated to and from the corresponding C arguments. These predicates should be defined entirely in terms of facts (unit clauses) and will be called in the relevant module, i.e. not necessarily in the `user` module. For example:

```
foreign(pos_cursor, c, move_cursor(+integer, +integer)).
```

The above example says that the C function `pos_cursor()` has two integer value arguments and that we will use the predicate `move_cursor/2` to call this function. A goal `move_cursor(5, 23)` would translate into the C call `pos_cursor(5,23);`.

The third argument of the predicate `foreign/3` specifies how to translate between Prolog arguments and C arguments. A call to a foreign predicate will raise an exception if an input arguments is uninstantiated (`instantiation_error/2`) or has the wrong type (`type_error/4`) or domain (`domain_error/4`). The call will fail upon return from the function if the output arguments do not unify with the actual arguments.

The available conversions are listed in the next subsection.

### 9.2.3 Conversions between Prolog Arguments and C Types

The following table lists the possible values for the arguments in the predicate specification of `foreign/[2,3]`. The value declares which conversion between corresponding Prolog argument and C type will take place.

> **Please note**: here, the term '`chars`' refers to a code-list, rather than to a char-list.

`Prolog: +integer`
`C: long` The argument should be a number. It is converted to a C `long` and passed to the C function.

`Prolog: +float`
`C: double` The argument should be a number. It is converted to a C `double` and passed to the C function.

`Prolog: +atom`
`C: SP_atom`
The argument should be an atom. Its canonical representation is passed to the C function.

`Prolog: +chars`
`C: char *` The argument should be a code-list. The C function will be passed the address of an array with the encoded string representation of these characters. The array is subject to reuse by other support functions, so if the value is going to be used on a more than temporary basis, it must be moved elsewhere.

`Prolog: +string`
`C: char *` The argument should be an atom. The C function will be passed the address of an encoded string representing the characters of the atom. The C function should *not* overwrite the string.

`Prolog: +string(`*N*`)` **obsolescent**
`C: char *` The argument should be an atom. The encoded string representing the atom will be copied into a newly allocated buffer. The string will be truncated (at a wide character boundary) if it is longer than *N* bytes. The string will be blank padded on the right if it is shorter than *N* bytes. The C function will be passed the address of the buffer. The C function may overwrite the buffer, but should not assume that it remains valid after returning.

`Prolog: +address`
`C: void *` The value passed will be a `void *` pointer.

`Prolog: +address(`*TypeName*`)`
`C:` *TypeName* `*`
The value passed will be a *TypeName* `*` pointer.

`Prolog: +term`
`C: SP_term_ref`
The argument could be any term. The value passed will be the internal representation of the term.

`Prolog: -integer`
`C: long *` The C function is passed a reference to an uninitialized `long`. The value returned will be converted to a Prolog integer.

`Prolog: -float`
`C: double *`
The C function is passed a reference to an uninitialized `double`. The value returned will be converted to a Prolog float.

`Prolog: -atom`
`C: SP_atom *`
The C function is passed a reference to an uninitialized `SP_atom`. The value returned should be the canonical representation of a Prolog atom.

`Prolog: -chars`
`C: char **`
The C function is passed the address of an uninitialized `char *`. The returned encoded string will be converted to a Prolog code-list.

`Prolog: -string`
`C: char **`
The C function is passed the address of an uninitialized `char *`. The returned encoded string will be converted to a Prolog atom. Prolog will copy the string to a safe place, so the memory occupied by the returned string may be reused during subsequent calls to foreign code.

`Prolog: -string(`*N*`)` **obsolescent**
`C: char *` The C function is passed a reference to a character buffer large enough to store *N* bytes. The C function is expected to fill the buffer with an encoded string of *N* bytes (not NULL-terminated). This encoded string will be stripped of trailing blanks and converted to a Prolog atom.

`Prolog: -address`
`C: void **`
The C function is passed the address of an uninitialized `void *`.

`Prolog: -address(`*TypeName*`)`
`C:` *TypeName* `**`
The C function is passed the address of an uninitialized *TypeName* `*`.

`Prolog: -term`
`C: SP_term_ref`
The C function is passed a new SP_term_ref, and is expected to set its value to a suitable Prolog term. Prolog will try to unify the value with the actual argument.

`Prolog: [-integer]`
`C: long` *F*`()`
The C function should return a `long`. The value returned will be converted to a Prolog integer.

`Prolog: [-float]`
`C: double F()`
The C function should return a `double`. The value returned will be converted to a Prolog float.

`Prolog: [-atom]`
`C: SP_atom F()`
The C function should return an `SP_atom`. The value returned must be the canonical representation of a Prolog atom.

`Prolog: [-chars]`
`C: char *F()`
The C function should return a `char *`. The returned encoded string will be converted to a Prolog code-list.

`Prolog: [-string]`
`C: char *F()`
The C function should return a `char *`. The returned encoded string will be converted to a Prolog atom. Prolog will copy the string to a safe place, so the memory occupied by the returned string may be reused during subsequent calls to foreign code.

`Prolog: [-string(N)]` **obsolescent**
`C: char *F()`
The C function should return a `char *`. The first *N* bytes of the encoded string (not necessarily NULL-terminated) will be copied and the copied string will be stripped of trailing blanks. The stripped string will be converted to a Prolog atom. C may reuse or destroy the string buffer during later calls.

`Prolog: [-address]`
`C: void *F()`
The C function should return a `void *`. (see Section 9.4.2 [Creating Prolog Terms], page 233), will be converted to a Prolog integer.

`Prolog: [-address(TypeName)]`
`C: TypeName *F()`
The C function should return a *`TypeName`* `*`.

`Prolog: [-term]`
`C: SP_term_ref F()`
The C function should return a SP_term_ref. Prolog will try to unify its value with the actual argument.

### 9.2.4 Interface Predicates

`load_foreign_resource(:Resource)`
Unless a foreign resource with the same name as *Resource* has been statically linked, the linked foreign resource specified by *Resource* is linked into the Prolog load image. In both cases, the predicates defined by *Resource* are installed, and any init function is called. Dynamic linking is not possible if the foreign resource was linked using the '`--static`' option.

If a resource with the same name has been previously loaded, it will be unloaded, as if `unload_foreign_resource(Resource)` were called, before *Resource* is loaded.

`unload_foreign_resource(:ResourceName)`

Any deinit function associated with *ResourceName*, a resource name, is called, and the predicates defined by *ResourceName* are uninstalled. If *ResourceName* has been dynamically linked, it is unlinked from the Prolog load image.

If no resource named `ResourceName` is currently loaded, an existence error is raised.

For backward compatibility, *ResourceName* can also be of the same type as the argument to `load_foreign_resource/1`. In that case the resource name will be derived from the absolute file name in the same manner as for `load_foreign_resource/1`. Also for backward compatibility, `unload_foreign_resource/1` is a meta-predicate, but the module is ignored.

> **Please note**: all foreign resources are unloaded before Prolog exits. This implies that the C library function `atexit(func)` cannot be used if *func* is defined in a dynamically linked foreign resource.

The following predicates are provided for backwards compatibility and should be avoided in new code:

`foreign_file(+File,+Functions)` *hook*,**obsolescent**

Specifies that a set of foreign functions, to be called from Prolog, are to be found in *File*. This predicate is only called from `load_foreign_files/2`.

`load_foreign_files(:ObjectFiles,+Libraries)` *development,hookable*,**obsolescent**

A resource name is derived from the first file name in *ObjectFiles* by stripping off the suffix. If this resource has been statically linked, the predicates defined by it are installed; otherwise, a linked foreign resource containing the declared functions is created and loaded.

### 9.2.5 The Foreign Resource Linker

The foreign resource linker, `splfr`, is used for creating foreign resources (see Section 9.2.1 [Foreign Resources], page 219). `splfr` reads terms from a Prolog file, applying op declarations and extracting any `foreign_resource/2` fact with first argument matching the resource name and all `foreign/[2,3]` facts. Based on this information, it generates the necessary glue code, and combines it with any additional C or object files provided by the user into a linked foreign resource. The output file name will be the resource name with a suitable extension. `splfr` is invoked as

```
% splfr [ Option | InputFile ] ...
```

The input to `splfr` can be divided into *Option*s and *InputFile*s and they can be arbitrarily mixed on the command line. Anything not interpreted as an option will be interpreted as

an input file. Exactly one of the input files should be a Prolog file. The following options are available:

'`--help`'
'`-v`'
'`--verbose`'
'`--version`'
'`--config=`*`ConfigFile`*'
'`--cflag=`*`CFlag`*'
'`-LD`'
'`--sicstus=`*`Executable`*'
'`--with_jdk=`*`DIR`*'
'`--with_tcltk=`*`DIR`*'
'`--with_tcl=`*`DIR`*'
'`--with_tk=`*`DIR`*'
'`--with_bdb=`*`DIR`*'
'`--keep`'

These are treated the same as for the `spld` tool. See Section 9.8.3 [The Application Builder], page 258, for details.

'`--resource=`*`ResourceName`*'

Specify the resource's name. This defaults to the basename of the Prolog source file found on the command line.

'`-o, --output=`*`OutputFileName`*'

Specify output file name. This defaults to the name of the resource, suffixed with the platform's standard shared object suffix (i.e. '`.so`' on most UNIX dialects, '`.dll`' under Windows). The use of this option is discouraged, except to change the output directory.

'`--manual`'

Do not generate any glue code. This option can only be used when the interface code is generated manually as described in Chapter 47 [Runtime Utilities], page 763. You should probably not use this option.

'`-S`'
'`--static`'

Create a statically linked foreign resource instead of a dynamically linked one, which is the default. A statically linked foreign resource is a single object file, which can be pre-linked into a Prolog system. See also the `spld` tool, Section 9.8.3 [The Application Builder], page 258.

'`--no-rpath`'

Under UNIX, the default is to embed into the shared object all linker library directories for use by the dynamic linker. For most UNIX linkers this corresponds to adding a '`-R`*`path`*' for each '`-L`*`path`*'. The '`--no-rpath`' option inihibits this.

'`--nocompile`'

Do not compile, just generate code. This may be useful in Makefiles, for example to generate the header file in a separate step. Implies '`--keep`'.

'`--namebase=namebase`'
: *namebase* will be used as part of the name of generated files. The default name base is the resource name (e.g. as specified with '`--resource`'). If '`--static`' is specified, the default *namebase* is the resource name followed by '`_s`'.

'`--header=headername`'
: Specify the name of the generated header file. The default if is `namebase_glue.h`. All C files that define foreign functions or that call SICStus API functions should include this file. Among other things the generated header file includes prototypes corresponding to the `foreign/3` declarations in the prolog code.

'`--multi-sp-aware`'
'`--exclusive-access`'
'`--context-hook=name`'
'`--no-context-hook`'
: Specifies various degrees of support for more than one SICStus in the same process. See Section 11.4 [Foreign Resources and Multiple SICStus Run-Times], page 296, for details.

'`--moveable`'
: Do not embed paths into the foreign resource.

  On platforms that support it, i.e. some versions of UNIX, the default behavior of `splfr` is to add each directory *dir* specified with '`-Ldir`' to the search path used by the run-time loader (using the SysV `ld -R` option or similar). The option '`--moveable`' turns off this behavior. For additional details, see the corresponding option to `spld` (see Section 9.8.3 [The Application Builder], page 258).

The key input to `splfr` is the *SourceFile*. The contents of this file determines how the foreign resource's interface will look like. When the source-file is read in, `foreign_resource/2` facts with first argument matching the name of this resource (i.e. `ResourceName`) is extracted together with all `foreign/[2,3]` facts.

#### 9.2.5.1 Customizing `splfr` under UNIX

The `splfr` tool is implemented as a Perl script and can be customized in order to adapt to local variations. *Do not attempt this unless you know what you are doing.* Customization is done by editing their common configuration file `spconfig-version`. Follow these instructions:

1. Locate the configuration file `spconfig-version`. It should be located in the same directory as `splfr`.
2. Make a copy for `spconfig-version`; let's call it `hacked_splfr.config`. Do not edit the original file.
3. The configuration file contains lines on the form `CFLAGS=-g -O2`. Edit these according to your needs. Do not add or remove any flags.

4. You may now use the modified `spconfig-version` together with `splfr` like this:

   ```
   % splfr [...] --config=/path/to/hacked_splfr.config
   ```

   Replace '`/path/to`' with the actual path to the hacked configuration file.

### 9.2.6 Creating Dynamic Linked Foreign Resources Manually under UNIX

The only supported method for building foreign resources is by compiling and linking them with `splfr`. However, this is sometimes inconvenient, for instance when writing a Makefile for use with `make`. To figure out what needs to be done to build a foreign resource, you should build it once with `splfr --verbose --keep ...`, note what compiler and linker flags are used, and save away any generated files. You can then mimic the build commands used by `splfr` in your '`Makefile`'. You should repeat this process each time you upgrade SICStus, even if only the revision part of the SICStus version changes.

### 9.2.7 Init and Deinit Functions

An init function and/or a deinit function can be declared by `foreign_resource/2`. If this is the case, these functions should have the prototype:

`void` *`FunctionName`* `(int when)`

The init function is called by `load_foreign_resource/1` after the resource has been loaded and the interfaced predicates have been installed. If the init function fails (using `SP_fail()`) or raises an exception (using `SP_raise_exception()`), the failure or exception is propagated by `load_foreign_resource/1` and the foreign resource is unloaded (without calling any deinit function). However, using `SP_fail()` is not recommended, and operations that may require `SP_raise_exception()` are probably better done in an init function that is called explicitly after the foreign resource has been loaded.

The deinit function is called by `unload_foreign_resource/1` before the interfaced predicates have been uninstalled and the resource has been unloaded. If the deinit function fails or raises an exception, the failure or exception is propagated by `unload_foreign_resource/1`, but the foreign resource is still unloaded. However, neither `SP_fail()` nor `SP_raise_exception()` should be called in a deinit function. Complex deinitialization should be done in an explicitly called deinit function instead.

The init and deinit functions may use the C-interface to call Prolog etc.

Foreign resources are unloaded before saving states, and reloaded afterwards or when the saved-state is restored; see Section 3.10 [Saving], page 31. Foreign resources are also unloaded when exiting Prolog execution. The parameter `when` reflects the context of the `(un)load_foreign_resource/1` and is set as follows for init functions:

`SP_WHEN_EXPLICIT`
: Explicit call to `load_foreign_resource/1`.

`SP_WHEN_RESTORE`
: Resource is reloaded after save or restore.

For deinit functions:

`SP_WHEN_EXPLICIT`
: Explicit call to `unload_foreign_resource/1`.

`SP_WHEN_SAVE`
: Resource is unloaded before save.

`SP_WHEN_EXIT`
: Resource is unloaded before exiting Prolog.

### 9.2.8 Creating the Linked Foreign Resource

Suppose we have a Prolog source file `ex.pl` containing:

```
                                                    % ex.pl
foreign(f1, p1(+integer,[-integer])).
foreign(f2, p2(+integer,[-integer])).
foreign_resource(ex, [f1,f2]).
:- load_foreign_resource(ex).
```

and a C source file `ex.c` with definitions of the functions `f1` and `f2`, both returning `long` and having a `long` as only parameter. The conversion declarations in '`ex.pl`' state that these functions form the foreign resource `ex`.

To create the linked foreign resource, simply type (to the Shell):

```
% splfr ex.pl ex.c
```

The linked foreign resource '`ex.so`' (file suffix '`.so`' is system dependent) has been created. It will be dynamically linked by the directive `:- load_foreign_resource(ex).` when the file '`ex.pl`' is loaded. Linked foreign resources can also be created manually (see Chapter 47 [Runtime Utilities], page 763).

Dynamic linking of foreign resources can also be used by runtime systems. On some platforms, however, the executable must not be *stripped* for dynamic linking to work, i.e. its symbol table must remain.

### 9.2.9 An Alternative Way to Define C Predicates

`SP_define_c_predicate()` defines a Prolog predicate such that when the Prolog predicate is called it will call a C function with a term corresponding to the Prolog goal. The

arguments to the predicate can then be examined using the usual term access functions, e.g. `SP_get_arg()` (see Section 9.4.3 [Accessing Prolog Terms], page 235).

```
typedef int SP_CPredFun(SP_term_ref goal, void *stash);
int SP_define_c_predicate(char *name, int arity, char *module,
                          SP_CPredFun *proc, void *stash)
```

The Prolog predicate *module*:*name*/*arity* will be defined (the module *module* must already exist). The `stash` argument can be anything and is simply passed as the second argument to the C function *proc*.

The C function should return `SP_SUCCESS` for success and `SP_FAILURE` for failure. The C function may also call `SP_fail()` or `SP_raise_exception()` in which case the return value will be ignored.

Here is an end-to-end example of the above:

```
                                                        % square.pl
foreign_resource(square, [init(square_init)]).

:- load_foreign_resource(square).
```

```
                                                        /* square.c */
#include <sicstus/sicstus.h>

static int square_it(SP_term_ref goal, void *stash)
{
  long arg1;
  SP_term_ref tmp = SP_new_term_ref();
  SP_term_ref square_term = SP_new_term_ref();
  long the_square;

  /* goal will be a term like square(42,X) */
  SP_get_arg(1,goal,tmp); /* extract first arg */
  if (!SP_get_integer(tmp,&arg1))
    return SP_FAILURE;   /* type check first arg */

  SP_put_integer(square_term, arg1*arg1);
  SP_get_arg(2,goal,tmp); /* extract second arg */

  /* Unify output argument.
     SP_put_integer(tmp,...) would *not* work!  */
  return (SP_unify(tmp, square_term) ? SP_SUCCESS : SP_FAILURE);
}

void square_init(int when)
{
  (void)when;                    /* unused */
  /* Install square_it as user:square/2 */
  SP_define_c_predicate("square", 2, "user", square_it, NULL /* unused */);
}
                                                            # terminal
% splfr square.pl square.c
% sicstus -f -l square
% compiling /home/matsc/tmp/square.pl...
%  loading foreign resource /home/matsc/tmp/square.so in module user
% compiled /home/matsc/tmp/square.pl in module user, 0 msec 816 bytes
SICStus 3.12.7 ...
Licensed to SICS
| ?- square(4711, X).
X = 22193521 ?
yes
| ?- square(not_an_int, X).
no
```

## 9.3 Calling C++ from Prolog

Functions in C++ files that should be called from Prolog must use C linkage, e.g.

```
extern "C" {
void myfun(long i)
{...};
};
```

To build a dynamic linked foreign resource with C++ code, you may (depending on platform) have to explicitly include certain libraries. E.g. on Sparc/SunOS 5.X using `gcc`:

```
% splfr .... -LD -L/usr/gnu/lib/gcc-lib/sparc-sun-solaris2.4/2.7.0 -
lgcc
```

The library path is installation dependent, of course.

## 9.4 Support Functions

The support functions include functions to manipulate SP_term_refs, functions to convert data between the basic C types and Prolog terms, functions to test whether a term can be converted to a specific C type, and functions to unify or compare two terms.

### 9.4.1 Creating and Manipulating SP_term_refs

Normally, C functions only have indirect access to Prolog terms via SP_term_refs. C functions may receive arguments as unconverted Prolog terms, in which case the actual arguments received will have the type `SP_term_ref`. Also, a C function may return an unconverted Prolog term, in which case it must create an SP_term_ref. Finally, any temporary Prolog terms created by C code must be handled as SP_term_refs.

SP_term_refs are motivated by the fact that SICStus Prolog's memory manager must have a means of reaching all live Prolog terms for memory management purposes, including such terms that are being manipulated by the user's C code. Previous releases of SICStus Prolog provided direct access to Prolog terms and the ability to tell the memory manager that a given memory address points to a Prolog term, but this approach was too low level and highly error-prone. The current design is modeled after and largely compatible with Quintus Prolog release 3.

SP_term_refs are created dynamically. At any given time, an SP_term_ref has a value (a Prolog term, initially `[]`). This value can be examined, accessed, and updated by the support functions described in this section.

It is important to understand the rules governing the scope of SP_term_refs in conjunction with calls from Prolog to C and vice versa:

- When a C function called from Prolog returns, all SP_term_refs passed to the function or dynamically created by the function become invalid.
- When terms are passed to C as a result of calling Prolog, those terms and any SP_term_refs created since the start of the query are only valid until backtracking into the query or an enclosing one.

See Section 43.6 [SPTerm and Memory], page 705, for a discussion (in the context of the Java interface) of the lifetime of term references.

A new SP_term_ref is created by calling:

```
SP_term_ref SP_new_term_ref(void)
```

The value of the SP_term_ref `to` is set to the value of the SP_term_ref `from` by calling `SP_put_term(to,from)`. The previous value of `to` is lost:

```
void SP_put_term(SP_term_ref to, SP_term_ref from)
```

Each Prolog atom is represented internally by a unique integer, represented in C as an `SP_atom`. This mapping between atoms and integers depends on the execution history. Certain functions require this representation as opposed to an SP_term_ref. It can be obtained by a special argument type declaration when calling C from Prolog, by calling `SP_get_atom()`, or by looking up an encoded string `s` in the Prolog symbol table by calling `SP_atom_from_string(s)`.

```
SP_atom SP_atom_from_string(char *s)
```

which returns the atom, or zero if the given string is malformed (is not a valid sequence of UTF-8 encoded characters).

The encoded string containing the characters of a Prolog atom `a` can be obtained by calling:

```
char *SP_string_from_atom(SP_atom a)
```

The length of the encoded string representing a Prolog atom `a` can be obtained by calling:

```
int SP_atom_length(SP_atom a)
```

Same as `strlen(SP_string_from_atom(a)`, but runs in O(1) time.

Prolog atoms, and the space occupied by their print names, are subject to garbage collection when the number of atoms has reached a certain threshold, under the control of the `agc_margin` Prolog flag (see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175), or when the atom garbage collector is called explicitly. The atom garbage collector will find all references to atoms from the Prolog specific memory areas, including SP_term_refs and arguments passed from Prolog to foreign language functions. However, atoms created by `SP_atom_from_string()` and merely stored in a local variable are endangered by garbage collection. The following functions make it possible to protect an atom while it is in use. The operations are implemented using reference counters to cater for multiple, independent use of the same atom in different foreign resources:

```
int SP_register_atom(SP_atom a)
```

Registers the atom `a` with the Prolog memory manager by incrementing its reference counter. Returns a nonzero value if the operation succeeds.

```
int SP_unregister_atom(SP_atom a)
```

Unregisters the atom `a` with the Prolog memory manager by decrementing its reference counter. Returns a nonzero value if the operation succeeds.

### 9.4.2 Creating Prolog Terms

These functions create a term and store it as the value of an SP_term_ref, which must exist prior to the call. They return zero if the conversion fails (as far as failure can be detected), and a nonzero value otherwise, assigning to `t` the converted value.

> **Please note**: here, the term '`chars`' refers to a code-list, rather than to a char-list.

`int SP_read_from_string(SP_term_ref t, const char*string, SP_term_ref vals[])`

Assigns to `t` the result of reading a term from the its textual representation `string`. Variables that occur in the term are bound to the corresponding term in `val`.

The SP_term_ref vector `val` is terminated by `0` (zero). `val` may be `NULL`, this is treated as an empty vector.

The variables in the term are ordered according to their first occurence during a depth first traversal in increasing argument order. That is, the same order as used by `terms:term_variables_bag/2` (see Chapter 21 [Term Utilities], page 367). Variables that do not have a corresponding entry in `vals` are ignored. Entries in `vals` that do not correspond to a variable in the term are ignored.

The string should be encoded using the internal encoding of SICStus Prolog, the UTF-8 encoding (see Section 12.2 [WCX Concepts], page 301).

This example creates the term `foo(X,42,42,X)` (without error checking):

```
SP_term_ref x = SP_new_term_ref();
SP_term_ref y = SP_new_term_ref();
SP_term_ref term = SP_new_term_ref();
SP_term_ref vals[] = {x,y,x, 0/* zero termination */};

SP_put_variable(x);
SP_put_integer(y,42);

SP_read_from_string(term, "foo(A,B,B,C).", vals);
/* A corresponds to vals[0] (x),
   B to vals[1] (y),
   C to vals[2] (x).
   A and C therefore both are bound to
   the variable referred to by x.
   B is bound to the term referred to by y (42).
   So term refers to a term foo(X,42,42,X).
*/
```

See Section 9.5 [Calling Prolog from C], page 241, for an example of using `SP_read_from_string()` to call an arbitrary goal.

`int SP_put_variable(SP_term_ref t)`
Assigns to `t` a new Prolog variable.

`int SP_put_integer(SP_term_ref t, long l)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog integer from a C long integer.

`int SP_put_float(SP_term_ref t, double d)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog float from a C double.

`int SP_put_atom(SP_term_ref t, SP_atom a)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog atom from `a`, which must be the canonical representation of a Prolog atom. (see Section 9.2 [Calling C from Prolog], page 218).

`int SP_put_string(SP_term_ref t, char *name)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog atom from a C encoded string.

`int SP_put_address(SP_term_ref t, void *pointer)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog integer representing a pointer.

`int SP_put_list_chars(SP_term_ref t, SP_term_ref tail, char *s)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog code-list represented by the encoded string `s`, prepended to the value of `tail`.

`int SP_put_list_n_chars(SP_term_ref t, SP_term_ref tail, long n, char *s)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog code-list represented by the first `n` bytes in encoded string `s`, prepended in front of the value of `tail`.

`int SP_put_integer_bytes(SP_term_ref tr, void *buf, size_t buf_size, int native)`
Allows C to pass arbitrarily sized integers to SICStus. `buf` consists of the `buf_size` bytes of the twos complement representation of the integer. Less significant bytes are at lower indices. If `native` is non-zero, `buf` is instead

assumed to be a pointer to the native `buf_size` byte integral type. Supported native sizes typically include two, four and eight (64bit) bytes. If the native size is not supported or if some other error occurs, zero is returned.

`int SP_put_number_chars(SP_term_ref t, char *s)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog number by parsing the string in `s`.

`int SP_put_functor(SP_term_ref t, SP_atom name, int arity)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog compound term with all the arguments unbound variables. If `arity` is 0, assigns the Prolog atom whose canonical representation is `name` to `t`. This is similar to calling `functor/3` with the first argument unbound and the second and third arguments bound to an atom and an integer, respectively.

`int SP_put_list(SP_term_ref t)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog list whose head and tail are both unbound variables.

`int SP_cons_functor(SP_term_ref t, SP_atom name, int arity, SP_term_ref arg, ...)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog compound term whose arguments are the values of `arg`... If `arity` is 0, assigns the Prolog atom whose canonical representation is `name` to `t`. This is similar to calling `=../2` with the first argument unbound and the second argument bound.

`int SP_cons_list(SP_term_ref t, SP_term_ref head, SP_term_ref tail)`
Assigns to `t` a Prolog list whose head and tail are the values of `head` and `tail`.

### 9.4.3 Accessing Prolog Terms

These functions will take an SP_term_ref and convert it to C data. They return zero if the conversion fails, and a nonzero value otherwise, and (except the last two) store the C data in output arguments. Note that here, the term `chars` refers to a code-list, rather than to a char-list:

`int SP_get_integer(SP_term_ref t, long *l)`
Assigns to `*l` the C `long` corresponding to a Prolog number. The value must fit in `*l` for the operation to succeed. For numbers too large to fit in a `long` you can use `SP_get_integer_bytes()`, below.

`int SP_get_float(SP_term_ref t, double *d)`
Assigns to `*d` the C `double` corresponding to a Prolog number.

`int SP_get_atom(SP_term_ref t, SP_atom *a)`
Assigns to `*a` the canonical representation of a Prolog atom.

`int SP_get_string(SP_term_ref t, char **name)`
Assigns to `*name` a pointer to the encoded string representing the name of a Prolog atom. This string must *not* be modified.

`int SP_get_address(SP_term_ref t, void **pointer)`
Assigns to `*pointer` a C pointer from a Prolog term.

`int SP_get_list_chars(SP_term_ref t, char **s)`

Assigns to `*s` a zero-terminated array containing an encoded string that corresponds to the given Prolog code-list. The array is subject to reuse by other support functions, so if the value is going to be used on a more than temporary basis, it must be moved elsewhere.

`int SP_get_list_n_chars(SP_term_ref t, SP_term_ref tail, long n, long *w, char *s)`

Copies into `s` the encoded string representing the character codes in the initial elements of list `t`, so that at most `n` bytes are used. The number of bytes actually written is assigned to `*w`. `tail` is set to the remainder of the list. The array `s` must have room for at least `n` bytes.

`int SP_get_integer_bytes(SP_term_ref tr, void *buf, size_t *pbuf_size, int native)`

Allows C code to obtain arbitrary precision integers from Prolog.

When called, `tr` should refer to a Prolog integer; floating point values are not accepted. `*pbuf_size` should point at the size of the buffer `buf`, which will receive the result.

In the following, assume that the integer referred to by `tr` requires a minimum of *size* bytes to store (in twos-complement representation).

1. If `tr` does not refer to a Prolog integer, zero is returned and the other arguments are ignored.
2. If `*pbuf_size` is less than *size*, then `*pbuf_size` is updated to *size* and zero is returned. The fact that `*pbuf_size` has changed can be used to distinguish insufficient buffer size from other possible errors. By calling `SP_get_integer_bytes()` with `*pbuf_size` set to zero, you can determine the buffer size needed; in this case, `buf` is ignored.
3. `*pbuf_size` is set to *size*.
4. If `native` is zero, `buf` is filled with the twos complement representation of the integer, with the least significant bytes stored at lower indices in `buf`. Note that all of `buf` is filled, even though only *size* bytes was needed.
5. If `native` is non-zero, `buf` is assumed to point at a native `*pbuf_size` byte integral type. On most platforms, native integer sizes of two (16-bit), four (32 bit) and eight (64 bytes) bytes are supported. Note that `*pbuf_size == 1`, which would correspond to `signed char`, is *not* supported with `native`.
6. If an unsupported size is used with `native`, zero is returned.

The following example gets a Prolog integer into a (presumably 64 bit) `long long` C integer.

```
{
  long long x; // C99, GCC supports this
  size_t sz = sizeof x;
  if (!SP_get_integer_bytes(tr, &x, &sz, 1/* native */))
    .. error handling ..
  .. use x .. // sz may have decreased
}
```

`int SP_get_number_chars(SP_term_ref t, char **s)`
: Assigns to `*s` a zero-terminated array of characters corresponding to the printed representation of a Prolog number. The array is subject to reuse by other support functions, so if the value is going to be used on a more than temporary basis, it must be moved elsewhere.

`int SP_get_functor(SP_term_ref t, SP_atom *name, int *arity)`
: Assigns to `*name` and `*arity` the canonical representation and arity of the principal functor of a Prolog compound term. If the value of `t` is an atom, then that atom is assigned to `*name` and 0 is assigned to `*arity`. This is similar to calling `functor/3` with the first argument bound to a compound term or an atom and the second and third arguments unbound.

`int SP_get_list(SP_term_ref t, SP_term_ref head, SP_term_ref tail)`
: Assigns to `head` and `tail` the head and tail of a Prolog list.

`int SP_get_arg(int i, SP_term_ref t, SP_term_ref arg)`
: Assigns to `arg` the `i`:th argument of a Prolog compound term. This is similar to calling `arg/3` with the third argument unbound.

### 9.4.4 Testing Prolog Terms

There is one general function for type testing of Prolog terms and a set of specialized, more efficient, functions, one for each term type:

`int SP_term_type(SP_term_ref t)`
: Depending on the type of the term *t*, one of `SP_TYPE_VARIABLE`, `SP_TYPE_INTEGER`, `SP_TYPE_FLOAT`, `SP_TYPE_ATOM`, or `SP_TYPE_COMPOUND` is returned.

`int SP_is_variable(SP_term_ref t)`
: Returns nonzero if the term is a Prolog variable, zero otherwise.

`int SP_is_integer(SP_term_ref t)`
: Returns nonzero if the term is a Prolog integer, zero otherwise.

`int SP_is_float(SP_term_ref t)`
: Returns nonzero if the term is a Prolog float, zero otherwise.

`int SP_is_atom(SP_term_ref t)`
: Returns nonzero if the term is a Prolog atom, zero otherwise.

`int SP_is_compound(SP_term_ref t)`
: Returns nonzero if the term is a Prolog compound term, zero otherwise.

`int SP_is_list(SP_term_ref t)`
Returns nonzero if the term is a Prolog list, zero otherwise. Note that only the principal functor matters: the function returns zero if the term is the empty list, and nonzero if it's a non-strict list.

`int SP_is_atomic(SP_term_ref t)`
Returns nonzero if the term is an atomic Prolog term, zero otherwise.

`int SP_is_number(SP_term_ref t)`
Returns nonzero if the term is a Prolog number, zero otherwise.

### 9.4.5 Unifying and Comparing Terms

`int SP_unify(SP_term_ref x, SP_term_ref y)`
Unifies two terms, returning zero on failure and nonzero on success.

`int SP_compare(SP_term_ref x, SP_term_ref y)`
Returns `-1` if `x @< y`, `0` if `x == y` and `1` if `x @> y`

### 9.4.6 Operating System Services

#### 9.4.6.1 Memory Allocation

The standard C library memory allocation functions (`malloc`, `calloc`, `realloc`, and `free`) are available in foreign code, but cannot reuse any free memory that SICStus Prolog's memory manager may have available, and so may contribute to memory fragmentation.

The following functions provide the same services via SICStus Prolog's memory manager.

`void * SP_malloc(size_t size)`
Returns a pointer to a block of at least `size` bytes.

`void * SP_calloc(size_t nmemb, size_t size)`
Returns a pointer to a block of at least `size * nemb`. The first `size * nmemb` bytes are set to zero.

`void * SP_realloc(void *ptr, size_t size)`
Changes the size of the block referenced by `ptr` to `size` bytes and returns a pointer to the (possibly moved) block. The contents will be unchanged up to the lesser of the new and old sizes. The block referenced by `ptr` must have been obtained by a call to `SP_malloc()` or `SP_realloc()`, and must not have been released by a call to `SP_free()` or `SP_realloc()`.

`void SP_free(void *ptr)`
Releases the block referenced by `ptr`, which must have been obtained by a call to `SP_malloc()` or `SP_realloc()`, and must not have been released by a call to `SP_free()` or `SP_realloc()`.

`char * SP_strdup(const char *str)`
: Returns a pointer to a new string, which is a duplicate of the string pointer to by `str`. The memory for the new string is allocated using `SP_malloc()`.

### 9.4.6.2 File System

SICStus Prolog caches the name of the current working directory. To take advantage of the cache and to keep it consistent, foreign code should call the following interface functions instead of calling `chdir()` and `getcwd()` directly:

`int SP_chdir(const char *path)`
: Cause a directory pointed to by `path` to become the current working directory. Returns 0 upon successful completion. Otherwise, a value of -1 is returned and `errno` is set to indicate the error.

`char *SP_getcwd(char *buf, unsigned int size);`
: Returns a pointer to the current directory pathname. If `buf` is not `NULL`, the pathname will be stored in the space pointed to by `buf`. If `buf` is a `NULL` pointer, `size` bytes of space will be obtained using `SP_malloc()`. In this case, the pointer returned may be used as the argument in a subsequent call to `SP_free()`. Returns `NULL` with `errno` set if `size` is not large enough to store the pathname.

### 9.4.6.3 Threads

When running more that one SICStus run-time in the same process it is often necessary to protect data with mutual exclusion locks. The following functions implement recursive mutual exclusion locks, which only need static initialization.

Note that the SICStus run-time is not thread safe in general.

```
typedef ... SP_mutex;
#define SP_MUTEX_INITIALIZER ...

int SP_mutex_lock(SP_mutex *pmx);
int SP_mutex_unlock(SP_mutex *pmx);
```

A (recursive) mutual exclusion lock is declared as type `SP_mutex`. It should be initialized to (the static initializer) `SP_MUTEX_INITIALIZER` before use.

`SP_mutex_lock()` locks the mutex, and returns zero on error, non-zero on success.

`SP_mutex_unlock()` unlocks the mutex. It returns zero on error, non-zero on success. The number of unlocks must match the number of locks and only the thread that performed the lock can unlock the mutex.

```
...
static SP_mutex volatile my_mutex = SP_MUTEX_INITIALIZER;
/* only access this counter with my_mutex locked */
int volatile protected_counter = 0;

/* returns the new value of protected_counter */
int increment_the_counter(void)
{
  int new_value;

  if(SP_mutex_lock(&my_mutex) == 0) goto error_handling;
  /* No other thread can update protected_counter here */
  new_value = protected_counter+1;
  protected_counter = new_value;
  if (SP_mutex_unlock(&my_mutex) == 0) goto error_handling;
  return new_value;

error_handling:
  ...
}
```

### 9.4.7 Miscellaneous

A dynamic foreign resource that is used by multiple SICStus run-times in the same process may need to maintain a global state that is kept separate for each SICStus run-time. Each SICStus run-time maintains a location (containing a `void*`) for each foreign resource. A foreign resource can then access this location to store any data that is specific to the calling SICStus run-time.

```
void **SP_foreign_stash(void)
```

You can use `SP_foreign_stash()` to get access to a location, initially set to `NULL`, where the foreign resource can store a `void*`. Typically this would be a pointer to a C struct that holds all information that need to be stored in global variables. This struct can be allocated and initialized by the foreign resource init function, it should be deallocated by the foreign resource deinit function.

`SP_foreign_stash()` is only available for use in dynamic foreign resources. The value returned by `SP_foreign_stash()` is only valid until the next SICStus API call. The correct way to initialize the location pointed at by `SP_foreign_stash()` is therefore:

```
struct my_state {...};

init_my_foreign_resource(...)
{
   struct my_state *p = SP_malloc(sizeof(struct my_state));
   (*SP_foreign_stash()) = (void*)p;
}
```

The following example is incorrect; `SP_malloc()` may be called between the time `SP_foreign_stash()` is called and the time its return value is used:

```
/* WRONG */
(*SP_foreign_stash()) = SP_malloc(sizeof(struct my_state));
```

`SP_foreign_stash()` is currently a C macro, not a function. You should not rely on this.

## 9.5 Calling Prolog from C

In development and runtime systems alike, Prolog and C code may call each other to arbitrary depths.

Before calling a predicate from C you must look up the predicate definition by module, name, and arity. The function `SP_predicate()` will return a pointer to this definition or return `NULL` if the predicate is not visible in the module. This definition could be used in more than one call to the same predicate. The module specification is optional. If `NULL` or `""` (the empty string) is given, then the default *type-in module* (see Section 5.2 [Module Spec], page 59) is assumed:

```
SP_pred_ref SP_predicate(char *name_string,
                         long arity,
                         char *module_string)
```

Note that the first and third arguments point to encoded strings, representing the characters of the predicate and module name.

The function `SP_pred()` may be used as an alternative to the above. The only difference is that the name and module arguments are passed as Prolog atoms rather than strings, and the module argument is mandatory. This saves the cost of looking up the two arguments in the Prolog symbol table. This cost dominates the cost of `SP_predicate()`:

```
SP_pred_ref SP_pred(SP_atom name_atom,
                    long arity,
                    SP_atom module_atom)
```

### 9.5.1 Finding One Solution of a Call

The easiest way to call a predicate if you are only interested in the first solution is to call the function `SP_query()`. It will create a goal from the predicate definition and the arguments, call it, and commit to the first solution found, if any.

Returns `SP_SUCCESS` if the goal succeeded, `SP_FAILURE` if it failed, and `SP_ERROR` if an error condition occurred. Only when the return value is `SP_SUCCESS` are the values in the query arguments valid, and will remain so until backtracking into any enclosing query:

```
int SP_query(SP_pred_ref predicate, SP_term_ref arg1, ...)
```

If you are only interested in the side-effects of a predicate you can call `SP_query_cut_fail()`. It will try to prove the predicate, cut away the rest of the solutions, and finally fail. This will reclaim any memory allocated after the call, and throw away any solution found. The return values are the same as for `SP_query()`.

```
int SP_query_cut_fail(SP_pred_ref predicate, SP_term_ref arg1, ...)
```

### 9.5.2 Finding Multiple Solutions of a Call

If you are interested in more than one solution a more complicated scheme is used. You find the predicate definition as above, but you don't call the predicate directly.

1. Set up a call with `SP_open_query()`
2. Call `SP_next_solution()` to find a solution. Call this predicate again to find more solutions if there are any.
3. Terminate the call with `SP_close_query()` or `SP_cut_query()`

The function `SP_open_query()` will return an identifier of type `SP_qid` that you use in successive calls, or `0`, if given an invalid predicate reference. Note that if a new query is opened while another is already open, the new query must be terminated before exploring the solutions of the old one. That is, queries must be strictly nested:

```
SP_qid SP_open_query(SP_pred_ref predicate, SP_term_ref arg1, ...)
```

The function `SP_next_solution()` will cause the Prolog engine to backtrack over any current solution of an open query and look for a new one. The given argument must be the innermost query that is still open, i.e. it must not have been terminated explicitly by `SP_close_query()` or `SP_cut_query()` or implicitly by an unsuccessful call to `SP_next_solution()`. Returns `SP_SUCCESS` for success, `SP_FAILURE` for failure, `SP_ERROR` if an error condition occurred. Only when the return value is `SP_SUCCESS` are the values in the query arguments valid, and will remain so until backtracking into this query or an enclosing one:

```
int SP_next_solution(SP_qid query)
```

A query must be terminated in either of two ways. The function `SP_cut_query()` will discard the choices created since the corresponding `SP_open_query()`, like the goal `!`. The current solution is retained in the arguments until backtracking into any enclosing query. The given argument does not have to be the innermost open query; any open queries in its scope will also be cut. Returns `SP_SUCCESS` for success and `SP_ERROR` for invalid usage:

```
int SP_cut_query(SP_qid query)
```

Alternatively, the function `SP_close_query()` will discard the choices created since the corresponding `SP_open_query()`, and then backtrack into the query, throwing away any current solution, like the goal `!, fail`. The given argument does not have to be the innermost open query; any open queries in its scope will also be closed. Returns `SP_SUCCESS` for success and `SP_ERROR` for invalid usage:

```
int SP_close_query(SP_qid query)
```

A simple way to call arbitrary prolog code is to use `SP_read_from_string()` (see Section 9.4.2 [Creating Prolog Terms], page 233) to create an argument to `call/1`. It is a good idea to always explicitly specify the module context when using `call/1` or other meta-predicates from C.

This example calls a compound goal (without error checking).

```
SP_pred_ref call_pred = SP_predicate("call", 1, "prolog");
SP_term_ref x = SP_new_term_ref();
SP_term_ref goal = SP_new_term_ref();
SP_term_ref vals[] = {x, 0 /* zero termination */};
long len;

SP_put_variable(x);
/* The X=_ is a trick to ensure that X is the first variable
   in the depth-first order and thus corresponds to vals[0] (x).
   There are no entries in vals for _,L1,L2.
*/
SP_read_from_string(goal,
   "user:(X=_, length([0,1,2],L1), length([3,4],L2), X is L1+L2).", vals);

SP_query(call_pred, goal);
SP_get_integer(x, &len);
/* here len is 5 */
```

### 9.5.3 Calling Prolog Asynchronously

If you wish to call Prolog back from a signal handler or a thread other than the thread that called `SP_initialize()`, that is, the *main thread*, you cannot use `SP_query()` etc. directly. The call to Prolog has to be delayed until such time that the Prolog execution can accept an interrupt and the call has to be performed from the main thread (the Prolog execution

thread). The function `SP_event()` serves this purpose, and installs the function `func` to be called from Prolog (in the main thread) when the execution can accept a callback. It returns non-zero if and only if installation succeeded. `func` is called with `arg` as first argument.

A queue of functions, with corresponding arguments, is maintained; that is, if several calls to `SP_event()` occur before Prolog can accept an interrupt, the functions are queued and executed in turn at the next possible opportunity. A `func` installed with `SP_event()` will not be called until SICStus is actually running. One way of ensuring that all pending functions installed with `SP_event()` are run is to call, from the main thread, some dummy goal, such as, `SP_query_cut_fail(SP_predicate("true",0,"user"))`.

While `SP_event()` is safe to call from any thread, it is not safe to call from arbitrary signal handlers. If you want to call `SP_event()` when a signal is delivered, you need to install your signal handler with `SP_signal()` (see below).

Note that `SP_event()` is one of the *very* few functions in the SICStus API that can safely be called from another thread than the main thread.

Depending on the value returned from `func`, the interrupted Prolog execution will just continue (`SP_SUCCESS`) or backtrack (`SP_FAILURE` or `SP_ERROR`). An exception raised by `func`, using `SP_raise_exception()`, will be processed in the interrupted Prolog execution. If `func` calls `SP_fail()` or `SP_raise_exception()` the return value from `func` is ignored and handled as if `func` returned `SP_FAILURE` or `SP_ERROR`, respectively. In case of failure or exception, the event queue is flushed.

It is generally not robust to let `func` raise an exception or fail. The reason is that not all Prolog code is written such that it gracefully handles being interrupted. If you want to interrupt some long-running Prolog code, it is better to let your code test a flag in some part of your code that is executed repeatedly.

```
int SP_event(int (*func)(void*), void *arg)
```

### 9.5.3.1 Signal Handling

As noted above it is not possible to call e.g. `SP_query()` or even `SP_event()` from an arbitrary signal handler. That is, from signal handlers installed with `signal` or `sigaction`. Instead you need to install the signal handler using `SP_signal()`.

When the OS delivers a signal `sig` for which `SP_signal(sig,func)` has been called SICStus will *not* call `func` immediately. Instead the call to `func` will be delayed until it is safe for Prolog to do so, in much the same way that functions installed by `SP_event()` are handled (this is an incompatible change from SICStus 3.8 and earlier).

Since the signal handling function `func` will not be called immediately upon delivery of the signal to the process it only makes sense to use `SP_signal()` to handle certain asynchronous signals such as `SIGINT`, `SIGUSR1`, `SIGUSR2`. Other asynchronous signals handled specially by the OS, such as `SIGCHLD` are not suitable for handling via `SP_signal()`. Note that the

development system installs a handler for 'SIGINT', and, under Windows, 'SIGBREAK', to catch keyboard interrupts. Under UNIX, library(timeout) currently uses SIGVTALRM.

When func is called it may only call other (non SICStus) C code and SP_event(). Note that func will be called in the main thread.

To install a function, func, as a handler for the signal sig, call:

```
typedef void SP_SigFun (int);
SP_SigFun SP_signal (int sig, SP_SigFun fun);
```

SP_signal() returns SP_SIG_ERR on error. On success, SP_signal() returns some unspecified value different from SP_SIG_ERR.

If fun is one of the special constants SP_SIG_IGN or SP_SIG_DFL, then one of two things happens. If a signal handler for sig has already been installed with SP_signal(), then the SICStus OS-level signal handler is removed and replaced with, respectively, SIG_IGN or SIG_DFL. If a signal handler has not been installed with SP_signal(), then SP_signal() does nothing and returns SP_SIG_ERR.

A signal handler installed by a foreign resource should be uninstalled in the deinit function for the foreign resource. This is to prevent the handler in the foreign resource from being called after the code of the foreign resource has been unloaded (e.g. by unload_foreign_resource/1).

The following two functions were used prior to SICStus 3., but are obsolete now:

```
SP_SigFun SP_reinstall_signal (int sig, SP_SigFun)        obsolescent
void SP_continue(void)                                    obsolescent
```

they are no-ops.

The following piece of C code illustrates these facilities. The function signal_init() installs the function signal_handler() as the primary signal handler for the signals SIGUSR1 and SIGUSR2. That function invokes the predicate user:prolog_handler/1 as the actual signal handler, passing the signal number as an argument to the predicate.

```
SP_pred_ref event_pred;

static int signal_event(void *handle)
{
  int signal_no = (int) handle;
  SP_term_ref x=SP_new_term_ref();
  int rc;

  SP_put_integer(x, signal_no); /* Should not give an error */
  rc = SP_query(event_pred, x);
  if (rc == SP_ERROR && SP_exception_term(x))
    SP_raise_exception(x);        /* Propagate any raised exception */
  return rc;
}

static void signal_handler(int signal_no)
{
  /* cast to size_t to avoid warnings on 64-bit machines */
  SP_event(signal_event, (void *)(size_t)signal_no);
  /* The two calls below are for SICStus 3.8 compatibility */
  SP_reinstall_signal(signal_no, signal_handler);
  SP_continue();
}

void signal_init(void)
{
  event_pred = SP_predicate("prolog_handler",1,"user");

  SP_signal(SIGUSR1, signal_handler);
  SP_signal(SIGUSR2, signal_handler);
}
```

### 9.5.4 Exception Handling in C

When an exception has been raised, the functions `SP_query()`, `SP_query_cut_fail()` and `SP_next_solution()` return `SP_ERROR`. To access the *exception term* (the argument of the call to `raise_exception/1`), which is asserted when the exception is raised, the function `SP_exception_term()` is used. As a side-effect, the exception term is retracted, so if your code wants to pass the exception term back to Prolog, it must use the `SP_raise_exception()` function below. If an exception term exists, `SP_exception_term()` retracts it and stores it as the value of an SP_term_ref, which must exist prior to the call and returns nonzero. Otherwise, it returns zero:

```
int SP_exception_term(SP_term_ref t)
```

To raise an exception from a C function called from Prolog, just call `SP_raise_exception(t)` where `t` is the SP_term_ref whose value is the exception term. The glue code will detect that an exception has been raised, any value returned from the function will be ignored, and the exception will be passed back to Prolog:

```
void SP_raise_exception(SP_term_ref t)
```

## 9.6 SICStus Streams

With the SICStus Prolog C interface, the user can define his/her own streams as well as from C read or write on the predefined streams. The stream interface is modeled after Quintus Prolog release 2. It provides:

- C functions to perform I/O on Prolog streams. This way you can use the same stream from Prolog and C code.
- User defined streams. You can define your own Prolog streams in C.
- Bidirectional streams. A SICStus stream supports reading or writing or both.
- Hookable standard input/output/error streams.

### 9.6.1 Prolog Streams

From the Prolog level there is a unique number that identifies a stream. This identifier can be converted from/to a Prolog stream:

`stream_code(+`*`Stream`*`,?`*`StreamCode`*`)`
`stream_code(?`*`Stream`*`,+`*`StreamCode`*`)`

*StreamCode* is the C stream identifier (an integer) corresponding to the Prolog stream *Stream*. This predicate is only useful when streams are passed between Prolog and C. Note that *`StreamCode`* no longer has any relation to the file descriptor.

The *`StreamCode`* is a Prolog integer representing an `SP_stream *` pointer.

To read or write on a Prolog stream from C, special versions of the most common standard C I/O functions are used:

```
int SP_getc(void)
int SP_fgetc(SP_stream *s)
void SP_putc(int c)
void SP_fputc(int c, SP_stream *s)
```

The above functions deliver or accept wide character codes.

```
void SP_puts(char *string)
void SP_fputs(char *string, SP_stream *s)
int SP_printf(char *format, ...)
int SP_fprintf(SP_stream *s, char *format, ...)
int SP_fflush(SP_stream *s)
int SP_fclose(SP_stream *s)
```

The above functions expect and deliver encoded strings in their `char *` and `char **` arguments. Specifically, in the `SP_printf()` and `SP_fprintf()` functions, first the formatting operation will be performed. The resulting string will be assumed to be in internal encoding, and will then be output using the `SP_puts()` or `SP_fputs()` function (see below). This means, e.g. that the `%c` printf conversion specification can only be used for ASCII characters, and the strings included using a `%s` specification should also be ASCII strings, or already transformed to the encoded form.

The `SP_puts()` and `SP_fputs()` functions first convert their encoded string argument into a sequence of wide character codes, and then output these on the required stream according to the external encoding; see Section 12.6 [WCX Foreign Interface], page 311.

There following predefined streams are accessible from C:

`SP_stdin` Standard input. Refers to the same stream as `user_input` in Prolog. Which stream is referenced by `user_input` is controlled by the Prolog flag `user_input`

`SP_stdout`
Standard output. Refers to the same stream as `user_output` in Prolog. Which stream is referenced by `user_output` is controlled by the Prolog flag `user_output`.

`SP_stderr`
Standard error. Refers to the same stream as `user_error` in Prolog. Which stream is referenced by `user_error` is controlled by the flag `user_error`.

`SP_curin` Current input. It is initially set equal to `SP_stdin`. It can be changed with the predicates `see/1` and `set_input/1`.

`SP_curout`
Current output. It is initially set equal to `SP_stdout`. It can be changed with the predicates `tell/1` and `set_output/1`.

Note that these variables are read only. They are set but never read by the stream handling.

### 9.6.2 Defining a New Stream

The following steps are required to define a new stream in C:

- Define low level functions (character reading, writing etc).
- Initialize and open your stream.

- Allocate memory needed for your particular stream.
- Initialize and install a Prolog stream with `SP_make_stream()` or `SP_make_stream_context()`.
- Initialize additional fields. Some streams may require additional changes to the fields in the `SP_stream` structure than the default values set by `SP_make_stream()`.

#### 9.6.2.1 Low Level I/O Functions

For each new stream the appropriate low level I/O functions have to be defined. Error handling, prompt handling and character counting is handled in a layer above these functions. They all operate on a user defined private data structure pointed out by `user_handle` in `SP_stream`.

User defined low level I/O functions may invoke Prolog code and use most of the support functions described in the other sections of this chapter. They must *not* use `SP_fail()` or `SP_raise_exception()`, doing so will not have the intended effect and may cause problems.

`int` *`my_fgetc`*`(void *handle)`
: Should return the character read or -1 on end of file.

`int` *`my_fputc`*`(char c, void *handle)`
: Should write the character `c` and return the character written.

`int` *`my_flush`*`(void *handle)`
: Should flush the (output) stream and return 0 on success, -1 on error.

`int` *`my_eof`*`(void *handle)`
: Should return 1 on end of file, else 0.

`void` *`my_clrerr`*`(void *handle)`
: Should reset the stream's error and `EOF` indicators.

`int` *`my_close`*`(void *handle)`
: Should close the stream and return zero.

#### 9.6.2.2 Installing a New Stream

A new stream is made accessible to Prolog using one of the functions:

```
int SP_make_stream(
        void *handle,
        int (*sgetc)(),
        int (*sputc)(),
        int (*sflush)(),
        int (*seof)(),
        void (*sclrerr)(),
        int (*sclose)(),
        SP_stream **stream)

int SP_make_stream_context(
        void *handle,
        int (*sgetc)(),
        int (*sputc)(),
        int (*sflush)(),
        int (*seof)(),
        void (*sclrerr)(),
        int (*sclose)(),
        SP_stream **stream,
        SP_atom option,
        int context)
```

The functions return `SP_SUCCESS` on success and `SP_ERROR` for invalid usage, and will:

- Allocate a `SP_stream` structure
- Install your low level I/O functions. For those not supplied default functions are installed.
- Determine if the stream is for input or output or both from the functions supplied.
- Fill in fields in the `SP_stream` structure with default values

The `handle` pointer will be supplied as the `handle` argument in the calls to the low level functions.

A stream without a close function will be treated as not closable i.e. `close/1` will not have any effect on it.

The `SP_make_stream_context()` function has two additional arguments supplying information related to the handling of wide characters; see Section 12.6 [WCX Foreign Interface], page 311.

### 9.6.2.3 Internal Representation

For most streams you don't have to know anything about the internal representatio, but there may be occasions when you have to set some fields manually or do some processing on all streams of a particular type. SICStus Prolog maintains a circular list of stream objects of type `SP_stream`.

`SP_stream *backward;`
`SP_stream *forward;`
: Used for linking streams together. The insertion is done by `SP_make_stream()` and the deletion is done from the Prolog predicate `close/1`.

`char *filename;`
: This field is set to the empty string, `""`, by `SP_make_stream()`. May be set to a suitable encoded string, provided the string will not be overwritten until the stream is closed.

`unsigned long mode;`
: A bit vector that contains information about the access modes supported, if the stream is a TTY stream etc. It is not available to the user but the TTY property can be set by the function:

  `void SP_set_tty(SP_stream *s)`

`int fd;`
: The file descriptor if the stream is associated with a file, socket etc. Otherwise a negative integer.

`void *user_handle;`
: This is the pointer to the user supplied private data for the stream. For example, in the case of SICStus Prolog predefined file streams the `user_handle` could be a pointer to the standard I/O `FILE`.

There is no standard way to tell if a stream is user defined. You have to save pointers to the streams created or check if one of the stream functions installed is user defined, i.e:

```
int is_my_stream(SP_stream *s)
{
  return (s->sclose == my_close);
}
```

### 9.6.3 Hookable Standard Streams

As of release 3.7, the standard I/O streams (input, output, and error) are hookable, i.e. the streams can be redefined by the user.

`SP_UserStreamHook *SP_set_user_stream_hook(SP_UserStreamHook *hook)`
: Sets the user-stream hook to `hook`.

`SP_UserStreamPostHook *SP_set_user_stream_post_hook(SP_UserStreamPostHook *hook)`
: Sets the user-stream post-hook to `hook`.

These hook functions must be called before `SP_initialize()` (see Section 9.8.4.1 [Initializing the Prolog Engine], page 275). In custom built development systems, they may be called in the hook function `SU_initialize()`. See Section 9.8.3 [The Application Builder], page 258.

#### 9.6.3.1 Writing User-stream Hooks

The user-stream hook is, if defined, called during `SP_initialize()`. It has the following prototype:

```
SP_stream *user_stream_hook(int which)
```

If the hook is not defined, SICStus will attempt to open the standard TTY/console versions of these streams. If they are unavailable (such as for windowed executables under Windows), the result is undefined.

It is called three times, one for each stream. The `which` argument indicates which stream it is called for. The value of `which` is one of:

`SP_STREAMHOOK_STDIN`
: Create stream for standard input.

`SP_STREAMHOOK_STDOUT`
: Create stream for standard output.

`SP_STREAMHOOK_STDERR`
: Create stream for standard error.

The hook should return a standard SICStus I/O stream, as described in Section 9.6.2 [Defining a New Stream], page 248.

#### 9.6.3.2 Writing User-stream Post-hooks

The user-stream post-hook is, if defined, called after all the streams have been defined, once for each of the three standard streams. It has a slightly different prototype:

```
void user_stream_post_hook(int which, SP_stream *str)
```

where `str` is a pointer to the corresponding `SP_stream` structure. There are no requirements as to what this hook must do; the default behavior is to do nothing at all.

The post-hook is intended to be used to do things that may require that all streams have been created.

#### 9.6.3.3 User-stream Hook Example

This section contains an example of how to create and install a set of user-streams.

The hook is set by calling `SP_set_user_stream_hook()` in the main program like this:

```
SP_set_user_stream_hook(user_strhook);
```

**Remember**: `SP_set_user_stream_hook()` and `SP_set_user_stream_post_hook()` must be called *before* `SP_initialize()`.

The hook `user_strhook()` is defined like this:

```
SP_stream *user_strhook(int which)
{
  SP_stream *s;

  SP_make_stream(NULL, my_getc, my_putc, my_flush, my_eof, my_clrerr,
                 NULL, &s);

  return s;
}
```

See Section 9.6.2.2 [Installing a New Stream], page 249 for a description on the parameters to `SP_make_stream()`.

## 9.7 Hooks

The user may define functions to be called at certain occasions by the Prolog system. This is accomplished by passing the functions as arguments to the following set-hook-functions. The functions can be removed by passing a `NULL`.

`typedef int (SP_ReadHookProc) (int fd)`
`SP_ReadHookProc SP_set_read_hook (SP_ReadHookProc *)` **obsolescent**

The installed function is called before reading a character from `fd` provided it is associated with a terminal device. This function shall return nonzero when there is input available at `fd`. It is called repeatedly until it returns nonzero.

You should avoid the use of a read hook if possible. It is not possible to write a reliable read hook. The reason is that SICStus streams are typically based on C stdio streams (`FILE*`). Such streams can contain buffered data that is not accessible from the file descriptor. Using e.g. `select()` can therefore block even though `fgetc` on the underlying `FILE*` would not block.

`typedef void (SP_VoidFun) (void)`
`SP_VoidFun * SP_set_reinit_hook (SP_VoidFun *)`

The installed function is called by the development system upon startup. The call is made after SICStus Prolog's signal handler installation but before any initializations are run and the version banners are displayed. Calling Prolog from functions invoked through this hook is not supported. In recursive calls to Prolog from C, which includes all run-time systems, this hook is not used.

`typedef void (SP_VoidFun) (void);`
`SP_VoidFun * SP_set_interrupt_hook (SP_VoidFun *)`

The installed function is called on occasions like expansion of stacks, garbage collection and printouts, in order to yield control to special consoles etc. for

interrupt checking. Calling Prolog from functions invoked through this hook is not supported.

## 9.8 Stand-alone Executables

So far we have only discussed foreign code as pieces of code loaded into a Prolog executable. This is often not the desired situation. Instead, people often want to create *stand-alone executables*, i.e. an application where Prolog is used as a component, accessed through the API described in the previous sections.

### 9.8.1 Runtime Systems

Stand-alone applications containing debugged Prolog code and destined for end-users are typically packaged as runtime systems. No SICStus license is needed by a runtime system. A runtime system has the following limitations:

- No top-level. The executable will restore a saved-state and/or load code, and call `user:runtime_entry(start)`. Alternatively, you may supply a main program and explicitly initialize the Prolog engine with `SP_initialize()`. `break/0` and `require/1` are unavailable.
- No debugger. The Prolog flags `debug` and `debugger_print_options` have no effect. The predicates `debugging/0`, `debug/0`, `nodebug/0`, `trace/0`, `notrace/0`, `zip/0`, `nozip/0`, `unknown/2`, `leash/1`, `spy/[1,2]`, `nospy/1`, `nospyall/0`, `add_breakpoints/2`, `remove_breakpoints/1`, `current_breakpoint/5`, `disable_breakpoints/1`, `enable_breakpoints/1`, and `execution_state/[1,2]` are unavailable.
- Except in extended runtime systems: no compiler; compiling is replaced by consulting. `fcompile/1` is unavailable. Extended runtime system contain the compiler.
- The Prolog flags `discontiguous_warnings`, `redefine_warnings`, `single_var_warnings` have no effect. The user is not prompted in the event of name clashes.

- The `informational` Prolog flag is off by default, suppressing informational messages.
- The predicates `version/[0,1]` and `help/0` are unavailable.
- The compile-time part of the foreign language interface, e.g. `load_foreign_files/2`, is unavailable.
- No profiler. The predicates `profile_data/4` and `profile_reset/1` are unavailable.
- No signal handling except as installed by `SP_signal()`.

### 9.8.2 Runtime Systems on Target Machines

When a runtime system is delivered to the end user, chances are that the user does not have an existing SICStus installation. To deliver such an executable, you need:

the executable
: This is your executable program, usually created by `spld` (see Section 9.8.3 [The Application Builder], page 258).

the runtime kernel
: This is a shared object or a DLL, usually '`$SP_PATH/../libsprt312.so`' under UNIX, or '`%SP_PATH%\..\sprt312.dll`' under Windows.

the (extended) runtime library
: The saved-state '`$SP_PATH/bin/sprt.sav`' contains the built-in predicates written in Prolog. It is restored into the program at runtime by the function `SP_initialize()`. Extended runtime systems restore '`$SP_PATH/bin/spre.sav`' instead, available from SICS as an add-on product.

your Prolog code
: As a saved-state, '`.po`' files, '`.ql`', or source code ('`.pl`' files). They must be explicitly loaded by the program at runtime (see Section 9.8.4.2 [Loading Prolog Code], page 277).

your linked foreign resources
: Any dynamically linked foreign resources, including any linked foreign resources for library modules located in '`$SP_PATH/library`'.

The following two sections describe how to package the above components for UNIX and Windows *target machines*, i.e. machines that do not have SICStus Prolog installed, respectively. It is also possible to package all the above components into a single executable file, an all-in-one executable. See Section 9.8.3.2 [All-in-one Executables], page 265.

### 9.8.2.1 Runtime Systems on UNIX Target Machines

In order to build a runtime system for distribution on a target machine, the option '`--moveable`' must be passed to `spld`. This option prevents `spld` from hardcoding any (absolute) paths into the executable.

Next, in order for SICStus to be able to locate all relevant files, the following directory structure should be used.

```
myapp.exe
sp-3.12.7/
+--- libsprt312.so

+--- sicstus-3.12.7/
     +--- bin/
     |    +--- sprt.sav
     +--- library/
          +--- <files from $SP_PATH/library>
```

If support for multiple SICStus instances is needed, then the run-times named e.g. '`libsprt312_instance_01_.so`', need to be available as well, in the same place as '`libsprt312.so`'.

If SICStus Prolog is installed on the target machine, a symbolic link named '`sp-3.12.7`' can be used, in which case it should point at the directory of the SICStus installation that contains the '`libsprt312.so`' (or equivalent).

'`myapp.exe`' is typically created by a call to `spld`:

```
% spld --main=user --moveable [...] -o ./myapp.exe
```

On most platforms, the above directory layout will enable the executable to find the SICStus run-time (e.q., '`libsprt312.so`') as well as the boot file '`sprt.sav`' ('`spre.sav`'). In addition, application specific files, e.g. a '`.sav`' file, can be found using the automatically set environment variables `SP_APP_DIR` or `SP_RT_DIR`. On some platforms a wrapper script, generated by `spld`, is needed to ensure that the files are found.

On some platforms, the executable will not be able to locate '`sprt.sav`' ('`spre.sav`') unless the environment variable `SP_PATH` is set. If the example above is rooted in '`/home/joe`', then `SP_PATH` should be set to '`/home/joe/lib/sicstus-3.12.7`'. This is not needed on platforms where `SP_APP_DIR` or `SP_RT_DIR` can be used, e.g. on Linux, Solaris or Win32 and most others.

Unless the '`--static`' option is passed to `spld`, it might also be necessary to set `LD_LIBRARY_PATH` (or equivalent) to '`/home/joe/lib`' (in the example above) in order for the dynamic linker to find '`libsprt312.so`'. If the '`--static`' option is used, this is not necessary. Setting `LD_LIBRARY_PATH` is not needed, nor recommended, on Linux and Solaris (and Win32).

When a runtime system is redistributed to third parties, only the following files may be included in the distribution. All filenames are relative to '`<prefix>/lib/sicstus-3.12.7`':

'`../*.{a,so,sl,dylib}`'
'`bin/sprt.sav`'
'`bin/spre.sav`'
'`bin/jasper.jar`'
'`bin/prologbeans.jar`'
'`library/*.{tcl,po,pl}`'
Except '`license.pl`'!

'`library/*/*.{s.o,so,sl,dylib}`'
'`library/*/*.{po,pl}`'
'`sp_platform`'
(Located with `InstallSICStus`)

#### 9.8.2.2 Runtime Systems on Windows Target Machines

In order to locate all relevant files, the following directory structure should be used.

```
myapp.exe
sprt312.dll

sp312\
+--- bin\
|    +--- sprt.sav
+--- library\
     +--- <files from %SP_PATH%\library>
```

If support for multiple SICStus instances is needed, then the run-times named e.g. '`sprt312_instance_01_.dll`', need to be available as well, in the same place as '`sprt312.dll`'.

'`myapp.exe`' is typically created by a call to `spld`:

```
% spld --main=user [...] -o ./myapp.exe
```

If the directory containing '`sprt312.dll`' contains a directory called `sp312`, SICStus assumes that it is part of a runtime system as described in the picture. The (extended) runtime library, '`sprt.sav`' ('`spre.sav`'), is then looked up in the directory ('`sp312/bin`'), as in the picture. Furthermore, the initial `library_directory/1` fact will be set to the same directory with `sp312/library` appended.

The directory structure under `library/` should look like in a regular installed SICStus, including the platform-specific subdirectory (`x86-win32-nt-4` in this case). If your application needs to use `library(system)` and `library(random)`, your directory structure may look like:

```
myapp.exe
sprt312.dll

sp312\
+--- bin\
|    +--- sprt.sav
+--- library\
     +--- random.po
     +--- system.po
     +--- x86-win32-nt-4 \
          +--- random.dll
          +--- system.dll
```

The `sp*` files can also be put somewhere else in order to be shared by several applications provided the '`sprt312.dll`' can be located by the DLL search.

Naming the files with version number enables applications using different SICStus versions to install the `sp*` files in the same directory.

When a runtime system is redistributed to third parties, only the following files may be included in the distribution. All filenames are relative to '`%SP_PATH%`':

'`bin\sprt.sav`'
'`bin\spre.sav`'
'`bin\jasper.jar`'
'`bin\prologbeans.jar`'
'`bin\*.dll`'
'`bin\*.po`'
'`library\*.{tcl,po,pl,bas}`'
Except '`license.pl`'!

'`library\*\*.dll`'
'`library\*\*.{po,pl}`'

### 9.8.3 The Application Builder

The application builder, `spld`, is used for creating stand-alone executables. This tool replaces the tools `spmkrs` and `spmkds` of previous versions of SICStus. It is invoked as:

```
% spld [ Option | InputFile ] ...
```

`spld` takes the files specified on the command line and combines them into an executable file, much like the UNIX `ld` or the Windows `link` commands.

Note that no pathnames passed to `spld` should contain spaces. Under Windows, this can be avoided by using the short version of pathnames as necessary.

The input to `spld` can be divided into *Options* and *Files*, which can be arbitrarily mixed on the command line. Anything not interpreted as an option will be interpreted as an input file. Do not use spaces in any file or option passed to `spld`. Under Windows you can use the short file name for files with space in their name. The following options are available:

'`--help`' Prints out a summary of all options.

'`-v`'
'`--verbose`'
Print detailed information about each step in the compilation/linking sequence.

'`-vv`' Be very verbose. Prints everything printed by '`--verbose`', and switches on verbose flags (if possible) to the compiler and linker.

'`--version`'
Prints out the version number of `spld` and exits successfully.

'-o'
'--output=*filename*'
: Specify output file name. The default depends on the linker (e.g. 'a.out' on UNIX systems).

'-E'
'--extended-rt'
: Create an extended runtime system. In addition to the normal set of built-in runtime system predicates, extended runtime systems include the compiler. Extended runtime systems require the extended runtime library, available from SICS as an add-on product.

'-D'
'--development'
: Create a development system (with top-level, debugger, compiler, etc.). The default is to create a runtime system. Implies '--main=prolog'.

'--main=*type*'
'runtime_entry(+*Message*) *hook*'
'user:runtime_entry(+*Message*)'
: Specify what the executable should do upon startup. The possible values are prolog, user, restore and load.

  prolog
  : Implies '-D'. The executable will start the Prolog top-level. This is the default if '-D' is specified and no '.sav', '.pl', '.po', or '.ql' files are specified.

  user
  : The user supplies his/her own main program by including C-code (object file or source), which defines a function user_main(). This option is not compatible with '-D'. See Section 9.8.4 [User-defined Main Programs], page 274.

  restore
  : The executable will restore a saved-state created by save_program/[1,2]. This is the default if a '.sav' file is found among *Files*. It is only meaningful to specify one '.sav' file. If it was created by save_program/2, the given startup goal is run. Then the executable will any Prolog code specified on the command line. Finally, the goal user:runtime_entry(start) is run. The executable exits with 0 upon normal temination and with 1 on failure or exception. Not compatible with '-D'.

  load
  : The executable will load any Prolog code specified on the command line, i.e. files with extension '.pl', '.po' or '.ql'. This is the default if there are '.pl', '.po' or '.ql' but no '.sav' files among *Files*. Finally, the goal user:runtime_entry(start) is run. The executable exits with 0 upon normal temination and with 1 on failure or exception. Not compatible with '-D'. Note that this is almost like '--main==restore' except that no saved-state will be restored before loading the other files.

  none
  : No main function is generated. The main function must be supplied in one of the user supplied files. Not compatible with '-D'.

'--window'

*Win32 only.* Create a windowed executable. A console window will be opened and connected to the Prolog standard streams. If '--main=user' is specified, user_main() should not set the user-stream hooks. C/C++ source code files specified on the command-line will be compiled with '-DSP_WIN=1' if this option is given.

'--moveable'

Under UNIX, paths are normally hardcoded into executables in order for them to find the SICStus libraries and bootfiles. Two paths are normally hardcoded; the value of SP_PATH and, where possible, the runtime library search path using the '-R' linker option (or equivalent). If the linker does not support the '-R' option (or an equivalent), a wrapper script is generated instead, which sets LD_LIBRARY_PATH (or equivalent).

The '--moveable' option turns off this behavior, so the executable is not dependent on SICStus being installed in a specific place. On some platforms the executable can figure out where it is located and so can locate any files it need, e.g. using SP_APP_DIR and SP_RT_DIR. On some UNIX platforms, however, this is not possible. In these cases, if this option is given, the executable will rely on environment variables (SP_PATH (see Section 3.1.1 [Environment Variables], page 23) and LD_LIBRARY_PATH, etc.) to find all relevant files.

Under Windows, this option is always on, since Windows applications do not need to hardcode paths in order for them to find out where they're installed. See Section 9.8.2.2 [Runtime Systems on Windows Target Machines], page 257, for more information on how SICStus locates its libraries and bootfiles.

'-S'

'--static'

Link statically with SICStus run-time and foreign resources. When '--static' is specified, a static version of the SICStus run-time will be used and any SICStus foreign resources specified with '--resources' will be statically linked with the executable. In addition, '--static' implies '--embed-rt-sav', '--embed-sav-file' and '--resources-from-sav'.

Even with '--static', spld will go with the linker's default, which is usually dynamic. If you are in a situation where you would want spld to use a static library instead of a dynamic one, you will have to hack into spld's configuration file 'spconfig-*version*' (normally located in '<installdir>/bin'). We recommend that you make a copy of the configuration file and specify the new configuration file using '--config=<file>'. A typical modification of the configuration file for this purpose may look like:

```
[...]
TCLLIB=-Bstatic -L/usr/local/lib -ltk8.0 -ltcl8.0 -Bdynamic
[...]
```

Use the new configuration file by typing

```
% spld [...] -S --config=/home/joe/hacked_spldconfig [...]
```

The SICStus run-time depends on certain OS support that is only available in dynamically linked executables. For this reason it will probably not work to try

to tell the linker to build a completely static executable, i.e. an executable that links statically also with the C library and that cannot load shared objects.

'`--shared`'

Create a shared library runtime system instead of an ordinary executable. Not compatible with '`--static`'. Implies '`--main=none`'.

Not supported on all platforms.

'`--resources=`*`ResourceList`*'

*ResourceList* is a comma-separated list of resource names, describing which resources should be pre-linked with the executable. Names can be either simple resource names, for example `tcltk`, or they can be complete paths to a foreign resource (with or without extensions). Example

```
% spld [...] --resources=tcltk,clpfd,/home/joe/foobar.so
```

This will cause `library(tcltk)`, `library(clpfd)`, and '`/home/joe/foobar.so`' to be pre-linked with the executable. See also the option '`--respath`' below.

It is also possible to embed a *data resource*, that is, the contents of an arbitrary data file that can be accessed at run-time.

It is possible to embed any kind of data, but, currently, only `restore/1` knows about data resources. For this reason it only makes sense to embed '`.sav`' files.

The primary reason to embed files within the executable is to create an all-in-one executable, that is, an executable file that does not depend on any other files and that therefore is easy to run on machines without SICStus installed. See Section 9.8.3.2 [All-in-one Executables], page 265, for more information.

'`--resources-from-sav`'
'`--no-resources-from-sav`'

When embedding a saved-state as a data resource (with '`--resources`' or '`--embed-sav-file`'), this option extracts information from the embedded saved-state about the names of the foreign resources that were loaded when the saved-state was created. This is the default for static executables when no other resource is specified except the embedded saved-state. This option is only supported when a saved-state is embedded as a data resource. See Section 9.8.3.2 [All-in-one Executables], page 265, for more information.

Use '`--no-resources-from-sav`' to ensure that this feature is *not* enabled.

'`--respath=`*`Path`*'

Specify additional paths used for searching for resources. *Path* is a list of search-paths, colon separated under UNIX, semicolon separated under Windows. `spld` will always search the default library directory as a last resort, so if this option is not specified, only the default resources will be found. See also the '`--resources`' option above.

'`--config=`*`ConfigFile`*'

Specify another configuration file. This option is not intended for normal use. The file name may not contain spaces.

'`--cflag=CFlag`'
: *CFlag* is a comma-separated list of options to send to the C-compiler. Any commas in the list will be replaced by spaces. This option can occur multiple times.

'`-LD`'
: Do not process the rest of the command-line, but send it directly to the compiler/linker. Syntactic sugar for '`--cflag`'.

'`--sicstus=Executable`'
: `spld` relies on using SICStus during some stages of its execution. The default is the SICStus-executable installed with the distribution. *Executable* can be used to override this, in case the user wants to use another SICStus executable.

'`--interactive`'
'`-i`'
: Only applicable with '`--main=load`' or '`--main=restore`'. Calls `SP_force_interactive()` (see Section 9.8.4.1 [Initializing the Prolog Engine], page 275) before initializing SICStus.

'`--memhook=hook` **obsolescent**'
: For compatibility with previous versions. Ignored.

'`--more-memory`'
'`--no-more-memory`'
: Applies platform specific tricks to ensure that the Prolog stacks can use close to 256MB (on 32bit architectures). Currently only affects x86 Linux where it circumvents the default 128MB limit. Ignored on other platforms. Not compatible with '`--shared`'. Somewhat experimental since the required linker options are not well documented. This is the default on Linux. It can be forced on (off) by specifying '`--more-memory`' ('`--no-more-memory`').

'`--lang=Dialect`'
: Corresponds to `prolog_flag(language,_,Dialect)`. *Dialect* can be one of `iso` or `sicstus`. The language mode is set before restoring or loading any argument files. This option can only be used with '`--main=load`' and '`--main=restore`'.

'`--userhook`'
: This option enables you to define your own version of the `SU_initialize()` function. `SU_initialize()` is called by the main program before `SP_initialize()`. Its purpose is to call interface functions, which must be called before `SP_initialize()`, such as `SP_set_memalloc_hooks()`. It is not meaningful to specify this option if '`--main=user`' or '`--main=none`' is given.

  `SU_initialize()` should be defined as:

```
int SU_initialize(int argc, char *argv[])
```

  The contents of `argv` should not be modified. `SU_initialize()` should return 0 for success and non-zero for failure. If a non-zero value is returned, the development system exits with the return value as error code.

'`--with_jdk=DIR`'
'`--with_tcltk=DIR`'
'`--with_tcl=DIR`'
'`--with_tk=DIR`'
'`--with_bdb=DIR`'
: Specify the installation path for third-party software. This is mostly useful under Windows. Under UNIX, the installation script manages this automatically.

'`--keep`'
: Keep temporary files and interface code and rename them to human-readable names. Not intended for the casual user, but useful if you want to know exactly what code is generated.

'`--nocompile`'
: Do not compile, just generate code. This may be useful in Makefiles, for example to generate the header file in a separate step. Implies '`--keep`'.

'`--namebase=namebase`'
: Use *namebase* to construct the name of generated files. This defaults to `spldgen_` or, if '`--static`' is specified, `spldgen_s_`.

'`--embed-rt-sav`'
'`--no-embed-rt-sav`'
: '`--embed-rt-sav`' will embed the SICStus run-time '`.sav`' file into the executable. This is off by default unless '`--static`' is specified. It can be forced on (off) by specifying '`--embed-rt-sav`' ('`--no-embed-rt-sav`').

'`--embed-sav-file`'
'`--no-embed-sav-file`'
: '`--embed-sav-file`' will embed any '`.sav`' file passed to `spld` into the executable. This is just a shorthand for avoiding the ugly data resource syntax of the '`--resources`' option. This is the default when '`--static`' is specified. It can be forced on (off) by specifying '`--embed-sav-file`' ('`--no-embed-sav-file`'). A file '`./foo/bar.sav`' will be added with the data resource name '`/bar.sav`', i.e. as if `--resources=./foo/bar.sav=/bar.sav` had been specified.

'`--multi-sp-aware`'
: Compile the application with support for using more than one SICStus runtime in the same process. Not compatible with '`--static`' or pre-linked foreign resources. See Section 11.3 [Multiple SICStus Run-Times in C], page 294, for details.

Arguments to `spld` not recognized as options are assumed to be input-files and are handled as follows:

'`*.pl`'
'`*.po`'
'`*.ql`'
: These are interpreted as names of files containing Prolog code and will be passed to `SP_load()` at run-time (if '`--main`' is `load` or `restore`. If the intention is to make an executable that works independently of the run-time working directory,

avoid relative file names. Use absolute file names instead, `SP_APP_DIR`, `SP_LIBRARY_DIR`, or embed a '`.sav`' file as a data resource, using '`--resource`'.

'`*.sav`' These are interpreted as names of files containing saved-states and will be passed to `SP_restore()` at run-time if '`--main=restore`' is specified, subject to the above caveat about relative file names.

It is not meaningful to give more than one '`.sav`' argument.

'`*.so`'
'`*.sl`'
'`*.s.o`'
'`*.o`'
'`*.obj`'
'`*.dll`'
'`*.lib`'
'`*.dylib`' These files are assumed to be input-files to the linker and will be passed on unmodified.

'`*.c`'
'`*.cc`'
'`*.C`'
'`*.cpp`'
'`*.c++`' These files are assumed to be C/C++ source code and will be compiled by the C/C++-compiler before being passed to the linker.

If an argument is still not recognized, it will be passed unmodified to the linker.

#### 9.8.3.1 Customizing `spld` under UNIX

The `spld` tool is implemented as a Perl script and can be customized in order to adapt to local variations. *Do not attempt this unless you know what you are doing.* Customization is done by editing their common configuration file `spconfig-`*`version`*. Follow these instructions:

1. Locate the configuration file `spconfig-`*`version`*. It should be located in the same directory as `spld`.
2. Make a copy for `spconfig-`*`version`*; let's call it `hacked_spld.config`. Do not edit the original file.
3. The configuration file contains lines on the form `CFLAGS=-g -O2`. Edit these according to your needs. Do not add or remove any options.
4. You may now use the modified `spconfig-`*`version`* together with `spld` like this:

   ```
   % spld [...] --config=/path/to/hacked_spld.config
   ```

   Replace '`/path/to`' with the actual path to the hacked configuration file.

#### 9.8.3.2 All-in-one Executables

It is possible to embed saved-states into an executable. Together with static linking, this gives an all-in-one executable, an executable that does not depend on external SICStus files.

In the simplest case, creating an all-in-one executable '`main.exe`' from a saved state '`main.sav`' can be done with a command like

```
% spld --output=main.exe --static main.sav
```

This will automatically embed the saved state, any foreign resources needed by the saved state as well the SICStus run-time and its run-time saved state.

The keys to this feature are:

- Static linking. By linking an application with a static version of the SICStus run-time, you avoid any dependency on e.g. '`sprt312.dll`' (Windows) or '`libsprt312.so`' (UNIX). Note that, as of SICStus 3.9, static linking is supported under Windows.

  If the application needs foreign resources (predicates written in C code), as used for example by `library(system)` and `library(clpfd)`, then these foreign resources can be linked statically with the application as well.

  The remaining component is the Prolog code itself; see the next item.
- Data Resources (in-memory files). It is possible to link an application with data resources that can be read directly from memory. In particular, saved-states can be embedded in an application and used when restoring the saved-state of the application.

  An application needs two saved-states:

  1. The SICStus run-time system (`sprt.sav`).

     This is added automatically when `spld` is invoked with the '`--static`' (or '`-S`') option unless the `spld`-option '`--no-embed-rt-sav`' is specified. It can also be added explicitly with the option '`--embed-rt-sav`'.
  2. The user written code of the application as well as any SICStus libraries.

     This saved-state is typically created by loading all application code using `compile/1` and then creating the saved-state with `save_program/2`.

Data resources are added by specifying their internal name and the path to a file as part of the comma separated list of resources passed with the `spld` option '`--resources`'. Each data resource is specified as *file*=*name* where *file* is the path to the file containing the data (it must exist during the call to `spld`) and *name* is the name used to access the content of *file* during run-time. A typical choice of *name* would be the base name, i.e. without directories, of *file*, preceded by a slash (`/`). *name* should begin with a slash (`/`) and look like an ordinary lowercase file path made up of '`/`'-separated, non-empty, names consisting of '`a`' to '`z`', underscore ('`_`', period ('`.`'), and digits.

Typically, you would use `spld --main=restore`, which will automatically restore the first '`.sav`' argument. To manually restore an embedded saved-state you should

use the syntax `URL:x-sicstus-resource:name`, e.g. `SP_restore("URL:x-sicstus-resource:/main.sav")`.

An example will make this clearer. Suppose we create a run-time system that consists of a single file '`main.pl`' that looks like:

```
                                                        % main.pl
:- use_module(library(system)).
:- use_module(library(clpfd)).

% This will be called when the application starts:
user:runtime_entry(start) :-
   %% You may consider putting some other code here...
   write('hello world'),nl,
   write('Getting host name:'),nl,
   host_name(HostName),            % from system
   write(HostName),nl,
   ( all_different([3,9]) ->       % from clpfd
       write('3 != 9'),nl
   ; otherwise ->
       write('3 = 9!?'),nl
   ).
```

Then create the saved-state '`main.sav`', which will contain the compiled code of '`main.pl`' as well as the Prolog code of `library(system)` and `library(clpfd)` and other Prolog libraries needed by `library(clpfd)`.

```
% sicstus -i -f
SICStus 3.12.7 ...
Licensed to SICS
| ?- compile(main).
% compiling .../main.pl...
% ... loading several library modules
| ?- save_program('main.sav').
% .../main.sav created in 201 msec

| ?- halt.
```

Finally, tell `spld` to build an executable statically linked with the SICStus run-time and the foreign resources needed by `library(system)` and `library(clpfd)`. Also, embed the Prolog run-time saved-state and the application specific saved-state just created. Note that the '`random`' foreign resource is needed since it is used by `library(clpfd)`.

As noted above, it is possible to build the all-in-one executable with the command line

```
% spld --output=main.exe --static main.sav
```

but for completeness the example below uses all options as if no options were added automatically.

The example is using Cygwin `bash` (http://www.cygwin.com) under Windows but would look much the same on other platforms. The command should be given on a single line; it is broken up here for better layout.

```
% spld
  --output=main.exe
  --static
  --embed-rt-sav
  --main=restore
  --resources=main.sav=/main.sav,clpfd,system,random
```

The arguments are as follows:

'`--output=main.exe`'
: This tells `spld` where to put the resulting executable.

'`--static`'
: Link statically with the SICStus run-time and foreign resources (`system` and `clpfd` in this case).

'`--embed-rt-sav`'
: This option embeds the SICStus run-time '`.sav`' file ('`sprt.sav`'). This option is not needed since it is added automatically by '`--static`'.

'`--main=restore`'
: Start the application by restoring the saved-state and calling `user:runtime_entry(start)`. This is not strictly needed in the above example since it is the default if any file with extension '`.sav`' or a data resource with a *name* with extension '`.sav`' is specified.

'`--resources=...`'
: This is followed by comma-separated resource specifications:

  `main.sav=/main.sav`
  : This tells `spld` to make the content (at the time `spld` is invoked) of the file '`main.sav`' available at run-time in a data resource named '`/main.sav`'. That is, the data resource name corresponding to `"URL:x-sicstus-resource:/main.sav"`.

    Alternatively, `spld` can create a default data resource specification when passed a '`.sav`' file argument and the option '`--embed-sav-file`' (which is the default with '`--static`').

  `clpfd`
  `system`
  `random`
  : These tell `spld` to link with the foreign resources (that is, C-code) associated with `library(system)`, `library(clpfd)` and

library(random). Since '--static' was specified the static versions of these foreign resources will be used.

Alternatively, spld can extract the information about the required foreign resources from the saved-state ('main.sav'). This feature is enabled by adding the option '--resources-from-sav' (which is the default with '--static'). Using '--resources-from-sav' instead of an explicit list of foreign resources is preferred since it is hard to know what foreign resources are used by the SICStus libraries.

Since both '--embed-sav-file' and '--resources-from-sav' are the default when '--static' is used the example can be built simply by doing

```
% spld --output=main.exe --static main.sav
```

Finally, we may run this executable on any machine, even if SICStus is not installed:

```
bash-2.04$ ./main.exe
hello world
Getting host name:
EOWYN
3 != 9
bash-2.04$
```

### 9.8.3.3 Examples

1. The character-based SICStus development system executable (sicstus) can be created using

   ```
   % spld --main=prolog -o sicstus
   ```

   This will create a development system that is dynamically linked and has no pre-linked foreign resources.

2. 

   ```
   % spld --static -D --resources=random -o main -ltk8.0 -ltcl8.0
   ```

   This will create a statically linked executable called main that has the resource random pre-linked (statically). The linker will receive '-ltk8.0 -ltcl8.0', which will work under UNIX (if Tcl/Tk is installed correctly) but will probably fail under Windows.

3. The following is a little more advanced example demonstrating two things. One is how to use the '--userhook' option to perform initializations in development systems before SP_initialize() is called. It also demonstrates how to use this mechanism to redefine the memory manager bottom layer.

```
/* ---------------------------------------------------------------
 * userhook.c - an example of how to use SU_initialize() to
 *              define your own memory manager bottom layer.
 *
 * The following commands create a sicstus-executable 'msicstus' that
 * uses malloc() as its own memory manager bottom layer. In addition
 * these memory hooks print out messages when they are called.
 *
 * ---------------------------------------------------------------
 */

#include <stdarg.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <sicstus/sicstus.h>

#ifdef __GLIBC__
#include <malloc.h>             /* for mallopt() */
#endif

static char* memman_earliest_start;
static char* memman_latest_end;
static size_t memman_alignment;
```

```
static int SPCDECL
SU_init_mem_hook(size_t alignment,
                 void* earliest_start,
                 void* latest_end,
                 void *cookie)
{
  fprintf(stderr, "Inside SU_init_mem_hook(%ld, 0x%lx, 0x%lx, 0x%lx)\n",
          (long)alignment,
          (unsigned long)earliest_start, (unsigned long)latest_end,
          (unsigned long)cookie);

#if __GLIBC__
  /* By default glibc malloc will use mmap for large requests. mmap
     returns addresses outside the constrained range so we try to
     prevent malloc from using mmap. There is no guarantee that mmap
     is not used anyway, especially with threads.
  */
  mallopt(M_MMAP_MAX, 0);
#endif /* __GLIBC__ */

  memman_earliest_start = (char*)earliest_start;
  memman_latest_end = (char*)latest_end;
  memman_alignment = alignment;
  (void)cookie;                 /* ignored */
  return 1;                     /* success */
}
static void SPCDECL
SU_deinit_mem_hook(void *cookie)
{

  fprintf(stderr, "Inside SU_deinit_mem_hook(0x%lx)\n",
          (unsigned long)cookie);
  (void)cookie;                 /* ignored */
}
```

```
static void * SPCDECL
SU_alloc_mem_hook(size_t size,  /* in bytes */
             size_t *pactualsize,
             int constrained,
             void *cookie)
{
  size_t actual_size;
  char *p;
  (void)cookie;                 /* ignored */
  /* Ensure there is room for an aligned block regardless of alignment
     from malloc(). */
  actual_size = size+memman_alignment;
  p = (char*)malloc(actual_size);
  fprintf(stderr, "Inside SU_alloc_mem_hook(%ld,%s) "
          "allocated %ldbyte block at 0x%lx\n",
         (long)size,
         (constrained ? "constrained" : "unconstrained"),
         (long)actual_size,
         (unsigned long)p);

  if (p!=NULL && constrained)
    {
      if (! (memman_earliest_start <= p && p < memman_latest_end
             &&  actual_size < (size_t)(memman_latest_end-p)))
        {                       /* did not get a suitable block */
          fprintf(stderr,
                  "Inside SU_alloc_mem_hook(%ld,constrained)"
                  "ERROR [0x%lx,0x%lx) is not within [0x%lx,0x%lx)\n",
                 (long)size,
                 (unsigned long)p,
                 (unsigned long)(p+actual_size),
                 (unsigned long)memman_earliest_start,
                 (unsigned long)memman_latest_end);
          free(p);
          p = NULL;
        }
    }

  if (p)
    {
      *pactualsize = actual_size;
      return p;
    }
  else
    {
      fprintf(stderr, "Inside SU_alloc_mem_hook(%ld,%s) "
              "ERROR failed to allocate memory\n",
             (long)size,
             (constrained ? "constrained" : "unconstrained"));
      return NULL;
    }
}
```

```
static int SPCDECL
SU_free_mem_hook(void *mem,
            size_t size,
            int constrained,
            int force,
            void *cookie)
{
  fprintf(stderr, "Inside SU_free_mem_hook(0x%lx, %ld, %s, %s, 0x%lx)\n",
          (unsigned long)mem,
          (long)size,
          (constrained ? "constrained" : "unconstrained"),
          (force ? "FORCE" : "!FORCE"),
          (unsigned long)cookie
          );
  /* We ignore all these since free() knows how to free anyway. */
  (void)size;
  (void)constrained;
  (void)force;
  (void)cookie;
  free(mem);
  return 1;                     /* could reclaim the memory */
}
/* Entry point for initializations to be done before SP_initialize() */
int SPCDECL
SU_initialize (int argc, char **argv)
{
  void *cookie = NULL;          /* we do not use this */
  int hints = 0;                /* should be zero */
  (void)argc;
  (void)argv;

  if (!SP_set_memalloc_hooks(hints,
                             SU_init_mem_hook,
                             SU_deinit_mem_hook,
                             SU_alloc_mem_hook,
                             SU_free_mem_hook,
                             cookie))
    {
      fprintf(stderr, "Inside SU_initialize, "
              "ERROR from SP_set_memalloc_hooks");
      return 1;
    }
  return 0;
}
```

Compile `userhook.c` like this:

```
% spld -D --userhook userhook.c -o msicstus.exe
...
Created "msicstus.exe"
% ./msicstus.exe -i -f
Inside(SU_init_mem_hook(8, 0x8, 0x10000000, 0x0)
Inside SU_alloc_mem_hook(131088,constrained) allo-
cated 131096byte block at 0x410048
Inside SU_alloc_mem_hook(1572880,unconstrained) allo-
cated 1572888byte block at 0x510020
SICStus 3.12.7 ...
Licensed to SICS
| ?-
```

4. An all-in-one executable with a home-built foreign resource.

   This example is similar to the example in Section 9.8.3.2 [All-in-one Executables], page 265, with the addition of a foreign resource of our own.

```
                                                        % foo.pl
:- use_module(library(system)).
:- use_module(library(clpfd)).

:- load_foreign_resource(bar).

% This will be called when the application starts:
user:runtime_entry(start) :-
   %% You may consider putting some other code here...
   write('hello world'),nl,
   write('Getting host name:'),nl,
   host_name(HostName),             % from system
   write(HostName),nl,
   ( all_different([3,9]) ->        % from clpfd
       write('3 != 9'),nl
   ; otherwise ->
       write('3 = 9!?'),nl
   ),
   '$pint'(4711).                   % from our own foreign re-
source 'bar'
                                                        % bar.pl
foreign(print_int, '$pint'(+integer)).
foreign_resource(bar, [print_int]).
```

```
                                                        /* bar.c */
#include <sicstus/sicstus.h>
#include <stdio.h>

extern void print_int(long a);

void print_int(long a)
{
  printf("a=%lu\n", a);
}
```

To create the saved-state `foo.sav` we will compile the file '`foo.pl`' and save it with `save_program('foo.sav').` When compiling the file the directive `:- load_foreign_resource(bar).` is called so a dynamic foreign resource must be present.

Thus, first we build a dynamic foreign resource.

```
% splfr bar.c bar.pl
```

Then we create the saved-state.

```
% sicstus --goal "compile(foo), save_program('foo.sav'), halt."
```

We also need a static foreign resource to embed in our all-in-one executable.

```
% splfr --static bar.c bar.pl
```

Lastly we build the all-in-one executable with `spld`. We do not need to list the foreign resources needed. `spld` will extract their names from the '`.sav`' file. Adding the '`--verbose`' option will make `spld` output lots of progress information, among which are the names of the foreign resources that are needed. Look for "Found resource name" in the output.

```
% spld --verbose --static --main=restore --respath=. --
resources=foo.sav=/mystuff/foo.sav --output=foo
```

In this case four foreign resource names are extracted from the '`.sav`' file: `bar`, `clpfd`, `random` and `system`. The source file '`foo.pl`' loads the foreign resource named `bar`. Is also uses the `system` module, which loads the foreign resource named `system`, and the `clpfd` module, which loads the foreign resources named `clpfd` and `random`.

By not listing foreign resources when running `spld`, we avoid the risk of omitting a required resource.

### 9.8.4 User-defined Main Programs

Runtime systems may or may not have an automatically generated main program. This is controlled by the '`--main`' option to `spld`. If '`--main=user`' is given, a function `user_main()` must be supplied:

```
int user_main(int argc, char *argv[])
```

`user_main()` is responsible for initializing the Prolog engine, loading code, and issuing any Prolog queries. An alternative is to use '`--main=none`' and write your own `main()` function.

### 9.8.4.1 Initializing the Prolog Engine

The Prolog Engine is initialized by calling `SP_initialize()`. This must be done before any interface functions are called, except `SP_force_interactive()`, `SP_set_memalloc_hooks()`, `SP_set_wcx_hooks()`, `SP_set_user_stream_post_hook()` and `SP_set_user_stream_hook()`. The function will allocate data areas used by Prolog, initialize command line arguments so that they can be accessed by the `argv` Prolog flag, and load the Runtime Library. It is called like this:

```
int SP_initialize(int argc, char **argv, char *boot_path)
```

It is recommended that `NULL` be passed for the `boot_path` argument; `SP_initialize()` will then use the location of the SICStus run-time system or the executable to locate the any supporting files.

If, for some reason, `boot_path` must be passed explicitly it should be the name of a directory, equivalent to '`$SP_PATH/bin`'. If the boot path can not be determined by any other means `SP_initialize()` will look up the value of the environment variable `SP_PATH` and look for the file '`$SP_PATH/bin/sprt.sav`' ('`$SP_PATH/bin/spre.sav`'), which contains the (Extended) Runtime Library. See Section 12.6 [WCX Foreign Interface], page 311, for implications of using non-ASCII characters in any of the arguments to `SP_initialize()`.

It returns `SP_SUCCESS` if initialization was successful, and `SP_ERROR` otherwise. If initialization was successful, further calls to `SP_initialize()` will be no-ops (and return `SP_SUCCESS`).

To unload the SICStus emulator, `SP_deinitalize()` can be called.

```
void SP_deinitialize(void)
```

`SP_deinitialize()` will make a best effort to restore the system to the state it was in at the time of calling `SP_initialize()`. This involves unloading foreign resources, shutting down the emulator by calling `halt/0`, and deallocate memory used by Prolog. `SP_deinitialize()` is idempotent as well, i.e. it is a no-op unless SICStus has actually been initialized.

You may also call `SP_force_interactive()` before calling `SP_initialize()`. This will force the I/O built-in predicates to treat the standard input stream as a terminal, even if it does not appear to be a terminal. Same as the '`-i`' option in development systems. (see Section 3.1 [Start], page 21).

```
void SP_force_interactive(void)
```

You may also call `SP_set_memalloc_hooks()` before calling `SP_initialize()`. This will define one layer of Prolog's memory manager, in case your application has special requirements.

The SICStus Prolog memory manager has a two-layer structure. The top layer has roughly the same functionality as the standard UNIX functions `malloc` and `free`, whereas the bottom layer is an interface to the operating system. It's the bottom layer that can be customized according to the API described below.

SICStus Prolog can generally use the whole virtual address space, but certain memory blocks are *address-constrained*—they must fit within a given memory range, the size of which is 256Mb (2^28 bytes) on 32-bit platforms, and 1Eb (2^60 bytes) on 64-bit platforms. Memory blocks are also subject to certain alignment constraints.

The API is as follows:

```
typedef int SP_InitAllocHook(size_t alignment,
                             void *earliest_start,
                             void *latest_end,
                             void *cookie);
typedef void SP_DeinitAllocHook(void *cookie);
typedef void *SP_AllocHook(size_t size,
                           size_t *actual_sizep,
                           int constrained,
                           void *cookie);
typedef int SP_FreeHook(void *ptr,
                        size_t size,
                        int constrained,
                        int force,
                        void *cookie);
int SP_set_memalloc_hooks(int hint,
                          SP_InitAllocHook *init_alloc_hook,
                          SP_DeinitAllocHook *deinit_alloc_hook,
                          SP_AllocHook *alloc_hook,
                          SP_FreeHook *free_hook,
                          void *cookie);
```

`SP_set_memalloc_hooks()`
: returns non-zero on success. Zero on error, e.g. if called after `SP_initialize()`.

`hint`
: is reserved for future extensions. It should be zero.

`cookie`
: can be used for any state needed by the memory hook functions. The value passed to `SP_set_memalloc_hooks()` is passed to each hook function. One possible use is to keep track of multiple SICStus run-times within the same process.

`init_alloc_hook`
: is called initially. `alignment` is guaranteed to be a power of 2, and is used by `alloc_hook`. `earliest_start` (inclusive) and `latest_end` (exclusive) are the bounds within which address-constrained memory blocks must fit. Both are aligned according to `alignment` and non-zero. The function can do whatever initialization that this layer of memory management wants to do. It should

return non-zero if it succeeds, zero if the memory manager bottom layer could not be initialized, in which case initialization of the SICStus run-time will fail.

`deinit_alloc_hook`
: is called by `SP_deinitialize()` when the Prolog engine shuts down. The function can do any necessary cleaning up.

`alloc_hook`
: must allocate and return a pointer to a piece of memory that contains at least `size` bytes aligned at a multiple of `alignment`. The actual size of the piece of memory should be returned in `*actual_sizep`. If `constrained` is non-zero, the piece of memory must be address-constrained. Should return `NULL` if it cannot allocate a suitable piece of memory. Note that the memory returned need not be aligned as long as there is room for an aligned block of at least `size` bytes.

`free_hook`
: is called with a pointer to a piece of memory to be freed and its size as returned by `alloc_hook`. `constrained` is the same as when `alloc_hook` was called to allocate the memory block. If `force` is non-zero, `free_hook` must accept the piece of memory; otherwise, it only accepts it if it is able to return it to the operating system. `free_hook` should return non-zero iff it accepts the piece of memory. Otherwise, the upper layer will keep using the memory as if it were not freed.

The default bottom layers look at the environment variables `PROLOGINITSIZE`, `PROLOGINCSIZE`, `PROLOGKEEPSIZE` and `PROLOGMAXSIZE`. They are useful for customizing the default memory manager. If you redefine the bottom layer, you can choose to ignore these environment variables. See Section 3.1.1 [Environment Variables], page 23.

### 9.8.4.2 Loading Prolog Code

You can load your Prolog code with the call `SP_load()`. This is the C equivalent of the Prolog predicate `load_files/1`:

```
int SP_load(char *filename)
```

Alternatively, you can restore a saved-state with the call `SP_restore()`, which is the C equivalent of the Prolog predicate `restore/1`:

```
int SP_restore(char *filename)
```

`SP_load()` and `SP_restore()` return `SP_SUCCESS` for success or `SP_ERROR` if an error condition occurred. The `filename` arguments in both functions are encoded strings.

Prolog error handling is mostly done by raising and catching exceptions. However, some *faults* are of a nature such that when they occur, the internal program state may be corrupted, and it is not safe to merely raise an exception. In runtime systems, the following C macro provides an environment for handling faults:

```
int SP_on_fault(Stmt, Message, Cleanup)
```

which should occur in the scope of a `char *Message` declaration. *Stmt* is run, and if a fault occurs, *Stmt* is aborted, *Message* gets assigned a value explaining the fault, all queries and SP_term_refs become invalid, Prolog's internal state is cleaned up, and *Cleanup* run. If *Stmt* terminates normally, *Message* is left unchanged. For example, a "fault-proof" runtime system could have the structure:

```
int main(int argc, char **argv)
{
  char *message;

  SP_initialize(argc, argv, "/usr/local/lib/sicstus3.9.1/bin");
loop:
  SP_on_fault(main_loop(), message,
              {printf("ERROR: %s\n",message); goto loop;});
  exit(0);
}

main_loop()
{...}
```

Faults that occur outside the scope of `SP_on_fault()` cause the runtime system to halt with an error message.

The following function can be used to raise a fault. For example, it can be used in a signal handler for `SIGSEGV` to prevent the program from dumping core in the event of a segmentation violation (runtime systems have no predefined signal handling):

```
void SP_raise_fault(char *message)
```

As for most SICStus API functions, calling `SP_raise_fault()` from a thread other than the main thread will lead to unpredictable results. For this reason, it is probably not a good idea to use `SP_raise_fault()` in a signal handler unless the process is single threaded. Also note that `SP_signal()` is not suitable for installing signal handlers for synchronous signals like `SIGSEGV`.

### 9.8.5 Generic Runtime Systems under Windows

There are three ready-made runtime systems provided with the distributions, '`%SP_PATH%\bin\sprt.exe`', '`%SP_PATH%\bin\sprtw.exe`', and '`%SP_PATH%\bin\sprti.exe`'. These have been created using `spld`:

```
% spld --main=restore '$SP_APP_DIR/main.sav' -o sprt.exe
% spld --main=restore '$SP_APP_DIR/main.sav' -i -o sprti.exe
% spld --main=restore '$SP_APP_DIR/main.sav' --window -o sprtw.exe
```

These are provided for users who do not have a C-compiler available. Each program launches a runtime system by restoring the saved-state '`main.sav`' (located in the same folder as the program).

The saved-state is created by `save_program/[1,2]`. If it was created by `save_program/2`, the given startup goal is run. Then, `user:runtime_entry(start)` is run. The program exits with 0 upon normal temination and with 1 on failure or exception.

The program `sprti` assumes that the standard streams are connected to a terminal, even if they do not seem to be (useful under Emacs, for example). `sprtw` is a windowed executable, corresponding to `spwin`.

## 9.9 Examples

### 9.9.1 Train Example (connections)

This is an example of how to create a runtime system. The Prolog program '`train.pl`' will display a route from one train station to another. The C program '`train.c`' calls the Prolog code and writes out all the routes found between two stations:

```
                                                        % train.pl
connected(From, From, [From], _):- !.
connected(From, To, [From| Way], Been):-
        (   no_stop(From, Through)
        ;
            no_stop(Through, From)
        ),
        not_been_before(Been, Through),
        connected(Through, To, Way, Been).

no_stop('Stockholm', 'Katrineholm').
no_stop('Stockholm', 'Vasteras').
no_stop('Katrineholm', 'Hallsberg').
no_stop('Katrineholm', 'Linkoping').
no_stop('Hallsberg', 'Kumla').
no_stop('Hallsberg', 'Goteborg').
no_stop('Orebro', 'Vasteras').
no_stop('Orebro', 'Kumla').

not_been_before(Way, _) :- var(Way),!.
not_been_before([Been| Way], Am) :-
        Been \== Am,
        not_been_before(Way, Am).
```

```
                                                        /* train.c */
#include <stdio.h>
#include <sicstus/sicstus.h>

void write_path(SP_term_ref path)
{
  char *text = NULL;
  SP_term_ref
    tail = SP_new_term_ref(),
    via = SP_new_term_ref();

  SP_put_term(tail,path);

  while (SP_get_list(tail,via,tail))
  {
    if (text)
      printf(" -> ");

    SP_get_string(via, &text);
    printf("%s",text);
  }
  printf("\n");
}

int user_main(int argc, char **argv)
{
  int rval;
  SP_pred_ref pred;
  SP_qid goal;
  SP_term_ref from, to, path;

  /* Initialize Prolog engine. This call looks up SP_PATH in order to
   * find the Runtime Library.  */
  if (SP_FAILURE == SP_initialize(argc, argv, NULL))
    {
      fprintf(stderr, "SP_initialize failed: %s\n",
              SP_error_message(SP_errno));
      exit(1);
    }

  rval = SP_restore("train.sav");

  if (rval == SP_ERROR || rval == SP_FAILURE)
    {
      fprintf(stderr, "Could not restore \"train.sav\".\n");
      exit(1);
    }
```

```
                                                        /* train.c */
    /* Look up connected/4. */
    if (!(pred = SP_predicate("connected",4,"user")))
      {
        fprintf(stderr, "Could not find connected/4.\n");
        exit(1);
      }

    /* Create the three arguments to connected/4. */
    SP_put_string(from = SP_new_term_ref(), "Stockholm");
    SP_put_string(to = SP_new_term_ref(), "Orebro");
    SP_put_variable(path = SP_new_term_ref());

    /* Open the query. In a development system, the query would look like:
     *
     * | ?- connected('Stockholm','Orebro',X).
     */
    if (!(goal = SP_open_query(pred,from,to,path,path)))
      {
        fprintf(stderr, "Failed to open query.\n");
        exit(1);
      }

    /*
     * Loop through all the solutions.
     */
    while (SP_next_solution(goal)==SP_SUCCESS)
      {
        printf("Path: ");
        write_path(path);
      }

    SP_close_query(goal);

    exit(0);
  }
```

Create the saved-state containing the Prolog code:

```
% sicstus
SICStus 3.12.7 ...
Licensed to SICS
| ?- compile(train),save_program('train.sav').
% compiling [...]/train.pl...
% compiled [...]/train.pl in module user, 10 msec 2848 bytes
% [...]/train.sav created in 0 msec

| ?- halt.
```

Create the executable using the application builder:

```
% spld --main=user train.c -o train.exe
```

And finally, run the executable:

```
% ./train
Path: Stockholm -> Katrineholm -> Hallsberg -> Kumla -> Orebro
Path: Stockholm -> Vasteras -> Orebro
```

### 9.9.2 I/O on Lists of Character Codes

This example is taken from the SICStus Prolog library (simplified, but operational). A stream for writing is opened where the written characters are placed in a buffer. When the stream is closed, a code-list is made from the contents of the buffer. The example illustrates the use of user definable streams.

The `open_buf_stream()` function opens a stream where the characters are put in a buffer. The stream is closed by `stream_to_chars()`, which returns the list constructed on the heap.

```
                                                        % example.pl
foreign(open_buf_stream, '$open_buf_stream'(-address('SP_stream'))).
foreign(stream_to_chars, '$stream_to_chars'(+address('SP_stream'),
                                            -term)).

foreign_resource(example, [open_buf_stream,stream_to_chars]).

:- load_foreign_resource(example).

%% with_output_to_chars(+Goal, -Chars)
%% runs Goal with current_output set to a list of characters

with_output_to_chars(Goal, Chars) :-
        '$open_buf_stream'(StreamCode),
        stream_code(Stream, StreamCode),
        current_output(CurrOut),
        set_output(Stream),
        call_and_reset(Goal, Stream, CurrOut, StreamCode, Chars).

call_and_reset(Goal, Stream, CurrOut, StreamCode, Chars) :-
        call(Goal), !,
        put(0),
        '$stream_to_chars'(StreamCode, Chars),
        reset_stream(Stream, CurrOut).
call_and_reset(_, Stream, CurrOut, _, _) :-
        reset_stream(Stream, CurrOut).

reset_stream(Stream, CurrOut) :-
        set_output(CurrOut),
        close(Stream).
```

```
                                                        /* example.c */
#include <sicstus/sicstus.h>

struct open_chars {
  char *chars;       /* character buffer */
  int index;         /* current insertion point */
  int size;
};

#define INIT_BUFSIZE 512

static int lputc(c, buf)
     int c;
     struct open_chars *buf;
{
  if (buf->index == buf->size)  /* grow buffer if necessary */
    {
      buf->size *= 2;
      buf->chars = (char *)realloc(buf->chars, buf->size);
    }
  return (buf->chars[buf->index++] = c);
}

static int lwclose(buf)
     struct open_chars *buf;
{
  free(buf->chars);
  free(buf);
  return 0;
}
```

```
                                                        /* example.c */
void open_buf_stream(streamp)
     SP_stream **streamp;
{
  struct open_chars *buf;

  /* Allocate buffer, create stream & return stream code */

  buf = (struct open_chars *)malloc(sizeof(struct open_chars));
  SP_make_stream(buf, NULL, lputc, NULL, NULL, NULL, lwclose,
                 streamp);

  buf->chars = (char *)malloc(INIT_BUFSIZE);
  buf->size = INIT_BUFSIZE;
  buf->index = 0;
}

void stream_to_chars(streamp, head)
     SP_stream *streamp;
     SP_term_ref head;
{
  SP_term_ref tail = SP_new_term_ref();
  struct open_chars *buf = (struct open_chars *)streamp->user_handle;

  /* Make a list of character codes out of the buffer */

  SP_put_string(tail, "[]");
  SP_put_list_chars(head, tail, buf->chars);
}
```

### 9.9.3 Exceptions from C

Consider, for example, a function returning the square root of its argument after checking that the argument is valid. If the argument is invalid, the function should raise an exception instead.

```
                                                        /* math.c */
#include <math.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <sicstus/sicstus.h>

extern double sqrt_check(double d);
double sqrt_check(double d)
{
  if (d < 0.0)
    {    /* build a domain_error/4 exception term */
      SP_term_ref culprit=SP_new_term_ref();
      SP_term_ref argno=SP_new_term_ref();
      SP_term_ref expdomain=SP_new_term_ref();
      SP_term_ref t1=SP_new_term_ref();

      SP_put_float(culprit, d);
      SP_put_integer(argno, 1);
      SP_put_string(expdomain, ">=0.0");
      SP_cons_functor(t1, SP_atom_from_string("sqrt"), 1, culprit);
      SP_cons_functor(t1, SP_atom_from_string("domain_error"), 4,
                      t1, argno, expdomain, culprit);
      SP_raise_exception(t1);    /* raise the exception */
      return 0.0;
    }
  return sqrt(d);
}
```

The Prolog interface to this function is defined in a file '`math.pl`'. The function uses the `sqrt()` library function, and so the math library '`-lm`' has to be included:

```
                                                        % math.pl
foreign_resource(math, [sqrt_check]).

foreign(sqrt_check, c, sqrt(+float, [-float])).

:- load_foreign_resource(math).
```

A linked foreign resource is created:

```
% splfr math.pl math.c -lm
```

A simple session using this function could be:

```
% sicstus
SICStus 3.12.7 ...
Licensed to SICS
| ?- [math].
% consulting /home/san/pl/math.pl...
% /home/san/pl/math.pl consulted, 10 msec 816 bytes

| ?- sqrt(5.0,X).

X = 2.23606797749979

| ?- sqrt(a,X).
! Type error in argument 1 of user:sqrt/2
! number expected, but a found
! goal:  sqrt(a,_143)

| ?- sqrt(-5,X).
! Domain error in argument 1 of user:sqrt/1
! expected '>=0.0', found -5.0
! goal:  sqrt(-5.0)
```

The above example used the foreign language interface with dynamic linking. To statically link '`math.s.o`' with the Prolog emulator, the following steps would have been taken:

```
% splfr -S math.pl math.c -lm
SICStus 3.12.7 ...
Licensed to SICS
% spXxQwsr.c generated, 0 msec

% spld -D -o mathsp --resources=./math.s.o
SICStus 3.12.7 ...
Licensed to SICS
% spYdLTgi1.c generated, 0 msec

Created "mathsp"
% ./mathsp
SICStus 3.12.7 ...
Licensed to SICS
| ?- [math].
% consult-
ing /a/filur/export/labs/isl/sicstus/jojo/sicstus38p/math.pl...
% con-
sulted /a/filur/export/labs/isl/sicstus/jojo/sicstus38p/math.pl in mod-
ule user, 0 msec 960 bytes

| ?- sqrt(5.0,X).

X = 2.23606797749979
```

### 9.9.4 Stream Example

This is a small example how to initialize a bidirectional socket stream (error handling omitted):

```
typedef struct {
  int fd;                       /* socket number */
  FILE *r_stream;               /* For reading */
  FILE *w_stream;               /* For writing */
} SocketData;

int socket_sgetc(SocketData *socket)
{
  return fgetc(socket->r_stream);
}

int socket_sputc(char c, SocketData *socket)
{
  return fputc(c, socket->w_stream);
}

int socket_sflush(SocketData *socket)
{
  return fflush(socket->w_stream);
}

int socket_seof(SocketData *socket)
{
  return feof(socket->r_stream);
}

void socket_sclrerr(SocketData *socket)
{
  clearerr(socket->r_stream);
  clearerr(socket->w_stream);
}

int socket_sclose(SocketData *socket)
{
  fclose(socket->r_stream);
  fclose(socket->w_stream);
  close(socket->fd);
  free(socket);
  return 0;
}
```

```
SP_stream *new_socket_stream(int fd)
{
  SP_stream *stream;
  SocketData *socket;

/* Allocate and initialize data local to socket */

  socket = (SocketData *)malloc(sizeof(SocketData));
  socket->fd = fd;
  socket->r_stream = fdopen(fd,"r");
  socket->w_stream = fdopen(fd,"w");

/* Allocate and initialize Prolog stream */

  SP_make_stream(
                 socket,
                 socket_sgetc,
                 socket_sputc,
                 socket_sflush,
                 socket_seof,
                 socket_sclrerr,
                 socket_sclose,
                 &stream);

/* Allocate and copy string */

  stream->filename = "socket";
  stream->fd = fd;

  return stream;
}
```

# 10 Interfacing .NET and Java

SICStus Prolog supports two different ways of interfacing a Prolog program with a Java client, and one for interfacing with a .NET client.

For .NET and Java there is *PrologBeans* and for Java there is *Jasper*. *PrologBeans* is the recommended package unless you have special needs and are interfacing with Java in which case you may consider using *Jasper*.

Jasper is "tightly coupled" with Prolog, which means that everything runs in the same process (the necessary code is loaded at runtime via dynamic linking). PrologBeans, on the other hand, is "loosely coupled", which means that the client code runs in a different process from the Prolog code. In fact, the client program and the Prolog program can run on separate machines, since the communication is done via TCP/IP sockets.

Advantages of Jasper:

Jasper is bi-directional. Callbacks are possible (limited in levels only by memory), and queries can backtrack.

Jasper is normally faster than PrologBeans.

Advantages of PrologBeans:

Since the client program and the Prolog program run in separate processes, there is no competition for memory between the virtual machine of the client (.NET or JVM) and the Prolog Abstract Machine. This means that PrologBeans works well with large applications.

Distribution over a network is a no-brainer when using PrologBeans. The application is distributable from the beginning.

PrologBeans has support for user session handling both at the Java level (with support for HTTP sessions and JNDI lookup) and at the Prolog level. This makes it easy to integrate Prolog applications into applications based on Java servers.

*PrologBeans* is described in Chapter 44 [PrologBeans], page 723, and *Jasper* is described in Chapter 43 [Jasper], page 693.

# 11 Multiple SICStus Run-Times in a Process

It is possible to have more than one SICStus run-time in a single process. These are completely independent (except that they dynamically load the same foreign resources; see Section 11.4 [Foreign Resources and Multiple SICStus Run-Times], page 296).

Even though the SICStus run-time can only be run in a single thread, it is now possible to start several SICStus run-times, optionally each in its own thread.

SICStus run-times are rather heavy weight and you should not expect to be able to run more than a handful.

## 11.1 Memory Considerations

The most pressing restriction when using more than one SICStus run-time in a process is that (on 32bit machines) all these run-times must compete for the the *address-constrained* range of virtual memory, typically the lower 256MB of memory.

This is worsened by the fact that, on some platforms, each SICStus run-time will attempt to grow its memory area as needed, leading to fragmentation. A fix that removes the restriction on useable memory is planned for a later release.

One way to avoid the fragmentation issue to some extent is to make each SICStus run-time preallocate a large enough memory area so it will not have to grow during run-time. This can be effected by setting the environment variables `GLOBALSTKSIZE`, `PROLOGINITSIZE` and `PROLOGMAXSIZE`.

On some platforms, currently `Linux` and Windows, the default bottom memory manager layer will pre-allocate as large a chunk of *address-constrained* memory as possible when the SICStus run-time is initialized. In order to use more than one run-time you therefore should set the environment variable `PROLOGMAXSIZE` to limit this greedy pre-allocation.

```
bash> GLOBALSTKSIZE=10MB; export GLOBALSTKSIZE;
bash> PROLOGINITSIZE=20MB; export PROLOGINITSIZE;
bash> PROLOGMAXSIZE=30MB; export PROLOGMAXSIZE;
```

You can use `statistics/2` to try to determine suitable values for thes, but it is bound to be a trial-and-error process.

## 11.2 Multiple SICStus Run-Times in Java

In Java, you can now create more than one `se.sics.jasper.SICStus` object. Each will correspond to a completely independent copy of the SICStus run-time. Note that a SICStus run-time is not deallocated when the corresponding SICStus object is no longer used. Thus,

the best way to use multiple SICStus objects is to create them early and then re-use them as needed.

It is probably useful to create each in its own separate thread. One reason would be to gain speed on a multi-processor machine.

## 11.3 Multiple SICStus Run-Times in C

Unless otherwise noted, this section documents the behavior when using dynamic linking to access a SICStus run-time.

The key implementation feature that makes it possible to use multiple run-times is that all calls from C to the SICStus API (`SP_query()`, etc.) go through a dispatch vector. Two run-times can be loaded at the same time since their APIs are accessed through different dispatch vectors.

By default, there will be a single dispatch vector, referenced from a global variable (`sp_GlobalSICStus`). A SICStus API functions, such as `SP_query()`, is then defined as a macro that expands to something similar to `sp_GlobalSICStus->SP_query_pointer`. The name of the global dispatch vector is subject to change without notice; it should not be referenced directly. If you need to access the dispatch vector, use the C macro `SICStusDISPATCHVAR` instead; see below.

### 11.3.1 Using a Single SICStus Run-Time

When building an application with `spld`, by default only one SICStus run-time can be loaded in the process. This is similar to the case in SICStus versions prior to 3.9. For most applications built with `spld`, the changes necessary to support multiple SICStus run-times should be invisible, and old code should only need to be rebuilt with `spld`.

In order to maintain backward compatibility, the global dispatch vector is automatically set up by `SP_initialize()`. Other SICStus API functions will not set up the dispatch vector, and will therefore lead to memory access errors if called before `SP_initialize()`. Currently, hook functions such as `SP_set_memalloc_hooks()` also set up the dispatch vector to allow them to be called before `SP_initialize()`. However, only `SP_initialize()` is guaranteed to set up the dispatch vector. The hook installation functions may change to use a different mechanism in the future. The SICStus API functions that perform automatic setup of the dispatch vector are marked with `SPEXPFLAG_PREINIT` in '`sicstus.h`'.

### 11.3.2 Using More than One SICStus Run-Time

Using more than one SICStus run-time in a process is only supported when the dynamic library version of the SICStus run-time is used (e.g, `sprt312.dll`, `libsprt312.so`).

An application that wants to use more than one SICStus run-time needs to be built using the '`--multi-sp-aware`' option to `spld`. C-code compiled by `spld --multi-sp-aware` will have the C preprocessor macro `MULTI_SP_AWARE` defined and non-zero.

Unlike the single run-time case described above, an application built with '`--multi-sp-aware`' will not have a global variable that holds the dispatch vector. Instead, your code will have to take steps to ensure that the appropriate dispatch vector is used when switching between SICStus run-times.

There are several steps needed to access a SICStus run-time from an application built with '`--multi-sp-aware`'.

1. You must obtain the dispatch vector of the initial SICStus run-time using `SP_get_dispatch()`. Note that this function is special in that it is not accessed through the dispatch vector; instead, it is exported in the ordinary manner from the SICStus run-time dynamic library (`libsprt312.so` under Windows and, typically, `sprt312.dll` under UNIX).
2. You must ensure that `SICStusDISPATCHVAR` expands to something that references the dispatch vector obtained in step 1.

   The C pre-processor macro `SICStusDISPATCHVAR` should expand to a `SICSTUS_API_STRUCT_TYPE *`, that is, a pointer to the dispatch vector that should be used. When '`--multi-sp-aware`' is not used `SICStusDISPATCHVAR` expands to `sp_GlobalSICStus` as described above. When using '`--multi-sp-aware`' it is probably best to let `SICStusDISPATCHVAR` expand to a local variable.
3. Once you have access to the SICStus API of the initial SICStus run-time you can call the SICStus API function `SP_load_sicstus_run_time()` to load additional run-times.

```
SICSTUS_API_STRUCT_TYPE *SP_get_dispatch(void *reserved);
```

`SP_get_dispatch()` returns the dispatch vector of the SICStus run-time. The argument `reserved` should be `NULL`. This function can be called from any thread.

```
typedef SICSTUS_API_STRUCT_TYPE *SP_get_dispatch_type(void *);

int SP_load_sicstus_run_time(SP_get_dispatch_type **ppfunc, void **phandle);
```

`SP_load_sicstus_run_time()` loads a new SICStus run-time. `SP_load_sicstus_run_time()` returns zero if a new run-time could not be loaded. If a new run-time could be loaded a non-zero value is returned and the address of the `SP_get_dispatch()` function of the newly loaded SICStus run-time is stored at the address `ppfunc`. The second argument, `phandle`, is reserved and should be `NULL`.

As a special case, if `SP_load_sicstus_run_time()` is called from a SICStus run-time that has not been initialized (with `SP_initialize()`) and that has not previously been loaded as the result of calling `SP_load_sicstus_run_time()`, then no new run-time is loaded. Instead, the `SP_get_dispatch()` of the run-time itself is returned. In particular, the first time `SP_load_sicstus_run_time()` is called on the initial SICStus run-time, and if this happens before the initial SICStus run-time is initialized, then no new run-time is loaded.

Calling `SP_load_sicstus_run_time()` from a particular run-time can be done from any thread.

An application that links statically with the SICStus run-time should not call `SP_load_sicstus_run_time()`.

You should not use pre-linked foreign resources when using multiple SICStus run-times in the same process.

For an example of loading and using multiple SICStus run-times, see '`library/jasper/spnative.c`' that implements this functionality for the Java interface Jasper.

## 11.4 Foreign Resources and Multiple SICStus Run-Times

Foreign resources access the SICStus C API in the same way as an embedding application, that is, through a dispatch vector. As for applications, the default and backward compatible mode is to only support a single SICStus run-time. An alternative mode makes it possible for a foreign resource to be shared between several SICStus run-times in the same process.

Unless otherwise noted, this section documents the behavior when using dynamically linked foreign resources. That is, shared objects (.so-files) under UNIX, dynamic libraries (DLLs) under Windows.

### 11.4.1 Foreign Resources Supporting Only One SICStus Run-Time

A process will only contain one instance of the code and data of a (dynamic) foreign resource even if the foreign resource is loaded and used from more than one SICStus run-time.

This presents a problem in the likely event that the foreign resource maintains some state, e.g. global variables, between invocations of functions in the foreign resource. The global state will probably need to be separate between SICStus run-times. Requiring a foreign resource to maintain its global state on a per SICStus run-time basis would be an incompatible change. Instead, by default, only the first SICStus run-time that loads a foreign resource will be allowed to use it. If a subsequent SICStus run-time (in the same process) tries to load the foreign resource then an error will be reported to the second SICStus run-time.

When `splfr` builds a foreign resource, it will also generate glue code. When the foreign resource is loaded, the glue code will set up a global variable pointing to the dispatch vector used in the foreign resource to access the SICStus API. This is similar to how an embedding application accesses the SICStus API.

The glue code will also detect if a subsequent SICStus run-time in the same process tries to initialize the foreign resource. In this case, an error will be reported.

This means that pre 3.9 foreign code should only need to be rebuilt with `splfr` to work with the latest version of SICStus. However, a recommended change is that all C files of a foreign resource include the header file generated by `splfr`. Inclusion of this generated header file may become mandatory in a future release. See Section 9.2.5 [The Foreign Resource Linker], page 224.

### 11.4.2 Foreign Resources Supporting Multiple SICStus Run-Times

A foreign resource that wants to be shared between several SICStus run-times must somehow know which SICStus run-time is calling it so that it can make callbacks using the SICStus API into the right SICStus run-time. In addition, the foreign resource may have global variables that should have different values depending on which SICStus run-time is calling the foreign resource.

A header file is generated by `splfr` when it builds a foreign resource (before any C code is compiled). This header file provides prototypes for any `foreign`-declared function, but it also provides other things needed for multiple SICStus run-time support. This header file must be included by any C file that contains code that either calls any SICStus API function or that contains any of the functions called by SICStus. See Section 9.2.5 [The Foreign Resource Linker], page 224.

#### 11.4.2.1 Simplified Support for Multiple SICStus Run-Times

To make it simpler to convert old foreign resources, there is an intermediate level of support for multiple SICStus run-times. This level of support makes it possible for several SICStus run-times to call the foreign resource, but a mutual exclusion lock ensures that only one SICStus run-time at a time can execute code in the foreign resource. That is, the mutex is locked upon entry to any function in the foreign resource and unlocked when the function returns. This makes it possible to use a global variable to hold the SICStus dispatch vector, in much the same way as is done when only a single SICStus run-time is supported. In addition, a special hook function in the foreign resource will be called every time the foreign resource is entered. This hook function can then make arrangements to ensure that any global variables are set up as appropriate.

To build a foreign resource in this way, use `splfr --exclusive-access`. In addition to including the generated header file, your code needs to define the context switch function. If the resource is named *resname* then the context switch hook should look like:

```
void sp_context_switch_hook_resname(int entering)
```

The context switch hook will be called with the SICStus API dispatch vector already set up, so calling any SICStus API function from the context switch hook will work as expected. The argument `entering` will be non-zero when a SICStus run-time is about to call a function in the foreign resource. The hook will be called with `entering` zero when the foreign function is about to return to SICStus.

It is possible to specify a name for the context switch hook with the `splfr` option '`--context-hook=name`'. If you do not require a context switch hook you can specify the `splfr` option '`--no-context-hook`'.

Due to the use of mutual exclusion lock to protect the foreign resource, there is a remote possibility of dead-lock. This would happen if the foreign resource calls back to SICStus and then passes control to a different SICStus run-time in the same thread, which then calls the foreign resource. For this reason it is best to avoid '`--exclusive-access`' for foreign resources that makes call-backs into Prolog.

The new SICStus API function `SP_foreign_stash()` provides access to a location where the foreign resource can store anything that is specific to the calling SICStus run-time. The location is specific to each foreign resource and each SICStus run-time. See Section 9.4.7 [Miscellaneous C API Functions], page 240.

C code compiled by `splfr --exclusive-access` will have the C pre-processor macro `SP_SINGLE_THREADED` defined to a non-zero value.

Some of the foreign resources in the SICStus library use this technique; see for instance `library(system)`.

#### 11.4.2.2 Full Support for Multiple SICStus Run-Times

To fully support multiple SICStus run-times, a foreign resource should be built with `splfr --multi-sp-aware`.

C code compiled by `splfr --multi-sp-aware` will have the C pre-processor macro `MULTI_SP_AWARE` defined to a non-zero value.

Full support for multiple SICStus run-times means that more than one SICStus run-time can execute code in the foreign resource at the same time. This rules out the option to use any global variables for information that should be specific to each SICStus run-time. In particular, the SICStus dispatch vector cannot be stored in a global variable. Instead, the SICStus dispatch vector is passed as an extra first argument to each foreign function.

To ensure some degree of link time type checking, the name of each foreign function will be changed (using `#define` in the generated header file).

The extra argument is used in the same way as when using multiple SICStus run-times from an embedding application. It must be passed on to any function that needs access to the SICStus API.

To simplify the handling of this extra argument, several macros are defined so that the same foreign resource code can be compiled both with and without support for multiple SICStus run-times:

- `SPAPI_ARG0`
- `SPAPI_ARG`

- SPAPI_ARG_PROTO_DECL0
- SPAPI_ARG_PROTO_DECL

Their use is easiest to explain with an example. Suppose the original foreign code looked like:

```
static int f1(void)
{
        some SICStus API calls
}

static int f2(SP_term_ref t, int x)
{
        some SICStus API calls
}

/* :- foreign(foreign_fun, c, foreign_pred(+integer)). */
void foreign_fun(long x)
{
  ... some SICStus API calls ...
  f1();
  ...
  f2(SP_new_term_ref(), 42);
  ...
}
```

Assuming no global variables are used, the following change will ensure that the SICStus API dispatch vector is passed around to all functions:

```
static int f1(SPAPI_ARG_PROTO_DECL0) // _DECL<ZERO> for no-arg functions
{
        some SICStus API calls
}

static int f2(SPAPI_ARG_PROTO_DECL SP_term_ref t, int x) // Note: no comma
{
        some SICStus API calls
}

/* :- foreign(foreign_fun, c, foreign_pred([-integer])). */
void foreign_fun(SPAPI_ARG_PROTO_DECL long x) // Note: no comma
{
  ... some SICStus API calls ...
  f1(SPAPI_ARG0);               // ARG<ZERO> for no-arg functions
  ...
  f2(SPAPI_ARG SP_new_term_ref(), 42);       // Note: no comma
  ...
}
```

If `MULTI_SP_AWARE` is not defined, i.e. '`--multi-sp-aware`' is not specified to `splfr`, then all these macros expand to nothing, except `SPAPI_ARG_PROTO_DECL0`, which will expand to `void`.

You can use `SP_foreign_stash()` to get access to a location, initially set to NULL, where the foreign resource can store a `void*`. Typically this would be a pointer to a C struct that holds all information that need to be stored in global variables. This struct can be allocated and initialized by the foreign resource init function. It should be deallocated by the foreign resource deinit function. See Section 9.4.7 [Miscellaneous C API Functions], page 240, for details.

Most foreign resources that come with SICStus fully support multiple SICStus run-times. For a particularly simple example, see the code for `library(random)`. For an example that hides the passing of the extra argument by using the C pre-processor, see the files in '`library/clpfd/`'.

## 11.5 Multiple Run-Times and Threads

Perhaps the primary reason to use more than one SICStus run-time in a process is to have each run-time running in a separate thread. To this end, a few mutual exclusion primitives are available. See Section 9.4.6 [Operating System Services], page 238, for details on mutual exclusion locks.

> **Please note**: the SICStus run-time is not thread safe in general. See Section 9.5.3 [Calling Prolog Asynchronously], page 243, for ways to safely interact with a running SICStus from arbitrary threads.

# 12 Handling Wide Characters

The chapter describes the SICStus Prolog features for handling wide characters. We will refer to these capabilities as Wide Character eXtensions, and will use the abbreviation WCX.

## 12.1 Introduction

SICStus Prolog supports character codes up to 31 bits wide. It has a set of hooks for specifying how the character codes should be read in and written out to streams, how they should be classified (as letters, symbol-chars, etc.), and how strings of wide characters should be exchanged with the operating system. There are three sets of predefined hook functions supporting ISO 8859/1, UNICODE/UTF-8 and EUC external encodings, selectable using an environment variable. Alternatively, users may plug in their own definition of hook functions and implement arbitrary encodings.

Section 12.2 [WCX Concepts], page 301, introduces the basic WCX concepts and presents their implementation in SICStus Prolog. Section 12.3 [Prolog Level WCX Features], page 303, gives an overview of those Prolog language features that are affected by wide character handling. Section 12.4 [WCX Environment Variables], page 304, and Section 12.5 [WCX Hooks], page 305, describe the options for customization of SICStus Prolog WCX through environment variables and through the hook functions, respectively. Section 12.6 [WCX Foreign Interface], page 311, and Section 12.7 [WCX Features in Libraries], page 313, summarize the WCX extensions in the foreign language interface and in the libraries. Section 12.8 [WCX Utility Functions], page 314, describes the utility functions provided by SICStus Prolog to help in writing the WCX hook functions, while Section 12.9 [Representation of EUC Wide Characters], page 315, presents the custom-made internal code-set for the EUC encoding. Finally Section 12.10 [A Sample WCX Box], page 316, describes an example implementation of the WCX hook functions, which supports a composite character code set and four external encodings. The code for this example is included in the distribution as `library(wcx_example)`.

## 12.2 Concepts

First let us introduce some notions concerning wide characters.

*(Wide) character code*

an integer, possibly outside the 0..255 range.

SICStus Prolog allows character codes in the range 0..2147483647 (= 2^31-1). Consequently, the built-in predicates for building and decomposing atoms from/into character codes (e.g. `atom_codes/2`) accept and produce lists of integers in the above range (excluding the 0 code).

Wide characters can be used in all contexts: in atoms (single quoted, or unquoted, depending on the character-type mapping), strings, character code notation (0'*char*), etc.

*External (stream) encoding*
: a way of encoding sequences of wide characters as sequences of (8-bit) bytes, used in stream input and output.

  SICStus Prolog has three different external stream encoding schemes built-in, selectable through an environment variable. Furthermore it provides hooks for users to plug in their own external stream encoding functions. The built-in predicates `put_code/1`, `get_code/1`, etc., accept and return wide character codes, converting the bytes written or read using the external encoding in force.

  Note that an encoding need not be able to handle the whole range of character codes allowed by SICStus Prolog.

*Character code set*
: a subset of the set `{0, . . . , 2^31-1}` that can be handled by an external encoding. SICStus Prolog assumes that the character code set is an extension of the ASCII code set, i.e. it includes codes 0..127, and these codes are interpreted as ASCII characters. Note that ASCII characters can still have an arbitrary external encoding, cf. the `usage` flag `WCX_CHANGES_ASCII`; see Section 12.5 [WCX Hooks], page 305.

*Character type mapping*
: a function mapping each element of the character code set to one of the character categories (*layout*, *small-letter*, *symbol-char*, etc.; see Section 50.4 [Token String], page 790). This is required for parsing tokens. The character-type mapping for non-ASCII characters is hookable in SICStus Prolog and has three built-in defaults, depending on the external encoding selected.

*System encoding*
: a way of encoding wide character strings, used or required by the operating system environment in various contexts (e.g. file names in `open/3`, command line options, as returned by `prolog_flag(argv, Flags)`, etc.). The system encoding is hookable in SICStus Prolog and has two built-in defaults.

*Internal encoding*
: a way of encoding wide character strings internally within the SICStus Prolog system. This is of interest to the user only if the foreign language interface is used in the program, or a system encoding hook function needs to be written. SICStus Prolog has a fixed internal encoding, which is UTF-8.

As discussed above there are several points where the users can influence the behavior of SICStus Prolog. The user can decide on

- the character code set,
- the character-type mapping,
- the external encoding, and
- the system encoding.

Let us call *WCX mode* a particular setting of these parameters.

Note that the selection of the character code set is conceptual only and need not be communicated to SICStus Prolog, as the decision materializes in the functions for the mapping and encodings.

## 12.3 Summary of Prolog Level WCX features

SICStus Prolog has a Prolog flag, called `wcx`, whose value can be an arbitrary atom, and which is initialized to `[]`. This flag is used at opening a stream, its value is normally passed to a user-defined hook function. This can be used to pass some information from Prolog to the hook function. In the example of Section 12.10 [A Sample WCX Box], page 316, which supports the selection of external encodings on a stream-by-stream basis, the value of the `wcx` flag is used to specify the encoding to be used for the newly opened stream.

The value of the `wcx` flag can be overridden by supplying a `wcx(`*`Value`*`)` option to `open/4` and `load_files/2`. If such an option is present, then the *`Value`* is passed on to the hook function.

The `wcx` flag has a reserved value. The value `wci` (wide character internal encoding) signifies that the stream should use the SICStus Prolog internal encoding (UTF-8), bypassing the hook functions supplied by the user. This is appropriate, e.g. if a file with wide characters is to be produced, which has to be readable irrespective of the (possibly user supplied) encoding scheme.

Wide characters generally require several bytes to be input or output. Therefore, for each stream, SICStus Prolog keeps track of the number of bytes input or output, in addition to the number of (wide) characters. Accordingly there is a built-in predicate `byte_count(+`*`Stream`*`,?`*`N`*`)` for accessing the number of bytes read/written on a stream.

Note that the predicate `character_count/2` returns the number of characters read or written, which may be less than the number of bytes, if some of the characters are multibyte. (On output streams the `byte_count/2` can also be less than the `character_count/2`, if some codes, not belonging to the code-set handled, are not written out.)

Note that if a stream is opened as a binary stream:

```
open(..., ..., ..., [type(binary)])
```

then no wide character handling will take place; every character output will produce a single byte on the stream, and every byte input will be considered a separate character.

## 12.4 Selecting the WCX Mode Using Environment Variables

When the SICStus Prolog system starts up, its WCX mode is selected according to the value of the `SP_CTYPE` environment variable. The supported values of the `SP_CTYPE` environment variable are the following:

`iso_8859_1` (default)

character code set:
0..255

character-type mapping:
according to the ISO 8859/1 standard; see Section 50.4 [Token String], page 790.

external encoding:
each character code is mapped to a single byte on the stream with the same value (trivial encoding).

`utf8`

character code set:
0..2147483647 (= 2^31-1)

character-type mapping:
according to ISO 8859/1 for codes 0..255. All codes above 255 are considered *small-letter*s.

external encoding:
UTF-8

This WCX mode is primarily intended to support the UNICODE character set, but it also allows the input and output of character codes above the UNICODE character code range.

`euc`

character code set:
a subset of 0..8388607 The exact character code set is described in Section 12.9 [Representation of EUC Wide Characters], page 315, together with its mapping to the standard external encoding.

character-type mapping:
according to ISO 8859/1 for codes 0..127. All codes above 127 are considered *small-letter*s.

external encoding:
EUC encoding with the lengths of the sub-code-sets dependent on the locale.

In all three cases the system encoding is implemented as truncation to 8-bits, i.e. any code output to the operating system is taken modulo 256, any byte coming from the operating system is mapped to the code with the same value.

The figure below shows an example interaction with SICStus Prolog in EUC mode. For the role of the `SP_CSETLEN` environment variable, see Section 12.9 [Representation of EUC Wide Characters], page 315.

```
scheutz>setenv SP_CTYPE euc
scheutz>setenv SP_CSETLEN 212
scheutz>bin/sicstus
SICStus 3.8 (sparc-solaris-5.5.1): Fri Oct  8 15:59:37 MET DST 1999
Licensed to SICS
{consulting /home/matsc/.sicstusrc...}
{consulted /home/matsc/.sicstusrc in module user, 10 msec 1488 bytes}
{source_info}
| ?- atom_codes(A, [680,681,682,683,684,685,686,687]).

A = ｲｳｴｵｶｷｸｹｺ ?

yes
{source_info}
| ?-
```

SICStus Prolog in EUC mode

## 12.5 Selecting the WCX Mode Using Hooks

Users can have complete control over the way wide characters are handled by SICStus Prolog if they supply their own definitions of appropriate hook functions. A set of such functions, implementing a specific environment for handling wide characters is called a *WCX box*. A sample WCX box is described below (see Section 12.10 [A Sample WCX Box], page 316).

Plugging-in of the WCX hook functions can be performed by calling

```
void SP_set_wcx_hooks ( int usage,
                        SP_WcxOpenHook *wcx_open,
                        SP_WcxCloseHook *wcx_close,
                        SP_WcxCharTypeHook *wcx_chartype,
                        SP_WcxConvHook *wcx_from_os,
                        SP_WcxConvHook *wcx_to_os);
```

The effect of `SP_set_wcx_hooks()` is controlled by the value of `usage`. The remaining arguments are pointers to appropriate hook functions or `NULL` values, the latter implying that the hook should take some default value.

There are three independent aspects to be controlled, and `usage` should be supplied as a bitwise OR of chosen constant names for each aspect. The defaults have value 0, so need not be included. The aspects are the following:

a. decide on the default code-set

   This decides the default behavior of the `wcx_open` and `wcx_chartype` hook functions (if both are supplied by the user, the choice of the default is irrelevant). The possible values are:

   `WCX_USE_LATIN1` (default)
   `WCX_USE_UTF8`
   `WCX_USE_EUC`
   : Select the behavior described above under titles `iso_8859_1`, `utf8`, and `euc`, respectively; see Section 12.4 [WCX Environment Variables], page 304.

b. decide on the default system encoding

   The flags below determine what function to use for conversion from/to the operating system encoding, if such functions are not supplied by the user through the `wcx_from_os` and `wcx_to_os` arguments (if both are supplied by the user, the choice of default is irrelevant).

   `WCX_OS_8BIT`
   : (default) Select the "truncation to 8-bits" behavior.

   `WCX_OS_UTF8`
   : Select the UTF-8 encoding to be used for all communication with the operating system.

c. decide on the preservation of ASCII, i.e. the codes in 0..127

   This is important if some of the conversion functions (`wcx_from_os`, `wcx_to_os`, and `wcx_getc`, `wcx_putc`, see later) are user-defined. In such cases it may be beneficial for the user to inform SICStus Prolog whether the supplied encoding functions preserve ASCII characters. (The default encodings do preserve ASCII.)

   `WCX_PRESERVES_ASCII`
   : (default) Declare that the encodings preserve all ASCII characters, i.e. getting or putting an ASCII character need not go through the conversion functions, and for strings containing ASCII characters only, the system encoding conversions need not be invoked.

`WCX_CHANGES_ASCII`
: Force the system to use the conversion functions even for ASCII characters and strings.

We now describe the role of the arguments following `usage` in the argument list of `SP_set_wcx_hooks()`.

`SP_WcxOpenHook *wcx_open`
: where `typedef void (SP_WcxOpenHook) (SP_stream *s, SP_atom option, int context);`

This function is called by SICStus Prolog for each `s` stream opened, except when the encoding to be used for the stream is pre-specified (binary files, files opened using the `wci` option, and the C streams created with contexts `SP_STREAMHOOK_WCI` and `SP_STREAMHOOK_BIN`).

The main task of the `wcx_open` hook is to associate the two WCX-processing functions with the stream, by storing them in the appropriate fields of the `SP_stream` data structure:

```
SP_WcxGetcHook *wcx_getc;
SP_WcxPutcHook *wcx_putc;
```

These fields are pointers to the functions performing the external decoding and encoding as described below. They are initialized to functions that truncate to 8 bits on output and zero-extend to 31 bits on input.

`SP_WcxGetcHook *wcx_getc`
: where `typedef int (SP_WcxGetcHook) (int first_byte, SP_stream *s, long *pbyte_count);`

This function is generally invoked whenever a character has to be read from a stream. Before invoking this function, however, a byte is read from the stream by SICStus Prolog itself. If the byte read is an ASCII character (its value is < 128), and `WCX_PRESERVES_ASCII` is in force, then the byte read is deemed to be the next character code, and `wcx_getc` is not invoked. Otherwise, `wcx_getc` is invoked with the byte and stream in question and is expected to return the next character code.

The `wcx_getc` function may need to read additional bytes from the stream, if `first byte` signifies the start of a multi-byte character. A byte may be read from the stream `s` in the following way:

```
byte = s->sgetc(s->user_handle);
```

The `wcx_getc` function is expected to increment its `*pbyte_count` argument by 1 for each such byte read.

The default `wcx_open` hook will install a `wcx_getc` function according to the `usage` argument. The three default external decoding functions are also available to users through the `SP_wcx_getc()` function (see Section 12.8 [WCX Utility Functions], page 314).

`SP_WcxPutcHook *wcx_putc`

where `typedef int (SP_WcxPutcHook) (int char_code, SP_stream *s, long *pbyte_count);`

This function is generally invoked whenever a character has to be written to a stream. However, if the character code to be written is an ASCII character (its value is < 128), and `WCX_PRESERVES_ASCII` is in force, then the code is written directly on the stream, and `wcx_putc` is not invoked. Otherwise, `wcx_putc` is invoked with the character code and stream in question and is expected to do whatever is needed to output the character code to the stream.

This will require outputting one or more bytes to the stream. A byte `byte` can be written to the stream `s` in the following way:

```
return_code = s->sputc(byte,s->user_handle);
```

The `wcx_putc` function is expected to return the return value of the last invocation of `s->sputc`, or -1 as an error code, if incapable of outputting the character code. The latter may be the case, for example, if the code to be output does not belong to the character code set in force. It is also expected to increment its `*pbyte_count` argument by 1 for each byte written.

The default `wcx_open` hook function will install a `wcx_putc` function according to the `usage` argument. The three default external encoding functions are also available to users through the `SP_wcx_putc()` function (see Section 12.8 [WCX Utility Functions], page 314).

In making a decision regarding the selection of these WCX-processing functions, the `context` and `option` arguments of the `wcx_open` hook can be used. The `option` argument is an atom. The `context` argument encodes the context of invocation. It is one of the following values

`SP_STREAMHOOK_STDIN`
`SP_STREAMHOOK_STDOUT`
`SP_STREAMHOOK_STDERR`
for the three standard streams,

`SP_STREAMHOOK_OPEN`
for streams created by `open/[3,4]`

`SP_STREAMHOOK_NULL`
for streams created by `open_null_stream/1`

`SP_STREAMHOOK_LIB`
for streams created from the libraries

`SP_STREAMHOOK_C, SP_STREAMHOOK_C+1, ...`
for streams created from C code via `SP_make_stream()`

The `option` argument comes from the user and it can carry some WCX-related information to be associated with the stream opened. For example, this can

be used to implement a scheme supporting multiple encodings, supplied on a stream-by-stream basis, as shown in the sample WCX-box (see Section 12.10 [A Sample WCX Box], page 316).

If the stream is opened from Prolog code, the `option` argument for this hook function is derived from the `wcx(Option)` option of `open/4` and `load_files/2`. If this option is not present, or the stream is opened using some other built-in predicate, then the value of the `wcx` Prolog flag will be passed on to the open hook.

If the stream is opened from C, via `SP_make_stream()`, then the option argument will be the value of the Prolog flag `wcx`.

There is also a variant of `SP_make_stream()`, called `SP_make_stream_context()`, which takes two additional arguments, the option and the context, to be passed on to the `wcx_open` hook (see Section 12.6 [WCX Foreign Interface], page 311).

The `wcx_open` hook can associate the information derived from `option` with the stream in question using a new field in the `SP_stream` data structure: `void *wcx_info`, initialized to `NULL`. If there is more information than can be stored in this field, or if the encoding to be implemented requires keeping track of a state, then the `wcx_open` hook should allocate sufficient amount of memory for storing the information and/or the state, using `SP_malloc()`, and deposit a pointer to that piece of memory in `wcx_info`.

The default `wcx_open` hook function sets the `wcx_getc` and `wcx_putc` stream fields to functions performing the external decoding and encoding according to `option`. Permitted values for `option` are the same as for the `SP_CTYPE` environment variable; see Section 12.4 [WCX Environment Variables], page 304. If the `option` argument is not supported then the `usage` argument of `SP_set_wcx_hooks()` will be used instead.

Note that, if `option` or `usage` is `euc` then there will be no attempt to translate between UNICODE code points and EUC code points. For this reason it is probably not meaningful to mix EUC with any of the other supported encodings. You should not rely on this behavior, future versions of SICStus may do a proper translation of EUC to and from UNICODE.

As an example, if `SP_CTYPE` is `utf8` you can load an ISO 8859/1 encoded prolog file using `load_files('file.pl', [wcx(iso_8859_1)]).`

`SP_WcxCloseHook *wcx_close`

where `typedef void (SP_WcxCloseHook) (SP_stream *s);`

This hook function is called whenever a stream is closed, for which the `wcx_open` hook was invoked at its creation. The argument `s` points to the stream being closed. It can be used to implement the closing activities related to external encoding, e.g. freeing any memory allocated in `wcx_open` hook.

The default `wcx_close` hook function does nothing.

`SP_WcxCharTypeHook *wcx_chartype`

where `typedef int (SP_WcxCharTypeHook) (int char_code);`

This function should be prepared to take any `char_code` >= 128 and return one of the following constants:

`CHT_LAYOUT_CHAR`
: for additional characters in the syntactic category *layout-char*,

`CHT_SMALL_LETTER`
: for additional characters in the syntactic category *small-letter*,

`CHT_CAPITAL_LETTER`
: for additional characters in the syntactic category *capital-letter*,

`CHT_SYMBOL_CHAR`
: for additional characters in the syntactic category *symbol-char*,

`CHT_SOLO_CHAR`
: for additional characters in the syntactic category *solo-char*.

Regarding the meaning of these syntactic categories, see Section 50.4 [Token String], page 790.

The value returned by this function is not expected to change over time, therefore, for efficiency reasons, its behavior is cached. The cache is cleared by `SP_set_wcx_hooks()`.

As a help in implementing this function, SICStus Prolog provides the function `SP_latin1_chartype()`, which returns the character type category for the codes 1..255 according to the ISO 8859/1 standard.

Note that if a character code >= 512 is categorized as a *layout-char*, and a character with this code occurs within an atom being written out in quoted form (e.g. using `writeq`) in native `sicstus` mode (as opposed to `iso` mode), then this code will be output as itself, rather than an octal escape sequence. This is because in `sicstus` mode escape sequences consist of at most 3 octal digits.

`SP_WcxConvHook *wcx_to_os`
: where `typedef char* (SP_WcxConvHook) (char *string, int context);`

This function is normally called each time SICStus Prolog wishes to communicate a string of possibly wide characters to the operating system. However, if the string in question consists of ASCII characters only, and `WCX_PRESERVES_ASCII` is in force, then `wcx_to_os` may not be called, and the original string may be passed to the operating system.

The first argument of `wcx_to_os` is a zero terminated string, using the internal encoding of SICStus Prolog, namely UTF-8. The function is expected to convert the string to a form required by the operating system, in the context described by the second, `context` argument, and to return the converted string. If no conversion is needed, it should simply return its first argument. Otherwise, the conversion should be done in a memory area controlled by this function (preferably a static buffer, reused each time the function is called).

The second argument specifies the context of conversion. It can be one of the following integer values:

`WCX_FILE` the string is a file-name,

`WCX_OPTION`
the string is a command, a command line argument or an environment variable,

`WCX_WINDOW_TITLE`
the string is a window title,

`WCX_C_CODE`
the string is a C identifier (used, e.g. in the glue code)

SICStus Prolog provides a utility function `SP_wci_code()`, see below, for obtaining a wide character code from a UTF-8 encoded string, which can be used to implement the `wcx_to_os` hook function.

The default of the `wcx_to_os` function depends on the `usage` argument of `SP_set_wcx_hooks()`. If the value of `usage` includes `WCX_OS_UTF8`, then the function does no conversion, as the operating system uses the same encoding as SICStus Prolog. If the value of `usage` includes `WCX_OS_8BIT`, then the function decodes the UTF-8 encoded string and converts this sequence of codes into a sequence of bytes by truncating each code to 8 bits.

Note that the default `wcx_to_os` functions ignore their `context` argument.

`SP_WcxConvHook *wcx_from_os`
where `typedef char* (SP_WcxConvHook) (char *string, int context);`

This function is called each time SICStus Prolog receives from the operating system a zero terminated sequence of bytes possibly encoding a wide character string. The function is expected to convert the byte sequence, if needed, to a string in the internal encoding of SICStus Prolog (UTF-8), and return the converted string. The conversion should be done in a memory area controlled by this function (preferably a static buffer, reused each time the function is called, but different from the buffer used in `wcx_to_os`).

The second argument specifies the context of conversion, as in the case of `wcx_to_os`.

SICStus Prolog provides a utility function `SP_code_wci()`, see below, for converting a character code (up to 31 bits) into UTF-8 encoding, which can be used to implement the `wcx_from_os` hook function.

The default of the `wcx_from_os` function depends on the `usage` argument of `SP_set_wcx_hooks()`. If the value of `usage` includes `WCX_OS_UTF8`, then the function does no conversion. If the value of `usage` includes `WCX_OS_8BIT`, then the function transforms the string of 8-bit codes into a UTF-8 encoded string.

Note that the default `wcx_from_os` functions ignore their `context` argument.

## 12.6 Summary of WCX Features in the Foreign Interface

All strings passed to foreign code, or expected from foreign code, which correspond to atoms or code-lists on the Prolog side, are in the internal encoding form, UTF-8. Note that this

is of concern only if the strings contain non-ASCII characters (e.g. accented letters in the `latin1` encoding).

Specifically, the C arguments corresponding to the following foreign specifications are passed and received as strings in the internal encoding:

```
+chars +string +string(N)
-chars -string -string(N)
[-chars] [-string] [-string(N)]
```

Similarly, the following functions defined in the foreign language interface expect and deliver internally encoded strings in their `char *` and `char **` arguments.

```
int SP_put_string(SP_term_ref t, char *name)
int SP_put_list_chars(SP_term_ref t, SP_term_ref tail, char *s)
int SP_put_list_n_chars(SP_term_ref t, SP_term_ref tail,
                        long n, char *s)
int SP_get_string(SP_term_ref t, char **name)
int SP_get_list_chars(SP_term_ref t, char **s)
int SP_get_list_n_chars(SP_term_ref t, SP_term_ref tail,
                        long n, long *w, char *s)
void SP_puts(char *string)
void SP_fputs(char *string, SP_stream *s)
int  SP_printf(char *format, ...)
int  SP_fprintf(SP_stream *s, char *format, ...)
SP_atom SP_atom_from_string(char *s)
char *SP_string_from_atom(SP_atom a)
SP_pred_ref SP_predicate(char *name_string,
                         long arity,
                         char *module_string)
int SP_load(char *filename)
int SP_restore(char *filename)
int SP_read_from_string()
```

The following functions deliver or accept wide character codes (up to 31 bits), and read or write them on the appropriate stream in the external encoding form:

```
int  SP_getc(void)
int  SP_fgetc(SP_stream *s)
void SP_putc(int c)
void SP_fputc(int c, SP_stream *s)
```

In the following function, strings are expected in the encoding format relevant for the operating system:

```
int SP_initialize(int argc, char **argv, char *boot_path)
```

Here, `argv` is an array of strings, as received from the operating system. These strings will be transformed to internal form using the `wcx_from_os(WCX_OPTION,...)` hook function.

Also `boot_path` is expected to be in the format file names are encoded, and `wcx_from_os(WCX_FILE,...)` will be used to decode it.

There are other functions in the foreign language interface that take or return strings. For these, the encoding is not relevant, either because the strings are guaranteed to be ASCII (`SP_error_message()`, `SP_put_number_chars()`, `SP_get_number_chars()`), or because the strings in question have no relation to Prolog code, as in `SP_on_fault()`, `SP_raise_fault()`.

The `SP_make_stream_context()` foreign language interface function is a variant of `SP_make_stream()` with two additional arguments: `option` and `context`. This extended form can be used to create streams from C with specified WCX features.

The `context` argument the `SP_make_stream_context()` function can be one of the following values:

```
SP_STREAMHOOK_WCI
SP_STREAMHOOK_BIN
SP_STREAMHOOK_C, SP_STREAMHOOK_C+1, ...
```

`SP_STREAMHOOK_WCI` means that input and output on the given stream should be performed using the SICStus internal encoding scheme, UTF-8, while `SP_STREAMHOOK_BIN` indicates that no encoding should be applied (binary files).

In the last two cases the `wcx_open` hook will not be called. In all other cases `SP_make_stream_context()` will call the `wcx_open` hook function, with the `option` and `context` supplied to it. The `option` argument of `SP_make_stream_context()` can be the standard representation of a Prolog atom, or the constant `SP_WCX_FLAG`, which prescribes that the value of the Prolog flag `wcx` should be supplied to the open hook function.

The user may add further context constants for his own use, with values greater than `SP_STREAMHOOK_C`.

## 12.7 Summary of Wcx-Related Features in the Libraries

Some libraries are affected by the introduction of wide characters.

When using `library(jasper)` SICStus Prolog properly receives non-ASCII strings from Java, and similarly, non-ASCII strings can be correctly passed to Java. This is in contrast with versions of SICStus Prolog earlier then 3.8 (i.e. without the WCX extensions), where, for example, strings containing non-ASCII characters passed from Java to Prolog resulted in a UTF-8 encoded atom or code-list on the Prolog side.

Several predicates in libraries `sockets`, `system` and `tcltk` create streams. These now use the `SP_make_stream_context()` function, with `SP_WCX_FLAG` as the option and the relevant `SP_STREAMHOOK_LIB` constant as the context argument. For example, if the WCX mode is set using environment variables (see Section 12.4 [WCX Environment Variables], page 304),

then this implies that the selected encoding will be used for streams created in the libraries. E.g. if the `SP_CTYPE` environment variable is set to `utf8`, then the output of non-ASCII characters to a socket stream will be done using UTF-8 encoding. If a `wcx_open` hook is supplied, then the user is free to select a different encoding for the libraries, as he is informed about the stream being opened by a library through the context argument of the `wcx_open` function.

Some of the arguments of library predicates contain atoms that are file names, environment variable names, commands, etc. If these contain non-ASCII characters, then they will be passed to the appropriate operating system function following a conversion to the system encoding in force (`wcx_to_os` hook), and similarly such atoms coming from the OS functions undergo a conversion from system encoding (`wcx_from_os`). Note however that host names (e.g. in `system:host_name(S)`) are assumed to be consisting of ASCII characters only.

## 12.8 WCX Related Utility Functions

The default functions for reading in and writing out character codes using one of the three supported encodings are available through

```
SP_WcxGetcHook *SP_wcx_getc(int usage);
SP_WcxPutcHook *SP_wcx_putc(int usage);
```

These functions return the decoding/encoding functions appropriate for `usage`, where the latter is one of the constants `WCX_USE_LATIN1`, `WCX_USE_UTF8`, `WCX_USE_EUC`.

The following utility functions may be useful when dealing with wide characters in internal encoding (WCI). These functions are modeled after multibyte character handling functions of Solaris.

`int SP_wci_code(int *pcode, char *wci);`

`SP_wci_code()` determines the number of bytes that comprise the internally encoded character pointed to by `wci`. Also, if `pcode` is not a null pointer, `SP_wci_code()` converts the internally encoded character to a wide character code and places the result in the object pointed to by `pcode`. (The value of the wide character corresponding to the null character is zero.) At most `WCI_MAX_BYTES` bytes will be examined, starting at the byte pointed to by `wci`.

If `wci` is a null pointer, `SP_wci_code()` simply returns 0. If `wci` is not a null pointer, then, if `wci` points to the null character, `SP_wci_code()` returns 0; if the next bytes form a valid internally encoded character, `SP_wci_code()` returns the number of bytes that comprise the internal encoding; otherwise `wci` does not point to a valid internally encoded character and `SP_wci_code()` returns the negated length of the invalid byte sequence. This latter case can not happen, if `wci` points to the beginning of a Prolog atom string, or to a position within such a string reached by repeated stepping over correctly encoded wide characters.

`WCI_MAX_BYTES`
: `WCI_MAX_BYTES` is a constant defined by SICStus Prolog showing the maximal length (in bytes) of the internal encoding of a single character code. (As the internal encoding is UTF-8, this constant has the value 6).

`int SP_wci_len(char *wci);`
: `SP_wci_len()` determines the number of bytes comprising the multi-byte character pointed to by `wci`. It is equivalent to:

```
SP_wci_code((int *)0, wci);
```

`int SP_code_wci(char *wci, int code);`
: `SP_code_wci()` determines the number of bytes needed to represent the internal encoding of the character `code`, and, if `wci` is not a null pointer, stores the internal encoding in the array pointed to by `wci`. At most `WCI_MAX_BYTES` bytes are stored.

  `SP_code_wci()` returns -1 if the value of `code` is outside the wide character code range; otherwise it returns the number of bytes that comprise the internal encoding of `code`.

The following functions give access to the default character type mapping and the currently selected operating system encoding/decoding functions.

`int SP_latin1_chartype(int char_code);`
: `SP_latin1_chartype` returns the character type category of the character code `char_code`, according to the ISO 8859/1 code-set. The `char_code` value is assumed to be in the 1..255 range.

`char* SP_to_os(char *string, int context)`
`char* SP_from_os(char *string, int context)`
: These functions simply invoke the `wcx_to_os()` and `wcx_from_os()` hook functions, respectively. These are useful in foreign functions that handle strings passed to/from the operating system, such as file names, options, etc.

## 12.9 Representation of EUC Wide Characters

As opposed to UNICODE, the definition of EUC specifies only the external representation. The actual wide character codes assigned to the multibyte characters are not specified. UNIX systems supporting EUC have their own C data type, `wchar_t`, which stores a wide character, but the mapping between this type and the external representation is not standardized.

We have decided to use a custom made mapping from the EUC encoding to the character code set, as opposed to using the UNIX type `wchar_t`. This decision was made so that the code set is machine independent and results in a compact representation of atoms.

EUC consists of four sub-code-sets, three of which can have multibyte external representation. Sub-code-set 0 consists of ASCII characters and is mapped one-to-one to codes 0..127. Sub-code-set 1 has an external representation of one to three bytes in the range 128-255, the length determined by the locale. Sub-code-sets 2 and 3 are similar, but their external representation is started by a so called single shift character code, known as SS2 and SS3, respectively. The following table shows the mapping from the EUC external encoding to SICStus Prolog character codes.

```
Sub-
code-set  External encoding                 Character code (binary)

 0        0xxxxxxx                           00000000 00000000 0xxxxxxx

 1        1xxxxxxx                           00000000 00000000 1xxxxxxx
          1xxxxxxx 1yyyyyyy                  00000000 xxxxxxx0 1yyyyyyy
          1xxxxxxx 1yyyyyyy 1zzzzzzzz        0xxxxxxx yyyyyyy0 1zzzzzzz

 2        SS2 1xxxxxxx                       00000000 00000001 0xxxxxxx
          SS2 1xxxxxxx 1yyyyyyy              00000000 xxxxxxx1 0yyyyyyy
          SS2 1xxxxxxx 1yyyyyyy 1zzzzzzzz    0xxxxxxx yyyyyyy1 0zzzzzzz

 3        SS3 1xxxxxxx                       00000000 00000001 1xxxxxxx
          SS3 1xxxxxxx 1yyyyyyy              00000000 xxxxxxx1 1yyyyyyy
          SS3 1xxxxxxx 1yyyyyyy 1zzzzzzzz    0xxxxxxx yyyyyyy1 1zzzzzzz
```

For sub-code-sets other than 0, the sub-code-set length indicated by the locale determines which of three mappings are used (but see below the `SP_CSETLEN` environment variable). When converting SICStus Prolog character codes to EUC on output, we ignore bits that have no significance in the mapping selected by the locale.

The byte lengths associated with the EUC sub-code-sets are determined by using the `csetlen()` function. If this function is not available in the system configuration used, then Japanese Solaris lengths are assumed, namely 2, 1, 2 for sub-code-sets 1, 2, and 3, respectively (the lengths exclude the single shift character).

To allow experimentation with sub-code-sets differing from the locale, the sub-code-set length values can be overridden by setting the `SP_CSETLEN` environment variable to *xyz*, where *x*, *y*, and *z* are digits in the range 1..3. Such a setting will cause the sub-code-sets 1, 2, 3 to have *x*, *y*, and *z* associated with them as their byte lengths.

## 12.10 A Sample Wide Character Extension (WCX) Box

This example implements a WCX box supporting the use of four external encodings within the same SICStus Prolog invocation: ISO Latin1, ISO Latin2 (ISO 8859/2), UNICODE, and EUC. The code is included in the distribution as `library(wcx_example)`.

The default encoding functions supplied in SICStus Prolog deal with a single encoding only. However, the interface does allow the implementation of WCX boxes supporting different encodings for different streams.

A basic assumption in SICStus Prolog is that there is a single character set. If we are to support multiple encodings we have to map them into a single character set. For example, the single-byte character sets ISO Latin1 and ISO Latin2 can be easily mapped to the Unicode character set. On the other hand there does not seem to be a simple mapping of the whole of EUC character set to UNICODE or the other way round.

Therefore, in this example, we use a *composite* character set, which covers both EUC and Unicode, but does not deal with unifying the character codes of characters appearing in both character sets, except for the case of ASCII characters.

The figure below depicts the structure of the composite character set of the sample WCX box.

```
.------------------.
|  EUC             |
|                  |
|                  |
|        .++++++++++++++++++++++++++.
|        +  ASCII  *  LATIN1  |      +
.--------+=========*==========       +
         + LATIN2  *                +
         +**********                +
         +                          +
         +                          +
         +                 UNICODE  +
         .++++++++++++++++++++++++++.
```

This character code set uses character codes up to 24 bit wide:

`0 =< code =< 2^16-1`
: A UNICODE character with the given code, including ASCII.

`code = 2^16 + euc_code`
: A non-ASCII EUC character with code `euc_code` (as described in Section 12.9 [Representation of EUC Wide Characters], page 315).

The four external encodings supported by the sample WCX box can be specified on a stream-by-stream basis, by supplying a `wcx(`*`ENC`*`)` option to `open/4`, where *`ENC`* is one of the atoms `latin1`, `latin2`, `unicode` or `euc`.

The mapping of these external encodings to the composite character code set is done in the following way:

latin1 is mapped one-to-one to UNICODE codes 0x0..0xff

latin2 is mapped to UNICODE codes 0x0..0x02dd, using an appropriate conversion table for the non-ASCII part.

unicode assumes UTF-8 external encoding and maps one-to-one to the 0x0..0xffff UNICODE range.

euc assumes EUC external encoding and maps sub-code-set 0 to UNICODE range 0x0..0x7f, and sub-code-sets 1-3 to internal codes above 0xffff, as shown above.

Note that in order to support this composite character code set, we had to give up the ability to read and write UTF-8-encoded files with character codes above 0xffff (which is possible using the built-in `utf8` WCX-mode of SICStus Prolog, (see Section 12.3 [Prolog Level WCX Features], page 303)).

The example uses a primitive character-type mapping: characters in the 0x80-0xff range are classified according to the `latin1` encoding, above that range all characters are considered *small-letter*s. However, as an example of re-classification, code 0xa1 (inverted exclamation mark) is categorized as *solo-char*.

The default system encoding is used (truncate to 8-bits).

The box has to be initialized by calling the C function `wcx_setup()`, which first reads the environment variable `WCX_TYPE`, and uses its value as the default encoding. It then calls `SP_set_wcx_hooks()`, and initializes its own conversion tables. In a runtime system `wcx_setup()` should be called before `SP_initialize()`, so that it effects the standard streams created there. The second phase of initialization, `wcx_init_atoms()`, has to be called after `SP_initialize()`, to set up variables storing the atoms naming the external encodings.

In a development system the two initialization phases can be put together, this is implemented as `wcx_init()`, and is declared to be a foreign entry point in `wcx.pl`.

On any subsequent creation of a stream, the hook function `my_wcx_open()` is called. This sets the wide character get and put function pointers in the stream according to the atom supplied in the `wcx(...)` option, or according to the value of the Prolog flag `wcx`.

Within the put function it may happen that a character code is to be output, which the given encoding cannot accommodate (a non-ASCII Unicode character on an EUC stream or vice-versa). No bytes are output in such a case and -1 is returned as an error code.

There is an additional foreign C function implemented in the sample WCX box: `wcx_set_encoding()`, available from Prolog as `set_encoding/2`. This allows changing the encoding of an already open stream. This is used primarily for standard input-output streams, while experimenting with the box.

# 13 Writing Efficient Programs

## 13.1 Overview

This chapter gives a number of tips on how to organize your programs for increased efficiency. A lot of clarity and efficiency is gained by sticking to a few basic rules. This list is necessarily very incomplete. The reader is referred to textbooks such as [O'Keefe 90] for a thorough exposition of the elements of Prolog programming style and techniques.

- Don't write code in the first place if there is a library predicate that will do the job.
- Write clauses representing base case before clauses representing recursive cases.
- Input arguments before output arguments in clause heads and goals.
- Use pure data structures instead of database changes.
- Use cuts sparingly, and *only* at proper places (see Section 4.5 [Cut], page 52). A cut should be placed at the exact point that it is known that the current choice is the correct one: no sooner, no later.
- Make cuts as local in their effect as possible. If a predicate is intended to be determinate, define *it* as such; do not rely on its callers to prevent unintended backtracking.
- Binding output arguments before a cut is a common source of programming errors, so don't do it.
- Replace cuts by if-then-else constructs if the test is simple enough (see Section 13.8 [Conditionals and Disjunction], page 336).
- Use disjunctions sparingly, *always* put parentheses around them, *never* put parentheses around the individual disjuncts, *never* put the '`;`' at the end of a line.
- Write the clauses of a predicate so that they discriminate on the principal functor of the first argument (see below). For maximum efficiency, avoid "defaulty" programming ("catch-all" clauses).
- Don't use lists (`[...]`), "round lists" (`(...)`), or braces (`{...}`) to represent compound terms, or "tuples", of some fixed arity. The name of a compound term comes for free.

## 13.2 The Cut

### 13.2.1 Overview

One of the more difficult things to master when learning Prolog is the proper use of the cut. Often, when beginners find unexpected backtracking occurring in their programs, they try to prevent it by inserting cuts in a rather random fashion. This makes the programs harder to understand and sometimes stops them from working.

During program development, each predicate in a program should be considered *independently* to determine whether or not it should be able to succeed more than once. In most applications, many predicates should at most succeed only once; that is, they should be determinate. Having decided that a predicate should be determinate, it should be verified that, in fact, it is. The debugger can help in verifying that a predicate is determinate (see Section 13.5 [The Determinacy Checker], page 325).

### 13.2.2 Making Predicates Determinate

Consider the following predicate, which calculates the factorial of a number:

```
fac(0, 1).
fac(N, X) :-
        N1 is N - 1,
        fac(N1, Y),
        X is N * Y.
```

The factorial of 5 can be found by typing:

```
| ?- fac(5, X).

X = 120
```

However, backtracking into the above predicate by typing a semicolon at this point, causes an infinite loop because the system starts attempting to satisfy the goals `fac(-1, X).`, `fac(-2, X).`, etc. The problem is that there are two clauses that match the goal `fac(0, F).`, but the effect of the second clause on backtracking has not been taken into account. There are at least three possible ways of fixing this:

1. Efficient solution: rewrite the first clause as

   ```
   fac(0,1) :- !.
   ```

   Adding the cut essentially makes the first solution the only one for the factorial of 0 and hence solves the immediate problem. This solution is space-efficient because as soon as Prolog encounters the cut, it knows that the predicate is determinate. Thus, when it tries the second clause, it can throw away the information it would otherwise need in order to backtrack to this point. Unfortunately, if this solution is implemented, typing '`fac(-1, X)`' still generates an infinite search.
2. Robust solution: rewrite the second clause as

   ```
   fac(N, X) :-
           N > 0,
           N1 is N - 1,
           fac(N1, Y),
           X is N * Y.
   ```

   This also solves the problem, but it is a more robust solution because this way it is impossible to get into an infinite loop.

This solution makes the predicate *logically* determinate—there is only one possible clause for any input—but the Prolog system is unable to detect this and must waste space for backtracking information. The space-efficiency point is more important than it may at first seem; if `fac/2` is called from another determinate predicate, and if the cut is omitted, Prolog cannot detect the fact that `fac/2` is determinate. Therefore, it will not be able to detect the fact that the calling predicate is determinate, and space will be wasted for the calling predicate as well as for `fac/2` itself. This argument applies again if the calling predicate is itself called by a determinate predicate, and so on, so that the cost of an omitted cut can be very high in certain circumstances.

3. Preferred solution: rewrite the entire predicate as the single clause

```
fac(N, X) :-
    (   N > 0 ->
            N1 is N - 1,
            fac(N1, Y),
            X is N * Y
    ;   N =:= 0 ->
            X = 1
    ).
```

This solution is as robust as solution 2, and more efficient than solution 1, since it exploits conditionals with arithmetic tests (see Section 13.8 [Conditionals and Disjunction], page 336 for more information on optimization using conditionals).

### 13.2.3 Placement of Cuts

Programs can often be made more readable by the placing of cuts as early as possible in clauses. For example, consider the predicate `p/0` defined by

```
p :- a, b, !, c, d.
p :- e, f.
```

Suppose that `b/0` is a test that determines which clause of `p/0` applies; `a/0` may or may not be a test, but `c/0` and `d/0` are not supposed to fail under any circumstances. A cut is most appropriately placed after the call to `b/0`. If in fact `a/0` is the test and `b/0` is not supposed to fail, then it would be much clearer to move the cut before the call to `b/0`.

A tool to aid in determinacy checking is included in the distribution. It is described in depth in Section 13.5 [The Determinacy Checker], page 325.

### 13.2.4 Terminating a Backtracking Loop

Cut is also commonly used in conjunction with the generate-and-test programming paradigm. For example, consider the predicate `find_solution/1` defined by

```
find_solution(X) :-
        candidate_solution(X),
        test_solution(X),
        !.
```

where `candidate_solution/1` generates possible answers on backtracking. The intent is to stop generating candidates as soon as one is found that satisfies `test_solution/1`. If the cut were omitted, a future failure could cause backtracking into this clause and restart the generation of candidate solutions. A similar example is shown below:

```
process_file(F) :-
        see(F),
        repeat,
            read(X),
            process_and_fail(X),
        !,
        seen.

process_and_fail(end_of_file) :- !.
process_and_fail(X) :-
        process(X),
        fail.
```

The cut in `process_file/1` is another example of terminating a generate-and-test loop. In general, a cut should always be placed after a `repeat/0` so that the backtracking loop is clearly terminated. If the cut were omitted in this case, on later backtracking Prolog might try to read another term after the end of the file had been reached.

The cut in `process_and_fail/1` might be considered unnecessary because, assuming the call shown is the only call to it, the cut in `process_file/1` ensures that backtracking into `process_and_fail/1` can never happen. While this is true, it is also a good safeguard to include a cut in `process_and_fail/1` because someone may unwittingly change `process_file/1` in the future.

## 13.3 Indexing

### 13.3.1 Overview

In SICStus Prolog, predicates are indexed on their first arguments. This means that when a predicate is called with an instantiated first argument, a hash table is used to gain fast access to only those clauses having a first argument with the same primary functor as the one in the predicate call. If the first argument is atomic, only clauses with a matching first argument are accessed. Indexes are maintained automatically by the built-in predicates manipulating the Prolog database (for example, `assert/1`, `retract/1`, and `compile/1`.

Keeping this feature in mind when writing programs can help speed their execution. Some hints for program structuring that will best use the indexing facility are given below. Note that dynamic predicates as well as static predicates are indexed. The programming hints given in this section apply equally to static and dynamic code.

### 13.3.2 Data Tables

The major advantage of indexing is that it provides fast access to tables of data. For example, a table of employee records might be represented as shown below in order to gain fast access to the records by employee name:

```
%  employee(LastName,FirstNames,Department,Salary,DateOfBirth)

employee('Smith', ['John'], sales,       20000, 1-1-59).
employee('Jones', ['Mary'], engineering, 30000, 5-28-56).
...
```

If fast access to the data via department is also desired, the data can be organized little differently. The employee records can be indexed by some unique identifier, such as employee number, and additional tables can be created to facilitate access to this table, as shown in the example below. For example,

```
%  employee(Id,LastName,FirstNames,Department,Salary,DateOfBirth)

employee(1000000, 'Smith', ['John'], sales,       20000, 1-1-59).
employee(1000020, 'Jones', ['Mary'], engineering, 30000, 5-28-56).
...

%  employee_name(LastName,EmpId)

employee_name('Smith', 1000000).
employee_name('Jones', 1000020).
...

%  department_member(Department,EmpId)

department_member(sales,       1000000).
department_member(engineering, 1000020).
...
```

Indexing would now allow fast access to the records of every employee named Smith, and these could then be backtracked through looking for John Smith. For example:

```
| ?- employee_name('Smith', Id),
     employee(Id, 'Smith', ['John'], Dept, Sal, DoB).
```

Similarly, all the members of the engineering department born since 1965 could be efficiently found like this:

```
| ?- department_member(engineering, Id),
     employee(Id, LN, FN, engineering, _, M-D-Y),
     Y > 65.
```

### 13.3.3 Determinacy Detection

The other advantage of indexing is that it often makes possible early detection of determinacy, even if cuts are not included in the program. For example, consider the following simple predicate, which joins two lists together:

```
concat([], L, L).
concat([X|L1], L2, [X|L3]) :- concat(L1, L2, L3).
```

If this predicate is called with an instantiated first argument, the first argument indexing of SICStus Prolog will recognize that the call is determinate—only one of the two clauses for `concat/3` can possibly apply. Thus, the Prolog system knows it does not have to store backtracking information for the call. This significantly reduces memory use and execution time.

Determinacy detection can also reduce the number of cuts in predicates. In the above example, if there was no indexing, a cut would not strictly be needed in the first clause as long as the predicate was always to be called with the first argument instantiated. If the first clause matched, then the second clause could not possibly match; discovery of this fact, however, would be postponed until backtracking. The programmer might thus be tempted to use a cut in the first clause to signal determinacy and recover space for backtracking information as early as possible.

With indexing, if the example predicate is always called with its first argument instantiated, backtracking information is *never* stored. This gives substantial performance improvements over using a cut rather than indexing to force determinacy. At the same time greater flexibility is maintained: the predicate can now be used in a nondeterminate fashion as well, as in

```
| ?- concat(L1, L2, [a,b,c,d]).
```

which will generate on backtracking all the possible partitions of the list `[a,b,c,d]` on backtracking. If a cut had been used in the first clause, this would not work.

## 13.4 Last Clause Determinacy Detection

Even if the determinacy detection made possible by indexing is unavailable to a predicate call, SICStus Prolog still can detect determinacy before determinate exit from the predicate. Space for backtracking information can thus be recovered as early as possible, reducing

memory requirements and increasing performance. For instance, the predicate `member/2` (found in the SICStus Prolog library) could be defined by:

```
member(Element, [Element|_]).
member(Element, [_|Rest]) :-
        member(Element, Rest).
```

`member/2` might be called with an instantiated first argument in order to check for membership of the argument in a list, which is passed as a second argument, as in

```
| ?- member(4, [1,2,3,4]).
```

The first arguments of both clauses of `member/2` are variables, so first argument indexing cannot be used. However, determinacy can still be detected before determinate exit from the predicate. This is because on entry to the last clause of a nondeterminate predicate, a call becomes effectively determinate; it can tell that it has no more clauses to backtrack to. Thus, backtracking information is no longer needed, and its space can be reclaimed. In the example, each time a call fails to match the first clause and backtracks to the second (last) clause, backtracking information for the call is automatically deleted.

Because of last clause determinacy detection, a cut is never needed as the first subgoal in the last clause of a predicate. Backtracking information will have been deleted before a cut in the last clause is executed, so the cut will have no effect except to waste time.

Note that last clause determinacy detection is exploited by dynamic code as well as static code in SICStus Prolog.

## 13.5 The Determinacy Checker

The determinacy checker can help you spot unwanted nondeterminacy in your programs. This tool examines your program source code and points out places where nondeterminacy may arise. It is not in general possible to find exactly which parts of a program will be nondeterminate without actually running the program, but this tool can find most unwanted nondeterminacy. Unintended nondeterminacy should be eradicated because

1. it may give you wrong answers on backtracking
2. it may cause a lot of memory to be wasted

### 13.5.1 Using the Determinacy Checker

There are two different ways to use the determinacy checker, either as a stand-alone tool, or during compilation. You may use it whichever way fits best with the way you work. Either way, it will discover the same nondeterminacy in your program.

The stand-alone determinacy checker is called `spdet`, and is run from the shell prompt, specifying the names of the Prolog source files you wish to check. You may omit the '`.pl`' suffix if you like.

```
% spdet [-r] [-d] [-D] [-i ifile] fspec...
```

The `spdet` tool is automatically installed when you install SICStus Prolog. The tool takes a number of options:

'`-r`' Process files recursively, fully checking the specified files and all the files they load.

'`-d`' Print out declarations that should be added.

'`-D`' Print out all needed declarations.

'`-i` *`ifile`*' An initialization file, which is loaded before processing begins.

The determinacy checker can also be integrated into the compilation process, so that you receive warnings about unwanted nondeterminacy along with warnings about singleton variables or discontiguous clauses. To make this happen, simply insert the line

```
:- load_files(library(detcheck),
              [when(compile_time), if(changed)]).
```

Once this line is added, every time that file is loaded, it will be checked for unwanted nondeterminacy.

### 13.5.2 Declaring Nondeterminacy

Some predicates are intended to be nondeterminate. By declaring intended nondeterminacy, you avoid warnings about predicates you intend to be nondeterminate. Equally importantly, you also inform the determinacy checker about nondeterminate predicates. It uses this information to identify unwanted nondeterminacy.

Nondeterminacy is declared by putting a declaration of the form

```
:- nondet name/arity.
```

in your source file. This is similar to a `dynamic` or `discontiguous` declaration. You may have multiple `nondet` declarations, and a single declaration may mention several predicates, separating them by commas.

Similarly, a predicate $P/N$ may be classified as nondeterminate by the checker, whereas in reality it is determinate. This may happen e.g. if $P/N$ calls a dynamic predicate that in reality never has more than one clause. To prevent false alarms asiring from this, you can inform the checker about determinate predicates by declarations of the form:

```
:- det name/arity.
```

If you wish to include `det` and `nondet` declarations in your file and you plan to use the stand-alone determinacy checker, you must include the line

```
:- load_files(library(nondetdecl),
              [when(compile_time), if(changed)]).
```

near the top of each file that contains such declarations. If you use the integrated determinacy checker, you do not need (and should not have) this line.

### 13.5.3 Checker Output

The output of the determinacy checker is quite simple. For each clause containing unexpected nondeterminacy, a single line is printed showing the module, name, arity, and clause number (counting from 1). The form of the information is:

```
* Non-determinate: module:name/arity (clause number)
```

A second line for each nondeterminate clause indicates the cause of the nondeterminacy. The recognized causes are:

- The clause contains a disjunction that is not forced to be determinate with a cut or by ending the clause with a call to `fail/0` or `raise_exception/1`.
- The clause calls a nondeterminate predicate. In this case the predicate is named.
- There is a later clause for the same predicate whose first argument has the same principal functor (or one of the two clauses has a variable for the first argument), and this clause does not contain a cut or end with a call to `fail/0` or `raise_exception/1`. In this case, the clause number of the other clause is mentioned.
- If the predicate is multifile, clause indexing is not considered sufficient to ensure determinacy. This is because other clauses may be added to the predicate in other files, so the determinacy checker cannot be sure it has seen all the clauses for the predicate. It is good practice to include a cut (or fail) in every clause of a multifile predicate.

The determinacy checker also occasionally prints warnings when declarations are made too late in the file or not at all. For example, if you include a `dynamic`, `nondet`, or `discontiguous` declaration for a predicate after some clauses for that predicate, or if you put a `dynamic` or `nondet` declaration for a predicate after a clause that includes a call to that predicate, the determinacy checker may have missed some nondeterminacy in your program. The checker also detects undeclared discontiguous predicates, which may also have undetected nondeterminacy. Finally, the checker looks for goals in your program that indicate that predicates are dynamic; if no `dynamic` declaration for those predicates exists, you will be warned.

These warnings take the following form:

```
! warning: predicate module:name/arity is property.
!          Some nondeterminacy may have been missed.
!          Add (or move) the directive
!              :- property module:name/arity.
!          near the top of this file.
```

### 13.5.4 Example

Here is an example file:

```
:- load_files(library(detcheck),
              [when(compile_time), if(changed)]).

parent(abe, rob).
parent(abe, sam).
parent(betty, rob).
parent(betty, sam).

is_parent(Parent) :- parent(Parent, _).
```

The determinacy checker notices that the first arguments of clauses 1 and 2 have the same principal functor, and similarly for clauses 3 and 4. It reports:

```
* Non-determinate: user:parent/2 (clause 1)
*     Indexing cannot distinguish this from clause 2.
* Non-determinate: user:parent/2 (clause 3)
*     Indexing cannot distinguish this from clause 4.
```

In fact, `parent/2` should be nondeterminate, so we should add the declaration

```
:- nondet parent/2.
```

before the clauses for `parent/2`. If run again after modifying file, the determinacy checker prints:

```
* Non-determinate: user:is_parent/1 (clause 1)
*     This clause calls user:parent/2, which may be nondeterminate.
```

It no longer complains about `parent/2` being nondeterminate, since this is declared. But now it notices that because `parent/2` is nondeterminate, then so is `is_parent/1`.

### 13.5.5 Options

When run from the command line, the determinacy checker has a few options to control its workings.

The '`-r`' option specifies that the checker should recursively check files in such a way that it finds nondeterminacy caused by calls to other nondeterminate predicates, whether they are declared so or not. Also, predicates that appear to determinate will be treated as such, whether declared `nondet` or not. This option is quite useful when first running the checker on a file, as it will find all predicates that should be either made determinate or declared `nondet` at once. Without this option, each time a `nondet` declaration is added, the checker may find previously unnoticed nondeterminacy.

For example, if the original example above, without any `nondet` declarations, were checked with the '`-r`' option, the output would be:

```
* Non-determinate: user:parent/2 (clause 1)
*     Indexing cannot distinguish this from clause 2.
* Non-determinate: user:parent/2 (clause 3)
*     Indexing cannot distinguish this from clause 4.
* Non-determinate: user:is_parent/1 (clause 1)
*     Calls nondet predicate user:parent/2.
```

The '`-d`' option causes the tool to print out the needed `nondet` declarations. These can be readily pasted into the source files. Note that it only prints the `nondet` declarations that are not already present in the files. However, these declarations should not be pasted into your code without each one first being checked to see if the reported nondeterminacy is intended.

The '`-D`' option is like '`-d`', except that it prints out all `nondet` declarations that should appear, whether they are already in the file or not. This is useful if you prefer to replace all old `nondet` declarations with new ones.

Your code will probably rely on operator declarations and possibly term expansion. The determinacy checker handles this in much the same way as `fcompile/1`: you must supply an initialization file, using the '`-i`' *ifile* option. Contrary to `fcompile/1`, `spdet` will execute any operator declaration it encounters.

### 13.5.6 What is Detected

As mentioned earlier, it is not in general possible to find exactly which places in a program will lead to nondeterminacy. The determinacy checker gives predicates the benefit of the doubt: when it's possible that a predicate will be determinate, it will not be reported. The checker will only report places in your program that will be nondeterminate regardless of which arguments are bound. Despite this, the checker catches most unwanted nondeterminacy in practice.

The determinacy checker looks for the following sources of nondeterminacy:

- Multiple clauses that can't be distinguished by the principal functor of the first arguments, and are not made determinate with an explicit cut, `fail/0`, `false/0`, or `raise_exception/1`. First argument indexing is not considered for multifile predi-

cates, because another file may have a clause for this predicate with the same principal functor of its first argument.

- A clause with a disjunction not forced to be determinate by a cut, `fail/0`, `false/0`, or `raise_exception/1` in each arm of the disjunction but the last, or where the whole disjunction is followed by a cut, `fail/0`, `false/0`, or `raise_exception/1`.
- A clause that calls something known to be nondeterminate, other than when it is followed by a cut, `fail/0`, `false/0`, or `raise_exception/1`, or where it appears in the condition of an if-then-else construct. Known nondeterminate predicates include hooks and those declared nondeterminate or dynamic (since they can be modified, dynamic predicates are assumed to be nondeterminate), plus the following built-in predicates:
  - `absolute_file_name/3`, when the options list contains `solutions(all)`.
  - `atom_concat/3`, when the first two arguments are variables not appearing earlier in the clause (including the clause head).
  - `bagof/3`, when the second argument contains any variables not appearing earlier in the clause (including the clause head).
  - `clause/[2,3]`.
  - `current_op/3`, when any argument contains any variables not appearing earlier in the clause (including the clause head).
  - `current_key/2`, when the second argument contains any variables not appearing earlier in the clause (including the clause head).
  - `current_predicate/2`, when the second argument contains any variables not appearing earlier in the clause (including the clause head).
  - `length/2`, when both arguments are variables not appearing earlier in the clause (including the clause head).
  - `predicate_property/2`, when either argument contains any variables not appearing earlier in the clause (including the clause head).
  - `recorded/3`.
  - `repeat/0`.
  - `retract/1`.
  - `setof/3`, when the second argument contains any variables not appearing earlier in the clause (including the clause head).
  - `source_file/[1,2]` when the last argument contains any variables not appearing earlier in the clause (including the clause head).
  - `sub_atom/5`, when at least two of the second, fourth and fifth arguments are variables not appearing earlier in the clause (including the clause head).

## 13.6 Last Call Optimization

Another important efficiency feature of SICStus Prolog is last call optimization. This is a space optimization technique, which applies when a predicate is determinate at the point where it is about to call the last goal in the body of a clause. For example,

```
% for(Int, Lower, Upper)
% Lower and Upper should be integers such that Lower =< Upper.
% Int should be uninstantiated; it will be bound successively on
% backtracking to Lower, Lower+1, ... Upper.

for(Int, Int, _Upper).
for(Int, Lower, Upper) :-
        Lower < Upper,
        Next is Lower + 1,
        for(Int, Next, Upper).
```

This predicate is determinate at the point where the recursive call is about to be made, since this is the last clause and the preceding goals `(<)/2` and `is/2`) are determinate. Thus last call optimization can be applied; effectively, the stack space being used for the current predicate call is reclaimed before the recursive call is made. This means that this predicate uses only a constant amount of space, no matter how deep the recursion.

### 13.6.1 Accumulating Parameters

To take best advantage of this feature, make sure that goals in recursive predicates are determinate, and whenever possible put the recursive call at the end of the predicate.

This isn't always possible, but often can be done through the use of *accumulating parameters*. An accumulating parameter is an added argument to a predicate that builds up the result as computation proceeds. For example, in our factorial example, the last goal in the body of the recursive case is `is/2`, not the recursive call to `fac/2`.

```
fac(N, X) :-
    (   N > 0 ->
            N1 is N - 1,
            fac(N1, Y),
            X is N * Y
    ;   N =:= 0 ->
            X = 1
    ).
```

This can be corrected by adding another argument to `fac/2` to accumulate the factorial.

```
fac(N, X) :- fac(N, 1, X).

%  fac(+N, +M, -X)
%  X is M * the factorial of N.

fac(N, M, X) :-
    (   N > 0 ->
            N1 is N - 1,
            M1 is N * M,
            fac(N1, M1, X)
    ;   N =:= 0 ->
            X = M
    ).
```

Here, we do the multiplication before calling `fac/3` recursively. Note that we supply the base case, 1, at the start of the computation, and that we are multiplying by decreasing numbers. In the earlier version, `fac/2`, we multiply after the recursive call, and so we multiply by increasing numbers. Effectively, the new version builds the result backwards. This is correct because multiplication is associative.

### 13.6.2 Accumulating Lists

This technique becomes much more important when extended to lists, as in this case it can save much building of unneeded lists through unnecessary calls to append sublists together. For example, the naive way to reverse a list is:

```
nreverse([], []).
nreverse([H|T], L) :-
        nreverse(T, L1),
        append(L1, [H], L).
```

This is very wasteful, since each call to `append/3` copies the initial part of the list, and adds one element to it. Fortunately, this can be very easily rewritten to use an accumulating parameter:

```
reverse(L1, L2) :- reverse(L1, [], L2).

%  reverse(+X, +Y, -Z)
%  Z is X reversed, followed by Y
reverse([], Z, Z).
reverse([H|T], L0, L) :-
        reverse(T, [H|L0], L).
```

This version of reverse is many times faster than the naive version, and uses much less memory. The key to understanding the behavior of this predicate is the observation made earlier: using an accumulating parameter, we build the result backwards.

Don't let this confuse you. Building a list forward is easy. For example, a predicate returning a list L of consecutive numbers from 1 to N could be written in two different ways: counting up and collecting the resulting list forward, or counting down and accumulating the result backward.

```
iota1(N, L) :- iota1(1, N, L).
iota1(N, Max, L) :-
        (   N > Max ->
                L = []
        ;   N1 is N+1,
            L = [N|L1],
            iota1(N1, Max, L1)
        ).
```

or,

```
iota2(N, L) :- iota2(N, [], L).
iota2(N, L0, L) :-
        (   N =< 0 ->
                L = L0
        ;   N1 is N-1,
            iota2(N1, [N|L0], L)
        ).
```

Both versions generate the same results, and neither waste any space. The second version is slightly faster. Choose whichever approach you prefer.

## 13.7 Building and Dismantling Terms

The built-in predicate `(=..)/2` is a clear way of building terms and taking them apart. However, it is almost never the most efficient way. `functor/3` and `arg/3` are generally much more efficient, though less direct. The best blend of efficiency and clarity is to write a clearly-named predicate that implements the desired operation and to use `functor/3` and `arg/3` in that predicate.

Here is an actual example. The task is to reimplement the built-in predicate `(==)/2`. The first variant uses `(=..)/2` (this symbol is pronounced "univ" for historical reasons). Some Prolog textbooks recommend code similar to this.

```
ident_univ(X, Y) :-
        var(X),                 % If X is a variable,
        !,
        var(Y),                 % so must Y be, and
        samevar(X, Y).          % they must be the same.
ident_univ(X, Y) :-             % If X is not a variable,
        nonvar(Y),              % neither may Y be;
        X =.. [F|L],            % they must have the
        Y =.. [F|M],            % same function symbol F
        ident_list(L, M).       % and identical arguments

ident_list([], []).
ident_list([H1|T1], [H2|T2]) :-
        ident_univ(H1, H2),
        ident_list(T1, T2).

samevar(29, Y) :-               % If binding X to 29
        var(Y),                 % leaves Y unbound,
        !,                      % they were not the same
        fail.                   % variable.
samevar(_, _).                  % Otherwise they were.
```

This code performs the function intended; however, every time it touches a non-variable term of arity *N*, it constructs a list with *N+1* elements, and if the two terms are identical, these lists are reclaimed only when backtracked over or garbage collected.

Better code uses `functor/3` and `arg/3`.

```
ident_farg(X, Y) :-
        (   var(X) ->           % If X is a variable,
                var(Y),         % so must Y be, and
                samevar(X, Y)   % they must be the same;
        ;   nonvar(Y),          % otherwise Y must be nonvar
            functor(X, F, N),   % The principal functors of X
            functor(Y, F, N),   % and Y must be identical,
            ident_farg(N, X, Y) % including the last N args.
        ).

ident_farg(0, _, _) :- !.
ident_farg(N, X, Y) :-          % The last N arguments are
        arg(N, X, Xn),          % identical
        arg(N, Y, Yn),          % if the Nth arguments
        ident_farg(Xn, Yn),     % are identical,
        M is N-1,               % and the last N-1 arguments
        ident_farg(M, X, Y).    % are also identical.
```

This approach to walking through terms using `functor/3` and `arg/3` avoids the construction of useless lists.

The pattern shown in the example, in which a predicate of arity *K* calls an auxiliary predicate of the same name of arity *K+1* (the additional argument denoting the number of items remaining to process), is very common. It is not necessary to use the same name for this auxiliary predicate, but this convention is generally less prone to confusion.

In order to simply find out the principal function symbol of a term, use

```
| ?- the_term_is(Term),
|    functor(Term, FunctionSymbol, _).
```

The use of `(=..)/2`, as in

```
| ?- the_term_is(Term),
|    Term =.. [FunctionSymbol|_].
```

is wasteful, and should generally be avoided. The same remark applies if the arity of a term is desired.

`(=..)/2` should not be used to locate a particular argument of some term. For example, instead of

```
Term =.. [_F,_,ArgTwo|_]
```

you should write

```
arg(2, Term, ArgTwo)
```

It is generally easier to get the explicit number "2" right than to write the correct number of anonymous variables in the call to `(=..)/2`. Other people reading the program will find the call to `arg/3` a much clearer expression of the program's intent. The program will also be more efficient. Even if several arguments of a term must be located, it is clearer and more efficient to write

```
arg(1, Term, First),
arg(3, Term, Third),
arg(4, Term, Fourth)
```

than to write

```
Term =.. [_,First,_,Third,Fourth|_]
```

Finally, `(=..)/2` should not be used when the functor of the term to be operated on is known (that is, when both the function symbol and the arity are known). For example, to make a new term with the same function symbol and first arguments as another term, but one additional argument, the obvious solution might seem to be to write something like the following:

```
add_date(OldItem, Date, NewItem) :-
        OldItem =.. [item,Type,Ship,Serial],
        NewItem =.. [item,Type,Ship,Serial,Date].
```

However, this could be expressed more clearly and more efficiently as

```
add_date(OldItem, Date, NewItem) :-
        OldItem = item(Type,Ship,Serial),
        NewItem = item(Type,Ship,Serial,Date).
```

or even

```
add_date(item(Type,Ship,Serial),
         Date,
         item(Type,Ship,Serial,Date)
        ).
```

## 13.8 Conditionals and Disjunction

There is an efficiency advantage in using conditionals whose test part consists only of arithmetic comparisons or type tests. Consider the following alternative definitions of the predicate `type_of_character/2`. In the first definition, four clauses are used to group characters on the basis of arithmetic comparisons.

```
type_of_character(Ch, Type) :-
        Ch >= "a", Ch =< "z",
        !,
        Type = lowercase.
type_of_character(Ch, Type) :-
        Ch >= "A", Ch =< "Z",
        !,
        Type = uppercase.
type_of_character(Ch, Type) :-
        Ch >= "0", Ch =< "9",
        !,
        Type = digit.
type_of_character(_Ch, Type) :-
        Type = other.
```

In the second definition, a single clause with a conditional is used. The compiler generates equivalent, optimized code for both versions.

```
type_of_character(Ch, Type) :-
        (   Ch >= "a", Ch =< "z" ->
                Type = lowercase
        ;   Ch >= "A", Ch =< "Z" ->
                Type = uppercase
        ;   Ch >= "0", Ch =< "9" ->
                Type = digit
        ;   otherwise ->
                Type = other
        ).
```

Following is a list of built-in predicates that are compiled efficiently in conditionals:

- `atom/1`
- `atomic/1`
- `callable/1`
- `compound/1`
- `float/1`
- `ground/1`
- `integer/1`
- `nonvar/1`
- `number/1`
- `simple/1`
- `var/1`
- `</2`
- `=</2`
- `=:=/2`
- `=\=/2`
- `>=/2`
- `>/2`
- `@</2`
- `@=</2`
- `==/2`
- `\==/2`
- `@>=/2`
- `@>/2`

This optimization is actually somewhat more general than what is described above. A sequence of guarded clauses:

```
Head1 :- Guard1, !, Body1.
...
Headm :- Guardm, !, Bodym.
Headn :- Bodym.
```

is eligible for the same optimization, provided that the arguments of the clause heads are all unique variables and that the "guards" are simple tests as listed above.

## 13.9 Programming Examples

The rest of this chapter contains a number of simple examples of Prolog programming, illustrating some of the techniques described above.

### 13.9.1 Simple List Processing

The goal `concatenate(L1,L2,L3)` is true if list *L3* consists of the elements of list *L1* concatenated with the elements of list *L2*. The goal `member(X,L)` is true if *X* is one of the elements of list *L*. The goal `reverse(L1,L2)` is true if list *L2* consists of the elements of list *L1* in reverse order.

```
concatenate([], L, L).
concatenate([X|L1], L2, [X|L3]) :- concatenate(L1, L2, L3).

member(X, [X|_]).
member(X, [_|L]) :- member(X, L).

reverse(L, L1) :- reverse_concatenate(L, [], L1).

reverse_concatenate([], L, L).
reverse_concatenate([X|L1], L2, L3) :-
        reverse_concatenate(L1, [X|L2], L3).
```

### 13.9.2 Family Example (descendants)

The goal `descendant(X,Y)` is true if *Y* is a descendant of *X*.

```
descendant(X, Y) :- offspring(X, Y).
descendant(X, Z) :- offspring(X, Y), descendant(Y, Z).

offspring(abraham, ishmael).
offspring(abraham, isaac).
offspring(isaac, esau).
offspring(isaac, jacob).
```

If for example the query

```
| ?- descendant(abraham, X).
```

is executed, Prolog's backtracking results in different descendants of Abraham being returned as successive instances of the variable *X*, i.e.

```
X = ishmael
X = isaac
X = esau
X = jacob
```

### 13.9.3 Association List Primitives

These predicates implement "association list" primitives. They use a binary tree representation. Thus the time complexity for these predicates is *O(lg N)*, where *N* is the number of keys. These predicates also illustrate the use of `compare/3` (see Section 8.3 [Term Compare], page 168) for case analysis.

The goal `get_assoc(`*`Key`*`, `*`Assoc`*`, `*`Value`*`)` is true when *Key* is identical to one of the keys in *Assoc*, and *Value* unifies with the associated value.

```
get_assoc(Key, t(K,V,L,R), Val) :-
        compare(Rel, Key, K),
        get_assoc(Rel, Key, V, L, R, Val).

get_assoc(=, _, Val, _, _, Val).
get_assoc(<, Key, _, Tree, _, Val) :-
        get_assoc(Key, Tree, Val).
get_assoc(>, Key, _, _, Tree, Val) :-
        get_assoc(Key, Tree, Val).
```

### 13.9.4 Differentiation

The goal `d(`*`E1`*`, `*`X`*`, `*`E2`*`)` is true if expression *E2* is a possible form for the derivative of expression *E1* with respect to *X*.

```
d(X, X, D) :- atomic(X), !, D = 1.
d(C, X, D) :- atomic(C), !, D = 0.
d(U+V, X, DU+DV) :- d(U, X, DU), d(V, X, DV).
d(U-V, X, DU-DV) :- d(U, X, DU), d(V, X, DV).
d(U*V, X, DU*V+U*DV) :- d(U, X, DU), d(V, X, DV).
d(U**N, X, N*U**N1*DU) :- integer(N), N1 is N-1, d(U, X, DU).
d(-U, X, -DU) :- d(U, X, DU).
```

### 13.9.5 Use of Meta-Logical Predicates

This example illustrates the use of the meta-logical predicates `var/1`, `arg/3`, and `functor/3` (see Section 8.7 [Meta Logic], page 183). The goal `variables(Term, L, [])` instantiates variable *L* to a list of all the variable occurrences in *Term*. E.g.:

```
| ?- variables(d(U*V, X, DU*V+U*DV), L, []).

L = [U,V,X,DU,V,U,DV]

variables(X, [X|L0], L) :- var(X), !, L = L0.
variables(T, L0, L) :-
%       nonvar(T),
        functor(T, _, A),
        variables(0, A, T, L0, L).

variables(A, A, _, L0, L) :- !, L = L0.
variables(A0, A, T, L0, L) :-
%       A0<A,
        A1 is A0+1,
        arg(A1, T, X),
        variables(X, L0, L1),
        variables(A1, A, T, L1, L).
```

### 13.9.6 Use of Term Expansion

This example illustrates the use of `user:term_expansion/[2,4]` to augment the built-in predicate `expand_term/2`, which works as a filter on the input to compile and consult. The code below will allow the declaration '`:- wait f/3`' as an alias for '`:- block f(-,?,?)`'. Wait declarations were used in previous versions of SICStus Prolog.

Note the `multifile` declaration, which prevents this `user:term_expansion/[2,4]` clause from erasing any other clauses for the same predicate that might have been loaded.

```
:- op(1150, fx, [wait]).

:- multifile user:term_expansion/2.
user:term_expansion((:- wait F/N), (:- block Head)) :-
        functor(Head, F, N),
        wb_args(N, Head).

wb_args(0, _Head).
wb_args(1, Head) :- arg(1, Head, -).
wb_args(N, Head) :-
        N>1,
        arg(N, Head, ?),
        N1 is N-1,
        wb_args(N1, Head).
```

### 13.9.7 Prolog in Prolog

This example shows how simple it is to write a Prolog interpreter in Prolog, and illustrates the use of a variable goal. In this mini-interpreter, goals and clauses are represented as ordinary Prolog data structures (i.e. terms). Terms representing clauses are specified using the predicate `my_clause/1`, e.g.:

```
my_clause( (grandparent(X, Z) :- parent(X, Y), parent(Y, Z)) ).
```

A unit clause will be represented by a term such as

```
my_clause( (parent(john, mary) :- true) ).
```

The mini-interpreter consists of three clauses:

```
execute((P,Q)) :- !, execute(P), execute(Q).
execute(P) :- predicate_property(P, built_in), !, P.
execute(P) :- my_clause((P :- Q)), execute(Q).
```

The second clause enables the mini-interpreter to cope with calls to ordinary Prolog predicates, e.g. built-in predicates. The mini-interpreter needs to be extended to cope with the other control structures, i.e. `!`, `(P;Q)`, `(P->Q)`, `(P->Q;R)`, `(\+ P)`, and `if(P,Q,R)`.

### 13.9.8 Translating English Sentences into Logic Formulae

The following example of a definite clause grammar defines in a formal way the traditional mapping of simple English sentences into formulae of classical logic. By way of illustration, if the sentence

> Every man that lives loves a woman.

is parsed as a sentence by the call

```
| ?- phrase(sentence(P), [every,man,that,lives,loves,a,woman]).
```

then $P$ will get instantiated to

```
all(X):(man(X)&lives(X) => exists(Y):(woman(Y)&loves(X,Y)))
```

where `:`, `&` and `=>` are infix operators defined by

```
:- op(900, xfx, =>).
:- op(800, xfy, &).
:- op(550, xfy, :). /* predefined */
```

The grammar follows:

```
sentence(P) --> noun_phrase(X, P1, P), verb_phrase(X, P1).

noun_phrase(X, P1, P) -->
        determiner(X, P2, P1, P), noun(X, P3), rel_clause(X, P3, P2).
noun_phrase(X, P, P) --> name(X).

verb_phrase(X, P) --> trans_verb(X, Y, P1), noun_phrase(Y, P1, P).
verb_phrase(X, P) --> intrans_verb(X, P).

rel_clause(X, P1, P1&P2) --> [that], verb_phrase(X, P2).
rel_clause(_, P, P) --> [].

determiner(X, P1, P2, all(X):(P1=>P2)) --> [every].
determiner(X, P1, P2, exists(X):(P1&P2)) --> [a].

noun(X, man(X)) --> [man].
noun(X, woman(X)) --> [woman].

name(john) --> [john].

trans_verb(X, Y, loves(X,Y)) --> [loves].
intrans_verb(X, lives(X)) --> [lives].
```

## 13.10 The Cross-Referencer

### 13.10.1 Introduction

The main purpose of the cross-referencer, `spxref`, is to find undefined predicates and unreachable code. To this end, it begins by looking for initializations, hooks and `public`

directives to start tracing the reachable code from. If an entire application is being checked, it also traces from `user:runtime_entry/1`. If individual module-files are being checked, it also traces from their export lists.

A second function of `spxref` is to aid in the formation of module statements. `spxref` can list all of the required `module/2` and `use_module/2` statements by file.

### 13.10.2 Basic Use

The cross-referencer is run from the shell prompt, specifying the names of the Prolog source files you wish to check. You may omit the '`.pl`' suffix if you like.

```
% spxref [-R] [-v] [-c] [-i ifile] [-w wfile] [-x xfile] [-u ufile
] fspec ...
```

`spxref` takes a number of options, as follows. *File* arguments should be given as atoms or as '`-`', denoting the standard output stream.

'`-R`' Check an application, i.e. follow `user:runtime_entry/1`, as opposed to module declarations.

'`-c`' Generate standard compiler style error messages.

'`-v`' Verbose output. This echoes the names of the files being read.

'`-i` *`ifile`*' An initialization file, which is loaded before processing begins.

'`-w` *`wfile`*' Warning file. Warnings are written to the standard error stream by default.

'`-x` *`xfile`*' Generate a cross-reference file. This is not generated by default.

'`-m` *`mfile`*' Generate a file indicating which predicates are imported and which are exported for each file. This is not generated by default.

'`-u` *`ufile`*' Generate a file listing all the undefined predicates. This is not generated by default.

### 13.10.3 Practice and Experience

Your code will probably rely on operator declarations and possibly term expansion. The cross-referencer handles this in much the same way as `fcompile/1`: you must supply an initialization file. Contrary to `fcompile/1`, `spxref` will execute any operator declaration it encounters.

Supply meta-predicate declarations for your meta-predicates. Otherwise, the cross-referencer will not follow the meta-predicates' arguments. Be sure the cross-referencer encounters the meta-predicate declarations *before* it encounters calls to the declared predicates.

The cross-referencer traces from initializations, hooks, predicates declared `public`, and optionally from `user:runtime_entry/1` and module declarations. The way it handles meta-predicates requires that your application load its module-files before its non-module-files.

This cross-referencer was written in order to tear out the copious dead code from the application that the author became responsible for. If you are doing such a thing, the cross-referencer is an invaluable tool. Be sure to save the output from the first run that you get from the cross referencer: this is very useful resource to help you find things that you've accidentally ripped out and that you really needed after all.

There are situations where the cross-referencer does not follow certain predicates. This can happen if the predicate name is constructed on the fly, or if it is retrieved from the database. In this case, add `public` declarations for these. Alternatively, you could create term expansions that are peculiar to the cross-referencer.

# 14 The SICStus Tools

The SICStus tools are the tools that are automatically installed with SICStus Prolog as shell commands. They are all described in detail elsewhere in this manual; this is just a summary.

`sicstus` The stream-based development system. See Section 3.1 [Start], page 21.

`spwin` The windowed development system for Windows. See Section 3.1 [Start], page 21.

`splm` The SICStus license manager.

`splfr` The foreign resource linker. See Section 9.2.5 [The Foreign Resource Linker], page 224.

`spld` The application builder. See Section 9.8.3 [The Application Builder], page 258.

`spdet` The determinacy checker. See Section 13.5 [The Determinacy Checker], page 325.

`spxref` The cross-referencer. See Section 13.10 [The Cross-Referencer], page 342.

# 15 The Prolog Library

% TODO: Pillow, PrologBeans, Spaceout, XML. % Manual order.

The Prolog library comprises a number of packages that are thought to be useful in a number of applications. Note that the predicates in the Prolog library are not built-in predicates. One has to explicitly load each package to get access to its predicates. The following packages are provided:

`arrays` (see Chapter 16 [Arrays], page 351)
: provides an implementation of extendible arrays with logarithmic access time.

`assoc` (see Chapter 17 [Assoc], page 353)
: uses AVL trees to implement "association lists", i.e. extendible finite mappings from terms to terms.

`atts` (see Chapter 18 [Attributes], page 355)
: provides a means of associating with variables arbitrary attributes, i.e. named properties that can be used as storage locations as well as hooks into Prolog's unification.

`heaps` (see Chapter 19 [Heaps], page 361)
: implements binary heaps, the main application of which are priority queues.

`lists` (see Chapter 20 [Lists], page 363)
: provides basic operations on lists.

`terms` (see Chapter 21 [Term Utilities], page 367)
: provides a number of operations on terms.

`ordsets` (see Chapter 22 [Ordsets], page 371)
: defines operations on sets represented as lists with the elements ordered in Prolog standard order.

`queues` (see Chapter 23 [Queues], page 373)
: defines operations on queues (FIFO stores of information).

`random` (see Chapter 24 [Random], page 375)
: provides a random number generator.

`system` (see Chapter 25 [System Utilities], page 377)
: provides access to operating system services.

`trees` (see Chapter 26 [Trees], page 381)
: uses binary trees to represent non-extendible arrays with logarithmic access time. The functionality is very similar to that of `library(arrays)`, but `library(trees)` is slightly more efficient if the array does not need to be extendible.

`ugraphs` (see Chapter 27 [UGraphs], page 383)
: Provides an implementation of directed and undirected graphs with unlabeled edges.

`wgraphs` (see Chapter 28 [WGraphs], page 387)
: provides an implementation of directed and undirected graphs where each edge has an integral weight.

`sockets` (see Chapter 29 [Sockets], page 391)
: provides an interface to system calls for manipulating sockets.

`linda/client`
`linda/server` (see Chapter 30 [Linda Library], page 395)
: provides an implementation of the Linda concept for process communication.

`bdb` (see Chapter 31 [BDB], page 401)
: provides an interface to Berkeley DB, for storage and retrieval of terms on disk files with user-defined multiple indexing.

`clpb` (see Chapter 32 [CLPB], page 411)
: provides constraint solving over Booleans.

`clpq`
`clpr` (see Chapter 33 [CLPQR], page 417)
: provides constraint solving over Q (Rationals) or R (Reals).

`clpfd` (see Chapter 34 [CLPFD], page 445)
: provides constraint solving over Finite (Integer) Domains

`chr` (see Chapter 35 [CHR], page 495)
: provides Constraint Handling Rules

`fdbg` (see Chapter 36 [FDBG], page 519)
: provides a debugger for finite domain constraint programs

`objects` (see Chapter 37 [Obj Intro], page 547)
: provides the combination of the logic programming and the object-oriented programming paradigms.

`pillow` (see Chapter 38 [PiLLoW], page 583)
: The PiLLoW Web Programming Library,

`xml` (see Chapter 39 [XML], page 585)
: Parsing and generating XML.

`tcltk` (see Chapter 40 [Tcl/Tk], page 587)
: An interface to the Tcl/Tk language and toolkit.

`gauge` (see Chapter 41 [Gauge], page 687)
: is a profiling tool for Prolog programs with a graphical interface based on `tcltk`.

`charsio` (see Chapter 42 [Chars I/O], page 691)
: defines I/O predicates that read from, or write to, a code-list.

`jasper` (see Chapter 43 [Jasper], page 693)
: Access Java from Prolog.

`prologbeans` (see Chapter 44 [PrologBeans], page 723)
: Access Prolog from Java.

`comclient` (see Chapter 45 [COM Client], page 741)
An interface to Microsoft COM automaton objects.

`vbsp` (see Chapter 46 [Visual Basic], page 747)
Access Prolog from Visual Basic.

`flinkage` (see Chapter 47 [Runtime Utilities], page 763)
is a tool for generating glue code for the Foreign Language Interface when building statically linked runtime systems or development systems. No longer supported but provided for porting really old code.

`spaceout` (see Chapter 48 [Spaceout], page 765)
Meta-call with limit on memory use.

`timeout` (see Chapter 49 [Timeout], page 767)
Meta-call with limit on execution time.

`wcx_example`
provides a sample implementation of a Wide Character Extension (WCX) box.

To load a library package *Package*, you will normally enter a query

```
| ?- use_module(library(Package)).
```

A library package normally consists of one or more hidden modules.

An alternative way of loading from the library is using the built-in predicate `require/1` (see Section 8.1.1 [Read In], page 134). The index file '`INDEX.pl`' needed by `require/1` can be created by the `make_index` program. This program is loaded as:

```
| ?- use_module(library(mkindex)).
```

`make_index:make_library_index(+`*`LibraryDirectory`*`)`
Creates a file '`INDEX.pl`' in *LibraryDirectory*. All '`*.pl`' files in the directory and all its subdirectories are scanned for `module/2` declarations. From these declarations, the exported predicates are entered into the index.

# 16 Array Operations

This package provides an implementation of extendible arrays with logarithmic access time.

Beware: the atom `$` is used to indicate an unset element, and the functor `$ /4` is used to indicate a subtree. In general, array elements whose principal function symbol is `$` will not work.

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(arrays)).
```

`new_array(-Array)`
: Binds *Array* to a new empty array. Example:

```
| ?- new_array(A).

A = array($($,$,$,$),2)
```

`is_array(+Array)`
: Is true when *Array* actually is an array.

`aref(+Index, +Array, ?Element)`
: *Element* is the element at position *Index* in *Array*. It fails if `Array[Index]` is undefined.

`arefa(+Index, +Array, ?Element)`
: Is like `aref/3` except that *Element* is a new array if `Array[Index]` is undefined. Example:

```
| ?- arefa(3, array($($,$,$,$),2), E).

E = array($($,$,$,$),2)
```

`arefl(+Index, +Array, ?Element)`
: Is as `aref/3` except that *Element* is `[]` for undefined cells. Example:

```
| ?- arefl(3, array($($,$,$,$),2), E).

E = []
```

`array_to_list(+Array, -List)`
: *List* is a list with the pairs *Index-Element* of all the elements of *Array*. Example:

```
| ?- array_to_list(array($(a,b,c,d),2), List).

List = [0-a,1-b,2-c,3-d]
```

`aset(+Index, +Array, +Element, -NewArray)`
: *NewArray* is the result of setting `Array[Index]` to *Element*. Example:

```
| ?- aset(3,array($($,$,$,$),2), a, Newarr).

Newarr = array($($,$,$,a),2)
```

# 17 Association Lists

In this package, finite mappings ("association lists") are represented by AVL trees, i.e. they are subject to the Adelson-Velskii-Landis balance criterion:

> A tree is balanced iff for every node the heights of its two subtrees differ by at most 1.

The empty tree is represented as `t`. A tree with key `K`, value `V`, and left and right subtrees `L` and `R` is represented as `t(K,V,|R|-|L|,L,R)`, where `|T|` denotes the height of `T`.

The advantage of this representation is that lookup, insertion and deletion all become—in the worst case—*O(log n)* operations.

The algorithms are from [Wirth 76], section 4.4.6–4.4.8.

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(assoc)).
```

`empty_assoc(?Assoc)`
: *Assoc* is an empty AVL tree.

`assoc_to_list(+Assoc, ?List)`
: *List* is a list of *Key-Value* pairs in ascending order with no duplicate *Keys* specifying the same finite function as the association tree *Assoc*. Use this to convert an association tree to a list.

`is_assoc(+Assoc)`
: *Assoc* is a (proper) AVL tree. It checks both that the keys are in ascending order and that *Assoc* is properly balanced.

`min_assoc(+Assoc, ?Key, ?Val)`
: *Key* is the smallest key in *Assoc* and *Val* is its value.

`max_assoc(+Assoc, ?Key, ?Val)`
: *Key* is the greatest key in *Assoc* and *Val* is its value.

`gen_assoc(?Key, +Assoc, ?Value)`
: *Key* is associated with *Value* in the association tree *Assoc*. Can be used to enumerate all *Values* by ascending *Keys*.

`get_assoc(+Key, +Assoc, ?Value)`
: *Key* is identical (==) to one of the keys in the association tree *Assoc*, and *Value* unifies with the associated value.

`get_assoc(+Key, +OldAssoc, ?OldValue, ?NewAssoc, ?NewValue)`
: *OldAssoc* and *NewAssoc* are association trees of the same shape having the same elements except that the value for *Key* in *OldAssoc* is *OldValue* and the value for *Key* in *NewAssoc* is *NewValue*.

`get_next_assoc(+Key, +Assoc, ?Knext, ?Vnext)`
: *Knext* and *Vnext* is the next key and associated value after *Key* in *Assoc*.

`get_prev_assoc(+Key, +Assoc, ?Kprev, ?Vprev)`
: *Kprev* and *Vprev* is the previous key and associated value after *Key* in *Assoc*.

`list_to_assoc(+List, ?Assoc)`
: *List* is a proper list of *Key-Value* pairs (in any order) and *Assoc* is an association tree specifying the same finite function from *Keys* to *Values*.

`ord_list_to_assoc(+List, ?Assoc)`
: *List* is a proper list of *Key-Value* pairs (keysorted) and *Assoc* is an association tree specifying the same finite function from *Keys* to *Values*.

`map_assoc(:Pred, ?Assoc)`
: *Assoc* is an association tree, and for each *Key*, if *Key* is associated with *Value* in *Assoc*, *Pred(Value)* is true.

`map_assoc(:Pred, ?OldAssoc, ?NewAssoc)`
: *OldAssoc* and *NewAssoc* are association trees of the same shape, and for each *Key*, if *Key* is associated with *Old* in *OldAssoc* and with *New* in *NewAssoc*, *Pred(Old,New)* is true.

`put_assoc(+Key, +OldAssoc, +Val, ?NewAssoc)`
: *OldAssoc* and *NewAssoc* define the same finite function, except that *NewAssoc* associates *Key* with *Val*. *OldAssoc* need not have associated *Key* with any value.

`del_assoc(+Key, +OldAssoc, ?Val, ?NewAssoc)`
: *OldAssoc* and *NewAssoc* define the same finite function except that *OldAssoc* associates *Key* with *Val* and *NewAssoc* doesn't associate *Key* with any value.

`del_min_assoc(+OldAssoc, ?Key, ?Val, ?NewAssoc)`
: *OldAssoc* and *NewAssoc* define the same finite function except that *OldAssoc* associates *Key* with *Val* and *NewAssoc* doesn't associate *Key* with any value and *Key* precedes all other keys in *OldAssoc*.

`del_max_assoc(+OldAssoc, ?Key, ?Val, -NewAssoc)`
: *OldAssoc* and *NewAssoc* define the same finite function except that *OldAssoc* associates *Key* with *Val* and *NewAssoc* doesn't associate *Key* with any value and *Key* is preceded by all other keys in *OldAssoc*.

# 18 Attributed Variables

This package implements attributed variables. It provides a means of associating with variables arbitrary attributes, i.e. named properties that can be used as storage locations as well as to extend the default unification algorithm when such variables are unified with other terms or with each other. This facility was primarily designed as a clean interface between Prolog and constraint solvers, but has a number of other uses as well. The basic idea is due to Christian Holzbaur and he was actively involved in the final design. For background material, see the dissertation [Holzbaur 90].

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(atts)).
```

The package provides a means to declare and access named attributes of variables. The attributes are compound terms whose arguments are the actual attribute values. The attribute names are *private* to the module in which they are defined. They are defined with a declaration

```
:- attribute AttributeSpec, ..., AttributeSpec.
```

where each *AttributeSpec* has the form (*Name*/*Arity*). There must be at most one such declaration in a module *Module*.

Having declared some attribute names, these attributes can now be added, updated and deleted from unbound variables. For each declared attribute name, any variable can have at most one such attribute (initially it has none).

The declaration causes the following two access predicates to become defined by means of the `user:goal_expansion/3` mechanism. They take a variable and an *AccessSpec* as arguments where an *AccessSpec* is either `+(Attribute)`, `-(Attribute)`, or a list of such. The '`+`' prefix may be dropped for convenience. The meaning of the '`+`'/'`-`' prefix is documented below:

*Module*`:get_atts(-`*Var*`, ?`*AccessSpec*`)`

Gets the attributes of *Var* according to *AccessSpec*. If *AccessSpec* is unbound, it will be bound to a list of all set attributes of *Var*. Non-variable terms cause a type error to be raised. The prefixes in the *AccessSpec* have the following meaning:

`+(`*Attribute*`)`

The corresponding actual attribute must be present and is unified with *Attribute*.

`-(`*Attribute*`)`

The corresponding actual attribute must be absent. The arguments of *Attribute* are ignored, only the name and arity are relevant.

*Module*`:put_atts(-`*Var*`, +`*AccessSpec*`)`

Sets the attributes of *Var* according to *AccessSpec*. Non-variable terms cause a type error to be raised. The effects of `put_atts/2` are undone on backtracking.

`+(Attribute)`
: The corresponding actual attribute is set to *Attribute*. If the actual attribute was already present, it is simply replaced.

`-(Attribute)`
: The corresponding actual attribute is removed. If the actual attribute was already absent, nothing happens.

A module that contains an attribute declaration has an opportunity to extend the default unification algorithm by defining the following predicate:

`Module:verify_attributes(-Var, +Value, -Goals)` *hook*

This predicate is called whenever a variable *Var* that might have attributes in *Module* is about to be bound to *Value* (it might have none). The unification resumes after the call to `verify_attributes/3`. *Value* is a non-variable term, or another attributed variable. *Var* might have no attributes present in *Module* ; the unification extension mechanism is not sophisticated enough to filter out exactly the variables that are relevant for *Module*.

`verify_attributes/3` is called *before* *Var* has actually been bound to *Value*. If it fails, the unification is deemed to have failed. It may succeed nondeterminately, in which case the unification might backtrack to give another answer. It is expected to return, in *Goals*, a list of goals to be called *after* *Var* has been bound to *Value*.

`verify_attributes/3` may invoke arbitrary Prolog goals, but *Var* should *not* be bound by it. Binding *Var* will result in undefined behavior.

If *Value* is a non-variable term, `verify_attributes/3` will typically inspect the attributes of *Var* and check that they are compatible with *Value* and fail otherwise. If *Value* is another attributed variable, `verify_attributes/3` will typically copy the attributes of *Var* over to *Value*, or merge them with *Value*'s, in preparation for *Var* to be bound to *Value*. In either case, `verify_attributes/3` may determine *Var*'s current attributes by calling `get_atts(Var,List)` with an unbound *List*.

An important use for attributed variables is in implementing coroutining facilities as an alternative or complement to the built-in coroutining mechanisms. In this context it might be useful to be able to interpret some of the attributes of a variable as a goal that is blocked on that variable. Certain built-in predicates (`frozen/2`, `call_residue/2`) and the Prolog top-level need to access blocked goals, and so need a means of getting the goal interpretation of attributed variables by calling:

`Module:attribute_goal(-Var, -Goal)` *hook*

This predicate is called in each module that contains an attribute declaration, when an interpretation of the attributes as a goal is needed, for example in `frozen/2` and `call_residue/2`. It should unify *Goal* with the interpretation, or merely fail if no such interpretation is available.

An important use for attributed variables is to provide an interface to constraint solvers. An important function for a constraint solver in the constraint logic programming paradigm is to be able to perform projection of the residual constraints onto the variables that occurred in the top-level query. A module that contains an attribute declaration has an opportunity to perform such projection of its residual constraints by defining the following predicate:

*Module*:`project_attributes(+`*QueryVars*`, +`*AttrVars*`)` *hook*

This predicate is called by the Prolog top level and by the built-in predicate `call_residue/2` in each module that contains an attribute declaration. *QueryVars* is the list of variables occurring in the query, or in terms bound to such variables, and *AttrVars* is a list of possibly attributed variables created during the execution of the query. The two lists of variables may or may not be disjoint.

If the attributes on *AttrVars* can be interpreted as constraints, this predicate will typically "project" those constraints onto the relevant *QueryVars*. Ideally, the residual constraints will be expressed entirely in terms of the *QueryVars*, treating all other variables as existentially quantified. Operationally, `project_attributes/2` must remove all attributes from *AttrVars*, and add transformed attributes representing the projected constraints to some of the *QueryVars*.

Projection has the following effect on the Prolog top-level. When the top-level query has succeeded, `project_attributes/2` is called first. The top-level then prints the answer substition and residual constraints. While doing so, it searches for attributed variables created during the execution of the query. For each such variable, it calls `attribute_goal/2` to get a printable representation of the constraint encoded by the attribute. Thus, `project_attributes/2` is a mechanism for controlling how the residual constraints should be displayed at top-level.

Similarly during the execution of `call_residue(`*Goal*`,`*Residue*`)`, when *Goal* has succeeded, `project_attributes/2` is called. After that, all attributed variables created during the execution of *Goal* are located. For each such variable, `attribute_goal/2` produces a term representing the constraint encoded by the attribute, and *Residue* is unified with the list of all such terms.

The exact definition of `project_attributes/2` is constraint system dependent, but see Section 33.5 [Projection], page 430 for details about projection in clp(Q,R).

In the following example we sketch the implementation of a finite domain "solver". Note that an industrial strength solver would have to provide a wider range of functionality and that it quite likely would utilize a more efficient representation for the domains proper. The module exports a single predicate `domain(-`*Var*`,?`*Domain*`)`, which associates *Domain* (a list of terms) with *Var*. A variable can be queried for its domain by leaving *Domain* unbound.

We do not present here a definition for `project_attributes/2`. Projecting finite domain constraints happens to be difficult.

```
                                                        % domain.pl
:- module(domain, [domain/2]).

:- use_module(library(atts)).
:- use_module(library(ordsets), [
        ord_intersection/3,
        ord_intersect/2,
        list_to_ord_set/2
   ]).

:- attribute dom/1.

verify_attributes(Var, Other, Goals) :-
        get_atts(Var, dom(Da)), !,          % are we involved?
        (   var(Other) ->                   % must be attributed then
            (   get_atts(Other, dom(Db)) -> %   has a domain?
                ord_intersection(Da, Db, Dc),
                Dc = [El|Els],              % at least one element
                (   Els = [] ->             % exactly one element
                    Goals = [Other=El]      % implied binding
                ;   Goals = [],
                    put_atts(Other, dom(Dc))% rescue intersection
                )
            ;   Goals = [],
                put_atts(Other, dom(Da))    % rescue the domain
            )
        ;   Goals = [],
            ord_intersect([Other], Da)      % value in domain?
        ).
verify_attributes(_, _, []).                % unification triggered
                                            % because of attributes
                                            % in other modules

attribute_goal(Var, domain(Var,Dom)) :-     % interpretation as goal
        get_atts(Var, dom(Dom)).

domain(X, Dom) :-
        var(Dom), !,
        get_atts(X, dom(Dom)).
domain(X, List) :-
        list_to_ord_set(List, Set),
        Set = [El|Els],                     % at least one element
        (   Els = [] ->                     % exactly one element
            X = El                          % implied binding
        ;   put_atts(Fresh, dom(Set)),
            X = Fresh                       % may call
                                            % verify_attributes/3
        ).
```

Note that the "implied binding" `Other=El` was deferred until after the completion of `verify_attribute/3`. Otherwise, there might be a danger of recursively invoke `verify_attribute/3`, which might bind `Var`, which is not allowed inside the scope of `verify_attribute/3`. Deferring unifications into the third argument of `verify_attribute/3` effectively serializes th calls to `verify_attribute/3`.

Assuming that the code resides in the file '`domain.pl`', we can load it via:

```
| ?- use_module(domain).
```

Let's test it:

```
| ?- domain(X,[5,6,7,1]), domain(Y,[3,4,5,6]), domain(Z,[1,6,7,8]).

domain(X,[1,5,6,7]),
domain(Y,[3,4,5,6]),
domain(Z,[1,6,7,8])

| ?- domain(X,[5,6,7,1]), domain(Y,[3,4,5,6]), domain(Z,[1,6,7,8]),
     X=Y.

Y = X,
domain(X,[5,6]),
domain(Z,[1,6,7,8])

| ?- domain(X,[5,6,7,1]), domain(Y,[3,4,5,6]), domain(Z,[1,6,7,8]),
     X=Y, Y=Z.

X = 6,
Y = 6,
Z = 6
```

To demonstrate the use of the *Goals* argument of `verify_attributes/3`, we give an implementation of `freeze/2`. We have to name it `myfreeze/2` in order to avoid a name clash with the built-in predicate of the same name.

```
                                                        % myfreeze.pl
:- module(myfreeze, [myfreeze/2]).

:- use_module(library(atts)).

:- attribute frozen/1.

verify_attributes(Var, Other, Goals) :-
        get_atts(Var, frozen(Fa)), !,       % are we involved?
        (   var(Other) ->                   % must be attributed then
            (   get_atts(Other, frozen(Fb)) % has a pending goal?
            ->  put_atts(Other, frozen((Fa,Fb))) % rescue conjunction
            ;   put_atts(Other, frozen(Fa)) % rescue the pending goal
            ),
            Goals = []
        ;   Goals = [Fa]
        ).
verify_attributes(_, _, []).

attribute_goal(Var, Goal) :-                % interpretation as goal
        get_atts(Var, frozen(Goal)).

myfreeze(X, Goal) :-
        put_atts(Fresh, frozen(Goal)),
        Fresh = X.
```

Assuming that this code lives in file '`myfreeze.pl`', we would use it via:

```
| ?- use_module(myfreeze).
| ?- myfreeze(X,print(bound(x,X))), X=2.

bound(x,2)                      % side-effect
X = 2                           % bindings
```

The two solvers even work together:

```
| ?- myfreeze(X,print(bound(x,X))), domain(X,[1,2,3]),
     domain(Y,[2,10]), X=Y.

bound(x,2)                      % side-effect
X = 2,                          % bindings
Y = 2
```

The two example solvers interact via bindings to shared attributed variables only. More complicated interactions are likely to be found in more sophisticated solvers. The corresponding `verify_attributes/3` predicates would typically refer to the attributes from other known solvers/modules via the module prefix in *`Module`*`:get_atts/2`.

# 19 Heap Operations

A binary heap is a tree with keys and associated values that satisfies the *heap condition*: the key of every node is greater than or equal to the key of its parent, if it has one. The main application of binary heaps are priority queues. To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(heaps)).
```

`add_to_heap(+OldHeap, +Key, +Datum, ?NewHeap)`
: Inserts the new *Key-Datum* pair into the current heap *OldHeap* producing the new heap *NewHeap*. The insertion is not stable, that is, if you insert several pairs with the same *Key* it is not defined which of them will come out first, and it is possible for any of them to come out first depending on the history of the heap. Example:

```
| ?- add_to_heap(t(0,[],t),3,678,N).

N = t(1,[],t(3,678,t,t))
```

`get_from_heap(+OldHeap, ?Key, ?Datum, ?NewHeap)`
: Returns the *Key-Datum* pair in *OldHeap* with the smallest *Key*, and also a *NewHeap*, which is the *OldHeap* with that pair deleted. Example:

```
get_from_heap(t(1,[],t(1,543,t,t)),K,D,N).

D = 543,
K = 1,
N = t(0,[1],t)
```

`empty_heap(?Heap)`
: is true when *Heap* is the empty heap.

`heap_size(+Heap, ?Size)`
: *Size* is the number of elements in the heap *Heap*.

`heap_to_list(+Heap, -List)`
: Returns the current set of *Key-Datum* pairs in the *Heap* as a keysorted *List*.

`is_heap(+Heap)`
: is true when *Heap* is a valid heap.

`list_to_heap(+List, -Heap)`
: Takes a list *List* of *Key-Datum* pairs and forms them into a heap *Heap*. Example:

```
| ?- list_to_heap([1-34,2-345,5-678],H).

H = t(3,[],t(1,34,t(2,345,t,t),t(5,678,t,t)))
```

`min_of_heap(+Heap, ?Key, ?Datum)`
: Returns the *Key-Datum* pair at the top of the heap *Heap* without removing it. Fails if the heap is empty.

`min_of_heap(+Heap, ?Key1, ?Datum1, ?Key2, ?Datum2)`
: Returns the smallest (*Key1-Datum1*) and second smallest (*Key2-Datum2*) pairs in the *Heap*, without deleting them. It fails if the heap does not have at least two elements.

`delete_from_heap(+OldHeap, +Key, ?Datum, ?NewHeap)`
: deletes a single *Key-Datum* pair in *OldHeap* producing *NewHeap*. This is useful if you want to e.g. change the priority of *Datum*. Beware: this operation needs to search the whole heap in the worst case.

# 20 List Operations

This package defines operations on lists. Lists are a very basic data structure, but nevertheless certain very frequent operations are provided in this package.

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(lists)).
```

`append(?Prefix, ?Suffix, ?Combined)`
: *Combined* is the combined list of the elements in *Prefix* followed by the elements in *Suffix*. It can be used to form *Combined* or it can be used to find *Prefix* and/or *Suffix* from a given *Combined*.

`delete(+List, +Element, ?Residue)`
: *Residue* is the result of removing all *identical* occurrences of *Element* in *List*.

`is_list(+List)`
: *List* is a proper list.

`last(?List, ?Last)`
: *Last* is the last element in *List*. Example:

```
| ?- last([x,y,z], Z).

Z = z
```

`max_list(+ListOfNumbers, ?Max)`
: *Max* is the largest of the elements in *ListOfNumbers*.

`member(?Element, ?List)`
: *Element* is a member of *List*. It may be used to test for membership in a list, but it can also be used to enumerate all the elements in *List*. Example:

```
| ?- member(X, [a,b,c]).

X = a ? ;

X = b ? ;

X = c ? ⟨RET⟩

yes
```

`memberchk(+Element, +List)`
: *Element* is a member of *List*, but `memberchk/2` only succeeds once and can therefore not be used to enumerate the elements in *List*. Example:

```
| ?- memberchk(X, [a,b,c]).

X = a ? ;

no
```

`min_list(+ListOfNumbers, ?Min)`
*Min* is the smallest of the numbers in the list *ListOfNumbers*.

`nextto(?X, ?Y, ?List)`
*X* and *Y* appears side-by-side in *List*. Example:

```
| ?- nextto(X, Y, [1,2,3]).

X = 1,
Y = 2 ? ;

X = 2,
Y = 3 ? ;

no
```

`no_doubles(?List)`
*List* contains no duplicated elements. This is true when `dif(X, Y)` holds for all pairs of members *X* and *Y* of the list.

`non_member(?Element, ?List)`
*Element* does not occur in *List*. This is true when `dif(Element, Y)` holds for all members *Y* of the list.

`nth(?N, ?List, ?Element)`
*Element* is the *N*th element of *List*. The first element is number 1. Example:

```
| ?- nth(N, [a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i], f).

N = 6
```

`nth(?N, ?List, ?Element, ?Rest)`
*Element* is in position *N* in the *List* and *Rest* is all elements in *List* except *Element*.

`nth0(?N, ?List, ?Element)`
*Element* is the *N*th element of *List*, counting the first element as 0.

`nth0(?N, ?List, ?Element, ?Rest)`
*Element* is the *N*th element of *List*, counting the first element as 0. *Rest* is all the other elements in *List*. Example:

```
| ?- nth0(N, [a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i,j], f, R).

N = 5,
R = [a,b,c,d,e,g,h,i,j]
```

`permutation(?List, ?Perm)`
*Perm* is a permutation of *List*.

`prefix(?Prefix, ?List)`
*Prefix* is a prefix of *List*. Example:

```
| ?- prefix([1,2,3], [1,2,3,4,5,6]).
```

`remove_duplicates(+List, ?Pruned)`

*Pruned* is the result of removing all *identical* duplicate elements in *List*. Example:

```
| ?- remove_duplicates([1,2,3,2,3,1], P).

P = [1,2,3] ? ;

no
```

`reverse(?List, ?Reversed)`

*Reversed* has the same elements as *List* but in a reversed order.

`same_length(?List1, ?List2)`

*List1* and *List2* have the same number of elements.

`same_length(?List1, ?List2, ?Length)`

*List1* and *List2* have the same number of elements and that number is *Length*. Example:

```
| ?- same_length([1,2,3], [9,8,7], N).

N = 3 ? ;

no
```

`select(?Element, ?List, ?List2)`

The result of removing an occurrence of *Element* in *List* is *List2*.

`sublist(?Sub, ?List)`

*Sub* contains some of the elements of *List*, in the same order.

`substitute(+X, +Xlist, +Y, ?Ylist)`

*Xlist* and *Ylist* are equal except for replacing *identical* occurrences of *X* by *Y*. Example:

```
| ?- substitute(1, [1,2,3,4], 5, X).

X = [5,2,3,4]
```

`sum_list(+ListOfNumbers, ?Sum)`

*Sum* is the result of adding the *ListOfNumbers* together.

`suffix(?Suffix, ?List)`

*Suffix* is a suffix of *List*.

# 21 Term Utilities

This package defines operations on terms for subsumption checking, "anti-unification", testing acyclicity, and getting the variables.

> **Please note**: anti-unification is a purely syntactic operation; any attributes attached to the variables are ignored.

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(terms)).
```

`subsumes_chk(?General, ?Specific)`

Provided *General* and *Specific* have no variables in common, *Specific* is an instance of *General*, i.e. if there is a substitution that leaves *Specific* unchanged and makes *General* identical to *Specific*. It doesn't bind any variables.

```
| ?- subsumes_chk(f(X), f(a)).

true

| ?- subsumes_chk(f(a), f(X)).

no

| ?- subsumes_chk(A-A, B-C).

no

| ?- subsumes_chk(A-B, C-C).

true
```

`subsumes(?General, ?Specific)`

Provided *General* and *Specific* have no variables in common, *Specific* is an instance of *General*. It will bind variables in *General* (but not those in *Specific* ) so that *General* becomes identical to *Specific*.

`variant(?Term, ?Variant)`

*Term* and *Variant* are identical modulo renaming of variables, provided *Term* and *Variant* have no variables in common.

`term_subsumer(?Term1, ?Term2, ?General)`

*General* is the most specific term that generalizes *Term1* and *Term2*. This process is sometimes called *anti-unification*, as it is the dual of unification.

```
| ?- term_subsumer(f(g(1,h(_))), f(g(_,h(1))), T).

T = f(g(_B,h(_A)))

| ?- term_subsumer(f(1+2,2+1), f(3+4,4+3), T).

T = f(_A+_B,_B+_A)
```

`term_hash(?Term, ?Hash)`
`term_hash(?Term, +Depth, +Range, ?Hash)`

If *Term* is instantiated up to the given *Depth*, an integer hash value in the range [0,*Range*) as a function of *Term* is unified with *Hash*. Otherwise, the goal just succeeds, leaving *Hash* uninstantiated.

If *Term* contains floats or integers outside the small integer range, the hash value will be platform dependent. Otherwise, the hash value will be identical across runs and platforms.

The *depth* of a term is defined as follows: the (principal functor of) the term itself has depth 1, and an argument of a term with depth *i* has depth *i+1*.

*Depth* should be an integer >= -1. If *Depth* = -1 (the default), *Term* must be ground, and all subterms of *Term* are relevant in computing *Hash*. Otherwise, only the subterms up to depth *Depth* of *Term* are used in the computation.

*Range* should be an integer >= 1. The default will give hash values in a range appropriate for all platforms.

```
| ?- term_hash([a,b,_], 3, 4, H).

H = 2

| ?- term_hash([a,b,_], 4, 4, H).

true

| ?- term_hash(f(a,f(b,f(_,[]))), 2, 4, H).

H = 2
```

`term_hash/[2,4]` is provided primarily as a tool for the construction of sophisticated Prolog clause access schemes. Its intended use is to generate hash values for terms that will be used with first argument clause indexing, yielding compact and efficient multi-argument or deep argument indexing.

`term_variables(?Term, ?Variables)`

*Variables* is the set of variables occurring in *Term*.

`term_variables_bag(?Term, ?Variables)`

*Variables* is the list of variables occurring in *Term*, in first occurrence order. Each variable occurs once only in the list.

`acyclic_term(?X)`
: True if $X$ is finite (acyclic). Runs in linear time.

`cyclic_term(?X)`
: True if $X$ is infinite (cyclic). Runs in linear time.

# 22 Ordered Set Operations

This package defines operations on ordered sets. Ordered sets are sets represented as lists with the elements ordered in a standard order. The ordering is defined by the `@<` family of term comparison predicates and it is the ordering produced by the built-in predicate `sort/2` (see Section 8.3 [Term Compare], page 168).

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(ordsets)).
```

`is_ordset(+Set)`
: *Set* is an ordered set.

`list_to_ord_set(+List, ?Set)`
: *Set* is the ordered representation of the set denoted by the unordered representation *List*. Example:

```
| ?- list_to_ord_set([p,r,o,l,o,g], P).

P = [g,l,o,p,r]
```

`ord_add_element(+Set1, +Element ?Set2)`
: *Set2* is *Set1* with *Element* inserted in it, preserving the order. Example:

```
| ?- ord_add_element([a,c,d,e,f], b, N).

N = [a,b,c,d,e,f]
```

`ord_del_element(+Set1, +Element, ?Set2)`
: *Set2* is like *Set1* but with *Element* removed.

`ord_disjoint(+Set1, +Set2)`
: The two ordered sets have no elements in common.

`ord_intersect(+Set1, +Set2)`
: The two ordered sets have at least one element in common.

`ord_intersection(+Set1, +Set2, ?Intersect)`
: *Intersect* is the ordered set representation of the intersection between *Set1* and *Set2*.

`ord_intersection(+Set1, +Set2, ?Intersect, ?Diff)`
: *Intersect* is the intersection between *Set1* and *Set2*, and *Diff* is the difference between *Set2* and *Set1*.

`ord_intersection(+Sets, ?Intersection)`
: *Intersection* is the ordered set representation of the intersection of all the sets in *Sets*. Example:

```
| ?- ord_intersection([[1,2,3],[2,3,4],[3,4,5]], I).

I = [3]
```

`ord_member(+Elt, +Set)`
is true when *Elt* is a member of *Set*.

`ord_seteq(+Set1, +Set2)`
Is true when the two arguments represent the same set. Since they are assumed to be ordered representations, they must be identical.

`ord_setproduct(+Set1, +Set2, ?SetProduct)`
*SetProduct* is the Cartesian Product of the two Sets. The product is represented as pairs: *Elem1-Elem2* where *Elem1* is an element from *Set1* and *Elem2* is an element from *Set2*. Example

```
| ?- ord_setproduct([1,2,3], [4,5,6], P).

P = [1-4,1-5,1-6,2-4,2-5,2-6,3-4,3-5,3-6]
```

`ord_subset(+Set1, +Set2)`
Every element of the ordered set *Set1* appears in the ordered set *Set2*.

`ord_subtract(+Set1, +Set2, ?Difference)`
*Difference* contains all and only the elements of *Set1* that are not also in *Set2*. Example:

```
| ?- ord_subtract([1,2,3,4], [3,4,5,6], S).

S = [1,2]
```

`ord_symdiff(+Set1, +Set2, ?Difference)`
*Difference* is the symmetric difference of *Set1* and *Set2*. Example:

```
| ?- ord_symdiff([1,2,3,4], [3,4,5,6], D).

D = [1,2,5,6]
```

`ord_union(+Set1, +Set2, ?Union)`
*Union* is the union of *Set1* and *Set2*.

`ord_union(+Set1, +Set2, ?Union, ?New)`
*Union* is the union of *Set1* and *Set2*, and *New* is the elements of *Set2* that are not also in *Set1*. This is useful if you are accumulating members of a set and you want to process new elements as they are added to the set.

`ord_union(+Sets, ?Union)`
*Union* is the union of all the sets in *Sets*. Example:

```
| ?- ord_union([[1,2,3],[2,3,4],[3,4,5]], U).

U = [1,2,3,4,5]
```

# 23 Queue Operations

A queue is a first-in, first-out store of information. This implementation of queues uses difference-lists, the head of the difference-list represents the beginning of the queue and the tail represents the end of the queue. The members of the difference-list are the elements in the queue. The first argument in the queue-representation is the number of elements in the queue in unary representation.

Thus, a queue with *n* elements is represented as follows:

```
q(s(...s(0)...), [X1,...,Xn,Y1,...,Ym], [Y1,...,Ym])
```

where *n* is the length of the queue and *X1*...*Xn* are the elements of the queue.

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(queues)).
```

`empty_queue(?Queue)`
: Is true if *Queue* has no elements.

`is_queue(+Queue)`
: is true when *Queue* is a valid queue.

`queue(?X, ?Queue)`
: Is true if *Queue* has one element and that is *X*.

`queue_head(?Head, ?Queue1, ?Queue2)`
: *Queue1* and *Queue2* are the same queues except that *Queue2* has *Head* inserted in the front. It can be used to enqueue the first element in *Queue2*. Example:

```
| ?- queue_head(Head, Nq,
                q(s(s(s(s(0)))),[1,2,3,4|R],R)).

Head = 1,
Nq = q(s(s(s(0))),[2,3,4|_193],_193),
R = _193
```

`queue_head_list(+HeadList, ?Queue1, ?Queue2)`
: *Queue1* and *Queue2* have the same elements except that *Queue2* has *HeadList* inserted in the front.

`queue_last(?Last, ?Queue1, ?Queue2)`
: *Queue2* is like *Queue1* but have *Last* as the last element in the queue.

`queue_last_list(+LastList, ?Queue1, ?Queue2)`
: *Queue1* and *Queue2* are the same queues except that *Queue2* has the list of elements *LastList* last in the queue. Example:

```
| ?- queue_last_list([5,6], q(s(s(0)))), [1,2|R], R), NQ).

NQ = q(s(s(s(s(0))))),[1,2,5,6|_360],_360),
R = [5,6|_360]
```

`list_queue(+List, ?Queue)`

*Queue* is the queue representation of the elements in *List*. Example:

```
| ?- list_queue([1,2,3,4], Q).

Q = q(s(s(s(s(0)))),[1,2,3,4|_138],_138)
```

`queue_length(+Queue, ?Length)`

*Length* is the number of elements in *Queue*. Example:

```
| ?- queue_length(q(s(s(s(s(s(0))))),[a,b,c,d,e|R],R), L).

L = 5,
R = _155
```

# 24 Random Number Generator

This package provides a random number generator. To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(random)).
```

This library fully supports multiple SICStus run-times in a process.

`random(-Number)`
: Binds *Number* to a random float in the interval [0.0, 1.0). Note that 1.0 will never be generated.

`random(+Lower, +Upper, -Number)`
: Binds *Number* to a random integer in the interval [*Lower*,*Upper*) if *Lower* and *Upper* are integers. Otherwise, *Number* is bound to a random float between *Lower* and *Upper*. *Upper* will never be generated.

`randseq(+K, +N, -RandomSeq)`
: Generates an unordered set of *K* unique integers, chosen randomly in the range *1..N*. *RandomSeq* is not returned in any particular order.

`randset(+K, +N, -RandomSet)`
: Generates an ordered set of *K* unique integers, chosen randomly in the range *1..N*. The set is returned in standard order.

`getrand(?State)`
: Tries to unify *State* with the term `rand(X,Y,Z)` where *X*, *Y*, and *Z* are integers describing the state of the random generator.

`setrand(rand(+X,+Y,+Z))`
: Sets the state of the random generator. *X*, *Y*, and *Z* must be integers in the ranges `[1,30269)`, `[1,30307)`, and `[1,30323)`, respectively.

# 25 Operating System Utilities

This package contains utilities for invoking services from the operating system. To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(system)).
```

Certain predicates described below take names of files or directories as arguments. These must be given as atoms, and the predicates below will not call `absolute_file_name/3` on them.

Some predicates are described as invoking the default shell. Specifically this means invoking '`/bin/sh`' on UNIX platforms. Under MSDOS, Windows and OS/2, the command interpreter given by the environment variable `COMSPEC` is invoked.

This library fully supports multiple SICStus run-times in a process.

`now(-`*`When`*`)`
: Unifies the current date and time as a UNIX timestamp with *When*.

`datime(-`*`Datime`*`)`
: Unifies *Datime* with the current date and time as a `datime/6` record of the form `datime(`*`Year`*`,`*`Month`*`,`*`Day`*`,`*`Hour`*`,`*`Min`*`,`*`Sec`*`)`. All fields are integers.

`datime(+`*`When`*`,-`*`Datime`*`)`
: Given a UNIX timestamp *When*, unifies *Datime* with the corresponding date and time as a `datime/6` record.

`delete_file(+`*`FileName`*`,+`*`Options`*`)`
: *FileName* is the name of an existing file or directory. *Options* is a list of options. Possible options are `directory`, `recursive` or `ignore`. If *FileName* is not a directory it is deleted; otherwise, if the option `directory` is specified but not `recursive`, the directory will be deleted if it is empty. If `recursive` is specified and *FileName* is a directory, the directory and all its subdirectories and files will be deleted. If the operation fails, an exception is raised unless the `ignore` option is specified.

`delete_file(+`*`FileName`*`)`
: Equivalent to `delete_file(`*`FileName`*`,[recursive])`.

`directory_files(+`*`Directory`*`,-`*`FileList`*`)`
: *FileList* is the list of entries (files, directories, etc.) in *Directory*.

`make_directory(+`*`DirectoryName`*`)`
: Makes a new directory.

`environ(?`*`Var`*`, ?`*`Value`*`)`
: *Var* is the name of an environment variable, and *Value* is its value. Both are atoms. Can be used to enumerate all current environment variables.

`exec(+Command, [+Stdin,+Stdout,+Stderr], -Pid)`

Passes *Command* to a new default shell process for execution. The standard I/O streams of the new process are connected according to what is specified by the terms `+Stdin`, `+Stdout`, and `+Stderr` respectively. Possible values are:

`null` Connected to '`/dev/null`' or equivalent.

`std` The standard stream is shared with the calling process. Note that the standard stream may not be referring to a console if the calling process is windowed. To portably print the output from the subprocess on the Prolog console, `pipe/1` must be used and the program must explicitly read the pipe and write to the console. Similarly for the input to the subprocess.

`pipe(-Stream)`
A pipe is created, which connects the Prolog stream *Stream* to the standard stream of the new process. It must be closed using `close/1`; it is not closed automatically when the process dies.

*Pid* is the process identifier of the new process.

Under UNIX, the subprocess will be detached provided none of its standard streams is specified as `std`. This means it will not receive an interruption signal as a result of `^C` being typed.

`file_exists(+FileName)`

*FileName* is the name of an existing file or directory.

`file_exists(+FileName, +Permissions)`

*FileName* is the name of an existing file or directory that can be accessed according to *Permissions*. *Permissions* is an atom, an integer (see `access(2)`), or a list of atoms and/or integers. The atoms must be drawn from the list `[read,write,search,exists]`.

`file_property(+FileName, ?Property)`

*FileName* has the property *Property*. The possible properties are:

`type(Type)`
*Type* is one of `regular`, `directory`, `fifo`, `symlink`, `socket` or `unknown`.

`size(Size)`
*Size* is the size of *FileName*.

`mod_time(ModTime)`
*ModTime* is the time of the last modification of *FileName*, as a UNIX timestamp. `library(system)` (see Chapter 25 [System Utilities], page 377) provides operations on such timestamps.

If *Property* is uninstantiated, the predicate will enumerate the properties on backtracking.

`host_id(-HID)`

*HID* is the unique identifier, represented by an atom, of the host executing the current SICStus Prolog process.

`host_name(-HostName)`

*HostName* is the standard host name of the host executing the current SICStus Prolog process.

`pid(-PID)`

*PID* is the identifier of the current SICStus Prolog process.

`kill(+Pid, +Signal)`

Sends the signal *Signal* to process *Pid*.

`mktemp(+Template, -FileName)`

Interface to the UNIX function mktemp(3). A unique file name is created and unified with *FileName*. *Template* should contain a file name with six trailing '`X`'s. The unique file name is that template with the six '`X`'s replaced by a character string.

`popen(+Command, +Mode, ?Stream)`

Interface to the UNIX function `popen(3)`. Passes *Command* to a new default shell process for execution. *Mode* may be either `read` or `write`. In the former case the output from the process is piped to *Stream*. In the latter case the input to the process is piped from *Stream*. *Stream* may be read/written using the ordinary *StreamIO* predicates. It must be closed using `close/1`; it is not closed automatically when the process dies.

`rename_file(+OldName, +NewName)`

*OldName* is the name of an existing file or directory, which will be renamed to *NewName*. If the operation fails, an exception is raised.

`shell`

Starts a new interactive shell named by the environment variable `SHELL`. The control is returned to Prolog upon termination of the shell process.

`shell(+Command)`

Passes *Command* to a new shell named by the environment variable `SHELL` for execution. Succeeds if the C library function `system()` returns 0.

Under MSDOS, Windows or OS/2, if `SHELL` is defined it is expected to name a UNIX like shell, which will be invoked with the option '`-c Command`'. If `SHELL` is undefined, the shell named by `COMSPEC` will be invoked with the option '`/C Command`'.

`shell(+Command, -Status)`

Passes *Command* to a new shell named by the environment variable `SHELL` for execution. *Status* is unified with the value returned by the C library function `system()`. See also `shell/1` above.

`sleep(+Seconds)`

Puts the SICStus Prolog process asleep for *Second* seconds, where *Seconds* may be an integer or a float. Under UNIX, the `usleep` function will be used if *Seconds* is less than one, and `sleep` otherwise. Under MSDOS, Windows or OS/2, the `Sleep` function will be used.

`system`

Starts a new interactive default shell process. The control is returned to Prolog upon termination of the shell process.

`system(+Command)`
: Passes Command to a new default shell process for execution. Succeeds if the C library function `system()` returns 0.

`system(+Command, -Status)`
: Passes *Command* to a new default shell process for execution. *Status* is unified with the value returned by the C library function `system()`.

`tmpnam(-FileName)`
: Interface to the ANSI C function tmpnam(3). A unique file name is created and unified with *FileName*.

`wait(+Pid, -Status)`
: Waits for the child process *Pid* to terminate. The exit status is returned in *Status*. The function is similar to that of the UNIX function `waitpid(3)`.

`working_directory(?OldDirectory, ?NewDirectory)`
: *OldDirectory* is the current working directory, and the working directory is set to *NewDirectory*. In particular, the goal `working_directory(Dir,Dir)` unifies *Dir* with the current working directory without changing anything.

# 26 Updatable Binary Trees

This package uses binary trees to represent arrays of $N$ elements where $N$ is fixed, unlike `library(arrays)`. To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(trees)).
```

Binary trees have the following representation: `t` denotes the empty tree, and `t(Label,Left,Right)` denotes the binary tree with label *Label* and children *Left* and *Right*.

`gen_label(?Index, +Tree, ?Label)`
: *Label* labels the *Index*-th element in the *Tree*. Can be used to enumerate all *Labels* by ascending *Index*. Use `get_label/3` instead if *Index* is instantiated.

`get_label(+Index, +Tree, ?Label)`
: *Label* labels the *Index*-th element in the *Tree*.

`list_to_tree(+List, -Tree)`
: Constructs a binary *Tree* from *List* where `get_label(K,Tree,Lab)` iff *Lab* is the *K*th element of *List*.

`map_tree(:Pred, +OldTree, -NewTree)`
: *OldTree* and *NewTree* are binary trees of the same shape and *Pred(Old,New)* is true for corresponding elements of the two trees.

`put_label(+I, +OldTree, +Label, -NewTree)`
: Constructs *NewTree*, which has the same shape and elements as *OldTree*, except that the *I*-th element is *Label*.

`put_label(+I, +OldTree, ?OldLabel, -NewTree, ?NewLabel)`
: Constructs *NewTree*, which has the same shape and elements as *OldTree*, except that the *I*-th element is changed from *OldLabel* to *NewLabel*.

`tree_size(+Tree, ?Size)`
: Calculates as *Size* the number of elements in the *Tree*.

`tree_to_list(+Tree, ?List)`
: Is the converse operation to `list_to_tree/2`. Any mapping or checking operation can be done by converting the tree to a list, mapping or checking the list, and converting the result, if any, back to a tree.

# 27 Unweighted Graph Operations

Directed and undirected graphs are fundamental data structures representing arbitrary relationships between data objects. This package provides a Prolog implementation of directed graphs, undirected graphs being a special case of directed graphs.

An unweighted directed graph (ugraph) is represented as a list of (vertex-neighbors) pairs, where the pairs are in standard order (as produced by `keysort` with unique keys) and the neighbors of each vertex are also in standard order (as produced by `sort`), every neighbor appears as a vertex even if it has no neighbors itself, and no vertex is a neighbor to itself.

An undirected graph is represented as a directed graph where for each edge *(U,V)* there is a symmetric edge *(V,U)*.

An edge *(U,V)* is represented as the term *U-V*. *U* and *V* must be distinct.

A vertex can be any term. Two vertices are distinct iff they are not identical (`==`).

A path from *u* to *v* is represented as a list of vertices, beginning with *u* and ending with *v*. A vertex cannot appear twice in a path. A path is maximal in a graph if it cannot be extended.

A tree is a tree-shaped directed graph (all vertices have a single predecessor, except the root node, which has none).

A strongly connected component of a graph is a maximal set of vertices where each vertex has a path in the graph to every other vertex.

Sets are represented as ordered lists (see Chapter 22 [Ordsets], page 371).

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(ugraphs)).
```

The following predicates are defined for directed graphs.

`vertices_edges_to_ugraph(+Vertices, +Edges, -Graph)`
: Is true if *Vertices* is a list of vertices, *Edges* is a list of edges, and *Graph* is a graph built from *Vertices* and *Edges*. *Vertices* and *Edges* may be in any order. The vertices mentioned in *Edges* do not have to occur explicitly in *Vertices*. *Vertices* may be used to specify vertices that are not connected by any edges.

`vertices(+Graph, -Vertices)`
: Unifies *Vertices* with the vertices in *Graph*.

`edges(+Graph, -Edges)`
: Unifies *Edges* with the edges in *Graph*.

`add_vertices(+Graph1, +Vertices, -Graph2)`
: *Graph2* is *Graph1* with *Vertices* added to it.

`del_vertices(+Graph1, +Vertices, -Graph2)`
: *Graph2* is *Graph1* with *Vertices* and all edges to and from them removed from it.

`add_edges(+Graph1, +Edges, -Graph2)`
: *Graph2* is *Graph1* with *Edges* and their "to" and "from" vertices added to it.

`del_edges(+Graph1, +Edges, -Graph2)`
: *Graph2* is *Graph1* with *Edges* removed from it.

`transpose(+Graph, -Transpose)`
: *Transpose* is the graph computed by replacing each edge *(u,v)* in *Graph* by its symmetric edge *(v,u)*. Takes O(N^2) time.

`neighbors(+Vertex, +Graph, -Neighbors)`
`neighbours(+Vertex, +Graph, -Neighbors)`
: *Vertex* is a vertex in *Graph* and *Neighbors* are its neighbors.

`complement(+Graph, -Complement)`
: *Complement* is the complement graph of *Graph*, i.e. the graph that has the same vertices as *Graph* but only the edges that are not in *Graph*.

`compose(+G1, +G2, -Composition)`
: Computes *Composition* as the composition of two graphs, which need not have the same set of vertices.

`transitive_closure(+Graph, -Closure)`
: Computes *Closure* as the transitive closure of *Graph* in O(N^3) time.

`symmetric_closure(+Graph, -Closure)`
: Computes *Closure* as the symmetric closure of *Graph*, i.e. for each edge *(u,v)* in *Graph*, add its symmetric edge *(v,u)*. Takes O(N^2) time. This is useful for making a directed graph undirected.

`top_sort(+Graph, -Sorted)`
: Finds a topological ordering of a *Graph* and returns the ordering as a list of *Sorted* vertices. Fails iff no ordering exists, i.e. iff the graph contains cycles. Takes O(N^2) time.

`max_path(+V1, +V2, +Graph, -Path, -Cost)`
: *Path* is a longest path of cost *Cost* from *V1* to *V2* in *Graph*, there being no cyclic paths from *V1* to *V2*. Takes O(N^2) time.

`min_path(+V1, +V2, +Graph, -Path, -Cost)`
: *Path* is a shortest path of cost *Cost* from *V1* to *V2* in *Graph*. Takes O(N^2) time.

`min_paths(+Vertex, +Graph, -Tree)`
: *Tree* is a tree of all the shortest paths from *Vertex* to every other vertex in *Graph*. This is the single-source shortest paths problem.

`path(+Vertex, +Graph, -Path)`
: Given a *Graph* and a *Vertex* of *Graph*, returns a maximal *Path* rooted at *Vertex*, enumerating more paths on backtracking.

`reduce(+Graph, -Reduced)`
: *Reduced* is the reduced graph for *Graph*. The vertices of the reduced graph are the strongly connected components of *Graph*. There is an edge in *Reduced* from $u$ to $v$ iff there is an edge in *Graph* from one of the vertices in $u$ to one of the vertices in $v$.

`reachable(+Vertex, +Graph, -Reachable)`
: Given a *Graph* and a *Vertex* of *Graph*, returns the set of vertices that are *reachable* from that *Vertex*, including *Vertex* itself. Takes O(N^2) time.

`random_ugraph(+P, +N, -Graph)`
: Where $P$ is a probability, unifies *Graph* with a random graph of vertices *1..N* where each possible edge is included with probability $P$.

The following predicates are defined for undirected graphs only.

`min_tree(+Graph, -Tree, -Cost)`
: *Tree* is a spanning tree of *Graph* with cost *Cost*, if it exists.

`clique(+Graph, +K, -Clique)`
: *Clique* is a maximal clique (complete subgraph) of $n$ vertices of *Graph*, where $n \geq K$. $n$ is not necessarily maximal.

`independent_set(+Graph, +K, -Set)`
: *Set* is a maximal independent (unconnected) set of $n$ vertices of *Graph*, where $n \geq K$. $n$ is not necessarily maximal.

`coloring(+Graph, +K, -Coloring)`
`colouring(+Graph, +K, -Coloring)`
: *Coloring* is a mapping from vertices to colors $[1, n]$ of *Graph* such that all edges have distinct end colors, where $n \leq K$. The mapping is represented as an ordered list of *Vertex*-*Color* pairs. $n$ is not necessarily minimal.

# 28 Weighted Graph Operations

A weighted directed graph (wgraph) is represented as a list of (vertex-edgelist) pairs, where the pairs are in standard order (as produced by `keysort` with unique keys), the edgelist is a list of (neighbor-weight) pair also in standard order (as produced by `keysort` with unique keys), every weight is a nonnegative integer, every neighbor appears as a vertex even if it has no neighbors itself, and no vertex is a neighbor to itself.

An undirected graph is represented as a directed graph where for each edge *(U,V)* there is a symmetric edge *(V,U)*.

An edge *(U,V)* with weight *W* is represented as the term *U-(V-W)*. *U* and *V* must be distinct.

A vertex can be any term. Two vertices are distinct iff they are not identical (`==`).

A path from *u* to *v* is represented as a list of vertices, beginning with *u* and ending with *v*. A vertex cannot appear twice in a path. A path is maximal in a graph if it cannot be extended.

A tree is a tree-shaped directed graph (all vertices have a single predecessor, except the root node, which has none).

A strongly connected component of a graph is a maximal set of vertices where each vertex has a path in the graph to every other vertex.

Sets are represented as ordered lists (see Chapter 22 [Ordsets], page 371).

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(wgraphs)).
```

The following predicates are defined for directed graphs.

`wgraph_to_ugraph(+WeightedGraph, -Graph)`
: *Graph* has the same vertices and edges as *WeightedGraph*, except the edges of *Graph* are unweighted.

`ugraph_to_wgraph(+Graph, -WeightedGraph)`
: *WeightedGraph* has the same vertices and edges as *Graph*, except the edges of *WeightedGraph* all have weight 1.

`vertices_edges_to_wgraph(+Vertices, +Edges, -WeightedGraph)`
: *Vertices* is a list of vertices, *Edges* is a list of edges, and *WeightedGraph* is a graph built from *Vertices* and *Edges*. *Vertices* and *Edges* may be in any order. The vertices mentioned in *Edges* do not have to occur explicitly in *Vertices*. *Vertices* may be used to specify vertices that are not connected by any edges.

`vertices(+WeightedGraph, -Vertices)`
: Unifies *Vertices* with the vertices in *WeightedGraph*.

`edges(+WeightedGraph, -Edges)`
Unifies *Edges* with the edges in *WeightedGraph*.

`add_vertices(+WeightedGraph1, +Vertices, -WeightedGraph2)`
*WeightedGraph2* is *WeightedGraph1* with *Vertices* added to it.

`del_vertices(+WeightedGraph1, +Vertices, -WeightedGraph2)`
*WeightedGraph2* is *WeightedGraph1* with *Vertices* and all edges to and from them removed from it.

`add_edges(+WeightedGraph1, +Edges, -WeightedGraph2)`
*WeightedGraph2* is *WeightedGraph1* with *Edges* and their "to" and "from" vertices added to it.

`del_edges(+WeightedGraph1, +Edges, -WeightedGraph2)`
*WeightedGraph2* is *WeightedGraph1* with *Edges* removed from it.

`transpose(+WeightedGraph, -Transpose)`
*Transpose* is the graph computed by replacing each edge *(u,v)* in *WeightedGraph* by its symmetric edge *(v,u)*. It can only be used one way around. Takes O(N^2) time.

`neighbors(+Vertex, +WeightedGraph, -Neighbors)`
`neighbours(+Vertex, +WeightedGraph, -Neighbors)`
*Vertex* is a vertex in *WeightedGraph* and *Neighbors* are its weighted neighbors.

`transitive_closure(+WeightedGraph, -Closure)`
Computes *Closure* as the transitive closure of *WeightedGraph* in O(N^3) time.

`symmetric_closure(+WeightedGraph, -Closure)`
Computes *Closure* as the symmetric closure of *WeightedGraph*, i.e. for each edge *(u,v)* in *WeightedGraph*, add its symmetric edge *(v,u)*. Takes O(N^2) time. This is useful for making a directed graph undirected.

`top_sort(+WeightedGraph, -Sorted)`
Finds a topological ordering of a *WeightedGraph* and returns the ordering as a list of *Sorted* vertices. Fails iff no ordering exists, i.e. iff the graph contains cycles. Takes O(N^2) time.

`max_path(+V1, +V2, +WeightedGraph, -Path, -Cost)`
*Path* is a maximum-cost path of cost *Cost* from *V1* to *V2* in *WeightedGraph*, there being no cyclic paths from *V1* to *V2*. Takes O(N^2) time.

`min_path(+V1, +V2, +WeightedGraph, -Path, -Cost)`
*Path* is a minimum-cost path of cost *Cost* from *V1* to *V2* in *WeightedGraph*. Takes O(N^2) time.

`min_paths(+Vertex, +WeightedGraph, -Tree)`
*Tree* is a tree of all the minimum-cost paths from *Vertex* to every other vertex in *WeightedGraph*. This is the single-source minimum-cost paths problem.

`path(+Vertex, +WeightedGraph, -Path)`
Given a *WeightedGraph* and a *Vertex* of *WeightedGraph*, returns a maximal *Path* rooted at *Vertex*, enumerating more paths on backtracking.

`reduce(+WeightedGraph, -Reduced)`
: *Reduced* is the reduced graph for *WeightedGraph*. The vertices of the reduced graph are the strongly connected components of *WeightedGraph*. There is an edge in *Reduced* from *u* to *v* iff there is an edge in *WeightedGraph* from one of the vertices in *u* to one of the vertices in *v*.

`reachable(+Vertex, +WeightedGraph, -Reachable)`
: Given a *WeightedGraph* and a *Vertex* of *WeightedGraph*, returns the set of vertices that are *reachable* from that *Vertex*. Takes O(N^2) time.

`random_wgraph(+P, +N, +W, -WeightedGraph)`
: Where *P* is a probability, unifies *WeightedGraph* with a random graph of vertices *1..N* where each possible edge is included with probability *P* and random weight in *1..W*.

The following predicate is defined for undirected graphs only.

`min_tree(+WeightedGraph, -Tree, -Cost)`
: *Tree* is a minimum-cost spanning tree of *WeightedGraph* with cost *Cost*, if it exists.

# 29 Socket I/O

This library package defines a number of predicates manipulating sockets. They are all rather straight-forward interfaces to the corresponding BSD-type socket functions with the same name (except `current_host/1`). The reader should therefore study the appropriate documents for a deeper description.

The *Domain* is either the atom `'AF_INET'` or `'AF_UNIX'`. They correspond directly to the same domains in BSD-type sockets. `'AF_UNIX'` may not be available on non-UNIX platforms.

An *Address* is either `'AF_INET'(Host,Port)` or `'AF_UNIX'(SocketName)`. *Host* is an atom denoting a hostname (not an IP-address), *Port* is a portnumber and *SocketName* is an atom denoting a socket. A reader familiar with BSD sockets will understand this immediately.

All streams below can be both read from and written on. All I/O predicates operating on streams can be used, for example `read/2`, `write/2`, `format/3`, `current_stream/3`, etc. Socket streams are block buffered both on read and write by default. This can be changed by calling `socket_buffering/4`.

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(sockets)).
```

`socket(+Domain, -Socket)`
: A socket *Socket* in the domain *Domain* is created.

`socket_close(+Socket)`
: *Socket* is closed. Sockets used in `socket_connect/2` should not be closed by `socket_close/1` as they will be closed when the corresponding stream is closed.

`socket_bind(+Socket, 'AF_UNIX'(+SocketName))`
`socket_bind(+Socket, 'AF_INET'(?Host,?Port))`
: The socket *Socket* is bound to the address. If *Port* is uninstantiated, the operating system picks a port number to which *Port* is bound.

`socket_connect(+Socket, 'AF_UNIX'(+SocketName), -Stream)`
`socket_connect(+Socket, 'AF_INET'(+Host,+Port), -Stream)`
: The socket *Socket* is connected to the address. *Stream* is a special stream on which items can be both read and written.

`socket_listen(+Socket, +Length)`
: The socket *Socket* is defined to have a maximum backlog queue of *Length* pending connections.

`socket_accept(+Socket, -Stream)`
`socket_accept(+Socket, -Client, -Stream)`
: The first connection to socket *Socket* is extracted. The stream *Stream* is opened for read and write on this connection. For the `'AF_INET'` domain, *Client* will be unified with an atom containing the Internet host address of the connect-

ing entity in numbers-and-dots notation. For other domains, *Client* will be unbound.

Under Windows `socket_accept/[2,3]` is not interruptible. This will prevent the process from terminating or responding to keyboard interrupt. A workaround is to use `socket_select/5` with a timeout, something like:

```
%% same as socket_accept/3 but will be interruptible with CTRL-C,
%% CTRL-BREAK etc (within 2 seconds)
nonblocking_socket_accept(Socket, Client, Stream) :-
   Seconds = 2,   % wait this long between retries
   MicroSeconds = 0,
   TimeOut = Seconds:MicroSeconds,
   repeat,        % repeat until connection or error
   socket_select([accept-Socket], Accepted, TimeOut, [], _ReadStreams),
   %% Here Accepted == [] if the timeout period expired
   Accepted = [accept-connection(Client1, Stream1)],
   !,
   Client = Client1,
   Stream = Stream1.
```

`socket_buffering(+`*`Stream`*`, +`*`Direction`*`, -`*`OldBuf`*`, +`*`NewBuf`*`)`

The buffering in the *Direction* of the socket stream *Stream* is changed from *OldBuf* to *NewBuf*. *Direction* should be `read` or `write`. *OldBuf* and *NewBuf* should be `unbuf` for unbuffered I/O or `fullbuf` for block buffered I/O.

`socket_select(+`*`TermsSockets`*`, -`*`NewTermsStreams`*`, +`*`TimeOut`*`, +`*`Streams`*`, -`*`ReadStreams`*`)`

The list of streams in *Streams* is checked for readable characters. The list *ReadStreams* returns the streams with readable data. Under Windows, only socket streams can be used with `socket_select`. Under UNIX, a stream can be any stream associated with a file descriptor but `socket_select/5` may block for non-socket streams even though there is data available. The reason is that non-socket streams can have buffered data available, e.g. within a `C stdio FILE*`.

`socket_select/5` also waits for connections to the sockets specified by *TermsSockets*. This argument should be a list of *Term-Socket* pairs, where *Term*, which can be any term, is used as an identifier. *NewTermsStreams* is a list of *Term*-`connection(`*`Client`*`,`*`Stream`*`)` pairs, where *Stream* is a new stream open for communicating with a process connecting to the socket identified with *Term*, *Client* is the client host address (see `socket_accept/3`).

If *TimeOut* is instantiated to `off`, the predicate waits until something is available. If *TimeOut* is `S:U` the predicate waits at most `S` seconds and `U` microseconds. Both `S` and `U` must be integers >=0. If there is a timeout, *ReadStreams* and *NewTermsStreams* are `[]`.

`socket_select(+Sockets, -NewStreams, +TimeOut, +Streams, -ReadStreams)`
`socket_select(+Socket, -NewStream, +TimeOut, +Streams, -ReadStreams)`
`socket_select(+Sockets, -NewStreams, -NewClients, +TimeOut, +Streams, -ReadStreams)`
`socket_select(+Socket, -NewStream, -NewClient, +TimeOut, +Streams, -ReadStreams)`

These forms, which are provided for backward compatibility only, differs in how sockets are specified and new streams returned.

`socket_select/[5,6]` also wait for connections to the sockets in the list *Sockets*. *NewStreams* is the list of new streams opened for communicating with the connecting processes. *NewClients* is the corresponding list of client host addresses (see `socket_accept/3`).

The second form requires one socket (not a list) for the first argument and returns a stream, *NewStream*, if a connection is made.

`current_host(?HostName)`

*HostName* is unified with the fully qualified name of the machine the process is executing on.

`hostname_address(+HostName, -HostAddress)`
`hostname_address(-HostName, +HostAddress)`

The Internet host is resolved given either the host name or address. *HostAddress* should be an atom containing the Internet host address in numbers-and-dots notation. The predicate will fail if the host name or address cannot be resolved.

# 30 Linda—Process Communication

Linda is a concept for process communication.

For an introduction and a deeper description, see [Carreiro & Gelernter 89a] or [Carreiro & Gelernter 89b], respectively.

One process is running as a server and one or more processes are running as clients. The processes are communicating with sockets and supports networks.

The server is in principle a blackboard on which the clients can write (`out/1`), read (`rd/1`) and remove (`in/1`) data. If the data is not present on the blackboard, the predicates suspend the process until they are available.

There are some more predicates besides the basic `out/1`, `rd/1` and `in/1`. The `in_noblock/1` and `rd_noblock/1` does not suspend if the data is not available—they fail instead. A blocking fetch of a conjunction of data can be done with `in/2` or `rd/2`.

**Example**: A simple producer-consumer. In client 1:

```
producer :-
       produce(X),
       out(p(X)),
       producer.

produce(X) :- .....
```

In client 2:

```
consumer :-
       in(p(A)),
       consume(A),
       consumer.

consume(A) :- .....
```

**Example**: Synchronization

```
       ...,
       in(ready),  %Waits here until someone does out(ready)
       ...,
```

**Example**: A critical region

```
       ...,
       in(region_free),  % wait for region to be free
       critical_part,
       out(region_free), % let next one in
       ...,
```

**Example**: Reading global data

```
            ...,
            rd(data(Data)),
            ...,

     or, without blocking:
            ...,
            rd_noblock(data(Data)) ->
                  do_something(Data)
            ;     write('Data not available!'),nl
            ),
            ...,
```

**Example**: Waiting for one of several events

```
            ...,
            in([e(1),e(2),...,e(n)], E),
     %  Here is E instantiated to the first tuple that became available
            ...,
```

## 30.1 Server

The server is the process running the "blackboard process". It is an ordinary SICStus process, which can be run on a separate machine if necessary.

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library('linda/server')).
```

and start the server with `linda/[0,1]`.

`linda`

Starts a Linda-server in this SICStus. The network address is written to the current output stream as *Host:PortNumber*.

`linda(`*`:Options`*`)`

Starts a Linda-server in this SICStus. Each option on the list *Options* is one of

*`Address-Goal`*

where *Address* must be unifiable with *Host:Port* and *Goal* must be instantiated to a goal.

When the linda server is started, *Host* and *Port* are bound to the server host and port respectively and the goal *Goal* is called. A typical use of this would be to store the connection information in a file so that the clients can find the server to connect to.

For backward compatibility, if *Options* is not a list, it is assumed to be an option of the form *`Address-Goal`*.

In SICStus before 3.9.1, *Goal* needed an explicit module prefix to ensure it was called in the right module. This is no longer necessary since `linda/1` is now a meta-predicate.

`accept_hook(`*`Client,Stream,Goal`*`)`

When a client attempts to connects to the server *Client* and *Stream* will be bound to the IP address of the client and the socket stream connected to the client, respectively. The *Goal* is then called, and if it succeeds, the client is allowed to connect. If *Goal* fails, the server will close the stream and ignore the connection request. A typical use of this feature would be to restrict the addresses of the clients allowed to connect. If you require bullet proof security, you would probably need something more sophisticated.

**Example**:

```
| ?- linda([(Host:Port)-mypred(Host,Port),
            accept_hook(C,S,should_accept(C,S))]).
```

Will call `mypred/2` when the server is started. `mypred/2` could start the client-processes, save the address for the clients etc. Whenever a client attempts to connect from a host with IP address *Addr*, a bi-directional socket stream *Stream* will be opened to the client, and `should_accept(`*`Addr,Stream`*`)` will be called to determine if the client should be allowed to connect.

## 30.2 Client

The clients are one or more SICStus processes that have connection(s) to the server.

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library('linda/client')).
```

Some of the following predicates fail if they don't receive an answer from the Linda-server in a reasonable amount of time. That time is set with the predicate `linda_timeout/2`.

`linda_client(+`*`Address`*`)`

Establishes a connection to a Linda-server specified by *Address*. The *Address* is of the format *Host:PortNumber* as given by `linda/[0,1]`.

It is not possible to be connected to two Linda-servers at the same time.

This predicate can fail due to a timeout.

`close_client`

Closes the connection to the server.

`shutdown_server/0`

Sends a Quit signal to the server, which keeps running after receiving this signal, until such time as all the clients have closed their connections. It is up to the clients to tell each other to quit. When all the clients are done, the

server stops (i.e. `linda/[0,1]` succeeds). Courtesy of Malcolm Ryan. Note that `close_client/0` should be called *after* `shutdown_server/0`. `shutdown_server/0` will raise an error if there is no connection between the client and the server.

`linda_timeout(?OldTime, ?NewTime)`
This predicate controls Linda's timeout. *OldTime* is unified with the old timeout and then timeout is set to *NewTime*. The value is either `off` or of the form *Seconds:Milliseconds*. The former value indicates that the timeout mechanism is disabled, that is, eternal waiting. The latter form is the *timeout-time*.

`out(+Tuple)`
Places the tuple *Tuple* in Linda's tuple-space.

`in(?Tuple)`
Removes the tuple *Tuple* from Linda's tuple-space if it is there. If not, the predicate blocks until it is available (that is, someone performs an `out/1`).

`in_noblock(?Tuple)`
Removes the tuple *Tuple* from Linda's tuple-space if it is there. If not, the predicate fails.

This predicate can fail due to a timeout.

`in(+TupleList, ?Tuple)`
As `in/1` but succeeds when either of the tuples in *TupleList* is available. *Tuple* is unified with the fetched tuple. If that unification fails, the tuple is *not* reinserted in the tuple-space.

`rd(?Tuple)`
Succeeds if *Tuple* is available in the tuple-space, suspends otherwise until it is available. Compare this with `in/1`: the tuple is *not* removed.

`rd_noblock(?Tuple)`
Succeeds if *Tuple* is available in the tuple-space, fails otherwise.

This predicate can fail due to a timeout.

`rd(+TupleList, ?Tuple)`
As `in/2` but does not remove any tuples.

`bagof_rd_noblock(?Template, +Tuple, ?Bag)`
*Bag* is the list of all instances of *Template* such that *Tuple* exists in the tuple-space.

The behavior of variables in *Tuple* and *Template* is as in `bagof/3`. The variables could be existentially quantified with `^/2` as in `bagof/3`.

The operation is performed as an atomic operation.

This predicate can fail due to a timeout.

**Example**: Assume that only one client is connected to the server and that the tuple-space initially is empty.

```
| ?- out(x(a,3)), out(x(a,4)), out(x(b,3)), out(x(c,3)).

| ?- bagof_rd_noblock(C-N, x(C,N), L).

C = _32,
L = [a-3,a-4,b-3,c-3],
N = _52

| ?- bagof_rd_noblock(C, N^x(C,N), L).

C = _32,
L = [a,a,b,c],
N = _48
```

# 31 External Storage of Terms (Berkeley DB)

This library module handles storage and retrieval of terms on files. By using indexing, the store/retrieve operations are efficient also for large data sets. The package is an interface to the Berkeley DB toolset.

The package is loaded by the query:

```
| ?- use_module(library(bdb)).
```

## 31.1 Basics

The idea is to get a behavior similar to `assert/1`, `retract/1` and `clause/2`, but the terms are stored on files instead of in primary memory.

The differences compared with the Prolog database are:

- A *database* must be opened before any access and closed after the last access. (There are special predicates for this: `db_open/[4,5]` and `db_close/1`.)
- The functors and the indexing specifications of the terms to be stored have to be given when the database is created. (see Section 31.7 [The DB-Spec], page 408).
- The indexing is specified when the database is created. It is possible to index on other parts of the term than just the functor and first argument.
- Changes affect the database immediately.
- The database will store variables with blocked goals as ordinary variables.

Some commercial databases can't store non-ground terms or more than one instance of a term. This library module can however store terms of either kind.

## 31.2 Current Limitations

- The terms are not necessarily fetched in the same order as they were stored.
- If the process dies during an update operation (`db_store/3`, `db_erase/[2,3]`), the database can be inconsistent.
- Databases can only be shared between processes running on the machine where the environment is created (see Section 31.5 [Predicates], page 403). The database itself can be on a different machine.
- The number of terms ever inserted in a database cannot exceed 2^32-1.
- Duplicate keys are not handled efficiently by Berkeley DB. This limitation is supposed to get lifted in the future. Duplicate keys can result from indexing on non-key attribute sets, inserting terms with variables on indexing positions, or simply from storing the same term more than once.

## 31.3 Berkeley DB

This library module is an interface to the Berkeley DB toolset to support persistent storage of Prolog terms. Some of the notions of Berkeley DB are directly inherited, e.g. the environment.

The interface uses the Concurrent Access Methods product of Berkeley DB. This means that multiple processes can open the same databas, but transactions and disaster recovery are not supported.

The environment and the database files are ordinary Berkeley DB entities but uses a custom hash function which means that most, but not all, of the standard support utilities will work.

## 31.4 The DB-Spec—Informal Description

The *db-spec* defines which functors are allowed and which parts of a term are used for indexing in a database. The syntax of a spec resembles to that of the mode spec. The db-spec is a list of atoms and compound terms where the arguments are either `+` or `-`. A term can be inserted in the database if there is a spec in the spec list with the same functor.

Multilevel indexing is not supported, terms have to be "flattened".

Every spec with the functor of the *indexed term* specifies an indexing. Every argument where there is a `+` in the spec is indexed on.

The idea of the db-spec is illustrated with a few examples. (A section further down explains the db-spec in a more formal way).

Given a spec of `[f(+,-), .(+,-), g, f(-,+)]` the indexing works as follows. (The parts with indexing are underlined.)

| *Term* | *Store* | *Fetch* |
|---|---|---|
| `g(x,y)` | domain error | domain error |
| `f(A,B)` | `f(A,B)`<br>`-` | instantiation error |
| `f(a,b)` | `f(a,b) f(a,b)`<br>`- - - -` | `f(a,b)`<br>`- -` |
| `[a,b]` | `.(a,.(b,[]))`<br>`- -` | `.(a,.(b,[]))`<br>`- -` |
| `g` | `g`<br>`-` | `g`<br>`-` |

The specification `[f(+,-), f(-,+)]` is different from `[f(+,+)]`. The first specifies that two indices are to be made whereas the second specifies that only one index is to be made on both arguments of the term.

## 31.5 Predicates

### 31.5.1 Conventions

The following conventions are used in the predicate descriptions below.

- *Mode* is either `update` or `read` or `enumerate`. In mode `read` no updates can be made. Mode `enumerate` is like mode `read`, but indexing cannot be used, i.e. you can only sequentially enumerate the items in the database. In mode `enumerate` only the file storing the terms along with their references is used.
- *EnvRef* is a reference to an open database environment. The environment is returned when it is opened. The reference becomes invalid after the environment has been closed.
- *DBRef* is a reference to an open database. The reference is returned when the database is opened. The reference becomes invalid after the database has been closed.
- *TermRef* is a reference to a term in a given database. The reference is returned when a term is stored. The reference stays valid even after the database has been closed and hence can be stored permanently as part of another term. However, if such references are stored in the database, automatic compression of the database (using `db_compress/[2,3]`) is not possible, in that case the user has to write her own compressing predicate.
- *SpecList* is a description of the indexing scheme; see Section 31.7 [The DB-Spec], page 408.
- *Term* is any Prolog term.
- *Iterator* is a non-backtrackable mutable object. It can be used to iterate through a set of terms stored in a database. The iterators are unidirectional.

### 31.5.2 The Environment

To enable sharing of databases between process, programs have to create *environments* and the databases should be opened in these environments. A database can be shared between processes that open it in the same environment. An environment physically consists of a directory containing the files needed to enable sharing databases between processes. The directory of the environment has to be located in a local file system.

Databases can be opened outside any environment (see `db_open/4`), but in that case a process writing the database must ensure exclusive access or the behavior of the predicates is undefined.

### 31.5.3 Memory Leaks

In order to avoid memory leaks, environments, databases and iterators should always be closed explicitly. Consider using `call_cleanup/2` to automate the closing/deallocation of

these objects. You can always use `db_current_env/1`, `db_current/5` and `db_current_iterator/3` to enumerate the currently living objects.

> **Please note**: a database must not be closed while there are outstanding choices for some `db_fetch/3` goal that refers to that database. Outstanding choices can be removed with a cut (`!`).

### 31.5.4 The Predicates

`db_open_env(+EnvName, -EnvRef)`
`db_open_env(+EnvName, +CacheSize, -EnvRef)`

Opens an environment with the name *EnvName*. A directory with this name is created for the environment if necessary. *EnvName* is not subject to `absolute_file_name/3` conversion.

By using `db_open_env/3` one can specify the size of the cache: *CacheSize* is the (integer) size of the cache in kilobytes. The size of the cache cannot be less than 20 kilobytes. `db_open_env/2` will create a cache of the system's default size.

The size of the cache is determined when the environment is created and cannot be changed by future openings.

A process cannot open the same environment more than once.

`db_close_env(+EnvRef)`

Closes an environment. All databases opened in the environment will be closed as well.

`db_current_env(?EnvName, ?EnvRef)`

Unifies the arguments with the open environments. This predicate can be used for enumerating all currently open environments through backtracking.

`db_open(+DBName, +Mode, ?SpecList, -DBRef)`
`db_open(+DBName, +Mode, ?SpecList, +Options, -DBRef)`

Opens a database with the name *DBName*. The database physically consists of a directory with the same name, containing the files that make up the database. If the directory does not exist, it is created. In that case *Mode* must be `update` and the db-spec *SpecList* must be ground. If an existing database is opened and *Mode* is `read` or `update`, *SpecList* is unified with the db-spec given when the database was created. If the unification fails an error is raised. *DBRef* is unified with a reference to the opened database. *DBName* is not subject to `absolute_file_name/3` conversion.

If *Mode* is `enumerate` then the indexing specification is not read, and *SpecList* is left unbound.

*Options* provides a way to specify an environment in which to open the database, or a cache size. *Options* should be a list of terms of the following form:

`environment(EnvRef)`

The database will be opened in this environment.

`cache_size(CacheSize)`
This is the (integer) size of the cache in kilobytes. The size of the cache cannot be less than 20 kilobytes. If *CacheSize* is given as the atom `default`, a default cache size will be used. If *CacheSize* is given as the atom `off` or the atom `none`, all modified records will be flushed to disk after each operation.

To avoid inconsistency, if multiple processes open the same database, then all of them should do that with *Mode* set to `read` or `enumerate`. (This is not enforced by the system.)

`db_close(+DBRef)`
Closes the database referenced by *DBRef*. Any iterators opened in the database will be deallocated.

`db_current(?DBName, ?Mode, ?SpecList, ?EnvRef, ?DBRef)`
Unifies the arguments with the open databases. This predicate can be used to enumerate all currently open databases through backtracking. If the database was opened without an environment, then *EnvRef* will be unified with the atom `none`.

`db_store(+DBRef, +Term, -TermRef)`
Stores *Term* in the database *DBRef*. *TermRef* is unified with a corresponding term reference. The functor of *Term* must match the functor of a spec in the db-spec associated with *DBRef*.

`db_fetch(+DBRef, ?Term, ?TermRef)`
Unifies *Term* with a term from the database *DBRef*. At the same time, *TermRef* is unified with a corresponding term reference. Backtracking over the predicate unifies with all terms matching *Term*.

If *TermRef* is not instantiated then both the functor and the instantiatedness of *Term* must match a spec in the db-spec associated with *DBRef*.

If *TermRef* is instantiated, the referenced term is read and unified with *Term*.

If you simply want to find all matching terms, it is more efficient to use `db_findall/5` or `db_enumerate/3`.

`db_findall(+DBRef, +Template, +Term, :Goal, ?Bag)`
Unifies *Bag* with the list of instances of *Template* in all proofs of *Goal* found when *Term* is unified with a matching term from the database *DBRef*. Both the functor and the instantiatedness of *Term* must match a spec in the db-spec associated with *DBRef*. Conceptually, this predicate is equivalent to `findall(Template, (db_fetch(DBRef, Term, _), Goal), Bag)`.

`db_erase(+DBRef, +TermRef)`
`db_erase(+DBRef, +TermRef, +Term)`
Deletes the term from the database *DBRef* that is referenced by *TermRef*.

In the case of `db_erase/2` the term associated with *TermRef* has to be looked up. `db_erase/3` assumes that the term *Term* is identical with the term associated with *TermRef* (modulo variable renaming). If this is not the case, the behavior is undefined.

`db_enumerate(+DBRef, ?Term, ?TermRef)`

Unifies *Term* with a term from the database *DBRef*. At the same time, *TermRef* is unified with a corresponding term reference. Backtracking over the predicate unifies with all terms matching *Term*.

Implemented by linear search—the db-spec associated with *DBRef* is ignored. It is not useful to call this predicate with *TermRef* instantiated.

`db_sync(+DBRef)`

Flushes any cached information from the database referenced by *DBRef* to stable storage.

`db_compress(+DBRef, +DBName)`
`db_compress(+DBRef, +DBName, +SpecList)`

Copies the database given by *DBRef* to a new database named by *DBName*. The new database will be a compressed version of the first one in the sense that it will not have "holes" resulting from deletion of terms. Deleted term references will also be reused, which implies that references that refer to terms in the old database will be invalid in the new one.

`db_compress/2` looks for a database with the db-spec of the original one. `db_compress/3` stores the terms found in the original database with the indexing specification *SpecList*. `db_compress/2` cannot be used if the database *DBRef* was opened in mode `enumerate`.

If the database *DBName* already exists then the terms of *DBRef* will be appended to it. Of course *DBName* must have an indexing specification, which enables the terms in *DBRef* to be inserted into it.

In the case of `db_compress/3` if the database *DBName* does not exist, then *SpecList* must be a valid indexing specification.

`db_make_iterator(+DBRef, -Iterator)`
`db_make_iterator(+DBRef, +Term, -Iterator)`

Creates a new iterator and unifies it with *Iterator*. Iterators created with `db_make_iterator/2` iterate through the whole database. Iterators created with `db_make_iterator/3` iterate through the terms that would be found by `db_fetch(DBRef, Term, _)`.

Every iterator created by `db_make_iterator/[2,3]` must be destroyed with `db_iterator_done/1`.

`db_iterator_next(+Iterator, ?Term, ?TermRef)`

*Iterator* advances to the next term, *Term* and *TermRef* is unified with the term and its reference pointed to by *Iterator*. If there is no next term, the predicate fails.

`db_iterator_done(+Iterator)`

Deallocates *Iterator*, which must not be in use anymore.

`db_current_iterator(?DBRef, ?Term, ?Iterator)`

Unifies the the variables with the respective properties of the living iterators. This predicate can be used to enumerate all currently alive iterators through backtracking. If *Iterator* was made with `db_make_iterator/2` then *Term* will be left unbound.

`db_export(+DBName, +ExportFile)`
`db_export(+DBName, +Options, +ExportFile)`

Exports the database with the name *DBName* to the text file *ExportFile*. *ExportFile* can be imported by `db_import/[2,3]`.

*Options* should be an options list of the form acceptable by `db_open/[4,5]`.

In SICStus 3.12.0 `bdb:export/[2,3]` is available instead of `db_export/[2,3]`.

`db_import(+DBName, +ImportFile)`
`db_import(+DBName, +Options, +ImportFile)`

Imports the text file *ImportFile* into the database with the name *DBName*.

If *ImportFile* is imported into an existing database, the *SpecList* found in the *ImportFile* will be unified with the *SpecList* in the database.

*Options* should be an options list of the form acceptable by `db_open/[4,5]`.

In SICStus 3.12.0 `bdb:import/[2,3]` is available instead of `db_import/[2,3]`.

## 31.6 An Example Session

```
| ?- db_open(tempdb, update, [a(+,-)], DBRef), assert(tempdb(DBRef)).
DBRef = '$db'(1077241400)

| ?- tempdb(DBRef), db_store(DBRef, a(b,1), _).
DBRef = '$db'(1077241400)

| ?- tempdb(DBRef), db_store(DBRef, a(c,2), _).
DBRef = '$db'(1077241400)

| ?- tempdb(DBRef), db_fetch(DBRef, a(b,X), _).
X = 1,
DBRef = '$db'(1077241400) ? ;
no

| ?- tempdb(DBRef), db_enumerate(DBRef, X, _).
X = a(b,1),
DBRef = '$db'(1077241400) ? ;
X = a(c,2),
DBRef = '$db'(1077241400) ? ;
no

| ?- db_current(DBName, Mode, Spec, EnvRef, DBRef).
Mode = update,
Spec = [a(+,-)],
DBRef = '$db'(1077241400),
DBName = tempdb,
EnvRef = none ? ;
no

| ?- tempdb(DBRef), db_close(DBRef).
DBRef = '$db'(1077241400)
```

## 31.7 The DB-Spec

A db-spec has the form of a *speclist*:

*speclist* = [*spec1*, . . . , *specM*]

*spec* = *functor*(*argspec1*, . . . , *argspecN*)

*argspec* = + | -

where *functor* is a Prolog atom. The case $N = 0$ is allowed.

A spec *F*(*argspec1*, . . . , *argspecN*) is *applicable* to any nonvar term with principal functor $F/N$.

When storing a term $T$ we generate a hash code for every applicable spec in the db-spec, and a reference to $T$ is stored with each of them. (More precisely with each element of the set of generated hash codes). If $T$ contains nonvar elements on each `+` position in the spec, then the hash code depends on each of these elements. If $T$ does contain some variables on `+` position, then the hash code depends only on the functor of $T$.

When fetching a term $Q$ we look for an applicable spec for which there are no variables in $Q$ on positions maked `+`. If no applicable spec can be found a domain error is raised. If no spec can be found where on each `+` position a nonvar term occurs in $Q$ an instantiation error is raised. Otherwise, we choose the the spec with the most `+` postitions in it breaking ties by choosing the leftmost one.

The terms that contain nonvar terms on every `+` postition will be looked up using indexing based on the principal functor of the term and the principal functor of terms on `+` postitions. The other (more general) terms will be looked up using an indexing based on the principal functor of the term only.

As can be seen, storing and fetching terms with variables on `+` positions are not vigorously supported operations.

## 31.8 Exporting and importing a database

Since the database format of a Berkeley DB may change from version to version it may become necessary to migrate a database when upgrading. To this purpose there are two predicates available: `db_export/[2,3]` and `db_import/[2,3]` (see Section 31.5.4 [The Predicates], page 404).

The export/import feature was introduced in SICStus 3.12.0, but in that version you have to use `bdb:export/[2,3]` and `bdb:import/[2,3]`. Neither is exported from the bdb module, but can be used with module prefixing.

Since the bdb interface uses a custom hash function (see Section 31.3 [Berkeley DB], page 402), the standard Berkeley DB migration tools will not work.

# 32 Boolean Constraint Solver

The clp(B) system provided by this library module is an instance of the general Constraint Logic Programming scheme introduced in [Jaffar & Michaylov 87]. It is a solver for constraints over the Boolean domain, i.e. the values 0 and 1. This domain is particularly useful for modeling digital circuits, and the constraint solver can be used for verification, design, optimization etc. of such circuits.

To load the solver, enter the query:

```
| ?- use_module(library(clpb)).
```

The solver contains predicates for checking the consistency and entailment of a constraint wrt. previous constraints, and for computing particular solutions to the set of previous constraints.

The underlying representation of Boolean functions is based on Boolean Decision Diagrams [Bryant 86]. This representation is very efficient, and allows many combinatorial problems to be solved with good performance.

Boolean expressions are composed from the following operands: the constants 0 and 1 (`FALSE` and `TRUE`), logical variables, and symbolic constants, and from the following connectives. *P* and *Q* are Boolean expressions, *X* is a logical variable, *Is* is a list of integers or integer ranges, and *Es* is a list of Boolean expressions:

`~ P` True if *P* is false.

`P * Q` True if *P* and *Q* are both true.

`P + Q` True if at least one of *P* and *Q* is true.

`P # Q` True if exactly one of *P* and *Q* is true.

`X ^ P` True if there exists an *X* such that *P* is true. Same as `P[X/0] + P[X/1]`.

`P =:= Q` Same as `~P # Q`.

`P =\= Q` Same as `P # Q`.

`P =< Q` Same as `~P + Q`.

`P >= Q` Same as `P + ~Q`.

`P < Q` Same as `~P * Q`.

`P > Q` Same as `P * ~Q`.

`card(Is, Es)`
True if the number of true expressions in *Es* is a member of the set denoted by *Is*.

Symbolic constants (Prolog atoms) denote parametric values and can be viewed as all-quantified variables whose quantifiers are placed outside the entire expression. They are useful for forcing certain variables of an equation to be treated as input parameters.

## 32.1 Solver Interface

The following predicates are defined:

`sat(+Expression)`

*Expression* is a Boolean expression. This checks the consistency of the expression wrt. the accumulated constraints, and, if the check succeeds, *tells* the constraint that the expression be true.

If a variable $X$, occurring in the expression, is subsequently unified with some term $T$, this is treated as a shorthand for the constraint

```
| ?- sat(X=:=T).
```

`taut(+Expression, ?Truth)`

*Expression* is a Boolean expression. This *asks* whether the expression is now entailed by the accumulated constraints (*Truth*=1), or whether its negation is entailed by the accumulated constraints (*Truth*=0). Otherwise, it fails.

`labeling(+Variables)`

*Variables* is a list of variables. The variables are instantiated to a list of 0s and 1s, in a way that satisfies any accumulated constraints. Enumerates all solutions by backtracking, but creates choicepoints only if necessary.

## 32.2 Examples

### 32.2.1 Example 1

```
| ?- sat(X + Y).

sat(X=\=_A*Y#Y)
```

illustrates three facts. First, any accumulated constraints affecting the top-level variables are displayed floundered goals, since the query is not true for all `X` and `Y`. Secondly, accumulated constraints are displayed as `sat(V=:=Expr)` or `sat(V=\=Expr)` where $V$ is a variable and *Expr* is a "polynomial", i.e. an exclusive or of conjunctions of variables and constants. Thirdly, `_A` had to be introduced as an artificial variable, since `Y` cannot be expressed as a function of `X`. That is, `X + Y` is true iff there exists an `_A` such that `X=\=_A*Y#Y`. Let's check it!

```
| ?- taut(_A ^ (X=\=_A*Y#Y) =:= X + Y, T).

T = 1
```

verifies the above answer. Notice that the formula in this query is a tautology, and so it is entailed by an empty set of constraints.

### 32.2.2 Example 2

```
| ?- taut(A =< C, T).

no
| ?- sat(A =< B), sat(B =< C), taut(A =< C, T).

T = 1,
sat(A=:=_A*_B*C),
sat(B=:=_B*C)

| ?- taut(a, T).

T = 0

| ?- taut(~a, T).

T = 0
```

illustrates the entailment predicate. In the first query, the expression "A implies C" is neither known to be true nor false, so the query fails. In the second query, the system is told that "A implies B" and "B implies C", so "A implies C" is entailed. The expressions in the third and fourth queries are to be read "for each a, a is true" and "for each a, a is false", respectively, and so `T = 0` in both cases since both are unsatisfiable. This illustrates the fact that the implicit universal quantifiers introduced by symbolic constants are placed in front of the entire expression.

### 32.2.3 Example 3

```
| ?- [user].
| adder(X, Y, Sum, Cin, Cout) :-
     sat(Sum =:= card([1,3],[X,Y,Cin])),
     sat(Cout =:= card([2-3],[X,Y,Cin])).
| ^D
% consulted user in module user, 0 msec 424 bytes

| ?- adder(x, y, Sum, cin, Cout).

sat(Sum=:=cin#x#y),
sat(Cout=:=x*cin#x*y#y*cin)

| ?- adder(x, y, Sum, 0, Cout).

sat(Sum=:=x#y),
sat(Cout=:=x*y)

| ?- adder(X, Y, 0, Cin, 1), labeling([X,Y,Cin]).

Cin = 0,
X = 1,
Y = 1 ? ;

Cin = 1,
X = 0,
Y = 1 ? ;

Cin = 1,
X = 1,
Y = 0 ? ;
```

illustrates the use of cardinality constraints and models a one-bit adder circuit. The first query illustrates how representing the input signals by symbolic constants forces the output signals to be displayed as functions of the inputs and not vice versa. The second query computes the simplified functions obtained by setting carry-in to 0. The third query asks for particular input values satisfying sum and carry-out being 0 and 1, respectively.

### 32.2.4 Example 4

The predicate `fault/3` below describes a 1-bit adder consisting of five gates, with at most one faulty gate. If one of the variables `Fi` is equal to 1, the corresponding gate is faulty, and its output signal is undefined (i.e. the constraint representing the gate is relaxed).

Assuming that we have found some incorrect output from a circuit, we are interesting in finding the faulty gate. Two instances of incorrect output are listed in `fault_ex/2`:

```
fault([F1,F2,F3,F4,F5], [X,Y,Cin], [Sum,Cout]) :-
        sat(
                    card([0-1],[F1,F2,F3,F4,F5]) *
                    (F1 + (U1 =:= X * Cin)) *
                    (F2 + (U2 =:= Y * U3)) *
                    (F3 + (Cout =:= U1 + U2)) *
                    (F4 + (U3 =:= X # Cin)) *
                    (F5 + (Sum =:= Y # U3))
                ).

fault_ex(1, Faults) :- fault(Faults, [1,1,0], [1,0]).
fault_ex(2, Faults) :- fault(Faults, [1,0,1], [0,0]).
```

To find the faulty gates, we run the query

```
| ?- fault_ex(I,L), labeling(L).

I = 1,
L = [0,0,0,1,0] ? ;

I = 2,
L = [1,0,0,0,0] ? ;

I = 2,
L = [0,0,1,0,0] ? ;

no
```

Thus for input data `[1,1,0]`, gate 4 must be faulty. For input data `[1,0,1]`, either gate 1 or gate 3 must be faulty.

To get a symbolic representation of the outputs interms of the input, we run the query

```
| ?- fault([0,0,0,0,0], [x,y,cin], [Sum,Cout]).

sat(Cout=:=x*cin#x*y#y*cin),
sat(Sum=:=cin#x#y)
```

which shows that the sum and carry out signals indeed compute the intended functions if no gate is faulty.

# 33 Constraint Logic Programming over Rationals or Reals

## 33.1 Introduction

The clp(Q,R) system described in this document is an instance of the general Constraint Logic Programming scheme introduced by [Jaffar & Michaylov 87].

The implementation is at least as complete as other existing clp(R) implementations: It solves linear equations over rational or real valued variables, covers the lazy treatment of nonlinear equations, features a decision algorithm for linear inequalities that detects implied equations, removes redundancies, performs projections (quantifier elimination), allows for linear dis-equations, and provides for linear optimization.

The full clp(Q,R) distribution, including a stand-alone manual and an examples directory that is possibly more up to date than the version in the SICStus Prolog distribution, is available from http://www.ai.univie.ac.at/clpqr/.

### 33.1.1 Referencing this Software

When referring to this implementation of clp(Q,R) in publications, you should use the following reference:

> Holzbaur C., *OFAI clp(q,r) Manual*, Edition 1.3.3, Austrian Research Institute for Artificial Intelligence, Vienna, TR-95-09, 1995.

### 33.1.2 Acknowledgments

The development of this software was supported by the Austrian *Fonds zur Foerderung der Wissenschaftlichen Forschung* under grant P9426-PHY. Financial support for the Austrian Research Institute for Artificial Intelligence is provided by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Science and Research.

We include a collection of examples that has been distributed with the Monash University version of clp(R) [Heintze et al. 87], and its inclusion into this distribution was kindly permitted by Roland Yap.

## 33.2 Solver Interface

Until rational numbers become first class citizens in SICStus Prolog, rational arithmetics has to be emulated. Because of the emulation it is too expensive to support arithmetics with automatic coercion between all sorts of numbers, like you find it in CommonLisp, for example.

You must choose whether you want to operate in the field of Q (Rationals) or R (Reals):

```
| ?- use_module(library(clpq)).
```

or

```
| ?- use_module(library(clpr)).
```

You can also load both modules, but the exported predicates listed below will name clash (see Section 5.4 [Importation], page 61). You can avoid the interactive resolution dialog if the importation is skipped, e.g. via: `use_module(library(clpq),[]),use_module(library(clpr),[])`.

### 33.2.1 Notational Conventions

Throughout this chapter, the prompts `clp(q) ?-` and `clp(r) ?-` are used to differentiate between clp(Q) and clp(R) in exemplary interactions.

In general there are many ways to express the same linear relationship. This degree of freedom is manifest in the fact that the printed manual and an actual interaction with the current version of clp(Q,R) may show syntactically different answer constraints, despite the fact the same semantic relationship is being expressed. There are means to control the presentation; see Section 33.5.1 [Variable Ordering], page 431. The approximative nature of floating point numbers may also produce numerical differences between the text in this manual and the actual results of clp(R), for a given edition of the software.

### 33.2.2 Solver Predicates

The solver interface for both Q and R consists of the following predicates, which are exported from `module(linear)`.

`{+Constraint}`

*Constraint* is a term accepted by the the grammar below. The corresponding constraint is added to the current constraint store and checked for satisfiability. Use the module prefix to distinguish the solvers if both clp(Q) and clp(R) were loaded

```
| ?- clpr:{Ar+Br=10}, Ar=Br, clpq:{Aq+Bq=10}, Aq=Bq.

Aq = 5,
Ar = 5.0,
Bq = 5,
Br = 5.0
```

Although clp(Q) and clp(R) are independent modules, you are asking for trouble if you (accidently) share variables between them:

```
| ?- clpr:{A+B=10}, clpq:{A=B}.
! Type error in argument 2 of clpq:=/2
! a rational number expected, but 5.0 found
! goal:  _118=5.0
```

This is because both solvers eventually compute values for the variables and Reals are incompatible with Rationals.

Here is the constraint grammar:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Constraint* | ::= *C* | |
| | \| *C* , *C* | { conjunction } |
| *C* | ::= *Expr* =:= *Expr* | { equation } |
| | \| *Expr* = *Expr* | { equation } |
| | \| *Expr* < *Expr* | { strict inequation } |
| | \| *Expr* > *Expr* | { strict inequation } |
| | \| *Expr* =< *Expr* | { nonstrict inequation } |
| | \| *Expr* >= *Expr* | { nonstrict inequation } |
| | \| *Expr* =\= *Expr* | { disequation } |
| *Expr* | ::= *variable* | { Prolog variable } |
| | \| *number* | { floating point or integer } |
| | \| + *Expr* | { unary plus } |
| | \| - *Expr* | { unary minus } |
| | \| *Expr* + *Expr* | { addition } |
| | \| *Expr* - *Expr* | { subtraction } |
| | \| *Expr* * *Expr* | { multiplication } |
| | \| *Expr* / *Expr* | { division } |
| | \| abs(*Expr*) | { absolute value } |
| | \| sin(*Expr*) | { trigonometric sine } |
| | \| cos(*Expr*) | { trigonometric cosine } |
| | \| tan(*Expr*) | { trigonometric tangent } |
| | \| pow(*Expr*,*Expr*) | { raise to the power } |
| | \| exp(*Expr*,*Expr*) | { raise to the power } |
| | \| min(*Expr*,*Expr*) | { minimum of the two arguments } |
| | \| max(*Expr*,*Expr*) | { maximum of the two arguments } |
| | \| #(*Const*) | { symbolic numerical constants } |

Conjunctive constraints {*C*,*C*} have been made part of the syntax to control the granularity of constraint submission, which will be exploited by future versions of this software. Symbolic numerical constants are provided for compatibility only; see Section 33.7.1 [Monash Examples], page 439.

`entailed(+Constraint)`

Succeeds iff the linear *Constraint* is entailed by the current constraint store. This predicate does not change the state of the constraint store.

```
clp(q) ?- {A =< 4}, entailed(A=\=5).

{A=<4}

clp(q) ?- {A =< 4}, entailed(A=\=3).

no
```

`inf(+Expr, -Inf)`
`inf(+Expr, -Inf, +Vector, -Vertex)`

Computes the infimum of the linear expression *Expr* and unifies it with *Inf*. If given, *Vector* should be a list of variables relevant to *Expr*, and *Vertex* will be unified a list of the same length as *Vector* containing the values for *Vector*, such that the infimum is produced when assigned. Failure indicates unboundedness.

`sup(+Expr, -Sup)`
`sup(+Expr, -Sup, +Vector, -Vertex)`

Computes the supremum of the linear expression *Expr* and unifies it with *Sup*. If given, *Vector* should be a list of variables relevant to *Expr*, and *Vertex* will be unified a list of the same length as *Vector* containing the values for *Vector*, such that the supremum is produced when assigned. Failure indicates unboundedness.

```
clp(q) ?- { 2*X+Y =< 16, X+2*Y =< 11,
            X+3*Y =< 15, Z = 30*X+50*Y
          }, sup(Z, Sup, [X,Y], Vertex).

Sup = 310,
Vertex = [7,2],
{Z=30*X+50*Y},
{X+1/2*Y=<8},
{X+3*Y=<15},
{X+2*Y=<11}
```

`minimize(+Expr)`

Computes the infimum of the linear expression *Expr* and equates it with the expression, i.e. as if defined as:

```
minimize(Expr) :- inf(Expr, Expr).
```

`maximize(+Expr)`

Computes the supremum of the linear expression *Expr* and equates it with the expression.

```
clp(q) ?- { 2*X+Y =< 16, X+2*Y =< 11,
            X+3*Y =< 15, Z = 30*X+50*Y
          }, maximize(Z).

X = 7,
Y = 2,
Z = 310
```

`bb_inf(+Ints, +Expr, -Inf)`

Computes the infimum of the linear expression *Expr* under the additional constraint that all of variables in the list *Ints* assume integral values at the infimum. This allows for the solution of mixed integer linear optimization problems; see Section 33.8 [MIP], page 441.

```
clp(q) ?- {X >= Y+Z, Y > 1, Z > 1}, bb_inf([Y,Z],X,Inf).

Inf = 4,
{Y>1},
{Z>1},
{X-Y-Z>=0}
```

`bb_inf(+Ints, +Expr, -Inf, -Vertex, +Eps)`

Computes the infimum of the linear expression *Expr* under the additional constraint that all of variables in the list *Ints* assume integral values at the infimum. *Eps* is a positive number between 0 and 0.5 that specifies how close a number *X* must be to the next integer to be considered integral: `abs(round(X)-X) < Eps`. The predicate `bb_inf/3` uses `Eps = 0.001`. With clp(Q), `Eps = 0` makes sense. *Vertex* is a list of the same length as *Ints* and contains the (integral) values for *Ints*, such that the infimum is produced when assigned. Note that this will only generate one particular solution, which is different from the situation with `minimize/1`, where the general solution is exhibited.

`bb_inf/5` works properly for non-strict inequalities only! Disequations (`=\=`) and higher dimensional strict inequalities (`>`,`<`) are beyond its scope. Strict bounds on the decision variables are honored however:

```
clp(q) ?- {X >= Y+Z, Y > 1, Z > 1}, bb_inf([Y,Z],X,Inf,Vertex,0).

Inf = 4,
Vertex = [2,2],
{Y>1},
{Z>1},
{X-Y-Z>=0}
```

The limitation(s) can be addressed by:

- transforming the original problem statement so that only non-strict inequalities remain; for example, `{X + Y > 0}` becomes `{X + Y >= 1}` for integral `X` and `Y`;
- contemplating the use of clp(FD).

`ordering(+Spec)`

Provides a means to control one aspect of the presentation of the answer constraints; see Section 33.5.1 [Variable Ordering], page 431.

`dump(+Target, -NewVars, -CodedAnswer)`

Reflects the constraints on the target variables into a term, where *Target* and *NewVars* are lists of variables of equal length and *CodedAnswer* is the term representation of the projection of constraints onto the target variables where the target variables are replaced by the corresponding variables from *NewVars* (see Section 33.5.2 [Turning Answers into Terms], page 432).

```
clp(q) ?- {A+B =< 10, A>=4},
          dump([A,B],Vs,Cs),
          dump([B],Bp,Cb).

Cb = [_A=<6],
Bp = [_A],
Cs = [_B>=4,_C+_B=<10],
Vs = [_C,_B],
{A>=4},
{A+B=<10}
```

The current version of `dump/3` is incomplete with respect to nonlinear constraints. It only reports nonlinear constraints that are connected to the target variables. The following example has no solution. From the top-level's report we have a chance to deduce this fact, but `dump/3` currently has no means to collect global constraints . . .

```
q(X) :-
        {X>=10},
        {sin(Z)>3}.

clp(r) ?- q(X), dump([X],V,C).

C = [_A>=10.0],
V = [_A],
clpr:{3.0-sin(_B)<0.0},
{X>=10.0}
```

`projecting_assert/1(`*`:Clause`*`)`

If you use the database, the clauses you assert might have constraints associated with their variables. Use this predicate instead of `assert/1` in order to ensure that only the relevant and projected constraints get stored in the database. It will transform the clause into one with plain variables and extra body goals that set up the relevant constraint when called.

### 33.2.3 Unification

Equality constraints are added to the store implicitly each time variables that have been mentioned in explicit constraints are bound—either to another such variable or to a number.

```
clp(r) ?- {2*A+3*B=C/2}, C=10.0, A=B.

A = 1.0,
B = 1.0,
C = 10.0
```

Is equivalent modulo rounding errors to

```
clp(r) ?- {2*A+3*B=C/2, C=10, A=B}.

A = 1.0,
B = 0.9999999999999999,
C = 10.0
```

The shortcut bypassing the use of `{}/1` is allowed and makes sense because the interpretation of this equality in Prolog and clp(R) coincides. In general, equations involving interpreted functors, `+/2` in this case, must be fed to the solver explicitly:

```
clp(r) ?- X=3.0+1.0, X=4.0.

no
```

Further, variables known by clp(R) may be bound directly to floats only. Likewise, variables known by clp(Q) may be bound directly to rational numbers only; see Section 33.9.1.1 [Rationals], page 443. Failing to do so is rewarded with an exception:

```
clp(q) ?- {2*A+3*B=C/2}, C=10.0, A=B.
! Type error in argument 2 of = /2
! 'a rational number' expected, but 10.0 found
! goal:  _254=10.0
```

This is because `10.0` is not a rational constant. To make clp(Q) happy you have to say:

```
clp(q) ?- {2*A+3*B=C/2}, C=rat(10,1), A=B.

A = 1,
B = 1,
C = 10
```

If you use `{}/1`, you don't have to worry about such details. Alternatively, you may use the automatic expansion facility, check Section 33.7 [Syntactic Sugar], page 438.

### 33.2.4 Feedback and Bindings

What was covered so far was how the user populates the constraint store. The other direction of the information flow consists of the success and failure of the above predicates and the binding of variables to numerical values. Example:

```
clp(r) ?- {A-B+C=10, C=5+5}.

{A = B},
C = 10.0
```

The linear constraints imply `C=10.0` and the solver consequently exports this binding to the Prolog world. The fact that `A=B` is deduced and represented by the solver but not exported as a binding. More about answer presentation in Section 33.5 [Projection], page 430.

## 33.3 Linearity and Nonlinear Residues

The clp(Q,R) system is restricted to deal with linear constraints because the decision algorithms for general nonlinear constraints are prohibitively expensive to run. If you need this functionality badly, you should look into symbolic algebra packages. Although the clp(Q,R) system cannot solve nonlinear constraints, it will collect them faithfully in the hope that through the addition of further (linear) constraints they might get simple enough to solve eventually. If an answer contains nonlinear constraints, you have to be aware of the fact that success is qualified modulo the existence of a solution to the system of residual (nonlinear) constraints:

```
clp(r) ?- {sin(X) = cos(X)}.

clpr:{sin(X)-cos(X)=0.0}
```

There are indeed infinitely many solutions to this constraint (`X = 0.785398 + n*Pi`), but clp(Q,R) has no direct means to find and represent them.

The systems goes through some lengths to recognize linear expressions as such. The method is based on a normal form for multivariate polynomials. In addition, some simple isolation axioms, that can be used in equality constraints, have been added. The current major limitation of the method is that full polynomial division has not been implemented. Examples:

This is an example where the isolation axioms are sufficient to determine the value of $X$.

```
clp(r) ?- {sin(cos(X)) = 1/2}.

X = 1.0197267436954502
```

If we change the equation into an inequation, clp(Q,R) gives up:

```
clp(r) ?- {sin(cos(X)) < 1/2}.

clpr:{sin(cos(X))-0.5<0.0}
```

The following is easy again:

```
clp(r) ?- {sin(X+2+2)/sin(4+X) = Y}.

Y = 1.0
```

And so is this:

```
clp(r) ?- {(X+Y)*(Y+X)/X = Y*Y/X+99}.

{Y=49.5-0.5*X}
```

An ancient symbol manipulation benchmark consists in rising the expression `X+Y+Z+1` to the 15th power:

```
clp(q) ?- {exp(X+Y+Z+1,15)=0}.
clpq:{Z^15+Z^14*15+Z^13*105+Z^12*455+Z^11*1365+Z^10*3003+...
        ... polynomial continues for a few pages ...
        =0}
```

Computing its roots is another story.

### 33.3.1 How Nonlinear Residues Are Made to Disappear

Binding variables that appear in nonlinear residues will reduce the complexity of the nonlinear expressions and eventually results in linear expressions:

```
clp(q) ?- {exp(X+Y+1,2) = 3*X*X+Y*Y}.

clpq:{Y*2-X^2*2+Y*X*2+X*2+1=0}
```

Equating $X$ and $Y$ collapses the expression completely and even determines the values of the two variables:

```
clp(q) ?- {exp(X+Y+1,2) = 3*X*X+Y*Y}, X=Y.

X = -1/4,
Y = -1/4
```

### 33.3.2 Isolation Axioms

These axioms are used to rewrite equations such that the variable to be solved for is moved to the left hand side and the result of the evaluation of the right hand side can be assigned to the variable. This allows, for example, to use the exponentiation operator for the computation of roots and logarithms, see below.

`A = B * C` Residuates unless $B$ or $C$ is ground or $A$ and $B$ or $C$ are ground.

`A = B / C` Residuates unless $C$ is ground or $A$ and $B$ are ground.

`X = min(Y,Z)`
Residuates unless $Y$ and $Z$ are ground.

`X = max(Y,Z)`
Residuates unless $Y$ and $Z$ are ground.

`X = abs(Y)`
Residuates unless $Y$ is ground.

`X = pow(Y,Z)`, `X = exp(Y,Z)`
Residuates unless any pair of two of the three variables is ground. Example:

```
clp(r) ?- { 12=pow(2,X) }.

X = 3.5849625007211565

clp(r) ?- { 12=pow(X,3.585) }.

X = 1.9999854993443926

clp(r) ?- { X=pow(2,3.585) }.

X = 12.000311914286545
```

`X = sin(Y)`
: Residuates unless $X$ or $Y$ is ground. Example:

```
clp(r) ?- { 1/2 = sin(X) }.

X = 0.5235987755982989
```

`X = cos(Y)`
: Residuates unless $X$ or $Y$ is ground.

`X = tan(Y)`
: Residuates unless $X$ or $Y$ is ground.

## 33.4 Numerical Precision and Rationals

The fact that you can switch between clp(R) and clp(Q) should solve most of your numerical problems regarding precision. Within clp(Q), floating point constants will be coerced into rational numbers automatically. Transcendental functions will be approximated with rationals. The precision of the approximation is limited by the floating point precision. These two provisions allow you to switch between clp(R) and clp(Q) without having to change your programs.

What is to be kept in mind however is the fact that it may take quite big rationals to accommodate the required precision. High levels of precision are for example required if your linear program is ill-conditioned, i.e. in a full rank system the determinant of the coefficient matrix is close to zero. Another situation that may call for elevated levels of precision is when a linear optimization problem requires exceedingly many pivot steps before the optimum is reached.

If your application approximates irrational numbers, you may be out of space particularly soon. The following program implements $N$ steps of Newton's approximation for the square root function at point 2.

```
                                        % library('clpqr/examples/root')
root(N, R) :-
  root(N, 1, R).

root(0, S, R) :- !, S=R.
root(N, S, R) :-
  N1 is N-1,
  { S1 = S/2 + 1/S },
  root(N1, S1, R).
```

It is known that this approximation converges quadratically, which means that the number of correct digits in the decimal expansion roughly doubles with each iteration. Therefore the numerator and denominator of the rational approximation have to grow likewise:

```
clp(q) ?- use_module(library('clpqr/examples/root')).
clp(q) ?- root(3,R),print_decimal(R,70).
1.4142156862 7450980392 1568627450 9803921568 6274509803 9215686274
5098039215

R = 577/408

clp(q) ?- root(4,R),print_decimal(R,70).
1.4142135623 7468991062 6295578890 1349101165 5962211574 4044584905
0192000543

R = 665857/470832

clp(q) ?- root(5,R),print_decimal(R,70).
1.4142135623 7309504880 1689623502 5302436149 8192577619 7428498289
4986231958

R = 886731088897/627013566048

clp(q) ?- root(6,R),print_decimal(R,70).
1.4142135623 7309504880 1688724209 6980785696 7187537723 4001561013
1331132652

R = 1572584048032918633353217/1111984844349868137938112

clp(q) ?- root(7,R),print_decimal(R,70).
1.4142135623 7309504880 1688724209 6980785696 7187537694 8073176679
7379907324

R = 4946041176255201878775086487573351061418968498177 /
    3497379255757941172020851852070562919437964212608
```

Iterating for 8 steps produces no further change in the first 70 decimal digits of `sqrt(2)`. After 15 steps the approximating rational number has a numerator and a denominator with 12543 digits each, and the next step runs out of memory.

Another irrational number that is easily computed is $e$. The following program implements an alternating series for `1/e`, where the absolute value of last term is an upper bound on the error.

```
                                        % library('clpqr/examples/root')
e(N, E) :-
  { Err =:= exp(10,-(N+2)), Half =:= 1/2 },
  inv_e_series(Half, Half, 3, Err, Inv_E),
  { E =:= 1/Inv_E }.

inv_e_series(Term, S0, _, Err, Sum) :-
  { abs(Term) =< Err }, !,
  S0 = Sum.
inv_e_series(Term, S0, N, Err, Sum) :-
  N1 is N+1,
  { Term1 =:= -Term/N, S1 =:= Term1+S0 },
  inv_e_series(Term1, S1, N1, Err, Sum).
```

The computation of the rational number $E$ that approximates $e$ up to at least 1000 digits in its decimal expansion requires the evaluation of 450 terms of the series, i.e. 450 calls of `inv_e_series/5`.

```
clp(q) ?- e(1000,E).

E = 714905622893276021366680959207284233429074422139261095584556549 4
    370875022946776173047173889519779227134669308932610213200033819 2
    013187418783398542092268880422016784031919969949419385240322370 0
    585383274154419162874705213640217694196382554356590058916158572 3
    402309741760500482999192928304537235563914564458817473340136017 6
    995397370653727413328361474090277156115991306991783382028560844 0
    310496689999965192863763465641896902707669908288874248139230480 7
    948472548908084436039760619977178602469562020534404276586058137 9
    353829045120832212989806997810797122687316087204673187975303454 9
    313049216747480919634884691642178285008698566868064042519203815 5
    490286329835134946921162729286544087658106487386678612009860289 8
    879913009887737209736006593482775112065921347052879314380590355 4
    792868213108216436600701669876196106694837140736896253946799462 7
    137485824911079597639859503460699474018604042511710158848000000
    000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000
    000000000000000000000000000000000000000
    /
    262999081040300265109595915550300228544127217067310533446680893 1
    686310390134602424032654903508452868248704806482338072378711094 1
    680923518735631878097230279657025110292855200370855693931479567 8
    197839067439349854066374733407984151830363662588896391039144070 9
    088734579730347095920788331683834697339393777836341119562431355 3
    883564482235365984093681839105063036063373493538152827539205097 5
    727146899284090754135034545901119246689217786688226424286041218 8
    065211274464245040462576301963908694455889924978808455975372389 2
    164318899144494536072689953202354296957258436376107352884114701 2
    263421804546349405580707377849081469299651735995222926219839618 2
    183893004352858310997387234819380683038258404053639464089514875 1
    076625673874072989490963078526010172128570461681888974199594966 6
    630328970319939380197633497424081539792021305979907191506785675 8
    671645882106264556251274533670906339651002168190007668069694530 9
    366059093327986773674792664867873851570277743135384546619968099 1
    733618734211521654777749116601082000 59
```

The decimal expansion itself looks like this:

```
clp(q) ?- e(1000, E), print_decimal(E, 1000).
2.
7182818284 5904523536 0287471352 6624977572 4709369995 9574966967
6277240766 3035354759 4571382178 5251664274 2746639193 2003059921
8174135966 2904357290 0334295260 5956307381 3232862794 3490763233
8298807531 9525101901 1573834187 9307021540 8914993488 4167509244
7614606680 8226480016 8477411853 7423454424 3710753907 7744992069
5517027618 3860626133 1384583000 7520449338 2656029760 6737113200
7093287091 2744374704 7230696977 2093101416 9283681902 5515108657
4637721112 5238978442 5056953696 7707854499 6996794686 4454905987
9316368892 3009879312 7736178215 4249992295 7635148220 8269895193
6680331825 2886939849 6465105820 9392398294 8879332036 2509443117
3012381970 6841614039 7019837679 3206832823 7646480429 5311802328
7825098194 5581530175 6717361332 0698112509 9618188159 3041690351
5988885193 4580727386 6738589422 8792284998 9208680582 5749279610
4841984443 6346324496 8487560233 6248270419 7862320900 2160990235
3043699418 4914631409 3431738143 6405462531 5209618369 0888707016
7683964243 7814059271 4563549061 3031072085 1038375051 0115747704
1718986106 8739696552 1267154688 9570350354
```

## 33.5 Projection and Redundancy Elimination

Once a derivation succeeds, the Prolog system presents the bindings for the variables in the query. In a CLP system, the set of answer constraints is presented in analogy. A complication in the CLP context are variables and associated constraints that were not mentioned in the query. A motivating example is the familiar `mortgage` relation:

```
                                        % library('clpqr/examples/mg')
mg(P,T,I,B,MP):-
  {
     T = 1,
     B + MP = P * (1 + I)
  }.
mg(P,T,I,B,MP):-
  {
     T > 1,
     P1 = P * (1 + I) - MP,
     T1 = T - 1
  },
  mg(P1, T1, I, B, MP).
```

A sample query yields:

```
clp(r) ?- use_module(library('clpqr/examples/mg')).
clp(r) ?- mg(P,12,0.01,B,Mp).

{B=1.1268250301319698*P-12.682503013196973*Mp}
```

Without projection of the answer constraints onto the query variables we would observe the following interaction:

```
clp(r) ?- mg(P,12,0.01,B,Mp).

{B=12.682503013196973*_A-11.682503013196971*P},
{Mp= -(_A)+1.01*P},
{_B=2.01*_A-1.01*P},
{_C=3.0301*_A-2.0301*P},
{_D=4.060401000000001*_A-3.0604009999999997*P},
{_E=5.101005010000001*_A-4.10100501*P},
{_F=6.152015060100001*_A-5.152015060099999*P},
{_G=7.213535210701001*_A-6.213535210700999*P},
{_H=8.285670562808011*_A-7.285670562808009*P},
{_I=9.368527268436091*_A-8.36852726843609*P},
{_J=10.462212541120453*_A-9.46221254112045*P},
{_K=11.566834666531657*_A-10.566834666531655*P}
```

The variables _A ... _K are not part of the query, they originate from the mortgage program proper. Although the latter answer is equivalent to the former in terms of linear algebra, most users would prefer the former.

### 33.5.1 Variable Ordering

In general, there are many ways to express the same linear relationship between variables. clp(Q,R) does not care to distinguish between them, but the user might. The predicate `ordering(+Spec)` gives you some control over the variable ordering. Suppose that instead of $B$, you want $Mp$ to be the defined variable:

```
clp(r) ?- mg(P,12,0.01,B,Mp).

{B=1.1268250301319698*P-12.682503013196973*Mp}
```

This is achieved with:

```
clp(r) ?- mg(P,12,0.01,B,Mp), ordering([Mp]).

{Mp= -0.0788487886783417*B+0.08884878867834171*P}
```

One could go one step further and require $P$ to appear before (to the left of) $B$ in an addition:

```
clp(r) ?- mg(P,12,0.01,B,Mp), ordering([Mp,P]).

{Mp=0.08884878867834171*P-0.0788487886783417*B}
```

*Spec* in `ordering(+Spec)` is either a list of variables with the intended ordering, or of the form `A<B`. The latter form means that $A$ goes to the left of $B$. In fact, `ordering([A,B,C,D])` is shorthand for:

```
ordering(A < B), ordering(A < C), ordering(A < D),
ordering(B < C), ordering(B < D),
ordering(C < D)
```

The ordering specification only affects the final presentation of the constraints. For all other operations of clp(Q,R), the ordering is immaterial. Note that `ordering/1` acts like a constraint: you can put it anywhere in the computation, and you can submit multiple specifications.

```
clp(r) ?- ordering(B < Mp), mg(P,12,0.01,B,Mp).

{B= -12.682503013196973*Mp+1.1268250301319698*P}

clp(r) ?- ordering(B < Mp), mg(P,12,0.01,B,Mp), ordering(P < Mp).

{P=0.8874492252651537*B+11.255077473484631*Mp}
```

### 33.5.2 Turning Answers into Terms

In meta-programming applications one needs to get a grip on the results computed by the clp(Q,R) solver. You can use the predicates `dump/3` and/or `call_residue/2` for that purpose:

```
clp(r) ?- {2*A+B+C=10,C-
D=E,A<10}, dump([A,B,C,D,E],[a,b,c,d,e],Constraints).

Constraints = [e<10.0,a=10.0-c-d-2.0*e,b=c+d],
{C=10.0-2.0*A-B},
{E=10.0-2.0*A-B-D},
{A<10.0}

clp(r) ?- call_residue({2*A+B+C=10,C-D=E,A<10}, Constraints).

Constraints = [
               [A]-{A<10.0},
               [B]-{B=10.0-2.0*A-C},
               [D]-{D=C-E}
              ]
```

### 33.5.3 Projecting Inequalities

As soon as linear inequations are involved, projection gets more demanding complexity wise. The current clp(Q,R) version uses a Fourier-Motzkin algorithm for the projection of linear inequalities. The choice of a suitable algorithm is somewhat dependent on the number of variables to be eliminated, the total number of variables, and other factors. It is quite easy to produce problems of moderate size where the elimination step takes some time. For example, when the dimension of the projection is 1, you might be better off computing the supremum and the infimum of the remaining variable instead of eliminating `n-1` variables via implicit projection.

In order to make answers as concise as possible, redundant constraints are removed by the system as well. In the following set of inequalities, half of them are redundant.

```
                                    % library('clpqr/examples/eliminat')
example(2, [X0,X1,X2,X3,X4]) :-
  {
       +87*X0  +52*X1  +27*X2  -54*X3  +56*X4 =<  -93,
       +33*X0  -10*X1  +61*X2  -28*X3  -29*X4 =<   63,
       -68*X0   +8*X1  +35*X2  +68*X3  +35*X4 =<  -85,
       +90*X0  +60*X1  -76*X2  -53*X3  +24*X4 =<  -68,
       -95*X0  -10*X1  +64*X2  +76*X3  -24*X4 =<   33,
       +43*X0  -22*X1  +67*X2  -68*X3  -92*X4 =<  -97,
       +39*X0   +7*X1  +62*X2  +54*X3  -26*X4 =<  -27,
       +48*X0  -13*X1   +7*X2  -61*X3  -59*X4 =<   -2,
       +49*X0  -23*X1  -31*X2  -76*X3  +27*X4 =<    3,
       -50*X0  +58*X1   -1*X2  +57*X3  +20*X4 =<    6,
       -13*X0  -63*X1  +81*X2   -3*X3  +70*X4 =<   64,
       +20*X0  +67*X1  -23*X2  -41*X3  -66*X4 =<   52,
       -81*X0  -44*X1  +19*X2  -22*X3  -73*X4 =<  -17,
       -43*X0   -9*X1  +14*X2  +27*X3  +40*X4 =<   39,
       +16*X0  +83*X1  +89*X2  +25*X3  +55*X4 =<   36,
        +2*X0  +40*X1  +65*X2  +59*X3  -32*X4 =<   13,
       -65*X0  -11*X1  +10*X2  -13*X3  +91*X4 =<   49,
       +93*X0  -73*X1  +91*X2   -1*X3  +23*X4 =<  -87
  }.
```

Consequently, the answer consists of the system of nine non-redundant inequalities only:

```
clp(q) ?- use_module(library('clpqr/examples/elimination')).
clp(q) ?- example(2, [X0,X1,X2,X3,X4]).

{X0-2/17*X1-35/68*X2-X3-35/68*X4>=5/4},
{X0-73/93*X1+91/93*X2-1/93*X3+23/93*X4=<-29/31},
{X0-29/25*X1+1/50*X2-57/50*X3-2/5*X4>=-3/25},
{X0+7/39*X1+62/39*X2+18/13*X3-2/3*X4=<-9/13},
{X0+2/19*X1-64/95*X2-4/5*X3+24/95*X4>=-33/95},
{X0+2/3*X1-38/45*X2-53/90*X3+4/15*X4=<-34/45},
{X0-23/49*X1-31/49*X2-76/49*X3+27/49*X4=<3/49},
{X0+44/81*X1-19/81*X2+22/81*X3+73/81*X4>=17/81},
{X0+9/43*X1-14/43*X2-27/43*X3-40/43*X4>=-39/43}
```

The projection (the shadow) of this polyhedral set into the `X0,X1` space can be computed via the implicit elimination of non-query variables:

```
clp(q) ?- example(2, [X0,X1|_]).

{X0+2619277/17854273*X1>=-851123/17854273},
{X0+6429953/16575801*X1=<-12749681/16575801},
{X0+19130/1213083*X1>=795400/404361},
{X0-1251619/3956679*X1>=21101146/3956679},
{X0+601502/4257189*X1>=220850/473021}
```

Projection is quite a powerful concept that leads to surprisingly terse executable specifications of nontrivial problems like the computation of the convex hull from a set of points in an n-dimensional space: Given the program

```
                                % library('clpqr/examples/elimination')
conv_hull(Points, Xs) :-
  lin_comb(Points, Lambdas, Zero, Xs),
  zero(Zero),
  polytope(Lambdas).

polytope(Xs) :-
  positive_sum(Xs, 1).

  positive_sum([], Z) :- {Z=0}.
  positive_sum([X|Xs], SumX) :-
    { X >= 0, SumX = X+Sum },
    positive_sum(Xs, Sum).

zero([]).
zero([Z|Zs]) :- {Z=0}, zero(Zs).

lin_comb([],        [],     S1, S1).
lin_comb([Ps|Rest], [K|Ks], S1, S3) :-
  lin_comb_r(Ps, K, S1, S2),
  lin_comb(Rest, Ks, S2, S3).

  lin_comb_r([],     _, [],     []).
  lin_comb_r([P|Ps], K, [S|Ss], [Kps|Ss1]) :-
    { Kps = K*P+S },
    lin_comb_r(Ps, K, Ss, Ss1).
```

we can post the following query:

```
clp(q) ?- conv_hull([ [1,1], [2,0], [3,0], [1,2], [2,2] ], [X,Y]).

{Y=<2},
{X+1/2*Y=<3},
{X>=1},
{Y>=0},
{X+Y>=2}
```

This answer is easily verified graphically:

```
      |
    2 -    *    *
      |
      |
    1 -    *
      |
      |
    0 -----|----*----*----
           1    2    3
```

The convex hull program directly corresponds to the mathematical definition of the convex hull. What does the trick in operational terms is the implicit elimination of the *Lambdas* from the program formulation. Please note that this program does not limit the number of points or the dimension of the space they are from. Please note further that quantifier elimination is a computationally expensive operation and therefore this program is only useful as a benchmark for the projector and not so for the intended purpose.

## 33.6 Why Disequations

A beautiful example of disequations at work is due to [Colmerauer 90]. It addresses the task of tiling a rectangle with squares of all-different, a priori unknown sizes. Here is a translation of the original `Prolog-III` program to clp(Q,R):

```
                                        % library('clpqr/examples/squares')
filled_rectangle(A, C) :-
  { A >= 1 },
  distinct_squares(C),
  filled_zone([-1,A,1], _, C, []).

distinct_squares([]).
distinct_squares([B|C]) :-
  { B > 0 },
  outof(C, B),
  distinct_squares(C).

outof([],     _).
outof([B1|C], B) :-
  { B =\= B1 },       % *** note disequation ***
  outof(C, B).

filled_zone([V|L], [W|L], C0, C0) :-
  { V=W,V >= 0 }.
filled_zone([V|L], L3, [B|C], C2) :-
  { V < 0 },
  placed_square(B, L, L1),
  filled_zone(L1, L2, C, C1),
  { Vb=V+B },
  filled_zone([Vb,B|L2], L3, C1, C2).

placed_square(B, [H,H0,H1|L], L1) :-
  { B > H, H0=0, H2=H+H1 },
  placed_square(B, [H2|L], L1).
placed_square(B, [B,V|L], [X|L]) :-
  { X=V-B }.
placed_square(B, [H|L], [X,Y|L]) :-
  { B < H, X= -B, Y=H-B }.
```

There are no tilings with less than nine squares except the trivial one where the rectangle equals the only square. There are eight solutions for nine squares. Six further solutions are rotations of the first two.

```
clp(q) ?- use_module(library('clpqr/examples/squares')).
clp(q) ?- filled_rectangle(A, Squares).

A = 1,
Squares = [1] ? ;

A = 33/32,
Squares = [15/32,9/16,1/4,7/32,1/8,7/16,1/32,5/16,9/32] ? ;

A = 69/61,
Squares = [33/61,36/61,28/61,5/61,2/61,9/61,25/61,7/61,16/61] ? ⟨RET⟩
```

Depending on your hardware, the above query may take a few minutes. Supplying the knowledge about the minimal number of squares beforehand cuts the computation time by a factor of roughly four:

```
clp(q) ?- length(Squares, 9), filled_rectangle(A, Squares).

A = 33/32,
Squares = [15/32,9/16,1/4,7/32,1/8,7/16,1/32,5/16,9/32] ? ;

A = 69/61,
Squares = [33/61,36/61,28/61,5/61,2/61,9/61,25/61,7/61,16/61] ? ⟨RET⟩
```

## 33.7 Syntactic Sugar

There is a package that transforms programs and queries from an eval-quote variant of clp(Q,R) into corresponding programs and queries in a quote-eval variant. Before you use it, you need to know that in an eval-quote language, all symbols are interpreted unless explicitly quoted. This means that interpreted terms cannot be manipulated syntactically directly. Meta-programming in a CLP context by definition manipulates interpreted terms, therefore you need `quote/1` (just as in LISP) and some means to put syntactical terms back to their interpreted life: `{}/1`.

In a quote-eval language, meta-programming is (pragmatically) simpler because everything is implicitly quoted until explicitly evaluated. On the other hand, now object programming suffers from the dual inconvenience.

We chose to make our version of clp(Q,R) of the quote-eval type because this matches the intended use of the already existing boolean solver of SICStus. In order to keep the users of the eval-quote variant happy, we provide a source transformation package. It is activated via:

```
| ?- use_module(library('clpqr/expand')).
| ?- expand.
```

`expand/0` puts you in a mode where the arithmetic functors like `+/2`, `*/2` and all numbers (functors of arity 0) are interpreted semantically. `noexpand/0` gets you out of the mode.

```
clp(r) ?- 2+2=X.

X = 4.0
```

The package works by *purifying* programs and queries in the sense that all references to interpreted terms are made explicit. The above query is expanded prior to evaluation into:

```
{2.0+2.0=X}
```

The same mechanism applies when interpreted terms are nested deeper:

```
some_predicate(10, f(A+B/2), 2*cos(A))
```

Expands into:

```
{Xc=2.0*cos(A)},
{Xb=A+B/2},
{Xa=10.0},
some_predicate(Xa, f(Xb), Xc)
```

This process also applies when files are consulted or compiled. In fact, this is the only situation where expansion can be applied with relative safety. To see this, consider what happens when the top-level evaluates the expansion, namely some calls to the clp(Q,R) solver, followed by the call of the purified query. As we learned in Section 33.2.4 [Feedback], page 423, the solver may bind variables, which produces a goal with interpreted terms in it (numbers), which leads to another stage of expansion, and so on.

*We recommend that you only turn on expansion temporarily while consulting or compiling files needing expansion with* `expand/0` and `noexpand/0`.

### 33.7.1 Monash Examples

This collection of examples has been distributed with the Monash University Version of clp(R) [Heintze et al. 87], and its inclusion into this distribution was kindly permitted by Roland Yap.

In order to execute the examples, a small compatibility package has to be loaded first:

```
clp(r) ?- use_module(library('clpqr/monash')).
```

Then, assuming you are using clp(R):

```
clp(r) ?- expand, [library('clpqr/examples/monash/rkf45')],
          noexpand.

clp(r) ?- go.
Point    0.00000 :    0.75000    0.00000
Point    0.50000 :    0.61969    0.47793
Point    1.00000 :    0.29417    0.81233
Point    1.50000 :   -0.10556    0.95809
Point    2.00000 :   -0.49076    0.93977
Point    2.50000 :   -0.81440    0.79929
Point    3.00000 :   -1.05440    0.57522

Iteration finished
------------------
 439  derivative evaluations
```

#### 33.7.1.1 Compatibility Notes

The Monash examples have been written for clp(R). Nevertheless, all but `rkf45` complete nicely in clp(Q). With `rkf45`, clp(Q) runs out of memory. This is an instance of the problem discussed in Section 33.4 [Numerical Precision], page 426.

The Monash University clp(R) interpreter features a `dump/n` predicate. It is used to print the target variables according to the given ordering. Within this version of clp(Q,R), the corresponding functionality is provided via `ordering/1`. The difference is that `ordering/1` does only specify the ordering of the variables and *no* printing is performed. We think Prolog has enough predicates to perform output already. You can still run the examples referring to `dump/n` from the Prolog top-level:

```
clp(r) ?- expand, [li-
brary('clpqr/examples/monash/mortgage')], noexpand.

% go2
%
clp(r) ?- mg(P,120,0.01,0,MP), dump([P,MP]).

{P=69.7005220313972*MP}

% go3
%
clp(r) ?- mg(P,120,0.01,B,MP), dump([P,B,MP]).

{P=0.30299477968602706*B+69.7005220313972*MP}

% go4
%
clp(r) ?- mg(999, 3, Int, 0, 400), dump.

clpr:{_B-_B*Int+_A+400.0=0.0},
clpr:{_A-_A*Int+400.0=0.0},
{_B=599.0+999.0*Int}
```

## 33.8 A Mixed Integer Linear Optimization Example

The predicates `bb_inf/[3,5]` implement a simple Branch and Bound search algorithm for Mixed Integer Linear (MIP) Optimization examples. Serious MIP is not trivial. The implementation `library('clpqr/bb.pl')` is to be understood as a starting point for more ambitious users who need control over branching, or who want to add cutting planes, for example.

Anyway, here is a small problem from miplib, a collection of MIP models, housed at Rice University:

```
NAME:         flugpl
ROWS:         18
COLUMNS:      18
INTEGER:      11
NONZERO:      46
BEST SOLN:    1201500 (opt)
LP SOLN:      1167185.73
SOURCE:       Harvey M. Wagner
              John W. Gregory (Cray Research)
              E. Andrew Boyd (Rice University)
APPLICATION:  airline model
COMMENTS:     no integer variables are binary
```

```
                                          % library('clpqr/examples/mip')
example(flugpl, Obj, Vs, Ints, []) :-
  Vs = [ Anm1,Anm2,Anm3,Anm4,Anm5,Anm6,
         Stm1,Stm2,Stm3,Stm4,Stm5,Stm6,
         UE1,UE2,UE3,UE4,UE5,UE6],
  Ints = [Stm6, Stm5, Stm4, Stm3, Stm2,
          Anm6, Anm5, Anm4, Anm3, Anm2, Anm1],

  Obj =    2700*Stm1 + 1500*Anm1 + 30*UE1
         + 2700*Stm2 + 1500*Anm2 + 30*UE2
         + 2700*Stm3 + 1500*Anm3 + 30*UE3
         + 2700*Stm4 + 1500*Anm4 + 30*UE4
         + 2700*Stm5 + 1500*Anm5 + 30*UE5
         + 2700*Stm6 + 1500*Anm6 + 30*UE6,

  allpos(Vs),
  {  Stm1 = 60, 0.9*Stm1 +1*Anm1 -1*Stm2 = 0,
     0.9*Stm2 +1*Anm2 -1*Stm3 = 0, 0.9*Stm3 +1*Anm3 -1*Stm4 = 0,
     0.9*Stm4 +1*Anm4 -1*Stm5 = 0, 0.9*Stm5 +1*Anm5 -1*Stm6 = 0,
     150*Stm1 -100*Anm1 +1*UE1 >= 8000,
     150*Stm2 -100*Anm2 +1*UE2 >= 9000,
     150*Stm3 -100*Anm3 +1*UE3 >= 8000,
     150*Stm4 -100*Anm4 +1*UE4 >= 10000,
     150*Stm5 -100*Anm5 +1*UE5 >= 9000,
     150*Stm6 -100*Anm6 +1*UE6 >= 12000,
     -20*Stm1 +1*UE1 =< 0, -20*Stm2 +1*UE2 =< 0, -20*Stm3 +1*UE3 =< 0,
     -20*Stm4 +1*UE4 =< 0, -20*Stm5 +1*UE5 =< 0, -20*Stm6 +1*UE6 =< 0,
     Anm1 =< 18, 57 =< Stm2, Stm2 =< 75, Anm2 =< 18,
     57 =< Stm3, Stm3 =< 75, Anm3 =< 18, 57 =< Stm4,
     Stm4 =< 75, Anm4 =< 18, 57 =< Stm5, Stm5 =< 75,
     Anm5 =< 18, 57 =< Stm6, Stm6 =< 75, Anm6 =< 18
   }.

  allpos([]).
  allpos([X|Xs]) :- {X >= 0}, allpos(Xs).
```

We can first check whether the relaxed problem has indeed the quoted infimum:

```
clp(r) ?- example(flugpl, Obj, _, _, _), inf(Obj, Inf).

Inf = 1167185.7255923203
```

Computing the infimum under the additional constraints that `Stm6`, `Stm5`, `Stm4`, `Stm3`, `Stm2`, `Anm6`, `Anm5`, `Anm4`, `Anm3`, `Anm2`, `Anm1` assume integer values at the infimum is computationally harder, but the query does not change much:

```
clp(r) ?- example(flugpl, Obj, _, Ints, _),
          bb_inf(Ints, Obj, Inf, Vertex, 0.001).

Inf = 1201500.0000000005,
Vertex = [75.0,70.0,70.0,60.0,60.0,0.0,12.0,7.0,16.0,6.0,6.0]
```

## 33.9 Implementation Architecture

The system consists roughly of the following components:

- A polynomial normal form expression simplification mechanism.
- A solver for linear equations [Holzbaur 92a].
- A simplex algorithm to decide linear inequalities [Holzbaur 94].

### 33.9.1 Fragments and Bits

#### 33.9.1.1 Rationals

The internal data structure for rational numbers is `rat(Num,Den)`. *Den* is always positive, i.e. the sign of the rational number is the sign of *Num*. Further, *Num* and *Den* are relative prime. Note that integer *N* looks like `rat(N,1)` in this representation. You can control printing of terms with `portray/1`.

#### 33.9.1.2 Partial Evaluation, Compilation

Once one has a working solver, it is obvious and attractive to run the constraints in a clause definition at read time or compile time and proceed with the answer constraints in place of the original constraints. This gets you constant folding and in fact the full algebraic power of the solver applied to the avoidance of computations at runtime. The mechanism to realize this idea is to use `dump/3, call_residue/2` for the expansion of `{}/1`, via hook predicate `user:goal_expansion/3`).

#### 33.9.1.3 Asserting with Constraints

If you use the database, the clauses you assert might have constraints associated with their variables. You should use `projecting_assert/1` instead of `assert/1` in order to ensure that only the relevant and projected constraints get stored in the database.

```
| ?- {A+B=<33}, projecting_assert(test(A,B)).

{A+B=<33}

| ?- listing(test).
test(A, B) :-
        {A+B=<rat(33,1)}

| ?- test(A,B).

{A+B=<33}
```

### 33.9.2 Bugs

- The fuzzy comparison of floats is the source for all sorts of weirdness. If a result in R surprises you, try to run the program in Q before you send me a bug report.
- The projector for floundered nonlinear relations keeps too many variables. Its output is rather unreadable.
- Disequations are not projected properly.
- This list is probably incomplete.

Please send bug reports to `<christian@ai.univie.ac.at>`.

# 34 Constraint Logic Programming over Finite Domains

## 34.1 Introduction

The clp(FD) solver described in this chapter is an instance of the general Constraint Logic Programming scheme introduced in [Jaffar & Michaylov 87]. This constraint domain is particularly useful for modeling discrete optimization and verification problems such as scheduling, planning, packing, timetabling etc. The treatise [Van Hentenryck 89] is an excellent exposition of the theoretical and practical framework behind constraint solving in finite domains, and summarizes the work up to 1989.

This solver has the following highlights:

- Two classes of constraints are handled internally: primitive constraints and global constraints.
- The constraints described in this chapter are automatically translated to conjunctions of primitive and global library constraints.
- The truth value of a primitive constraint can be reflected into a 0/1-variable (reification).
- New primitive constraints can be added by writing so-called indexicals.
- New global constraints can be written in Prolog, by means of a programming interface.

This library fully supports multiple SICStus run-times in a process.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows: How to load the solver and how to write simple programs is explained in Section 34.2 [CLPFD Interface], page 446. A description of all constraints that the solver provides is contained in Section 34.3 [Available Constraints], page 450. The predicates for searching for solution are documented in Section 34.4 [Enumeration Predicates], page 465. The predicates for getting execution statistics are documented in Section 34.5 [Statistics Predicates], page 469. A few example programs are given in Section 34.10 [Example Programs], page 487. Finally, Section 34.11 [Syntax Summary], page 490 contains syntax rules for all expressions.

The following sections discuss advanced features and are probably only relevant to experienced users: How to control the amount of information presented in answers to queries is explained in Section 34.6 [Answer Constraints], page 470. The solver's execution mechanism and primitives are described in Section 34.7 [The Constraint System], page 470. How to add new global constraints via a programming interface is described in Section 34.8 [Defining Global Constraints], page 471. How to define new primitive constraints with indexicals is described in Section 34.9 [Defining Primitive Constraints], page 479.

### 34.1.1 Referencing this Software

When referring to this implementation of clp(FD) in publications, please use the following reference:

> Carlsson M., Ottosson G., Carlson B. *An Open-Ended Finite Domain Constraint Solver*, Proc. Programming Languages: Implementations, Logics, and Programs, 1997.

### 34.1.2 Acknowledgments

The first version of this solver was written as part of Key Hyckenberg's MSc thesis in 1995, with contributions from Greger Ottosson at the Computing Science Department, Uppsala University. The code was later rewritten by Mats Carlsson. Péter Szeredi contributed material for this manual chapter.

The development of this software was supported by the Swedish National Board for Technical and Industrial Development (NUTEK) under the auspices of Advanced Software Technology (ASTEC) Center of Competence at Uppsala University.

We include a collection of examples, some of which have been distributed with the INRIA implementation of clp(FD) [Diaz & Codognet 93].

## 34.2 Solver Interface

The solver is available as a library module and can be loaded with a query

```
:- use_module(library(clpfd)).
```

The solver contains predicates for checking the consistency and entailment of finite domain constraints, as well as solving for solution values for your problem variables.

In the context of this constraint solver, a *finite domain* is a subset of small integers, and a *finite domain constraint* denotes a relation over a tuple of small integers. Hence, only small integers and unbound variables are allowed in finite domain constraints.

All *domain variables*, i.e. variables that occur as arguments to finite domain constraints get associated with a finite domain, either explicitly declared by the program, or implicitly imposed by the constraint solver. Temporarily, the domain of a variable may actually be infinite, if it does not have a finite lower or upper bound. If during the computation a variable receives a new lower or upper bound that cannot be represented as a small integer, an overflow condition is issued. This is expressed as silent failure or as a representation error, subject to the `overflow` option of `fd_flag/3`.

The domain of all variables gets narrower and narrower as more constraints are added. If a domain becomes empty, the accumulated constraints are unsatisfiable, and the current computation branch fails. At the end of a successful computation, all domains have usually become singletons, i.e. the domain variables have become assigned.

The domains do not become singletons automatically. Usually, it takes some amount of search to find an assignment that satisfies all constraints. It is the programmer's responsibility to do so. If some domain variables are left unassigned in a computation, the garbage collector will preserve all constraint data that is attached to them.

**Please note**: the behavior of the predicates `assert/1`, `findall/3`, `raise_exception/1` and friends is undefined on non-ground terms containing domain variables. If you need to apply these operations to a term containing domain variables, `fd_copy_term/3` may be used to decompose the term into a template and a symbolic representation of the relevant constraints.

The heart of the constraint solver is a scheduler for indexicals [Van Hentenryck et al. 92] and global constraints. Both entities act as coroutines performing incremental constraint solving or entailment checking. They wake up by changes in the domains of its arguments. All constraints provided by this package are implemented as indexicals or global constraints. New constraints can be defined by the user.

Indexicals are reactive functional rules, which take part in the solver's basic constraint solving algorithm, whereas each global constraint is associated with its particular constraint solving algorithm. The solver maintains two scheduling queues, giving priority to the queue of indexicals.

The feasibility of integrating the indexical approach with a Prolog based on the WAM was clearly demonstrated by Diaz's clp(FD) implementation [Diaz & Codognet 93], one of the fastest finite domains solvers around.

### 34.2.1 Posting Constraints

A constraint is called as any other Prolog predicate. When called, the constraint is *posted* to the store. For example:

```
| ?- X in 1..5, Y in 2..8, X+Y #= T.
X in 1..5,
Y in 2..8,
T in 3..13

| ?- X in 1..5, T in 3..13, X+Y #= T.
X in 1..5,
T in 3..13,
Y in -2..12
```

Note that the answer constraint shows the domains of nonground query variables, but not any constraints that may be attached to them.

### 34.2.2 A Constraint Satisfaction Problem

Constraint satisfaction problems (CSPs) are a major class of problems for which this solver is ideally suited. In a CSP, the goal is to pick values from pre-defined domains for certain variables so that the given constraints on the variables are all satisfied.

As a simple CSP example, let us consider the Send More Money puzzle. In this problem, the variables are the letters S, E, N, D, M, O, R, and Y. Each letter represents a digit between 0 and 9. The problem is to assign a value to each digit, such that SEND `+` MORE equals MONEY.

A program that solves the puzzle is given below. The program contains the typical three steps of a clp(FD) program:

1. declare the domains of the variables
2. post the problem constraints
3. look for a feasible solution via backtrack search, or look for an optimal solution via branch-and-bound search

Sometimes, an extra step precedes the search for a solution: the posting of surrogate constraints to break symmetries or to otherwise help prune the search space. No surrogate constraints are used in this example.

The domains of this puzzle are stated via the `domain/3` goal and by requiring that S and M be greater than zero. The two problem constraint of this puzzle are the equation (`sum/8`) and the constraint that all letters take distinct values (`all_different/1`). Finally, the backtrack search is performed by `labeling/2`. Different search strategies can be encoded in the `Type` parameter. In the example query, the default search strategy is used (select the leftmost variable, try values in ascending order).

```
:- use_module(library(clpfd)).

mm([S,E,N,D,M,O,R,Y], Type) :-
     domain([S,E,N,D,M,O,R,Y], 0, 9),      % step 1
     S#>0, M#>0,
     all_different([S,E,N,D,M,O,R,Y]),     % step 2
     sum(S,E,N,D,M,O,R,Y),
     labeling(Type, [S,E,N,D,M,O,R,Y]).    % step 3

sum(S, E, N, D, M, O, R, Y) :-
                  1000*S + 100*E + 10*N + D
     +            1000*M + 100*O + 10*R + E
     #= 10000*M + 1000*O + 100*N + 10*E + Y.

| ?- mm([S,E,N,D,M,O,R,Y], []).
D = 7,
E = 5,
M = 1,
N = 6,
O = 0,
R = 8,
S = 9,
Y = 2
```

### 34.2.3 Reified Constraints

Instead of merely posting constraints it is often useful to reflect its truth value into a 0/1-variable $B$, so that:

- the constraint is posted if $B$ is set to 1
- the negation of the constraint is posted if $B$ is set to 0
- $B$ is set to 1 if the constraint becomes entailed
- $B$ is set to 0 if the constraint becomes disentailed

This mechanism is known as *reification*. Several frequently used operations can be defined in terms of reified constraints, such as blocking implication [Saraswat 90] and the cardinality operator [Van Hentenryck & Deville 91], to name a few. A reified constraint is written:

```
| ?- Constraint #<=> B.
```

where *Constraint* is reifiable. As an example of a constraint that uses reification, consider `exactly(X,L,N)`, which is true if $X$ occurs exactly $N$ times in the list $L$. It can be defined thus:

```
exactly(_, [], 0).
exactly(X, [Y|L], N) :-
    X #= Y #<=> B,
    N #= M+B,
    exactly(X, L, M).
```

## 34.3 Available Constraints

This section describes the classes of constraints that can be used with this solver.

### 34.3.1 Arithmetic Constraints

*?Expr RelOp ?Expr*

defines an arithmetic constraint. The syntax for *Expr* and *RelOp* is defined by a grammar (see Section 34.11.2 [Syntax of Arithmetic Expressions], page 492). Note that the expressions are not restricted to being linear. Constraints over non-linear expressions, however, will usually yield less constraint propagation than constraints over linear expressions.

Arithmetic constraints can be reified as e.g.:

```
| ?- X in 1..2, Y in 3..5, X#=<Y #<=> B.
B = 1,
X in 1..2,
Y in 3..5
```

Linear arithmetic constraints, except equalities, maintain interval-consistency and their reified versions detect interval-entailment and -disentailment; see Section 34.7 [The Constraint System], page 470.

The following constraints are among the library constraints that general arithmetic constraints compile to. They express a relation between a sum or a scalar product and a value, using a dedicated algorithm, which avoids creating any temporary variables holding intermediate values. If you are computing a sum or a scalar product, it can be much more efficient to compute lists of coefficients and variables and post a single sum or scalar product constraint than to post a sequence of elementary constraints.

`sum(+Xs, +RelOp, ?Value)`

where *Xs* is a list of integers or domain variables, *RelOp* is a relational symbol as above, and *Value* is an integer or a domain variable. True if *Xs RelOp Value*. Cannot be reified.

`scalar_product(+Coeffs, +Xs, +RelOp, ?Value)`

where *Coeffs* is a list of length *n* of integers, *Xs* is a list of length *n* of integers or domain variables, *RelOp* is a relational symbol as above, and *Value* is an integer or a domain variable. True if *Coeffs*Xs RelOp Value*. Cannot be reified.

The following constraint is a special case of `scalar_product/4` where *RelOp* is `#=`, and which is domain-consistent in the *Xs*:

`knapsack(+Coeffs, +Xs, ?Value)`
: where *Coeffs* is a list of length *n* of non-negative integers, *Xs* is a list of length *n* of non-negative integers or domain variables, and *Value* is an integer or a domain variable. Any domain variables must have finite bounds. True if *Coeffs**Xs* = *Value*. Cannot be reified.

### 34.3.2 Membership Constraints

`domain(+Variables, +Min, +Max)`
: where *Variables* is a list of domain variables or integers, *Min* is an integer or the atom `inf` (minus infinity), and *Max* is an integer or the atom `sup` (plus infinity). True if the variables all are elements of the range `Min..Max`. Cannot be reified.

`?X in +Range`
: defines a membership constraint. *X* is an integer or a domain variable and *Range* is a *ConstantRange* (see Section 34.11.1 [Syntax of Indexicals], page 491). True if *X* is an element of the range.

`?X in_set +FDSet`
: defines a membership constraint. *X* is an integer or a domain variable and *FDSet* is an FD set term (see Section 34.8.3 [FD Set Operations], page 475). True if *X* is an element of the FD set.

`in/2` and `in_set/2` constraints can be reified. They maintain domain-consistency and their reified versions detect domain-entailment and -disentailment; see Section 34.7 [The Constraint System], page 470.

### 34.3.3 Propositional Constraints

Propositional combinators can be used to combine reifiable constraints into propositional formulae over such constraints. Such formulae are goal expanded by the system into sequences of reified constraints and arithmetic constraints. For example,

```
X #= 4 #\/ Y #= 6
```

expresses the disjunction of two equality constraints.

The leaves of propositional formulae can be reifiable constraints, the constants 0 and 1, or 0/1-variables. New primitive, reifiable constraints can be defined with indexicals as described in Section 34.9 [Defining Primitive Constraints], page 479. The following propositional combinators are available:

`#\ :Q`

True if the constraint $Q$ is false.

`:P #/\ :Q`

True if the constraints $P$ and $Q$ are both true.

`:P #\ :Q`

True if exactly one of the constraints $P$ and $Q$ is true.

`:P #\/ :Q`

True if at least one of the constraints $P$ and $Q$ is true.

`:P #=> :Q`
`:Q #<= :P`

True if the constraint $Q$ is true or the constraint $P$ is false.

`:P #<=> :Q`

True if the constraints $P$ and $Q$ are both true or both false.

Note that the reification scheme introduced in Section 34.2.3 [Reified Constraints], page 449 is a special case of a propositional constraint.

### 34.3.4 Combinatorial Constraints

The constraints listed here are sometimes called symbolic constraints. They are currently not reifiable. Unless documented otherwise, they maintain (at most) interval-consistency in their arguments; see Section 34.7 [The Constraint System], page 470.

`count(+Val,+List,+RelOp,?Count)`

where *Val* is an integer, *List* is a list of integers or domain variables, *Count* an integer or a domain variable, and *RelOp* is a relational symbol as in Section 34.3.1 [Arithmetic Constraints], page 450. True if $N$ is the number of elements of *List* that are equal to *Val* and $N$ *RelOp Count*. Thus, `count/4` is a generalization of `exactly/3` (not an exported constraint), which was used in an example earlier.

`count/4` maintains domain-consistency, but in practice, the following constraint is a better alternative.

`global_cardinality(+Xs,+Vals)`
`global_cardinality(+Xs,+Vals,+Options)`

where $Xs = [X_1, \ldots, X_d]$ is a list of integers or domain variables, and $Vals = [K_1 - V_1, \ldots, K_n - V_n]$ is a list of pairs where each key $K_i$ is a unique integer and $V_i$ is a domain variable or an integer. True if every element of *Xs* is equal to some key and for each pair $K_i - V_i$, exactly $V_i$ elements of *Xs* are equal to $K_i$.

If either *Xs* or *Vals* is ground, and in many other special cases, `global_cardinality/[2,3]` maintains domain-consistency, but generally, interval-consistency cannot be guaranteed. A domain-consistency algorithm [Regin 96] is used, roughly linear in the total size of the domains.

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following:

`cost(Cost,Matrix)`

A cost is associated with the constraint and reflected into the domain variable *Cost*. *Matrix* should be a $d \times n$ matrix, represented as a list of $d$ lists, each of length $n$. Assume that each $X_i$ equals $K_{p_i}$. The cost of the constraint is then $Matrix[1, p_1] + \cdots + Matrix[d, p_d]$.

With this option, a domain-consistency algorithm [Regin 99] is used, the complexity of which is roughly $O(d(m + n \log n))$ where $m$ is the total size of the domains.

`element(?X,+List,?Y)`

where $X$ and $Y$ are integers or domain variables and *List* is a list of integers or domain variables. True if the $X$:th element of *List* is $Y$. Operationally, the domains of $X$ and $Y$ are constrained so that for every element in the domain of $X$, there is a compatible element in the domain of $Y$, and vice versa.

This constraint uses an optimized algorithm for the special case where *List* is ground.

`element/3` maintains domain-consistency in $X$ and interval-consistency in *List* and $Y$.

`relation(?X,+MapList,?Y)`

where $X$ and $Y$ are integers or domain variables and *MapList* is a list of `integer-ConstantRange` pairs, where the integer keys occur uniquely (see Section 34.11.1 [Syntax of Indexicals], page 491). True if *MapList* contains a pair `X-R` and $Y$ is in the range denoted by $R$.

Operationally, the domains of $X$ and $Y$ are constrained so that for every element in the domain of $X$, there is a compatible element in the domain of $Y$, and vice versa.

If *MapList* is not ground, the constraint must be wrapped in `call/1` to postpone goal expansion until runtime.

An arbitrary binary constraint can be defined with `relation/3`. `relation/3` is implemented in terms of the following, more general constraint, with which arbitrary relations can be defined compactly:

`case(+Template, +Tuples, +Dag)`
`case(+Template, +Tuples, +Dag, +Options)`

*Template* is an arbitrary non-ground Prolog term. Its variables are merely place-holders; they should not occur outside the constraint nor inside *Tuples*.

*Tuples* is a list of terms of the same shape as *Template*. They should not share any variables with *Template*.

*Dag* is a list of *nodes* of the form `node(ID,X,Successors)`, where $X$ is a place-holder variable. The set of all $X$ should equal the set of variables in *Template*. The first node in the list is the *root node*. Let *rootID* denote its ID.

Nodes are either *internal nodes* or *leaf nodes*. In the former case, *Successors* is a list of terms `(Min..Max)-ID2`, where the *ID2* refers to a child node. In the latter case, *Successors* is a list of terms `(Min..Max)`. In both cases, the `(Min..Max)` should form disjoint intervals.

*ID* is a unique, integer identifier of a node.

Each path from the root node to a leaf node corresponds to one set of tuples admitted by the relation expressed by the constraint. Each variable in *Template* should occur exactly once on each path, and there must not be any cycles.

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following. It can be used to control the waking and pruning conditions of the constraint, as well as to identify the leaf nodes reached by the tuples:

`leaves(TLeaf,Leaves)`
: *TLeaf* is a place-holder variable. *Leaves* is a list of variables of the same length as *Tuples*. This option effectively extends the relation by one argument, corresponding to the ID of the leaf node reached by a particular tuple.

`on(Spec)`
: Specifies how eagerly the constraint should react to domain changes of *X*.

`prune(Spec)`
: Specifies the extent to which the constraint should prune the domain of *X*.

*Spec* is one of the following, where *X* is a place-holder variable occurring in *Template* or equal to *TLeaf*:

`dom(X)`
: wake up when the domain of *X* has changed, resp. perform full pruning on *X*. This is the default for all variables mentioned in the constraint.

`min(X)`
: wake up when the lower bound of *X* has changed, resp. prune only the lower bound of *X*.

`max(X)`
: wake up when the upper bound of *X* has changed, resp. prune only the upper bound of *X*.

`minmax(X)`
: wake up when the lower or upper bound of *X* has changed, resp. prune only the bounds of *X*.

`val(X)`
: wake up when *X* has become ground, resp. only prune *X* when its domain has been narrowed to a singleton.

`none(X)`
: ignore domain changes of *X*, resp. never prune *X*.

The constraint holds if *path(rootID,Tuple,Leaf)* holds for each *Tuple* in *Tuples* and *Leaf* is the corresponding element of *Leaves* if given (otherwise, *Leaf* is a free variable).

*path(ID,Tuple,Leaf)* holds if *Dag* contains a term `node(ID,Var,Successors)`, *Var* is the unique *k*:th element of *Template*, *i* is the *k*:th element of *Tuple*, and:

- The node is an internal node, and
  1. *Successors* contains a term `(Min..Max)-Child`,
  2. $Min \leq i \leq Max$, and
  3. *path(Child,Tuple,Leaf)* holds; or

- The node is a leaf node, and
  1. *Successors* contains a term `(Min..Max)`,
  2. $Min \leq i \leq Max$, and $Leaf = ID$.

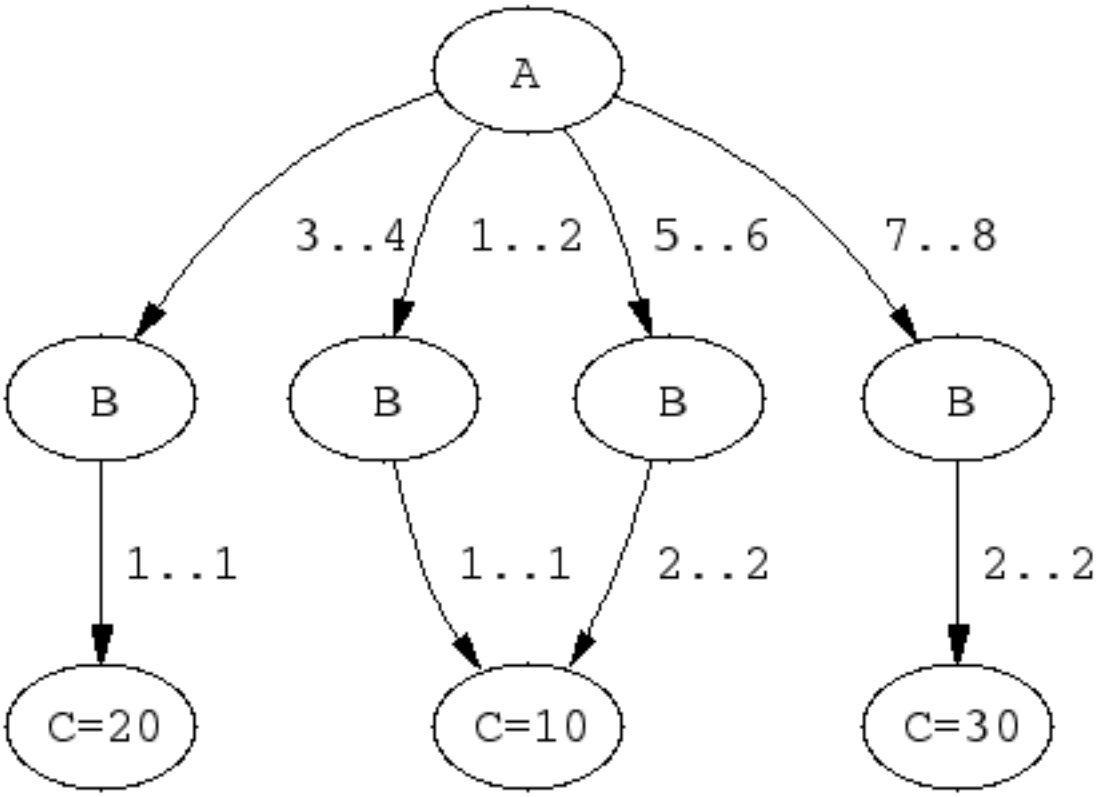
For example, recall that `element(X,L,Y)` wakes up when the domain of $X$ or the lower or upper bound of $Y$ has changed, performs full pruning of $X$, but only prunes the bounds of $Y$. The following two constraints:

```
element(X, [1,1,1,1,2,2,2,2], Y),
element(X, [10,10,20,20,10,10,30,30], Z)
```

can be replaced by the following single constraint, which is equivalent declaratively as well as wrt. pruning and waking. The fourth argument illustrates the leaf feature:

```
elts(X, Y, Z, L) :-
    case(f(A,B,C), [f(X,Y,Z)],
         [node(0, A,[(1..2)-1,(3..4)-2,(5..6)-3,(7..8)-4]),
          node(1, B,[(1..1)-5]),
          node(2, B,[(1..1)-6]),
          node(3, B,[(2..2)-5]),
          node(4, B,[(2..2)-7]),
          node(5, C,[(10..10)]),
          node(6, C,[(20..20)]),
          node(7, C,[(30..30)])],
         [on(dom(A)),on(minmax(B)),on(minmax(C)),
          prune(dom(A)),prune(minmax(B)),prune(minmax(C)),
          leaves(_,[L])]).
```

The DAG of the previous example has the following shape:




DAG corresponding to `elts/4`

A couple of sample queries:

```
| ?- elts(X, Y, Z, L).
L in 5..7,
X in 1..8,
Y in 1..2,
Z in 10..30

| ?- elts(X, Y, Z, L), Z #>= 15.
L in 6..7,
X in(3..4)\/(7..8),
Y in 1..2,
Z in 20..30

| ?- elts(X, Y, Z, L), Y = 1.
Y = 1,
L in 5..6,
X in 1..4,
Z in 10..20

| ?- elts(X, Y, Z, L), L = 5.
Z = 10,
X in(1..2)\/(5..6),
Y in 1..2
```

`all_different(+Variables)`
`all_different(+Variables, +Options)`
`all_distinct(+Variables)`
`all_distinct(+Variables, +Options)`

where *Variables* is a list of domain variables with bounded domains or integers. Each variable is constrained to take a value that is unique among the variables. Declaratively, this is equivalent to an inequality constraint for each pair of variables.

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following:

`on(On)` How eagerly to wake up the constraint. One of:

- `dom` (the default for `all_distinct/[1,2]` and `assignment/[2,3]`), to wake up when the domain of a variable is changed;
- `min` to wake up when the lower bound of a domain is changed;
- `max` to wake up when the upper bound of a domain is changed;
- `minmax` to wake up when some bound of a domain is changed;
- `val` (the default for `all_different/[1,2]`), to wake up when a variable becomes ground.

`consistency(Cons)`
Which algorithm to use, one of:

`global` The default for `all_distinct/[1,2]` and `assignment/[2,3]`. A domain-consistency algorithm [Regin 94] is used, roughly linear in the total size of the domains.

`local` The default for `all_different/[1,2]`. An algorithm achieving exactly the same pruning as a set of pairwise inequality constraints is used, roughly linear in the number of variables.

`bound` An interval-consistency algorithm [Mehlhorn 00] is used. This algorithm is nearly linear in the number of variables and values.

The following is a constraint over two lists of length $n$ of variables. Each variable is constrained to take a value in $[1, n]$ that is unique for its list. Furthermore, the lists are dual in a sense described below.

`assignment(+Xs, +Ys)`
`assignment(+Xs, +Ys, +Options)`
where $Xs = [X_1, \ldots, X_n]$ and $Ys = [Y_1, \ldots, Y_n]$ are lists of domain variables or integers. True if all $X_i, Y_i \in [1, n]$ and $X_i = j \equiv Y_j = i$.

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following, where *Boolean* must be `true` or `false` (`false` is the default):

`on(On)` Same meaning as for `all_different/2`.

`consistency(Cons)`
Same meaning as for `all_different/2`.

`circuit(Boolean)`
If `true`, `circuit(Xs,Ys)` must hold for the constraint to be true.

`cost(Cost,Matrix)`
A cost is associated with the constraint and reflected into the domain variable *Cost*. *Matrix* should be an $n \times n$ matrix, represented as a list of lists. The cost of the constraint is $Matrix[1, X_1] + \cdots + Matrix[n, X_n]$.

With this option, a domain-consistency algorithm [Sellmann 02] is used, the complexity of which is roughly $O(n(m + n \log n))$ where $m$ is the total size of the domains.

The following constraint can be thought of as constraining $n$ nodes in a graph to form a Hamiltonian circuit. The nodes are numbered from 1 to $n$. The circuit starts in node 1, visits each node, and returns to the origin.

`circuit(+Succ)`
`circuit(+Succ, +Pred)`

where *Succ* is a list of length $n$ of domain variables or integers. The $i$:th element of *Succ* (*Pred*) is the successor (predecessor) of $i$ in the graph. True if the values form a Hamiltonian circuit.

The following constraint can be thought of as constraining $n$ tasks, each with a start time $S_j$ and a duration $D_j$, so that no tasks ever overlap. The tasks can be seen as competing for some exclusive resource.

`serialized(+Starts,+Durations)`
`serialized(+Starts,+Durations,+Options)`

where *Starts* $= [S_1, \ldots, S_n]$ and *Durations* $= [D_1, \ldots, D_n]$ are lists of domain variables with finite bounds or integers. *Durations* must be non-negative. True if *Starts* and *Durations* denote a set of non-overlapping tasks, i.e.:

$$\begin{aligned} &\forall i, j \in [1, n] \wedge i < j : \\ &\qquad S_i + D_i \leq S_j \vee \\ &\qquad S_j + D_j \leq S_i \vee \\ &\qquad D_i = 0 \vee \\ &\qquad D_j = 0 \end{aligned}$$

The `serialized/[2,3]` constraint is merely a special case of `cumulative/[4,5]` (see below).

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following, where *Boolean* must be `true` or `false` (`false` is the default, except for the `bounds_only` option):

`precedences(Ps)`

*Ps* encodes a set of precedence constraints to apply to the tasks. *Ps* should be a list of terms of one of the forms:

- `d(`$i, j, k$`)`, where $i$ and $j$ should be task numbers, and $k$ should be a positive integer or `sup`, denoting:

$$\begin{cases} S_i + k \leq S_j \vee S_j \leq S_i, \text{ if } k \text{ is an integer} \\ S_j \leq S_i, \text{ if } k \text{ is } \texttt{sup} \end{cases}$$

- `i-j in r`, where $i$ and $j$ should be task numbers, and $r$ should be a *ConstantRange* (see Section 34.11.1 [Syntax of Indexicals], page 491), denoting:

$$S_i - S_j = D_{ij} \wedge D_{ij} \in r$$

`resource(R)`

$R$ is unified with a term that can be passed to `order_resource/2` (see Section 34.4 [Enumeration Predicates], page 465) in order to find a consistent ordering of the tasks.

`path_consistency(Boolean)`
: if `true`, a redundant path-consistency algorithm will be used inside the constraint in an attempt to improve the pruning.

`static_sets(Boolean)`
: if `true`, a redundant algorithm will be used, which reasons about the set of tasks that must precede (be preceded by) a given task, in an attempt to tighten the lower (upper) bound of a given start variable.

`edge_finder(Boolean)`
: if `true`, a redundant algorithm will be used, which attempts to identify tasks that necessarily precede or are preceded by some set of tasks.

`decomposition(Boolean)`
: if `true`, an attempt is made to decompose the constraint each time it is resumed.

`bounds_only(Boolean)`
: if `true`, the constraints will only prune the bounds of the $S_i$ variables, and not inside the domains.

Whether it's worthwhile to switch on any of the latter five options is highly problem dependent.

`serialized/3` can model a set of tasks to be serialized with sequence-dependent setup times. For example, the following constraint models three tasks, all with duration 5, where task 1 must precede task 2 and task 3 must either complete before task 2 or start at least 10 time units after task 2 started:

```
?- domain([S1,S2,S3], 0, 20),
   serialized([S1,S2,S3], [5,5,5],
              [precedences([d(2,1,sup),d(2,3,10)])]).
S1 in 0..15,
S2 in 5..20,
S3 in 0..20
```

The bounds of `S1` and `S2` changed because of the precedence constraint. Setting `S2` to 5 will propagate `S1=0` and `S3 in 15..20`.

The following constraint can be thought of as constraining $n$ tasks to be placed in time and on $m$ machines. Each machine has a resource limit, which is interpreted as a lower or upper bound on the total amount of resource used on that machine at any point in time that intersects with some task.

A task is represented by a term `task(`$O_i, D_i, E_i, H_i, M_i$`)` where $O_i$ is the start time, $D_i$ the duration, $E_i$ the end time, $H_i$ the resource consumption, and $M_i$ a machine identifier.

A machine is represented by a term `machine(`$M_j, L_j$`)` where $M_j$ is the identifier and $L_j$ is the resource limit of the machine.

All fields are domain variables with bounded domains, or integers. $L_j$ must be an integer. $D_i$ must be non-negative, but $H_i$ may be either positive or negative. Negative resource consumption is interpreted as resource production.

`cumulatives(+Tasks,+Machines)`
`cumulatives(+Tasks,+Machines,+Options)`

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following, where *Boolean* must be `true` or `false` (`false` is the default):

`bound(B)` If `lower` (the default), each resource limit is treated as a lower bound. If `upper`, each resource limit is treated as an upper bound.

`prune(P)` If `all` (the default), the constraint will try to prune as many variables as possible. If `next`, only variables that occur in the first non-ground task term (wrt. the order given when the constraint was posted) can be pruned.

`generalization(Boolean)`
If `true`, extra reasoning based on assumptions on machine assignment will be done to infer more.

`task_intervals(Boolean)`
If `true`, extra global reasoning will be performed in an attempt to infer more.

The following constraint can be thought of as constraining $n$ tasks, each with a start time $S_j$, a duration $D_j$, and a resource amount $R_j$, so that the total resource consumption does not exceed *Limit* at any time:

`cumulative(+Starts,+Durations,+Resources,?Limit)`
`cumulative(+Starts,+Durations,+Resources,?Limit,+Options)`

where *Starts* $= [S_1, \ldots, S_n]$, *Durations* $= [D_1, \ldots, D_n]$, and *Resource* $= [R_1, \ldots, R_n]$ are lists of domain variables with finite bounds or integers, and *Limit* is a domain variable with finite bounds or an integer. *Durations*, *Resources* and *Limit* must be non-negative. Let:

$$a = \min(S_1, \ldots, S_n)$$
$$b = \max(S_1 + D_1, \ldots, S_n + D_n)$$
$$R_{ij} = \begin{cases} R_j, \text{ if } S_j \leq i < S_j + D_j \\ 0, \text{ otherwise} \end{cases}$$

The constraint holds if:

$$\forall a \leq i < b : R_{i1} + \cdots + R_{in} \leq Limit$$

If given, *Options* should be of the same form as in `serialized/3`, except the `resource(R)` option is not useful in `cumulative/5`.

The `cumulative/4` constraint is due to Aggoun and Beldiceanu [Aggoun & Beldiceanu 93].

The following constraint captures the relation between a list of values, a list of the values in ascending order, and their positions in the original list:

`sorting(+Xs,+Ps,+Ys)`

where $Xs = [X_1, \ldots, X_n]$, $Ps = [P_1, \ldots, P_n]$, and $Ys = [Y_1, \ldots, Y_n]$ are lists of domain variables or integers. The constraint holds if the following are true:

- $Ys$ is in ascending order.
- $Ps$ is a permutation of $[1, n]$.
- $\forall i \in [1, n] : X_i = Y_{P_i}$

In practice, the underlying algorithm [Mehlhorn 00] is likely to achieve interval-consistency, and is guaranteed to do so if $Ps$ is ground or completely free.

The following constraints model a set or lines or rectangles, respectively, so that no pair of objects overlap:

`disjoint1(+Lines)`
`disjoint1(+Lines,+Options)`

where *Lines* is a list of terms $F(S_j, D_j)$ or $F(S_j, D_j, T_j)$, $S_j$ and $D_j$ are domain variables with finite bounds or integers denoting the origin and length of line $j$ respectively, $F$ is any functor, and the optional $T_j$ is an atomic term denoting the type of the line. $T_j$ defaults to 0 (zero).

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following, where *Boolean* must be `true` or `false` (`false` is the default):

`decomposition(Boolean)`

if `true`, an attempt is made to decompose the constraint each time it is resumed.

`global(Boolean)`

if `true`, a redundant algorithm using global reasoning is used to achieve more complete pruning.

`wrap(Min,Max)`

If used, the space in which the lines are placed should be thought of as a circle where positions *Min* and *Max* coincide, where *Min* and *Max* should be integers. That is, the space wraps around. Furthermore, this option forces the domains of the origin variables to be inside *[Min,Max-1]*.

`margin(`$T_1$`,`$T_2$`,`$D$`)`

This option imposes a minimal distance $D$ between the end point of any line of type $T_1$ and the origin of any line of type $T_2$. $D$ should be a positive integer or `sup`. If `sup` is used, all lines of type $T_2$ must be placed before any line of type $T_1$.

This option interacts with the `wrap/2` option in the sense that distances are counted with possible wrap-around, and the distance between any end point and origin is always finite.

The file `library('clpfd/examples/bridge.pl')` contains an example where `disjoint1/2` is used for scheduling non-overlapping tasks.

`disjoint2(+Rectangles)`
`disjoint2(+Rectangles,+Options)`

where *Rectangles* is a list of terms $F(S_{j_1}, D_{j_1}, S_{j_2}, D_{j_2})$ or $F(S_{j_1}, D_{j_1}, S_{j_2}, D_{j_2}, T_j)$, $S_{j_1}$ and $D_{j_1}$ are domain variables with finite bounds or integers denoting the origin and size of rectangle $j$ in the X dimension, $S_{j_2}$ and $D_{j_2}$ are the values for the Y dimension, $F$ is any functor, and the optional $T_j$ is an atomic term denoting the type of the rectangle. $T_j$ defaults to 0 (zero).

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following, where *Boolean* must be `true` or `false` (`false` is the default):

`decomposition(Boolean)`
: If `true`, an attempt is made to decompose the constraint each time it is resumed.

`global(Boolean)`
: If `true`, a redundant algorithm using global reasoning is used to achieve more complete pruning.

`wrap(Min1,Max1,Min2,Max2)`
: *Min1* and *Max1* should be either integers or the atoms `inf` and `sup` respectively. If they are integers, the space in which the rectangles are placed should be thought of as a cylinder wrapping around the X dimension where positions *Min1* and *Max1* coincide. Furthermore, this option forces the domains of the $S_{j_1}$ variables to be inside *[Min1,Max1-1]*.

  *Min2* and *Max2* should be either integers or the atoms `inf` and `sup` respectively. If they are integers, the space in which the rectangles are placed should be thought of as a cylinder wrapping around the Y dimension where positions *Min2* and *Max2* coincide. Furthermore, this option forces the domains of the $S_{j_2}$ variables to be inside *[Min2,Max2-1]*.

  If all four are integers, the space is a toroid wrapping around both dimensions.

`margin(`$T_1$`,`$T_2$`,`$D_1$`,`$D_2$`)`
: This option imposes minimal distances $D_1$ in the X dimension and $D_2$ in the Y dimension between the end point of any rectangle of type $T_1$ and the origin of any rectangle of type $T_2$. $D_1$ and $D_2$ should be positive integers or `sup`. If `sup` is used, all rectangles of type $T_2$ must be placed before any rectangle of type $T_1$ in the relevant dimension.

  This option interacts with the `wrap/4` option in the sense that distances are counted with possible wrap-around, and the distance between any end point and origin is always finite.

The file `library('clpfd/examples/squares.pl')` contains an example where `disjoint2/2` is used for tiling squares.

`synchronization(Boolean)`

Let the *assignment dimension* and the *temporal dimension* denote the two dimensions, no matter which is the X and which is the Y dimension. If *Boolean* is `true`, a redundant algorithm is used to achieve more complete pruning for the following case:

- All rectangles have size 1 in the assignment dimension.
- Some rectangles have the same origin and size in the temporal dimension, and that origin is not yet fixed.

The following example shows an artificial placement problem involving 25 rectangles including four groups of rectangles whose left and right borders must be aligned. If `Synch` is `true`, it can be solved with first-fail labeling in 23 backtracks. If `Synch` is `false`, 60 million backtracks do not suffice to solve it.

```
ex([O1,Y1a,Y1b,Y1c,
    O2,Y2a,Y2b,Y2c,Y2d,
    O3,Y3a,Y3b,Y3c,Y3d,
    O4,Y4a,Y4b,Y4c],
   Synch) :-
        domain([Y1a,Y1b,Y1c,
                Y2a,Y2b,Y2c,Y2d,
                Y3a,Y3b,Y3c,Y3d,
                Y4a,Y4b,Y4c], 1, 5),
        O1 in 1..28,
        O2 in 1..26,
        O3 in 1..22,
        O4 in 1..25,
        disjoint2([t(1,1,5,1),    t(20,4,5,1),
                   t(1,1,4,1),    t(14,4,4,1),
                   t(1,2,3,1),    t(24,2,3,1),
                   t(1,2,2,1),    t(21,1,2,1),
                   t(1,3,1,1),    t(14,2,1,1),
                   t(O1,3,Y1a,1),
                   t(O1,3,Y1b,1),
                   t(O1,3,Y1c,1),
                   t(O2,5,Y2a,1),
                   t(O2,5,Y2b,1),
                   t(O2,5,Y2c,1),
                   t(O2,5,Y2d,1),
                   t(O3,9,Y3a,1),
                   t(O3,9,Y3b,1),
                   t(O3,9,Y3c,1),
                   t(O3,9,Y3d,1),
                   t(O4,6,Y4a,1),
                   t(O4,6,Y4b,1),
                   t(O4,6,Y4c,1)],
                  [synchronization(Synch)]).
```

The following constraints express the fact that several vectors of domain variables are in ascending lexicographic order:

`lex_chain(+Vectors)`
`lex_chain(+Vectors,+Options)`

where *Vectors* is a list of vectors (lists) of domain variables with finite bounds or integers. The constraint holds if *Vectors* are in ascending lexicographic order.

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following:

`op(Op)` If *Op* is the atom `#=<` (the default), the constraints holds if *Vectors* are in non-descending lexicographic order. If *Op* is the atom `#<`, the constraints holds if *Vectors* are in strictly ascending lexicographic order.

`among(Least,Most,Values)`
If given, *Least* and *Most* should be integers such that $0 \leq Least \leq Most$ and *Values* should be a list of distinct integers. This option imposes the additional constraint on each vector in *Vectors* that at least *Least* and at most *Most* elements should belong to *Values*.

In the absence of an `among/3` option, the underlying algorithm [Carlsson & Beldiceanu 02] guarantees domain-consistency.

### 34.3.5 User-Defined Constraints

New, primitive constraints can be added defined by the user on two different levels. On a higher level, constraints can be defined using the global constraint programming interface; see Section 34.8 [Defining Global Constraints], page 471. Such constraints can embody specialized algorithms and use the full power of Prolog. They cannot be reified.

On a lower level, new primitive constraints can be defined with indexicals. In this case, they take part in the basic constraint solving algorithm and express custom designed rules for special cases of the overall local propagation scheme. Such constraints are called *FD predicates*; see Section 34.9 [Defining Primitive Constraints], page 479. They can optionally be reified.

## 34.4 Enumeration Predicates

As is usually the case with finite domain constraint solvers, this solver is not *complete*. That is, it does not ensure that the set of posted constraints is satisfiable. One must resort to search (enumeration) to check satisfiability and get particular solutions.

The following predicates provide several variants of search:

`indomain(?X)`
: where $X$ is a domain variable with a bounded domain or an integer. Assigns, in increasing order via backtracking, a feasible value to $X$.

`labeling(:Options, +Variables)`
: where *Variables* is a list of domain variables or integers and *Options* is a list of search options. The domain variables must all have bounded domains. True if an assignment of the variables can be found, which satisfies the posted constraints.

`first_bound(+BB0, -BB)`
`later_bound(+BB0, -BB)`
: Provides an auxiliary service for the `value(Enum)` option (see below).

`minimize(:Goal,?X)`
`maximize(:Goal,?X)`
: Uses a branch-and-bound algorithm with restart to find an assignment that minimizes (maximizes) the domain variable $X$. *Goal* should be a Prolog goal that constrains $X$ to become assigned, and could be a `labeling/2` goal. The algorithm calls *Goal* repeatedly with a progressively tighter upper (lower) bound on $X$ until a proof of optimality is obtained, at which time *Goal* and $X$ are unified with values corresponding to the optimal solution.

The *Options* argument of `labeling/2` controls the order in which variables are selected for assignment (variable choice heuristic), the way in which choices are made for the selected variable (value choice heuristic), and whether all solutions or a single, optimal solution should be found. The options are divided into four groups. One option may be selected per group. Also, the number of assumptions (choices) made during the search can be collected. Finally, a discrepancy limit can be imposed.

The following options control the order in which the next variable is selected for assignment.

`leftmost` The leftmost variable is selected. This is the default.

`min` The leftmost variable with the smallest lower bound is selected.

`max` The leftmost variable with the greatest upper bound is selected.

`ff` The first-fail principle is used: the leftmost variable with the smallest domain is selected.

`ffc` The most constrained heuristic is used: a variable with the smallest domain is selected, breaking ties by (a) selecting the variable that has the most constraints suspended on it and (b) selecting the leftmost one.

`variable(Sel)`
: *Sel* is a predicate to select the next variable. Given *Vars*, the variables that remain to label, it will be called as *Sel(Vars,Selected,Rest)*.

*Sel* is expected to succeed determinately, unifying *Selected* and *Rest* with the selected variable and the remaining list, respectively.

*Sel* should be a callable term, optionally with a module prefix, and the arguments *Vars,Selected,Rest* will be appended to it. For example, if *Sel* is `mod:sel(Param)`, it will be called as `mod:sel(Param,Vars,Selected,Rest)`.

The following options control the way in which choices are made for the selected variable *X*:

`step` Makes a binary choice between `X #= B` and `X #\= B`, where *B* is the lower or upper bound of *X*. This is the default.

`enum` Makes a multiple choice for *X* corresponding to the values in its domain.

`bisect` Makes a binary choice between `X #=< M` and `X #> M`, where *M* is the midpoint of the domain of *X*. This strategy is also known as domain splitting.

`value(Enum)`

*Enum* is a predicate that should narrow the domain of *X*, possibly but not necessarily to a singleton. It will be called as *Enum(X,Rest,BB0,BB)* where *Rest* is the list of variables that need labeling except *X*, and *BB0* and *BB* are parameters described below.

*Enum* is expected to succeed nondeterminately, narrowing the domain of *X*, and to backtrack one or more times, providing alternative narrowings. To ensure that branch-and-bound search works correctly, it must call the auxiliary predicate `first_bound(BB0,BB)` in its first solution. Similarly, it must call the auxiliary predicate `later_bound(BB0,BB)` in any alternative solution.

*Enum* should be a callable term, optionally with a module prefix, and the arguments *X,Rest,BB0,BB* will be appended to it. For example, if *Enum* is `mod:enum(Param)`, it will be called as `mod:enum(Param,X,Rest,BB0,BB)`.

The following options control the order in which the choices are made for the selected variable *X*. Not useful with the `value(Enum)` option:

`up` The domain is explored in ascending order. This is the default.

`down` The domain is explored in descending order.

The following options control whether all solutions should be enumerated by backtracking or whether a single solution that minimizes (maximizes) *X* is returned, if one exists.

`all` All solutions are enumerated. This is the default.

`minimize(X)`
`maximize(X)`
: Uses a branch-and-bound algorithm to find an assignment that minimizes (maximizes) the domain variable $X$. The labeling should constrain $X$ to become assigned for all assignments of *Variables*. It is useful to combine this option with the `time_out/2` option (see below).

The following option counts the number of assumptions (choices) made during the search:

`assumptions(K)`
: When a solution is found, $K$ is unified with the number of choices made.

A limit on the discrepancy of the search can be imposed:

`discrepancy(D)`
: On the path leading to the solution there are at most $D$ choicepoints in which a non-leftmost branch was taken.

Finally, a time limit on the search can be imposed:

`time_out(Time,Flag)`
: This is equivalent to a goal `time_out(labeling(...),Time,Flag)` (see Chapter 49 [Timeout], page 767). Furthermore, if combined with the `minimize(V)` or `maximize(V)` option, and the time limit is reached, the values of *Variables* and $V$ will be those of the best solution found.

For example, to enumerate solutions using a static variable ordering, use:

```
| ?- constraints(Variables),
     labeling([], Variables).
     %same as [leftmost,step,up,all]
```

To minimize a cost function using branch-and-bound search, a dynamic variable ordering using the first-fail principle, and domain splitting exploring the upper part of domains first, use:

```
| ?- constraints(Variables, Cost),
     labeling([ff,bisect,down,minimize(Cost)], Variables).
```

The file `library('clpfd/examples/tsp.pl')` contains an example of user-defined variable and value choice heuristics.

As opposed to the predicates above, which search for consistent assignments to domain variables, the following predicate searches for a consistent ordering among tasks competing for an exclusive resource, without necessarily fixing their start times:

`order_resource(+Options, +Resource)`

where *Options* is a list of search options and *Resource* represents a resource as returned by `serialized/3` (see Section 34.3.4 [Combinatorial Constraints], page 452) on which tasks must be serialized. True if a total ordering can be imposed on the tasks, enumerating all such orderings via backtracking.

The search options control the construction of the total ordering. It may contain at most one of the following atoms, selecting a strategy:

`first` The ordering is built by repetitively selecting some task to be placed before all others.

`last` The ordering is built by repetitively selecting some task to be placed after all others.

and at most one of the following atoms, controlling which task to select at each step. If `first` is chosen (the default), the task with the smallest value is selected; otherwise, the task with the greatest value is selected.

`est` The tasks are ordered by earliest start time.

`lst` The tasks are ordered by latest start time.

`ect` The tasks are ordered by earliest completion time.

`lct` The tasks are ordered by latest completion time.

`[first,est]` (the default) and `[last,lct]` can be good heuristics.

## 34.5 Statistics Predicates

The following predicates can be used to get execution statistics.

`fd_statistics(?Key, ?Value)`

This allows a program to access execution statistics specific to this solver. General statistics about CPU time and memory consumption etc. is available from the built-in predicate `statistics/2`.

For each of the possible keys *Key*, *Value* is unified with the current value of a counter, which is simultaneously zeroed. The following counters are maintained. See Section 34.7 [The Constraint System], page 470, for details of what they all mean:

`resumptions`
The number of times a constraint was resumed.

`entailments`
The number of times a (dis)entailment was detected by a constraint.

`prunings` The number of times a domain was pruned.

`backtracks`
The number of times a contradiction was found by a domain being wiped out, or by a global constraint signalling failure. Other causes

of backtracking, such as failed Prolog tests, are not covered by this counter.

`constraints`
The number of constraints created.

`fd_statistics`
Displays on the standard error stream a summary of the above statistics. All counters are zeroed.

## 34.6 Answer Constraints

By default, the answer constraint only shows the projection of the store onto the variables that occur in the query, but not any constraints that may be attached to these variables, nor any domains or constraints attached to other variables. This is a conscious decision, as no efficient algorithm for projecting answer constraints onto the query variables is known for this constraint system.

It is possible, however, to get a complete answer constraint including all variables that took part in the computation and their domains and attached constraints. This is done by asserting a clause for the following predicate:

`clpfd:full_answer` *hook*
If false (the default), the answer constraint, as well as constraints projected by `clpfd:project_attributes/2`, `clpfd:attribute_goal/2` and their callers, only contain the domains of the query variables. If true, those constraints contain the domains and any attached constraints of all variables. Initially defined as a dynamic predicate with no clauses.

## 34.7 The Constraint System

### 34.7.1 Definitions

The constraint system is based on domain constraints and indexicals. A *domain constraint* is an expression `X::I`, where $X$ is a domain variable and $I$ is a nonempty set of integers.

A set $S$ of domain constraints is called a *store*. $D(X, S)$, the *domain* of $X$ in $S$, is defined as the intersection of all $I$ such that $X::I$ belongs to $S$. The store is *contradictory* if the domain of some variable is empty; otherwise, it is *consistent*. A consistent store $S'$ is an *extension* of a store $S$ iff, for all variables $X$, $D(X, S')$ is contained in $D(X, S)$.

The following definitions, adapted from [Van Hentenryck et al. 95], define important notions of consistency and entailment of constraints wrt. stores.

A ground constraint is *true* if it holds and *false* otherwise.

A constraint $C$ is *domain-consistent wrt.* $S$ iff, for each variable $X_i$ and value $V_i$ in $D(X_i, S)$, there exist values $V_j$ in $D(X_j, S)$, $1 \leq j \leq n \wedge i \neq j$, such that $C(V_1, \ldots, V_n)$ is true.

A constraint $C$ is *domain-entailed by* $S$ iff, for all values $V_j$ in $D(X_j, S)$, $1 \leq j \leq n$, $C(V_1, \ldots, V_n)$ is true.

Let $D'(X, S)$ denote the interval $[\min(D(X, S)), \max(D(X, S))]$.

A constraint $C$ is *interval-consistent wrt.* $S$ iff, for each variable $X_i$, there exist values $V_j$ and $W_j$ in $D'(X_j, S)$, $1 \leq j \leq n, i \neq j$, such that $C(V_1, \ldots, \min(D(X_i, S)), \ldots, V_n)$ and $C(W_1, \ldots, \max(D(X_i, S)), \ldots, W_n)$ are both true.

A constraint $C$ is *interval-entailed by* $S$ iff, for all values $V_j$ in $D'(X_j, S)$, $1 \leq j \leq n$, $C(V_1, \ldots, V_n)$ is true.

Finally, a constraint is *domain-disentailed (interval-disentailed) by* $S$ iff its negation is domain-entailed (interval-entailed) by $S$.

### 34.7.2 Pitfalls of Interval Reasoning

In most circumstances, arithmetic constraints maintain interval-consistency and detect interval-entailment and -disentailment. There are cases where an interval-consistency maintaining constraint may detect a contradiction when the constraint is not yet interval-disentailed, as the following example illustrates. Note that `X #\= Y` maintains domain-consistency if both arguments are constants or variables:

```
| ?- X+Y #= Z, X=1, Z=6, Y in 1..10, Y #\= 5.
no
| ?- X+Y #= Z #<=> B, X=1, Z=6, Y in 1..10, Y #\= 5.
X = 1,
Z = 6,
Y in(1..4)\/(6..10),
B in 0..1
```

Since `1+5#=6` holds, `X+Y #= Z` is not interval-disentailed, although any attempt to make it interval-consistent wrt. the store results in a contradictory store.

## 34.8 Defining Global Constraints

### 34.8.1 The Global Constraint Programming Interface

This section describes a programming interface by means of which new constraints can be written. The interface consists of a set of predicates provided by this library module. Constraints defined in this way can take arbitrary arguments and may use any constraint

solving algorithm, provided it makes sense. Reification cannot be expressed in this interface; instead, reification may be achieved by explicitly passing a 0/1-variable to the constraint in question.

Global constraints have state, which may be updated each time the constraint is resumed. The state information may be used e.g. in incremental constraint solving.

The following two predicates are the principal entrypoints for defining and posting new global constraints:

`clpfd:dispatch_global(+Constraint, +State0, -State, -Actions)` *extendible*

Tells the solver how to solve constraints of the form *Constraint*. Defined as a dynamic, multifile predicate.

When defining a new constraint, a clause of this predicate must be added. Its body defines a constraint solving method and should always succeed determinately. When a global constraint is called or resumed, the solver will call this predicate to deal with the constraint.

> **Please note**: the constraint is identified by its principal functor; there is no provision for having two constraints with the same name in different modules. It is good practice to include a cut in every clause of `clpfd:dispatch_global/4`.

*State0* and *State* are the old and new state respectively.

The constraint solving method must not invoke the constraint solver recursively e.g. by binding variables or posting new constraints; instead, *Actions* should be unified with a list of requests to the solver. Each request should be of the following form:

`exit` The constraint has become entailed, and ceases to exist.

`fail` The constraint has become disentailed, causing the solver to backtrack.

`X = V` The solver binds *X* to *V*.

`X in R` The solver constrains *X* to be a member of the *ConstantRange* *R* (see Section 34.11.1 [Syntax of Indexicals], page 491).

`X in_set S`
The solver constrains *X* to be a member of the FD set *S* (see Section 34.8.3 [FD Set Operations], page 475).

`call(Goal)`
The solver calls the goal or constraint *Goal*, which should be module prefixed unless it is a built-in predicate or an exported predicate of the `clpfd` module.

*Goal* is executed as any Prolog goal, but in a context where some constraints may already be enqueued for execution, in which case those constraints will run after the completion of the call request.

`fd_global(:Constraint, +State, +Susp)`
`fd_global(:Constraint, +State, +Susp, +Options)`

where *Constraint* is a constraint goal, *State* is its initial state, and *Susp* is a term encoding how the constraint should wake up in response to domain changes. This predicate posts the constraint.

*Susp* is a list of *F(Var)* terms where *Var* is a variable to suspend on and *F* is a functor encoding when to wake up:

`dom(X)` wake up when the domain of *X* has changed

`min(X)` wake up when the lower bound of *X* has changed

`max(X)` wake up when the upper bound of *X* has changed

`minmax(X)`
wake up when the lower or upper of *X* has changed

`val(X)` wake up when *X* has become ground

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following:

`source(Term)`
By default, the symbolic form computed by `fd_copy_term/3`, and shown in the answer constraint if `clpfd:full_answer` holds, equals *Constraint*, module name expanded. With this option, the symbolic form will instead be *Term*. In particular, if *Term* equals `true`, the constraint will not appear in the *Body* argument of `fd_copy_term/3`. This can be useful if you are posting some redundant (implied) constraint.

`idempotent(Boolean)`
If `true` (the default), the constraint solving method is assumed to be idempotent. That is, in the scope of `clpfd:dispatch_global/4`, the solver will not check for the resumption conditions for the given constraint, while performing its *Actions*. If `false`, an action may well cause the solver to resume the constraint that produced the action.

If a variable occurs more than once in a global constraint that is being posted, or due to a variable-variable unification, the solver will no longer trust the constraint solving method to be idempotent.

For an example of usage, see Section 34.8.4 [A Global Constraint Example], page 477.

The following predicate controls operational aspects of the constraint solver:

`fd_flag(+FlagName, ?OldValue, ?NewValue)`

*OldValue* is the value of the FD flag *FlagName*, and the new value of *FlagName* is set to *NewValue*. The possible FD flag names and values are:

`overflow` Determines the behavior on integer overflow conditions. Possible values:

`error` Raises a representation error (the default).

`fail` Silently fails.

`debug` Controls the visibility of constraint propagation. Possible values are `on` and `off` (the default). For iternal use by `library(fdbg)`.

### 34.8.2 Reflection Predicates

The constraint solving method needs access to information about the current domains of variables. This is provided by the following predicates, which are all constant time operations.

`fd_var(?X)`
Checks that $X$ is currently an unbound variable that is known to the CLPFD solver.

`fd_min(?X, ?Min)`
where $X$ is a domain variable (or an integer). *Min* is unified with the smallest value in the current domain of $X$, i.e. an integer or the atom `inf` denoting minus infinity.

`fd_max(?X, ?Max)`
where $X$ is a domain variable (or an integer). *Max* is unified with the upper bound of the current domain of $X$, i.e. an integer or the atom `sup` denoting infinity.

`fd_size(?X, ?Size)`
where $X$ is a domain variable (or an integer). *Size* is unified with the size of the current domain of $X$, if the domain is bounded, or the atom `sup` otherwise.

`fd_set(?X, ?Set)`
where $X$ is a domain variable (or an integer). *Set* is unified with an FD set term denoting the internal representation of the current domain of $X$; see below.

`fd_dom(?X, ?Range)`
where $X$ is a domain variable (or an integer). *Range* is unified with a *ConstantRange* (see Section 34.11.1 [Syntax of Indexicals], page 491) denoting the the current domain of $X$.

`fd_degree(?X, ?Degree)`
where $X$ is a domain variable (or an integer). *Degree* is unified with the number of constraints that are attached to $X$.

> **Please note**: this number may include some constraints that have been detected as entailed. Also, *Degree* is not the number of neighbors of $X$ in the constraint network.

The following predicates can be used for computing the set of variables that are (transitively) connected via constraints to some given variable(s).

`fd_neighbors(+Var, -Neighbors)`
: Given a domain variable *Var*, *Neighbors* is the set of variables that can be reached from *Var* via constraints posted so far.

`fd_closure(+Vars, -Closure)`
: Given a list *Vars* of domain variables, *Closure* is the set of variables (including *Vars*) that can be transitively reached via constraints posted so far. Thus, `fd_closure/2` is the transitive closure of `fd_neighbors/2`.

The following predicate can be used for computing a symbolic form of the constraints that are transitively attached to some term. This is useful e.g. in the context of asserting or copying terms, as these operations are not supported on terms containing domain variables:

`fd_copy_term(+Term, -Template, -Body)`
: Given a term *Term* containing domain variables, *Template* is a copy of the same term with all variables renamed to new variables such that executing *Body* will post constraints equivalent to those that *Term* is attached to.

For example:

```
| ?- X in 0..1, Y in 10..11, X+5 #=< Y,
     fd_copy_term(f(X,Y), Template, Body).
Body = _A in_set[[0|1]],_B in_set[[10|11]],clpfd:'t>=u+c'(_B,_A,5),
Template = f(_A,_B),
X in 0..1,
Y in 10..11
```

### 34.8.3 FD Set Operations

The domains of variables are internally represented compactly as *FD set* terms. The details of this representation are subject to change and should not be relied on. Therefore, a number of operations on FD sets are provided, as such terms play an important role in the interface. The following operations are the primitive ones:

`is_fdset(+Set)`
: *Set* is a valid FD set.

`empty_fdset(?Set)`
: *Set* is the empty FD set.

`fdset_parts(?Set, ?Min, ?Max, ?Rest)`
: *Set* is an FD set, which is a union of the non-empty interval *[Min,Max]* and the FD set *Rest*, and all elements of *Rest* are greater than *Max*+1. *Min* and *Max* are both integers or the atoms `inf` and `sup`, denoting minus and plus infinity, respectively. Either *Set* or all the other arguments must be ground.

The following operations can all be defined in terms of the primitive ones, but in most cases, a more efficient implementation is used:

`empty_interval(+Min, +Max)`
: *[Min,Max]* is an empty interval.

`fdset_interval(?Set, ?Min, ?Max)`
: *Set* is an FD set, which is the non-empty interval *[Min,Max]*.

`fdset_singleton(?Set, ?Elt)`
: *Set* is an FD set containing *Elt* only. At least one of the arguments must be ground.

`fdset_min(+Set, -Min)`
: *Min* is the lower bound of *Set*.

`fdset_max(+Set, -Min)`
: *Max* is the upper bound of *Set*. This operation is linear in the number of intervals of *Set*.

`fdset_size(+Set, -Size)`
: *Size* is the cardinality of *Set*, represented as `sup` if *Set* is infinite. This operation is linear in the number of intervals of *Set*.

`list_to_fdset(+List, -Set)`
: *Set* is the FD set containing the elements of *List*. Slightly more efficient if *List* is ordered.

`fdset_to_list(+Set, -List)`
: *List* is an ordered list of the elements of *Set*, which must be finite.

`range_to_fdset(+Range, -Set)`
: *Set* is the FD set containing the elements of the *ConstantRange* (see Section 34.11.1 [Syntax of Indexicals], page 491) *Range*.

`fdset_to_range(+Set, -Range)`
: *Range* is a constant interval, a singleton constant set, or a union of such, denoting the same set as *Set*.

`fdset_add_element(+Set1, +Elt -Set2)`
: *Set2* is *Set1* with *Elt* inserted in it.

`fdset_del_element(+Set1, +Elt, -Set2)`
: *Set2* is like *Set1* but with *Elt* removed.

`fdset_disjoint(+Set1, +Set2)`
: The two FD sets have no elements in common.

`fdset_intersect(+Set1, +Set2)`
: The two FD sets have at least one element in common.

`fdset_intersection(+Set1, +Set2, -Intersection)`
: *Intersection* is the intersection between *Set1* and *Set2*.

`fdset_intersection(+Sets, -Intersection)`
: *Intersection* is the intersection of all the sets in *Sets*.

`fdset_member(?Elt, +Set)`
: is true when *Elt* is a member of *Set*. If *Elt* is unbound, *Set* must be finite.

`fdset_eq(+Set1, +Set2)`
Is true when the two arguments represent the same set i.e. they are identical.

`fdset_subset(+Set1, +Set2)`
Every element of *Set1* appears in *Set2*.

`fdset_subtract(+Set1, +Set2, -Difference)`
*Difference* contains all and only the elements of *Set1* that are not also in *Set2*.

`fdset_union(+Set1, +Set2, -Union)`
*Union* is the union of *Set1* and *Set2*.

`fdset_union(+Sets, -Union)`
*Union* is the union of all the sets in *Sets*.

`fdset_complement(+Set, -Complement)`
*Complement* is the complement of *Set* wrt. `inf..sup`.

### 34.8.4 A Global Constraint Example

The following example defines a new global constraint `exactly(X,L,N)`, which is true if $X$ occurs exactly $N$ times in the list $L$ of integers and domain variables. $N$ must be an integer when the constraint is posted. A version without this restriction and defined in terms of reified equalities was presented earlier; see Section 34.2.3 [Reified Constraints], page 449.

This example illustrates the use of state information. The state has two components: the list of variables that could still be $X$, and the number of variables still required to be $X$.

The constraint is defined to wake up on any domain change.

```
                                                        % exactly.pl
/*
An implementation of exactly(I, X[1]...X[m], N):

Necessary condition: 0 =< N =< m.
Rewrite rules:

[1] |= X[i]=I  ↦ exactly(I, X[1]...X[i-1],X[i+1]...X[m], N-1):
[2] |= X[i]\=I ↦ exactly(I, X[1]...X[i-1],X[i+1]...X[m], N):
[3] |= N=0     ↦ X[1]\=I ... X[m]\=I
[4] |= N=m     ↦ X[1]=I  ... X[m]=I
*/
:- use_module(library(clpfd)).

% the entrypoint
exactly(I, Xs, N) :-
        dom_suspensions(Xs, Susp),
        fd_global(exactly(I,Xs,N), state(Xs,N), Susp).

dom_suspensions([], []).
dom_suspensions([X|Xs], [dom(X)|Susp]) :-
        dom_suspensions(Xs, Susp).

% the solver method
:- multifile clpfd:dispatch_global/4.
clpfd:dispatch_global(exactly(I,_,_), state(Xs0,N0), state(Xs,N), Actions) :-
        exactly_solver(I, Xs0, Xs, N0, N, Actions).

exactly_solver(I, Xs0, Xs, N0, N, Actions) :-
        ex_filter(Xs0, Xs, N0, N, I),
        length(Xs, M),
        (   N=:=0 -> Actions = [exit|Ps], ex_neq(Xs, I, Ps)
        ;   N=:=M -> Actions = [exit|Ps], ex_eq(Xs, I, Ps)
        ;   N>0, N<M -> Actions = []
        ;   Actions = [fail]
        ).
```

```
                                                        % exactly.pl
% rules [1,2]: filter the X's, decrementing N
ex_filter([], [], N, N, _).
ex_filter([X|Xs], Ys, L, N, I) :- X==I, !,
        M is L-1,
        ex_filter(Xs, Ys, M, N, I).
ex_filter([X|Xs], Ys0, L, N, I) :-
        fd_set(X, Set),
        fdset_member(I, Set), !,
        Ys0 = [X|Ys],
        ex_filter(Xs, Ys, L, N, I).
ex_filter([_|Xs], Ys, L, N, I) :-
        ex_filter(Xs, Ys, L, N, I).

% rule [3]: all must be neq I
ex_neq(Xs, I, Ps) :-
        fdset_singleton(Set0, I),
        fdset_complement(Set0, Set),
        eq_all(Xs, Set, Ps).

% rule [4]: all must be eq I
ex_eq(Xs, I, Ps) :-
        fdset_singleton(Set, I),
        eq_all(Xs, Set, Ps).

eq_all([], _, []).
eq_all([X|Xs], Set, [X in_set Set|Ps]) :-
        eq_all(Xs, Set, Ps).

end_of_file.

% sample queries: | ?- exactly(5,[A,B,C],1), A=5.  A = 5, B
in(inf..4)\/(6..sup), C in(inf..4)\/(6..sup)

| ?- exactly(5,[A,B,C],1), A in 1..2, B in 3..4.
C = 5,
A in 1..2,
B in 3..4
```

## 34.9 Defining Primitive Constraints

Indexicals are the principal means of defining constraints, but it is usually not necessary to resort to this level of programming—most commonly used constraints are available in a library and/or via macro-expansion. The key feature about indexicals is that they give the programmer precise control over aspects of the operational semantics of the constraints.

Trade-offs can be made between the computational cost of the constraints and their pruning power. The indexical language provides many degrees of freedom for the user to select the level of consistency to be maintained depending on application-specific needs.

### 34.9.1 Indexicals

An *indexical* is a reactive functional rule of the form $X$ `in` $R$, where $R$ is a set valued *range expression* (see below). See Section 34.11.1 [Syntax of Indexicals], page 491, for a grammar defining indexicals and range expressions.

Indexicals can play one of two roles: *propagating indexicals* are used for constraint solving, and *checking indexicals* are used for entailment checking. When a propagating indexical fires, $R$ is evaluated in the current store $S$, which is extended by adding the new domain constraint $X$`::`$S(R)$ to the store, where $S(R)$ denotes the value of $R$ in $S$. When a checking indexical fires, it checks if $D(X, S)$ is contained in $S(R)$, and if so, the constraint corresponding to the indexical is detected as entailed.

### 34.9.2 Range Expressions

A range expression has one of the following forms, where $R_i$ denote range expressions, $T_i$ denote integer valued *term expressions*, $S(T_i)$ denotes the integer value of $T_i$ in $S$, $X$ denotes a variable, $I$ denotes an integer, and $S$ denotes the current store.

`dom(`$X$`)` evaluates to $D(X, S)$

`{`$T_1, \backslash ldots, T_n$`}`
evaluates to $\{S(T_1), \ldots, S(T_n)\}$. Any $T_i$ containing a variable that is not "quantified" by `unionof/3` will cause the indexical to suspend until this variable has been assigned.

$T_1$`..`$T_2$ evaluates to the interval between $S(T_1)$ and $S(T_2)$.

$R_1$`/\`$R_2$ evaluates to the intersection of $S(R_1)$ and $S(R_2)$

$R_1$`\/`$R_2$ evaluates to the union of $S(R_1)$ and $S(R_2)$

`\`$R_2$ evaluates to the complement of $S(R_2)$

$R_1$`+`$R_2$
$R_1$`+`$T_2$ evaluates to $S(R_2)$ or $S(T_2)$ added pointwise to $S(R_1)$

`-`$R_2$ evaluates to $S(R_2)$ negated pointwise

$R_1$`-`$R_2$
$R_1$`-`$T_2$
$T_1$`-`$R_2$ evaluates to $S(R_2)$ or $S(T_2)$ subtracted pointwise from $S(R_1)$ or $S(T_1)$

$R_1$ `mod` $R_2$
$R_1$ `mod` $T_2$ evaluates to $S(R_1)$ pointwise modulo $S(R_2)$ or $S(T_2)$

$R_1$ `?` $R_2$ evaluates to $S(R_2)$ if $S(R_1)$ is a non-empty set; otherwise, evaluates to the empty set. This expression is commonly used in the context `(`$R_1$ `? (inf..sup) \/` $R_3$`)`, which evaluates to $S(R_3)$ if $S(R_1)$ is an empty set; otherwise, evaluates to `inf..sup`. As an optimization, $R_3$ is not evaluated while the value of $R_1$ is a non-empty set.

`unionof(`$X$`,`$R_1$`,`$R_2$`)`
evaluates to the union of $S(E_1), \ldots, S(E_N)$, where each $E_I$ has been formed by substituting $K$ for $X$ in $R_2$, where $K$ is the $I$:th element of $S(R_1)$. See Section 34.10.2 [N Queens], page 488, for an example of usage.

> **Please note**: if $S(R_1)$ is infinite, the evaluation of the indexical will be abandoned, and the indexical will simply suspend.

`switch(`$T$`,`*`MapList`*`)`
evaluates to $S(E)$ if $S(T_1)$ equals $K$ and *MapList* contains a pair $K$`-`$E$. Otherwise, evaluates to the empty set. If $T$ contains a variable that is not "quantified" by `unionof/3`, the indexical will suspend until this variable has been assigned.

When used in the body of an FD predicate (see Section 34.9.8 [Goal Expanded Constraints], page 486), a `relation/3` expression expands to two indexicals, each consisting of a `switch/2` expression nested inside a `unionof/3` expression. Thus, the following constraints are equivalent:

```
p(X, Y) +: relation(X, [1-{1},2-{1,2},3-{1,2,3}], Y).

q(X, Y) +:
        X in unionof(B,dom(Y),switch(B,[1-{1,2,3},2-{2,3},3-{3}])),
        Y in unionof(B,dom(X),switch(B,[1-{1},2-{1,2},3-{1,2,3}])).
```

### 34.9.3 Term Expressions

A term expression has one of the following forms, where $T_1$ and $T_2$ denote term expressions, $X$ denotes a variable, $I$ denotes an integer, and $S$ denotes the current store.

`min(`$X$`)` evaluates to the minimum of $D(X, S)$

`max(`$X$`)` evaluates to the maximum of $D(X, S)$

`card(`$X$`)` evaluates to the size of $D(X, S)$

$X$ evaluates to the integer value of $X$. The indexical will suspend until $X$ is assigned.

$I$ an integer

`inf` minus infinity

`sup` plus infinity

`-`$T_1$ evaluates to $S(T_1)$ negated

| | |
|---|---|
| $T_1$`+`$T_2$ | evaluates to the sum of $S(T_1)$ and $S(T_2)$ |
| $T_1$`-`$T_2$ | evaluates to the difference of $S(T_1)$ and $S(T_2)$ |
| $T_1$`*`$T_2$ | evaluates to the product of $S(T_1)$ and $S(T_2)$, where $S(T_2)$ must not be negative |
| $T_1$`/>`$T_2$ | evaluates to the quotient of $S(T_1)$ and $S(T_2)$, rounded up, where $S(T_2)$ must be positive |
| $T_1$`/<`$T_2$ | evaluates to the quotient of $S(T_1)$ and $S(T_2)$, rounded down, where $S(T_2)$ must be positive |
| $T_1$ `mod` $T_2$ | evaluates to the modulo of $S(T_1)$ and $S(T_2)$ |

### 34.9.4 Monotonicity of Indexicals

A range $R$ is *monotone in* $S$ iff the value of $R$ in $S'$ is contained in the value of $R$ in $S$, for every extension $S'$ of $S$. A range $R$ is *anti-monotone in* $S$ iff the value of $R$ in $S$ is contained in the value of $R$ in $S'$, for every extension $S'$ of $S$. By abuse of notation, we will say that $X$ `in` $R$ is (anti-)monotone iff $R$ is (anti-)monotone.

The consistency or entailment of a constraint $C$ expressed as indexicals $X$ `in` $R$ in a store $S$ is checked by considering the relationship between $D(X, S)$ and $S(R)$, together with the (anti-)monotonicity of $R$ in $S$. The details are given in Section 34.9.6 [Execution of Propagating Indexicals], page 485 and Section 34.9.7 [Execution of Checking Indexicals], page 486.

The solver checks (anti-)monotonicity by requiring that certain variables occurring in the indexical be ground. This sufficient condition can sometimes be false for an (anti-)monotone indexical, but such situations are rare in practice.

### 34.9.5 FD Predicates

The following example defines the constraint $X+Y = T$ as an FD predicate in terms of three indexicals. Each indexical is a rule responsible for removing values detected as incompatible from one particular constraint argument. Indexicals are *not* Prolog goals; thus, the example does not express a conjunction. However, an indexical may make the store contradictory, in which case backtracking is triggered:

```
plus(X,Y,T) +:
        X in min(T) - max(Y) .. max(T) - min(Y),
        Y in min(T) - max(X) .. max(T) - min(X),
        T in min(X) + min(Y) .. max(X) + max(Y).
```

The above definition contains a single clause used for constraint solving. The first indexical wakes up whenever the bounds of $S(T)$ or $S(Y)$ are updated, and removes from $D(X, S)$ any values that are not compatible with the new bounds of $T$ and $Y$. Note that in the event of "holes" in the domains of $T$ or $Y$, $D(X, S)$ may contain some values that are incompatible

with $X + Y = T$ but go undetected. Like most built-in arithmetic constraints, the above definition maintains interval-consistency, which is significantly cheaper to maintain than domain-consistency and suffices in most cases. The constraint could for example be used as follows:

```
| ?- X in 1..5, Y in 2..8, plus(X,Y,T).
X in 1..5,
Y in 2..8,
T in 3..13
```

Thus, when an FD predicate is called, the '`+:`' clause is activated.

The definition of a user constraint has to specify what domain constraints should be added to the constraint store when the constraint is posted. Therefore the FD predicate contains a set of indexicals, each representing a domain constraint to be added to the constraint store. The actual domain constraint depends on the constraint store itself. For example, the third indexical in the above FD predicate prescribes the domain constraint '`T :: 3..13`' if the store contains '`X :: 1..5, Y :: 2..8`'. As the domain of some variables gets narrower, the indexical may enforce a new, stricter constraint on some other variables. Therefore such an indexical (called a propagating indexical) can be viewed as an agent reacting to the changes in the store by enforcing further changes in the store.

In general there are three stages in the lifetime of a propagating indexical. When it is posted it may not be evaluated immediately (e.g. has to wait until some variables are ground before being able to modify the store). Until the preconditions for the evaluation are satisfied, the agent does not enforce any constraints. When the indexical becomes evaluable the resulting domain constraint is added to the store. The agent then waits and reacts to changes in the domains of variables occurring in the indexical by re-evaluating it and adding the new, stricter constraint to the store. Eventually the computation reaches a phase when no further refinement of the store can result in a more precise constraint (the indexical is entailed by the store), and then the agent can cease to exist.

A necessary condition for the FD predicate to be correctly defined is the following: for any store mapping each variable to a singleton domain the execution of the indexicals should succeed without contradiction exactly when the predicate is intended to be true.

There can be several alternative definitions for the same user constraint with different strengths in propagation. For example, the definition of `plusd` below encodes the same `X+Y=T` constraint as the `plus` predicate above, but maintaining domain-consistency:

```
plusd(X,Y,T) +:
        X in dom(T) - dom(Y),
        Y in dom(T) - dom(X),
        T in dom(X) + dom(Y).

| ?- X in {1}\/{3}, Y in {10}\/{20}, plusd(X, Y, T).
X in{1}\/{3},
Y in{10}\/{20},
T in{11}\/{13}\/{21}\/{23}
```

This costs more in terms of execution time, but gives more precise results. For singleton domains `plus` and `plusd` behave in the same way.

In our design, general indexicals can only appear in the context of FD predicate definitions. The rationale for this restriction is the need for general indexicals to be able to suspend and resume, and this ability is only provided by the FD predicate mechanism.

If the program merely posts a constraint, it suffices for the definition to contain a single clause for solving the constraint. If a constraint is reified or occurs in a propositional formula, the definition must contain four clauses for solving and checking entailment of the constraint and its negation. The role of each clause is reflected in the "neck" operator. The following table summarizes the different forms of indexical clauses corresponding to a constraint $C$. In all cases, *Head* should be a compound term with all arguments being distinct variables:

*Head* `+:` *Indexicals*.
: The clause consists of propagating indexicals for solving $C$.

*Head* `-:` *Indexicals*.
: The clause consists of propagating indexicals for solving the negation of $C$.

*Head* `+?` *Indexical*.
: The clause consists of a single checking indexical for testing entailment of $C$.

*Head* `-?` *Indexical*.
: The clause consists of a single checking indexical for testing entailment of the negation of $C$.

When a constraint is reified, the solver spawns two reactive agents corresponding to detecting entailment and disentailment. Eventually, one of them will succeed in this and consequently will bind $B$ to 0 or 1. A third agent is spawned, waiting for $B$ to become assigned, at which time the constraint (or its negation) is posted. In the mean time, the constraint may have been detected as (dis)entailed, in which case the third agent is dismissed. The waiting is implemented by means of the coroutining facilities of SICStus Prolog.

As an example of a constraint with all methods defined, consider the following library constraint defining a disequation between two domain variables:

```
'x\\=y'(X,Y) +:
        X in \{Y},
        Y in \{X}.
'x\\=y'(X,Y) -:
        X in dom(Y),
        Y in dom(X).
'x\\=y'(X,Y) +?
        X in \dom(Y).
'x\\=y'(X,Y) -?
        X in {Y}.
```

The following sections provide more precise coding rules and operational details for indexicals. $X$ `in` $R$ denotes an indexical corresponding to a constraint $C$. $S$ denotes the current store.

### 34.9.6 Execution of Propagating Indexicals

Consider the definition of a constraint $C$ containing a propagating indexical $X$ `in` $R$. Let $TV(X, C, S)$ denote the set of values for $X$ that can make $C$ true in some ground extension of the store $S$. Then the indexical should obey the following coding rules:

- all arguments of $C$ except $X$ should occur in $R$
- if $R$ is ground in $S$, $S(R) = TV(X, C, S)$

If the coding rules are observed, $S(R)$ can be proven to contain $TV(X, C, S)$ for all stores in which $R$ is monotone. Hence it is natural for the implementation to wait until $R$ becomes monotone before admitting the propagating indexical for execution. The execution of $X$ `in` $R$ thus involves the following:

- If $D(X, S)$ is disjoint from $S(R)$, a contradiction is detected.
- If $D(X, S)$ is contained in $S(R)$, $D(X, S)$ does not contain any values known to be incompatible with $C$, and the indexical suspends, unless $R$ is ground in $S$, in which case $C$ is detected as entailed.
- Otherwise, $D(X, S)$ contains some values that are known to be incompatible with $C$. Hence, $X$`::`$S(R)$ is added to the store ($X$ is *pruned*), and the indexical suspends, unless $R$ is ground in $S$, in which case $C$ is detected as entailed.

A propagating indexical is scheduled for execution as follows:

- it is evaluated initially as soon as it has become monotone
- it is re-evaluated when one of the following conditions occurs:
  1. the domain of a variable $Y$ that occurs as `dom(`$Y$`)` or `card(`$Y$`)` in $R$ has been updated
  2. the lower bound of a variable $Y$ that occurs as `min(`$Y$`)` in $R$ has been updated
  3. the upper bound of a variable $Y$ that occurs as `max(`$Y$`)` in $R$ has been updated

### 34.9.7 Execution of Checking Indexicals

Consider the definition of a constraint $C$ containing a checking indexical $X$ `in` $R$. Let $FV(X, C, S)$ denote the set of values for $X$ that can make $C$ false in some ground extension of the store $S$. Then the indexical should obey the following coding rules:

- all arguments of $C$ except $X$ should occur in $R$
- if $R$ is ground in $S$, $S(R) = TV(X, C, S)$

If the coding rules are observed, $S(R)$ can be proven to exclude $FV(X, C, S)$ for all stores in which $R$ is anti-monotone. Hence it is natural for the implementation to wait until $R$ becomes anti-monotone before admitting the checking indexical for execution. The execution of $X$ `in` $R$ thus involves the following:

- If $D(X, S)$ is contained in $S(R)$, none of the possible values for $X$ can make $C$ false, and so $C$ is detected as entailed.
- Otherwise, if $D(X, S)$ is disjoint from $S(R)$ and $R$ is ground in $S$, all possible values for $X$ will make $C$ false, and so $C$ is detected as disentailed.
- Otherwise, $D(X, S)$ contains some values that could make $C$ true and some that could make $C$ false, and the indexical suspends.

A checking indexical is scheduled for execution as follows:

- it is evaluated initially as soon as it has become anti-monotone
- it is re-evaluated when one of the following conditions occurs:
  1. the domain of $X$ has been pruned, or $X$ has been assigned
  2. the domain of a variable $Y$ that occurs as `dom(`$Y$`)` or `card(`$Y$`)` in $R$ has been pruned
  3. the lower bound of a variable $Y$ that occurs as `min(`$Y$`)` in $R$ has been increased
  4. the upper bound of a variable $Y$ that occurs as `max(`$Y$`)` in $R$ has been decreased

### 34.9.8 Goal Expanded Constraints

The arithmetic, membership, and propositional constraints described earlier are transformed at compile time to conjunctions of goals of library constraints.

Sometimes it is necessary to postpone the expansion of a constraint until runtime, e.g. if the arguments are not instantiated enough. This can be achieved by wrapping `call/1` around the constraint.

Although space economic (linear in the size of the source code), the expansion of a constraint to library goals can have an overhead compared to expressing the constraint in terms of indexicals. Temporary variables holding intermediate values may have to be introduced, and the grain size of the constraint solver invocations can be rather small. The translation

of constraints to library goals has been greatly improved in the current version, so these problems have virtually disappeared. However, for backward compatibility, an implementation by compilation to indexicals of the same constraints is also provided. An FD predicate may be defined by a single clause:

```
Head +: Constraint.
```

where *Constraint* is an arithmetic constraint or an `element/3` or a `relation/3` constraint. This translation is only available for '`+:`' clauses; thus, *Head* cannot be reified.

In the case of arithmetic constraints, the constraint must be over linear terms (see Section 34.11.1 [Syntax of Indexicals], page 491). The memory consumption of the FD predicate will be quadratic in the size of the source code. The alternative version of `sum/8` in Section 34.10.1 [Send More Money], page 487 illustrates this technique.

In the case of `element(X,L,Y)` or `relation(X,L,Y)`, the memory consumption of the FD predicate will be linear in the size of the source code. The execution time of the initial evaluation of the FD predicate will be linear in the size of the initial domains for *X* and *Y*; if these domains are infinite, no propagation will take place.

## 34.10 Example Programs

This section contains a few example programs. The first two programs are included in a benchmark suite that comes with the distribution. The benchmark suite is run by typing:

```
| ?- compile(library('clpfd/examples/bench')).
| ?- bench.
```

### 34.10.1 Send More Money

Let us return briefly to the Send More Money problem (see Section 34.2.2 [A Constraint Satisfaction Problem], page 448). Its `sum/8` predicate will expand to a space-efficient conjunction of library constraints. A faster but more memory consuming version is defined simply by changing the neck symbol of `sum/8` from '`:-`' to '`+:`', thus turning it into an FD predicate:

```
sum(S, E, N, D, M, O, R, Y) +:
                   1000*S + 100*E + 10*N + D
     +             1000*M + 100*O + 10*R + E
     #= 10000*M + 1000*O + 100*N + 10*E + Y.
```

### 34.10.2 N Queens

The problem is to place N queens on an NxN chess board so that no queen is threatened by another queen.

The variables of this problem are the N queens. Each queen has a designated row. The problem is to select a column for it.

The main constraint of this problem is that no queen threaten another. This is encoded by the `no_threat/3` constraint and holds between all pairs `(X,Y)` of queens. It could be defined as

```
no_threat(X, Y, I) :-
        X   #\= Y,
        X+I #\= Y,
        X-I #\= Y.
```

However, this formulation introduces new temporary domain variables and creates twelve fine-grained indexicals. Worse, the disequalities only maintain interval-consistency and so may miss some opportunities for pruning elements in the middle of domains.

A better idea is to formulate `no_threat/3` as an FD predicate with two indexicals, as shown in the program below. This constraint will not fire until one of the queens has been assigned (the corresponding indexical does not become monotone until then). Hence, the constraint is still not as strong as it could be.

For example, if the domain of one queen is `2..3`, then it will threaten any queen placed in column 2 or 3 on an adjacent row, no matter which of the two open positions is chosen for the first queen. The commented out formulation of the constraint captures this reasoning, and illustrates the use of the `unionof/3` operator. This stronger version of the constraint indeed gives less backtracking, but is computationally more expensive and does not pay off in terms of execution time, except possibly for very large chess boards.

It is clear that `no_threat/3` cannot detect any incompatible values for a queen with domain of size greater than three. This observation is exploited in the third version of the constraint.

The first-fail principle is appropriate in the enumeration part of this problem.

```
:- use_module(library(clpfd)).

queens(N, L, LabelingType) :-
     length(L, N),
     domain(L, 1, N),
     constrain_all(L),
     labeling(LabelingType, L).

constrain_all([]).
constrain_all([X|Xs]) :-
     constrain_between(X, Xs, 1),
     constrain_all(Xs).

constrain_between(_X, [], _N).
constrain_between(X, [Y|Ys], N) :-
     no_threat(X, Y, N),
     N1 is N+1,
     constrain_between(X, Ys, N1).


% version 1: weak but efficient
no_threat(X, Y, I) +:
     X in \({Y} \/ {Y+I} \/ {Y-I}),
     Y in \({X} \/ {X+I} \/ {X-I}).

/*
% version 2: strong but very inefficient version
no_threat(X, Y, I) +:
    X in unionof(B,dom(Y),\({B} \/ {B+I} \/ {B-I})),
    Y in unionof(B,dom(X),\({B} \/ {B+I} \/ {B-I})).

% version 3: strong but somewhat inefficient version
no_threat(X, Y, I) +:
    X in (4..card(Y)) ? (inf..sup) \/
          unionof(B,dom(Y),\({B} \/ {B+I} \/ {B-I})),
    Y in (4..card(X)) ? (inf..sup) \/
          unionof(B,dom(X),\({B} \/ {B+I} \/ {B-I})).
*/

| ?- queens(8, L, [ff]).
L = [1,5,8,6,3,7,2,4]
```

### 34.10.3 Cumulative Scheduling

This example is a very small scheduling problem. We consider seven tasks where each task has a fixed duration and a fixed amount of used resource:

| *Task* | *Duration* | *Resource* |
|---|---|---|
| `t1` | 16 | 2 |
| `t2` | 6 | 9 |
| `t3` | 13 | 3 |
| `t4` | 7 | 7 |
| `t5` | 5 | 10 |
| `t6` | 18 | 1 |
| `t7` | 4 | 11 |

The goal is to find a schedule that minimizes the completion time for the schedule while not exceeding the capacity 13 of the resource. The resource constraint is succinctly captured by a `cumulative/4` constraint. Branch-and-bound search is used to find the minimal completion time.

This example was adapted from [Beldiceanu & Contejean 94].

```
:- use_module(library(clpfd)).
:- use_module(library(lists), [append/3]).

schedule(Ss, End) :-
        length(Ss, 7),
        Ds = [16, 6,13, 7, 5,18, 4],
        Rs = [ 2, 9, 3, 7,10, 1,11],
        domain(Ss, 1, 30),
        domain([End], 1, 50),
        after(Ss, Ds, End),
        cumulative(Ss, Ds, Rs, 13),
        append(Ss, [End], Vars),
        labeling([minimize(End)], Vars). % label End last

after([], [], _).
after([S|Ss], [D|Ds], E) :- E #>= S+D, after(Ss, Ds, E).

%% End of file

| ?- schedule(Ss, End).
Ss = [1,17,10,10,5,5,1],
End = 23
```

## 34.11 Syntax Summary

### 34.11.1 Syntax of Indexicals

```
X            ::= variable                    { domain variable }
Constant     ::= integer
               | inf                         { minus infinity }
               | sup                         { plus infinity }
Term         ::= Constant
               | X                           { suspend until assigned }
               | min(X)                      { min. of domain of X }
               | max(X)                      { max. of domain of X }
               | card(X)                     { size of domain of X }
               | - Term
               | Term + Term
               | Term - Term
               | Term * Term
               | Term /> Term                { division rounded up }
               | Term /< Term                { division rounded down }
               | Term mod Term
TermSet      ::= {Term,...,Term}
Range        ::= TermSet
               | dom(X)                      { domain of X }
               | Term .. Term                { interval }
               | Range /\ Range              { intersection }
               | Range \/ Range              { union }
               | \ Range                     { complement }
               | - Range                     { pointwise negation }
               | Range + Range               { pointwise addition }
               | Range - Range               { pointwise subtraction }
               | Range mod Range             { pointwise modulo }
               | Range + Term                { pointwise addition }
               | Range - Term                { pointwise subtraction }
               | Term - Range                { pointwise subtraction }
               | Range mod Term              { pointwise modulo }
               | Range ? Range
               | unionof(X,Range,Range)
               | switch(Term,MapList)
ConstantSet  ::= {integer,...,integer}
ConstantRange ::= ConstantSet
               | Constant .. Constant
               |        ConstantRange      /\
               ConstantRange
               |        ConstantRange      \/
               ConstantRange
               | \ ConstantRange
MapList      ::= []
```

```
                  |     [integer-ConstantRange
                  |MapList]
CList             ::= []
                  | [integer|CList]
Indexical         ::= X in Range
Indexicals        ::= Indexical
                  | Indexical , Indexicals
ConstraintBody    ::= Indexicals
                  | LinExpr RelOp LinExpr
                  | element(X,CList,X)
                  | relation(X,MapList,X)
Head              ::= term                    { a compound term with unique
                                                variable args }
TellPos           ::= Head +: ConstraintBody
TellNeg           ::= Head -: ConstraintBody
AskPos            ::= Head +? Indexical
AskNeg            ::= Head -? Indexical
ConstraintDef     ::= TellPos.
                  ?(TellNeg.)
                  ?(AskPos.)
                  ?(AskNeg.)
```

### 34.11.2 Syntax of Arithmetic Expressions

```
X                 ::= variable                { domain variable }
N                 ::= integer
LinExpr           ::= N                       { linear expression }
                  | X
                  | N * X
                  | N * N
                  | LinExpr + LinExpr
                  | LinExpr - LinExpr
Expr              ::= LinExpr
                  | Expr + Expr
                  | Expr - Expr
                  | Expr * Expr
                  | Expr / Expr               { integer division }
                  | Expr mod Expr
                  | min(Expr,Expr)
                  | max(Expr,Expr)
                  | abs(Expr)
RelOp             ::= #= | #\= | #< | #=< | #> | #>=
```

### 34.11.3 Operator Declarations

```
:- op(1200, xfx, [+:,-:,+?,-?]).
:- op(760, yfx, #<=>).
:- op(750, xfy, #=>).
:- op(750, yfx, #<=).
:- op(740, yfx, #\/).
:- op(730, yfx, #\).
:- op(720, yfx, #/\).
:- op(710, fy, #\).
:- op(700, xfx, [in,in_set]).
:- op(700, xfx, [#=,#\=,#<,#=<,#>,#>=]).
:- op(550, xfx, ..).
:- op(500, fy, \).
:- op(490, yfx, ?).
:- op(400, yfx, [/>,/<]).
```

# 35 Constraint Handling Rules

## 35.1 Copyright

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## 35.2 Introduction

Experience from real-life applications using constraint-based programming has shown that typically, one is confronted with a heterogeneous mix of different types of constraints. To be able to express constraints as they appear in the application and to write and combine constraint systems, a special purpose language for writing constraint systems called *constraint handling rules* (CHR) was developed. CHR have been used to encode a wide range of constraint handlers (solvers), including new domains such as terminological and temporal reasoning. Several CHR libraries exist in declarative languages such as Prolog and LISP, worldwide more than 20 projects use CHR. You can find more information about CHR in [Fruehwirth 98] or at http://www.informatik.uni-ulm.de/pm/mitarbeiter/fruehwirth/chr-intro.html

The high-level CHR are an excellent tool for rapid prototyping and implementation of constraint handlers. The usual abstract formalism to describe a constraint system, i.e. inference rules, rewrite rules, sequents, formulas expressing axioms and theorems, can be written as CHR in a straightforward way. Starting from this executable specification, the rules can be refined and adapted to the specifics of the application.

The CHR library includes a compiler, which translates CHR programs into Prolog programs on the fly, and a runtime system, which includes a stepper for debugging. Many constraint handlers are provided in the example directory of the library.

CHR are essentially a committed-choice language consisting of guarded rules that rewrite constraints into simpler ones until they are solved. CHR define both *simplification* of and

*propagation* over constraints. Simplification replaces constraints by simpler constraints while preserving logical equivalence (e.g. `X>Y,Y>X <=> fail`). Propagation adds new constraints that are logically redundant but may cause further simplification (e.g. `X>Y,Y>Z ==> X>Z`). Repeatedly applying CHR incrementally simplifies and finally solves constraints (e.g. `A>B,B>C,C>A`) leads to `fail`.

With multiple heads and propagation rules, CHR provide two features that are essential for non-trivial constraint handling. The declarative reading of CHR as formulas of first order logic allows one to reason about their correctness. On the other hand, regarding CHR as a rewrite system on logical formulas allows one to reason about their termination and confluence.

In case the implementation of CHR disagrees with your expectations based on this chapter, drop a line to the current maintainer: `christian@ai.univie.ac.at` (Christian Holzbaur).

## 35.3 Introductory Examples

We define a CHR constraint for less-than-or-equal, `leq`, that can handle variable arguments. This handler can be found in the library as the file `leq.pl`. (The code works regardless of options switched on or off.)

```
:- use_module(library(chr)).

handler leq.
constraints leq/2.
:- op(500, xfx, leq).

reflexivity  @ X leq Y <=> X=Y | true.
antisymmetry @ X leq Y , Y leq X <=> X=Y.
idempotence  @ X leq Y \ X leq Y <=> true.
transitivity @ X leq Y , Y leq Z ==> X leq Z.
```

The CHR specify how `leq` simplifies and propagates as a constraint. They implement reflexivity, idempotence, antisymmetry and transitivity in a straightforward way. CHR `reflexivity` states that `X leq Y` simplifies to `true`, provided it is the case that `X=Y`. This test forms the (optional) guard of a rule, a precondition on the applicability of the rule. Hence, whenever we see a constraint of the form `A leq A` we can simplify it to `true`.

The rule `antisymmetry` means that if we find `X leq Y` as well as `Y leq X` in the constraint store, we can replace it by the logically equivalent `X=Y`. Note the different use of `X=Y` in the two rules: In the `reflexivity` rule the equality is a precondition (test) on the rule, while in the `antisymmetry` rule it is enforced when the rule fires. (The reflexivity rule could also have been written as `reflexivity  X leq X <=> true`.)

The rules `reflexivity` and `antisymmetry` are *simplification CHR*. In such rules, the constraints found are removed when the rule applies and fires. The rule `idempotence` is a

*simpagation CHR*, only the constraints right of `'\'` will be removed. The rule says that if we find `X leq Y` and another `X leq Y` in the constraint store, we can remove one.

Finally, the rule `transitivity` states that the conjunction `X leq Y, Y leq Z` implies `X leq Z`. Operationally, we add `X leq Z` as (redundant) constraint, without removing the constraints `X leq Y, Y leq Z`. This kind of CHR is called *propagation CHR*.

Propagation CHR are useful, as the query `A leq B,C leq A,B leq C` illustrates: The first two constraints cause CHR `transitivity` to fire and add `C leq B` to the query. This new constraint together with `B leq C` matches the head of CHR `antisymmetry`, `X leq Y, Y leq X`. So the two constraints are replaced by `B=C`. Since `B=C` makes `B` and `C` equivalent, CHR `antisymmetry` applies to the constraints `A leq B, C leq A`, resulting in `A=B`. The query contains no more CHR constraints, the simplification stops. The constraint handler we built has solved `A leq B, C leq A, B leq C` and produced the answer `A=B, B=C`:

```
A leq B,C leq A,B leq C.
% C leq A, A leq B propagates C leq B by transitivity.
% C leq B, B leq C simplifies to B=C by antisymmetry.
% A leq B, C leq A simplifies to A=B by antisymmetry since B=C.
A=B,B=C.
```

Note that multiple heads of rules are essential in solving these constraints. Also note that this handler implements a (partial) order constraint over any constraint domain, this generality is only possible with CHR.

As another example, we can implement the sieve of Eratosthenes to compute primes simply as (for variations see the handler '`primes.pl`'):

```
:- use_module(library(chr)).
handler eratosthenes.
constraints primes/1,prime/1.

primes(1) <=> true.
primes(N) <=> N>1 | M is N-1,prime(N),primes(M). % generate candidates

absorb(J) @ prime(I) \ prime(J) <=> J mod I =:= 0 | true.
```

The constraint `primes(N)` generates candidates for prime numbers, `prime(M)`, where `M` is between `1` and `N`. The candidates react with each other such that each number absorbs multiples of itself. In the end, only prime numbers remain.

Looking at the two rules defining `primes/1`, note that head matching is used in CHR, so the first rule will only apply to `primes(1)`. The test `N>1` is a guard (precondition) on the second rule. A call with a free variable, like `primes(X)`, will delay (suspend). The third, multi-headed rule `absorb(J)` reads as follows: If there is a constraint `prime(I)` and some other constraint `prime(J)` such that `J mod I =:= 0` holds, i.e. `J` is a multiple of `I`, then keep `prime(I)` but remove `prime(J)` and execute the body of the rule, `true`.

## 35.4 CHR Library

CHR extend the Prolog syntax by a few constructs introduced in the next sections. Technically, the extension is achieved through the `user:term_expansion/2` mechanism. A file that contains a constraint handler may also contain arbitrary Prolog code. Constraint handling rules can be scattered across a file. Declarations and options should precede rules. There can only be at most one constraint handler per module.

### 35.4.1 Loading the Library

Before you can load or compile any file containing a constraint handler (solver) written in CHR, the `chr` library module has to be imported:

```
| ?- use_module(library(chr)).
```

It is recommended to include the corresponding directive at the start of your files containing handlers:

```
:- use_module(library(chr)).
```

### 35.4.2 Declarations

Declarations in files containing CHR affect the compilation and thus the behavior of the rules at runtime.

The mandatory handler declaration precedes any other CHR specific code. Example:

```
handler minmax.
```

A handler name must be a valid Prolog atom. Per module, only one constraint handler can be defined.

The constraints must be declared before they are used by rules. With this mandatory declaration one lists the constraints the rules will later talk about. The declaration can be used more than once per handler. Example:

```
constraints  leq/2, minimum/3, maximum/3.
```

The following optional declaration allows for conditional rule compilation. Only the rules mentioned get compiled. Rules are referred to by their names (see Section 35.4.3 [CHR Syntax], page 499). The latest occurrence takes precedence if used more than once per handler. Although it can be put anywhere in the handler file, it makes sense, as with other declarations, to use it early. Example:

```
rules antisymmetry, transitivity.
```

To simplify the handling of operator declarations, in particular during `fcompile/1`, `operator/3` declarations with the same denotation as `op/3`, but taking effect during compilation and loading, are helpful. Example:

```
operator(700, xfx, ::).
operator(600, xfx, :).
```

### 35.4.3 Constraint Handling Rules, Syntax

A constraint handling rule has one or more heads, an optional guard, a body and an optional name. A *Head* is a *Constraint*. A constraint is a callable Prolog term, whose functor is a declared constraint. The *Guard* is a Prolog goal. The *Body* of a rule is a Prolog goal (including constraints). A rule can be named with a *Name*, which can be any Prolog term (including variables from the rule).

There are three kinds of constraint handling rules:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Rule* | ::= ?(*Name* `@`)<br>(*Simplification* `\|` *Propagation* `\|` *Simpagation*)<br>?(pragma *Pragma*) |
| *Simplification* | ::= *Heads* `<=>` ?(*Guard* `\|`) *Body* |
| *Propagation* | ::= *Heads* `==>` ?(*Guard* `\|`) *Body* |
| *Simpagation* | ::= *Heads* `\` *Heads* `<=>` ?(*Guard* `\|`) *Body* |
| *Heads* | ::= *Head* `\|` *Head* `,` *Heads* |
| *Head* | ::= *Constraint* `\|` *Constraint* `#` *Id* |
| *Constraint* | ::= {a callable term declared as constraint} |
| *Id* | ::= {a unique variable} |
| *Guard* | ::= *Ask* `\|` *Ask* `&` *Tell* |
| *Ask* | ::= *Goal* |
| *Tell* | ::= *Goal* |
| *Goal* | ::= {a callable term, including conjunction and disjunction etc.} |
| *Body* | ::= *Goal* |
| *Pragma* | ::= {a conjunction of terms usually referring to one or more heads identified via `#/2`} |

The symbol '`|`' separates the guard (if present) from the body of a rule. Since '`|`' is read as '`;`' (disjunction) by the reader, care has to be taken when using disjunction in the guard or body of the rule. The top-level disjunction will always be interpreted as guard-body separator '`|`', so proper bracketing has to be used, e.g. `a <=> (b;c) | (d;e)` instead of `a <=> b;c | d;e` and `a <=> true | (d;e)` instead of `a <=> (d;e)`.

In simpagation rules, '`\`' separates the heads of the rule into two parts.

Individual head constraints may be tagged with variables via '`#`', which may be used as identifiers in pragma declarations, for example. Constraint identifiers must be distinct variables, not occurring elsewhere in the heads.

Guards test the applicability of a rule. Guards come in two parts, tell and ask, separated by '`&`'. If the '`&`' operator is not present, the whole guard is assumed to be of the ask type.

Declaratively, a rule relates heads and body *provided the guard is true*. A simplification rule means that the heads are true if and only if the body is true. A propagation rule means that the body is true if the heads are true. A simpagation rule combines a simplification and a propagation rule. The rule `Heads1 \ Heads2 <=> Body` is equivalent to the simplification rule `Heads1, Heads2 <=> Heads1, Body`. However, the simpagation rule is more compact to write, more efficient to execute and has better termination behavior than the corresponding simplification rule, since the constraints comprising `Heads1` will not be removed and inserted again.

### 35.4.4 How CHR Work

Each CHR constraint is associated with all rules in whose heads it occurs by the CHR compiler. Every time a CHR constraint is executed (called) or woken and reconsidered, it checks itself the applicability of its associated CHR by *trying* each CHR. By default, the rules are tried in textual order, i.e. in the order they occur in the defining file. To try a CHR, one of its heads is matched against the constraint. Matching succeeds if the constraint is an instance of the head. If a CHR has more than one head, the constraint store is searched for *partner* constraints that match the other heads. Heads are tried from left to right, except that in simpagation rules, the heads to be removed are tried before the head constraints to be kept (this is done for efficiency reasons). If the matching succeeds, the guard is executed. Otherwise the next rule is tried.

The guard either succeeds or fails. A guard succeeds if the execution of its Ask and Tell parts succeeds and in the ask part no variable that occurs also in the heads was touched or the cause of an instantiation error. The ask guard will fail otherwise. A variable is *touched* if it is unified with a term (including other variables from other constraints) different from itself. Tell guards, on the contrary, are trusted and not checked for that property. If the guard succeeds, the rule applies. Otherwise the next rule is tried.

If the firing CHR is a simplification rule, the matched constraints are removed from the store and the body of the CHR is executed. Similarly for a firing simpagation rule, except that the constraints that matched the heads preceding '\' are kept. If the firing CHR is a propagation rule the body of the CHR is executed without removing any constraints. It is remembered that the propagation rule fired, so it will not fire again with the same constraints if the constraint is woken and reconsidered. If the currently active constraint has not been removed, the next rule is tried.

If the current constraint has not been removed and all rules have been tried, it delays until a variable occurring in the constraint is touched. Delaying means that the constraint is inserted into the constraint store. When a constraint is woken, all its rules are tried again. (This process can be watched and inspected with the CHR debugger, see below.)

### 35.4.5 Pragmas

Pragmas are annotations to rules and constraints that enable the compiler to generate more specific, more optimized code. A pragma can be a conjunction of the following terms:

`already_in_heads`
: The intention of simplification and simpagation rules is often to combine the heads into a stronger version of one of them. Depending on the strength of the guard, the new constraint may be identical to one of the heads to removed by the rule. This removal followed by addition is inefficient and may even cause termination problems. If the pragma is used, this situation is detected and the corresponding problems are avoided. The pragma applies to all constraints removed by the rule.

`already_in_head(`*`Id`*`)`
: Shares the intention of the previous pragma, but affects only the constraint indicated via *Id*. Note that one can use more than one pragma per rule.

`passive(`*`Id`*`)`
: No code will be generated for the specified constraint in the particular head position. This means that the constraint will not see the rule, it is passive in that rule. This changes the behavior of the CHR system, because normally, a rule can be entered starting from each head constraint. Usually this pragma will improve the efficiency of the constraint handler, but care has to be taken in order not to lose completeness.

  For example, in the handler `leq`, any pair of constraints, say `A leq B, B leq A`, that matches the head `X leq Y , Y leq X` of the `antisymmetry` rule, will also match it when the constraints are exchanged, `B leq A, A leq B`. Therefore it is enough if a currently active constraint enters this rule in the first head only, the second head can be declared to be passive. Similarly for the `idempotence` rule. For this rule, it is more efficient to declare the first head passive, so that the currently active constraint will be removed when the rule fires (instead of removing the older constraint and redoing all the propagation with the currently active constraint). Note that the compiler itself detects the symmetry of the two head constraints in the simplification rule `antisymmetry`, thus it is automatically declared passive and the compiler outputs `CHR eliminated code for head 2 in antisymmetry`.

```
antisymmetry  X leq Y , Y leq X # Id <=> X=Y pragma passive(Id).
idempotence   X leq Y # Id \ X leq Y <=> true pragma passive(Id).
transitivity  X leq Y # Id , Y leq Z ==> X leq Z pragma passive(Id).
```

  Declaring the first head of rule `transitivity` passive changes the behavior of the handler. It will propagate less depending on the order in which the constraints arrive:

```
| ?- X leq Y, Y leq Z.
X leq Y,
Y leq Z,
X leq Z

| ?- Y leq Z, X leq Y.
Y leq Z,
X leq Y

| ?- Y leq Z, X leq Y, Z leq X.
Y = X,
Z = X
```

The last query shows that the handler is still complete in the sense that all circular chains of leq-relations are collapsed into equalities.

### 35.4.6 Options

Options parametrise the rule compilation process. Thus they should precede the rule definitions. Example:

```
option(check_guard_bindings, off).
```

The format below lists the names of the recognized options together with the acceptable values. The first entry in the lists is the default value.

`option(debug_compile, [off,on]).`
: Instruments the generated code such that the execution of the rules may be traced (see Section 35.5 [CHR Debugging], page 507).

`option(check_guard_bindings, [on,off]).`
: Per default, for guards of type ask the CHR runtime system makes sure that no variables are touched or the cause of an instantiation error. These checks may be turned off with this option, i.e. all guards are treated as if they were of the tell variety. The option was kept for backward compatibility. Tell and ask guards offer better granularity.

`option(already_in_store, [off,on]).`
: If this option is on, the CHR runtime system checks for the presence of an identical constraint upon the insertion into the store. If present, the attempted insertion has no effect. Since checking for duplicates for all constraints costs, duplicate removal specific to individual constraints, using a few simpagation rules of the following form instead, may be a better solution.

```
Constraint \ Constraint <=> true.
```

`option(already_in_heads, [off,on]).`
: The intention of simplification and simpagation rules is often to combine the heads into a stronger version of one of them. Depending on the strength of

the guard, the new constraint may be identical to one of the heads removed by the rule. This removal followed by addition is inefficient and may even cause termination problems. If the option is enabled, this situation is detected and the corresponding problems are avoided. This option applies to all constraints and is provided mainly for backward compatibility. Better grained control can be achieved with corresponding pragmas. (see Section 35.4.5 [CHR Pragmas], page 501).

The remaining options are meant for CHR implementors only:

```
option(flatten, [on,off]).
option(rule_ordering, [canonical,heuristic]).
option(simpagation_scheme, [single,multi]).
option(revive_scheme, [new,old]).
option(dead_code_elimination, [on,off]).
```

### 35.4.7 Built-In Predicates

This table lists the predicates made available by the CHR library. They are meant for advanced users, who want to tailor the CHR system towards their specific needs.

`current_handler(?Handler, ?Module)`
: nondeterminately enumerates the defined handlers with the module they are defined in.

`current_constraint(?Handler, ?Constraint)`
: nondeterminately enumerates the defined constraints in the form *Functor/Arity* and the handlers they are defined in.

`insert_constraint(+Constraint, -Id)`
: Inserts *Constraint* into the constraint store without executing any rules. The constraint will be woken and reconsidered when one of the variables in *Constraint* is touched. *Id* is unified with an internal object representing the constraint. This predicate only gets defined when a handler and constraints are declared (see Section 35.4.2 [CHR Declarations], page 498).

`insert_constraint(+Constraint, -Id, ?Term)`
: Inserts *Constraint* into the constraint store without executing any rules. The constraint will be woken and reconsidered when one of the variables in *Term* is touched. *Id* is unified with an internal object representing the constraint. This predicate only gets defined when a handler and constraints are declared (see Section 35.4.2 [CHR Declarations], page 498).

`find_constraint(?Pattern, -Id)`
: nondeterminately enumerates constraints from the constraint store that match *Pattern*, i.e., which are instances of *Pattern*. *Id* is unified with an internal object representing the constraint.

`find_constraint(-Var, ?Pattern, -Id)`
: Nondeterminately enumerates constraints from the constraint store that delay on *Var* and match *Pattern*, i.e., which are instances of *Pattern*. The identifier *Id* can be used to refer to the constraint later, e.g. for removal.

`findall_constraints(?Pattern, ?List)`
: Unifies *List* with a list of `Constraint # Id` pairs from the constraint store that match *Pattern*.

`findall_constraints(-Var, ?Pattern, ?List)`
: Unifies *List* with a list of `Constraint # Id` pairs from the constraint store that delay on *Var* and match *Pattern*.

`remove_constraint(+Id)`
: Removes the constraint *Id*, obtained with one of the previous predicates, from the constraint store.

`unconstrained(?Var)`
: Succeeds if no CHR constraint delays on *Var*. Defined as:

```
unconstrained(X) :-
    find_constraint(X, _, _), !, fail.
unconstrained(_).
```

`notify_constrained(?Var)`
: Leads to the reconsideration of the constraints associated with *Var*. This mechanism allows solvers to communicate reductions on the set of possible values of variables prior to making bindings.

### 35.4.8 Consulting and Compiling Constraint Handlers

The CHR compilation process has been made as transparent as possible. The user deals with files containing CHR just as with files containing ordinary Prolog predicates. Thus CHR may be consulted, compiled with various compilation modes, and compiled to file (see Chapter 6 [Load Intro], page 65).

### 35.4.9 Compiler-Generated Predicates

Besides predicates for the defined constraints, the CHR compiler generates some support predicates in the module containing the handler. To avoid naming conflicts, the following predicates must not be defined or referred to by user code in the same module:

`verify_attributes/3`
`attribute_goal/2`
`attach_increment/2`
`'attach_F/A'/2`
: for every defined constraint *F/A*.

*'F/A_N_M_...'/Arity*
for every defined constraint $F/A$. $N$ and $M$ is are integers, $Arity > A$.

For the prime number example that is:

```
attach_increment/2
attach_prime/1/2
attach_primes/1/2
attribute_goal/2
goal_expansion/3
prime/1
prime/1_1/2
prime/1_1_0/3
prime/1_2/2
primes/1
primes/1_1/2
verify_attributes/3
```

If an author of a handler wants to avoid naming conflicts with the code that uses the handler, it is easy to encapsulate the handler. The module declaration below puts the handler into module `primes`, which exports only selected predicates—the constraints in our example.

```
:- module(primes, [primes/1,prime/1]).

:- use_module(library(chr)).

handler eratosthenes.
constraints primes/1,prime/1.
...
```

### 35.4.10 Operator Declarations

This table lists the operators as used by the CHR library:

```
:- op(1200, xfx, @).
:- op(1190, xfx, pragma).
:- op(1180, xfx, [==>,<=>]).
:- op(1180, fy,  chr_spy).
:- op(1180, fy,  chr_nospy).
:- op(1150, fx,  handler).
:- op(1150, fx,  constraints).
:- op(1150, fx,  rules).
:- op(1100, xfx, '|').
:- op(1100, xfx, \ ).
:- op(1050, xfx, &).
:- op( 500, yfx, #).
```

### 35.4.11 Exceptions

The CHR runtime system reports instantiation and type errors for the predicates:

```
find_constraint/2
findall_constraints/3
insert_constraint/2
remove_constraint/1
notify_constrained/1
```

The only other CHR specific runtime error is:

`! CHR: registering New, module Module already hosts Old`

An attempt to load a second handler New into module *Module* already hosting handler *Old* was made.

The following exceptional conditions are detected by the CHR compiler:

`! CHR Compiler: syntax rule N: Term`

If the *N*-th *Term* in the file being loaded violates the CHR syntax (see Section 35.4.3 [CHR Syntax], page 499).

`! CHR Compiler: too many general heads in Name`

Unspecific heads in definitions like `C \ C <=> true` must not be combined with other heads in rule *Name*.

`! CHR Compiler: bad pragma Pragma in Name`

The pragma *Pragma* used in rule *Name* does not qualify. Currently this only happens if *Pragma* is unbound.

`! CHR Compiler: found head F/A in Name, expected one of: F/A list`

Rule *Name* has a head of given *F/A*, which is not among the defined constraints.

`! CHR Compiler: head identifiers in Name are not unique variables`

The identifiers to refer to individual constraints (heads) via '`#`' in rule *Name* do not meet the indicated requirements.

`! CHR Compiler: no handler defined`

CHR specific language elements, declarations or rules for example, are used before a handler was defined. This error is usually reported a couple of times, i.e. as often as there are CHR forms in the file expecting the missing definition.

`! CHR Compiler: compilation failed`

Not your fault. Send us a bug report.

## 35.5 Debugging CHR Programs

Use `option(debug_compile,on)` preceding any rules in the file containing the handler to enable CHR debugging. The CHR debugging mechanism works by instrumenting the code generated by the CHR compiler. Basically, the CHR debugger works like the Prolog debugger. The main differences are: there are extra ports specific to CHR, and the CHR debugger provides no means for the user to change the flow of control, i.e. there are currently no *retry* and *fail* options available.

### 35.5.1 Control Flow Model

The entities reflected by the CHR debugger are constraints and rules. Constraints are treated like ordinary Prolog goals with the usual ports: `[call,exit,redo,fail]`. In addition, constraints may get inserted into or removed from the constraint store (ports: `insert,remove`), and stored constraints containing variables will be woken and reconsidered (port: `wake`) when variables are touched.

The execution of a constraint consists of trying to apply the rules mentioning the constraint in their heads. Two ports for rules reflect this process: At a `try` port the active constraint matches one of the heads of the rule, and matching constraints for the remaining heads of the rule, if any, have been found as well. The transition from a `try` port to an `apply` port takes place when the guard has been successfully evaluated, i.e. when the rule commits. At the `apply` port, the body of the rule is just about to be executed. The body is a Prolog goal transparent to the CHR debugger. If the rule body contains CHR constraints, the CHR debugger will track them again. If the rules were consulted, the Prolog debugger can be used to study the evaluations of the other predicates in the body.

### 35.5.2 CHR Debugging Predicates

The following predicates control the operation of the CHR debugger:

`chr_trace`

Switches the CHR debugger on and ensures that the next time control enters a CHR port, a message will be produced and you will be asked to interact.

At this point you have a number of options. See Section 35.5.5 [CHR Debugging Options], page 511. In particular, you can just type ⟨RET⟩ to creep (or single-step) into your program. You will notice that the CHR debugger stops at many ports. If this is not what you want, the predicate `chr_leash` gives full control over the ports at which you are prompted.

`chr_debug`

Switches the CHR debugger on and ensures that the next time control enters a CHR port with a spypoint set, a message will be produced and you will be asked to interact.

`chr_nodebug`

Switches the CHR debugger off. If there are any spypoints set then they will be kept.

`chr_notrace`

Equivalent to `chr_nodebug`.

`chr_debugging`

Prints onto the standard error stream information about the current CHR debugging state. This will show:

1. Whether the CHR debugger is switched on.
2. What spypoints have been set (see below).
3. What mode of leashing is in force (see below).

`chr_leash(+`*`Mode`*`)`

The leashing mode is set to *Mode*. It determines the CHR ports at which you are to be prompted when you creep through your program. At unleashed ports a tracing message is still output, but program execution does not stop to allow user interaction. Note that the ports of spypoints are always leashed (and cannot be unleashed). *Mode* is a list containing none, one or more of the following port names:

`call` Prompt when a constraint is executed for the first time.

`exit` Prompt when the constraint is successfully processed, i.e. the applicable rules have applied.

`redo` Prompt at subsequent exits generated by nondeterminate rule bodies.

`fail` Prompt when a constraint fails.

`wake` Prompt when a constraint from the constraint store is woken and reconsidered because one of its variables has been touched.

`try` Prompt just before the guard evaluation of a rule, after constraints matching the heads have been found.

`apply` Prompt upon the application of a rule, after the successful guard evaluation, when the rule commits and fires, just before evaluating the body.

`insert` Prompt when a constraint gets inserted into the constraint store, i.e. after all rules have been tried.

`remove` Prompt when a constraint gets removed from the constraint store, e.g. when a simplification rule applies.

The initial value of the CHR leashing mode is `[call,exit,fail,wake,apply]`. Predefined shortcuts are:

`chr_leash(none)`, `chr_leash(off)`
: To turn leashing off.

`chr_leash(all)`
: To prompt at every port.

`chr_leash(default)`
: Same as `chr_leash([call,exit,fail,wake,apply])`.

`chr_leash(call)`
: No need to use a list if only a singular port is to be leashed.

### 35.5.3 CHR Spypoints

For CHR programs of any size, it is clearly impractical to creep through the entire program. *Spypoints* make it possible to stop the program upon an event of interest. Once there, one can set further spypoints in order to catch the control flow a bit further on, or one can start creeping.

Setting a spypoint on a constraint or a rule indicates that you wish to see all control flow through the various ports involved, except during skips. When control passes through any port with a spypoint set on it, a message is output and the user is asked to interact. Note that the current mode of leashing does not affect spypoints: user interaction is requested on *every* port.

Spypoints are set and removed by the following predicates, which are declared as prefix operators:

`chr_spy` *Spec*
: Sets spypoints on constraints and rules given by *Spec*, which is is of the form:

  _ *(variable)*
  : denoting all constraints and rules, or:

  *constraints Cs*
  : where *Cs* is one of

    _ *(variable)*
    : denoting all constraints

    *C,...,C* denoting a list of constraints *C*

    *Name* denoting all constraints with this functor, regardless of arity

    *Name/Arity*
    : denoting the constraint of that name and arity

  *rules Rs* where *Rs* is one of:

    _ *(variable)*
    : denoting all rules

*R,...,R* denoting a list of rules *R*

*Name* where *Name* is the name of a rule in any handler.

*already_in_store*
The name of a rule implicitly defined by the system when the option `already_in_store` is in effect.

*already_in_heads*
The name of a rule implicitly defined by the system when the option `already_in_heads` or the corresponding pragmas are in effect.

*Handler:Name*
where *Handler* is the name of a constraint handler and *Name* is the name of a rule in that handler

Examples:

```
| ?- chr_spy rules rule(3), transitivity, already_in_store.
| ?- chr_spy constraints prime/1.
```

If you set spypoints, the CHR debugger will be switched on.

`chr_nospy` *Spec*
Removes spypoints on constraints and rules given by *Spec*, where *Spec* is of the form as described for `chr_spy` *Spec*. There is no `chr_nospyall/0`. To remove all CHR spypoints use `chr_nospy _`.

The options available when you arrive at a spypoint are described later. See Section 35.5.5 [CHR Debugging Options], page 511.

### 35.5.4 CHR Debugging Messages

All trace messages are output to the standard error stream. This allows you to trace programs while they are performing file I/O. The basic format is as follows:

```
S
3   1 try     eratosthenes:absorb(10) @ prime(9)#<c4>, prime(10)#<c2> ?
```

*S* is a spypoint indicator. It is printed as ' ' if there is no spypoint, as 'r', indicating that there is a spypoint on this rule, or as 'c' if one of the involved constraints has a spypoint.

The first number indicates the current depth of the execution; i.e. the number of direct ancestors the currently active constraint has.

The second number indicates the head position of the currently active constraint at rule ports.

The next item tells you which port is currently traced.

A constraint or a matching rule are printed next. Constraints print as `Term#Id`, where *Id* is a unique identifier pointing into the constraint store. Rules are printed as `Handler:Name @`, followed by the constraints matching the heads.

The final '`?`' is the prompt indicating that you should type in one of the debug options (see Section 35.5.5 [CHR Debugging Options], page 511).

### 35.5.5 CHR Debugging Options

This section describes the options available when the system prompts you after printing out a debugging message. Most of them you know from the standard Prolog debugger. All the options are one letter mnemonics, some of which can be optionally followed by a decimal integer. They are read from the standard input stream up to the end of the line (Return, ⟨RET⟩). Blanks will be ignored.

The only option that you really have to remember is '`h`'. This provides help in the form of the following list of available options.

```
CHR debugging options:
   <cr>   creep            c      creep
    l     leap
    s     skip             s <i>  skip (ancestor i)
    g     ancestors
    &     constraints      & <i>  constraints (details)
    n     nodebug          =      debugging
    +     spy this
    -     nospy this       .      show rule
    <     reset printdepth < <n>  set printdepth
    a     abort            b      break
    ?     help             h      help
```

*c*
⟨RET⟩ *creep* causes the debugger to single-step to the very next port and print a message. Then if the port is leashed, the user is prompted for further interaction. Otherwise, it continues creeping. If leashing is off, creep is the same as *leap* (see below) except that a complete trace is printed on the standard error stream.

*l* *leap* causes the debugger to resume running your program, only stopping when a spypoint is reached (or when the program terminates). Leaping can thus be used to follow the execution at a higher level than exhaustive tracing.

*s*
*s i* *skip* over the entire execution of the constraint. That is, you will not see anything until control comes back to this constraint (at either the `exit` port or the `fail` port). This includes ports with spypoints set; they will be masked out during the skip. The command can be used with a numeric argument to skip the execution up to and including the ancestor indicated by the argument. Example:

```
        ...
        4   - exit    prime(8)#<c6> ? g
Ancestors:
        1   1 apply   eratosthenes:rule(2) @ primes(10)#<c1>
        2   1 apply   eratosthenes:rule(2) @ primes(9)#<c3>
        3   1 apply   eratosthenes:rule(2) @ primes(8)#<c5>
        4   - call    prime(8)#<c6>

        4   - exit    prime(8)#<c6> ? s 2
        2   - exit    primes(9)#<c3> ? ⟨RET⟩
```

`g` *print ancestors* provides you with a list of ancestors to the currently active constraint, i.e. all constraints not yet exited that led to the current constraint in the derivation sequence. The format is the same as with trace messages. Constraints start with `call` entries in the stack. The subsequent application of a rule replaces the call entry in the stack with an `apply` entry. Later the constraint shows again as `redo` or `fail` entry. Example:

```
        0   - call    primes(10)#<c1> ? ⟨RET⟩
        1   1 try     eratos-
thenes:rule(2) @ primes(10)#<c1> ? g

Ancestors:
        1   - call    primes(10)#<c1>

        1   1 try     eratos-
thenes:rule(2) @ primes(10)#<c1> ? ⟨RET⟩
        1   1 apply   eratos-
thenes:rule(2) @ primes(10)#<c1> ? ⟨RET⟩
        1   - call    prime(10)#<c2> ? ⟨RET⟩
        2   - insert  prime(10)#<c2>
        2   - exit    prime(10)#<c2> ? g

Ancestors:
        1   1 apply   eratosthenes:rule(2) @ primes(10)#<c1>
        2   - call    prime(10)#<c2>
```

`&` *print constraints* prints a list of the constraints in the constraint store. With a numeric argument, details relevant primarily to CHR implementors are shown.

`n` *nodebug* switches the CHR debugger off.

`=` *debugging* outputs information concerning the status of the CHR debugger as via `chr_debugging/0`

`+` *spy this* sets a spypoint on the current constraint or rule.

`-` *nospy this* removes the spypoint from the current constraint or rule, if it exists.

`.` *show rule* prints the current rule instantiated by the matched constraints. Example:

```
 8   1 ap-
ply   era:absorb(8) @ prime(4)#<c14> \ prime(8)#<c6> ? .

 absorb(8) @
  prime(4)#<c14> \
    prime(8)#<c6> <=>

    8 mod 4=:=0
    |
    true.
```

`<`

`< n` While in the debugger, a *printdepth* is in effect for limiting the subterm nesting level when printing rules and constraints. The limit is initially 10. This command, without arguments, resets the limit to 10. With an argument of *n*, the limit is set to *n*, treating 0 as infinity.

`a` *abort* calls the built-in predicate `abort/0`.

`b` *break* calls the built-in predicate `break/0`, thus putting you at a recursive top-level. When you end the break (entering `^D`) you will be re-prompted at the port at which you broke. The CHR debugger is temporarily switched off as you call the break and will be switched on again when you finish the break and go back to the old execution. Any changes to the CHR leashing or to spypoints during the break will remain in effect.

`?`

`h` *help* displays the table of options given above.

## 35.6 Programming Hints

This section gives you some programming hints for CHR. For maximum efficiency of your constraint handler, see also the previous subsections on declarations and options.

Constraint handling rules for a given constraint system can often be derived from its definition in formalisms such as inference rules, rewrite rules, sequents, formulas expressing axioms and theorems. CHR can also be found by first considering special cases of each constraint and then looking at interactions of pairs of constraints sharing a variable. Cases that do not occur in the application can be ignored.

It is important to find the right *granularity* of the constraints. Assume one wants to express that *n* variables are different from each other. It is more efficient to have a single constraint `all_different(List_of_n_Vars)` than *n***n* inequality constraints between each pair of different variables. However, the extreme case of having a single constraint modeling the whole constraint store will usually be inefficient.

Starting from an executable specification, the rules can then be refined and adapted to the specifics of the application. Efficiency can be improved by weakening the guards to perform simplification as early as needed and by strengthening the guards to do the *just*

*right* amount of propagation. Propagation rules can be expensive, because no constraints are removed.

The more heads a rule has, the more expensive it is. *Rules with several heads* are more efficient, if the heads of the rule share a variable (which is usually the case). Then the search for a partner constraint has to consider less candidates. In the current implementation, constraints are indexed by their functors, so that the search is only performed among the constraints containing the shared variable. Moreover, two rules with identical (or sufficiently similar) heads can be merged into one rule so that the search for a partner constraint is only performed once instead of twice.

As guards are tried frequently, they should be simple *tests* not involving side-effects. Head matching is more efficient than explicitly checking equalities in the ask-part of the guard. In the tell part of a guard, it should be made sure that variables from the head are never touched (e.g. by using `nonvar` or `ground` if necessary). For efficiency and clarity reasons, one should also avoid using constraints in guards. Besides conjunctions, disjunctions are allowed in the guard, but they should be used with care. The use of other control built-in predicates in the guard is discouraged. Negation and if-then-else in the ask part of a guard can give wrong results, since e.g. failure of the negated goal may be due to touching its variables.

*Several handlers can be used simultaneously if* they do not share constraints with the same name. The implementation will not work correctly if the same constraint is defined in rules of different handlers that have been compiled separately. In such a case, the handlers must be merged *by hand*. This means that the source code has to be edited so that the rules for the shared constraint are together (in one module). Changes may be necessary (like strengthening guards) to avoid divergence or loops in the computation.

## 35.7 Constraint Handlers

The CHR library comes with plenty of constraint handlers written in CHR. The most recent versions of these are maintained at http://www.pst.informatik.uni-muenchen.de/~fruehwir/chr-solver.html

'`arc.pl`' classical arc-consistency over finite domains

'`bool.pl`' simple Boolean constraints

'`cft.pl`' feature term constraints according to the CFT theory

'`domain.pl`'
finite domains over arbitrary ground terms and interval domains over integers and reals, but without arithmetic functions

'`gcd.pl`' elegant two-liner for the greatest common divisor

'`interval.pl`'
straightforward interval domains over integers and reals, with arithmetic functions

‘`kl-one.pl`’
: terminological reasoning similar to KL-ONE or feature trees

‘`leq.pl`’ standard introductory CHR example handler for less-than-or-equal

‘`list.pl`’ equality constraints over concatenations of lists (or strings)

‘`listdom.pl`’
: a straightforward finite enumeration list domains over integers, similar to ‘`interval.pl`’

‘`math-elim.pl`’
: solves linear polynomial equations and inequations using variable elimination, several variations possible

‘`math-fougau.pl`’
: solves linear polynomial equations and inequations by combining variable elimination for equations with Fourier’s algorithm for inequations, several variations possible

‘`math-fourier.pl`’
: a straightforward Fouriers algorithm to solve polynomial inequations over the real or rational numbers

‘`math-gauss.pl`’
: a straightforward, elegant implementation of variable elimination for equations in one rule

‘`minmax.pl`’
: simple less-than and less-than-or-equal ordering constraints together with minimum and maximum constraints

‘`modelgenerator.pl`’
: example of how to use CHR for model generation in theorem proving

‘`monkey.pl`’
: classical monkey and banana problem, illustrates how CHR can be used as a fairly efficient production rule system

‘`osf.pl`’ constraints over order sorted feature terms according to the OSF theory

‘`oztype.pl`’
: rational trees with disequality and OZ type constraint with intersection

‘`pathc.pl`’
: the most simple example of a handler for path consistency—two rules

‘`primes.pl`’
: elegant implementations of the sieve of Eratosthenes reminiscent of the chemical abstract machine model, also illustrates use of CHR as a general purpose concurrent constraint language

‘`scheduling.pl`’
: simple classical constraint logic programming scheduling example on building a house

'`tarski.pl`'
: most of Tarski's axiomatization of geometry as constraint system

'`term.pl`'
: Prolog term manipulation built-in predicates `functor/3, arg/3, =../2` as constraints

'`time-pc.pl`'
: grand generic handler for path-consistency over arbitrary constraints, load via '`time.pl`' to get a powerful solver for temporal constraints based on Meiri's unifying framework. '`time-rnd.pl`' contains a generator for random test problems.

'`time-point.pl`'
: quantitative temporal constraints over time points using path-consistency

'`tree.pl`'
: equality and disequality over finite and infinite trees (terms)

'`type.pl`'
: equalities and type constraints over finite and infinite trees (terms)

You can consult or compile a constraint handler from the CHR library using e.g.:

```
| ?- [library('chr/examples/gcd')].
| ?- compile(library('chr/examples/gcd')).
```

If you want to learn more about the handlers, look at their documented source code.

In addition, there are files with example queries for some handlers, their file name starts with '`examples-`' and the file extension indicates the handler, e.g. '`.bool`':

```
examples-adder.bool
examples-benchmark.math
examples-deussen.bool
examples-diaz.bool
examples-fourier.math
examples-holzbaur.math
examples-lim1.math
examples-lim2.math
examples-lim3.math
examples-puzzle.bool
examples-queens.bool
examples-queens.domain
examples-stuckey.math
examples-thom.math
```

## 35.8 Backward Compatibility

In this section, we discuss backward compatibility with the CHR library of Eclipse Prolog.

1. The restriction on at most two heads in a rule has been abandoned. A rule can have as many heads as you like. Note however, that searching for partner constraints can be expensive.
2. By default, rules are compiled in textual order. This gives the programmer more control over the constraint handling process. In the Eclipse library of CHR, the compiler was optimizing the order of rules. Therefore, when porting a handler, rules may have to be reordered. A good heuristic is to prefer simplification to simpagation and propagation and to prefer rules with single heads to rules with several heads. Instead of manually rearranging an old handler one may also use the following combination of options to get the corresponding effect:

   ```
   option(rule_ordering,heuristic).
   option(revive_scheme,old).
   ```
3. For backward compatibility, the `already_in_store`, `already_in_head` and `guard_bindings` options are still around, but there are CHR syntax extensions (see Section 35.4.3 [CHR Syntax], page 499) and pragmas (see Section 35.4.5 [CHR Pragmas], page 501) offering better grained control.
4. The Eclipse library of CHR provided automatic built-in labeling through the `label_with` declaration. Since it was not widely used and can be easily simulated, built-in labeling was dropped. The same effect can be achieved by replacing the declaration `label_with Constraint if Guard` by the simplification rule `chr_labeling, Constraint <=> Guard | Constraint', chr_labeling` and by renaming the head in each clause `Constraint :- Body` into `Constraint' :- Body` where `Constraint'` is a new predicate. Efficiency can be improved by declaring `Constraint` to be passive: `chr_labeling, Constraint#Id <=> Guard | Constraint', chr_labeling pragma passive(Id)`. This translation will not work if `option(already_in_heads,on)`. In that case use e.g. `chr_labeling(_), Constraint <=> Guard | Constraint', chr_labeling(_)` to make the new call to `chr_labeling` differ from the head occurrence.
5. The set of built-in predicates for advanced CHR users is now larger and better designed. Also the debugger has been improved. The Opium debugging environment is not available in SICStus Prolog.

# 36 Finite Domain Constraint Debugger

## 36.1 Introduction

FDBG is a CLP(FD) debugger for SICStus Prolog. Its main purpose is to enable the CLP programmer to trace the changes of domains of variables.

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(fdbg)).
```

FDBG defines the following prefix operator:

```
:- op(400, fy, #).
```

The presence of FDBG affects the translation and execution, but not the semantics, of subsequently loaded arithmetic constraints.

## 36.2 Concepts

In this section, several concepts and terms are defined. These terms will later be heavily used in the documentation; therefore, it is important that you understand them well.

### 36.2.1 Events

An FDBG event can (currently) belong to one of the two following major classes:

*constraint event*
: A global constraint is woken.

*labeling event*
: Three events belong to this class, namely:
  - the labeling of an FD variable is started
  - an FD variable gets constrained
  - the labeling of an FD variable fails, i.e. all elements of its domain have been tried and caused failure

These events are intercepted by the FDBG core. When any of them occurs, the appropriate visualizer (see Section 36.2.3 [FDBG Visualizers], page 520) gets called with a representation of the event (a Prolog term) as extra arguments.

Note that it is *not possible* to debug indexicals with FDBG. What's more, any domain narrowings done by indexicals happen unnoticed, making FDBG output harder to follow. On

the other hand, arithmetical constraints (like `X #> 0`) are translated to global constraints instead of indexicals after consulting `library(fdbg)`, and therefore don't lead to any misunderstandings. For this latter reason it is advisable to load `library(fdbg)` *before* any user programs.

### 36.2.2 Labeling Levels

In this subsection we give three definitions regarding the labeling procedure.

*labeling session*
: This term denotes the whole labeling procedure that starts with the call of `labeling/2` or an equivalent predicate and finishes by exiting this predicate. Normally, there is at most one labeling session per run.

*labeling attempt*
: One choicepoint of a labeling session. Exactly one variable is associated with a labeling attempt, although this is not necessarily true vice versa. For example in `enum` mode labeling, a single labeling attempt tries every possible value, but in `step` mode labeling, several binary choicepoints are created.

*labeling step*
: The event of somehow constraining the domain of a variable. This usually means either setting the variable to a specific value or limiting it with a lower or an upper bound.

As you can see there is a hierarchical relation among these definitions: a labeling session consists of several labeling attempts, which, in turn, might consist of several labeling steps.

A *labeling event*, on the other hand, can either be a labeling step, or the start of a labeling attempt, or the failure of the same. See Section 36.2.1 [FDBG Events], page 519.

### 36.2.3 Visualizers

A visualizer is a Prolog predicate reacting to FDBG events (see Section 36.2.1 [FDBG Events], page 519). It is called directly by the FDBG core when any FDBG event occurs. It is called *visualizer*, because usually it should present the events to the user, but in general it can do any kind of processing, like checking invariants, etc.

For all major event classes, a different visualizer type is used. The set of visualizers you would like to use for a session is specified in the option list of `fdbg_on/1` (see Section 36.3.1 [FDBG Options], page 523), when FDBG is switched on.

A specific visualizer can have several arguments, some are supplied by the FDBG core, the rest (if any) should be specified when FDBG is switched on. Note that the obligatory arguments will be appended to the *end* of the user defined argument list.

The set of built-in visualizers installed by default (see Section 36.3.1 [FDBG Options], page 523) is the following:

- for global constraint awakenings: `fdbg_show`
- for labeling events: `fdbg_label_show`

For details on built-in visualizers, see Section 36.3.3 [FDBG Built-In Visualizers], page 525.

### 36.2.4 Names of Terms

FDBG provides a service to assign names to Prolog terms for later reference. A name is an atom and it is usually associated with a compound term containing constraint variables, or with a single variable. In the former case, each variable appearing in the compound term is also assigned a name automatically by FDBG. This auto-assigned name is derived from the name of the term; see Section 36.2.6 [FDBG Name Auto-Generation], page 521.

Perhaps the most useful utilization of names is *annotation*, another service of FDBG. Here, each variable appearing in a Prolog term is replaced with a compound term describing it (i.e. containing its name, the variable itself, and some data regarding its domain). During annotation, unnamed constraint variables are also given a unique "anonymous" name automatically, these names begin with a '`fdvar`' prefix. See Section 36.4.2 [FDBG Writing Visualizers], page 531.

The names will be used by the built-in visualizers when referring to constraint variables, and they can also be used to retrieve the terms assigned to them in user defined visualizers. See Section 36.2.3 [FDBG Visualizers], page 520.

### 36.2.5 Selectors

A *selector* is a Prolog term denoting a (path to a) subterm of a given term *T*. Let *subterm(T,S)* denote the subterm of *T* wrt. a selector *S*, and let *N* denote an integer. A selector then takes one of the following forms:

| | |
|---|---|
| *S* | *subterm(T,S)* |
| `[]` | *T* |
| `[...,N]` | *N*th argument of the compound term *subterm(T,*`[...]`*)* |
| `[...,#N]` | *N*th element of the list *subterm(T,*`[...]`*)* |

### 36.2.6 Name Auto-Generation

There are two cases when a name is automatically generated.

1. When a name is assigned to a compound term by the user, each variable appearing in

it is assigned a so called *derived* name, which is created by appending a variant of the selector of the variable to the original name. For example, the call:

```
fdbg_assign_name(bar(A, [B, C], foobar(D, E)), foo)
```

will create the following name/term entries:

| *Name* | *Term/Variable* | *Selector* |
|---|---|---|
| `foo` | `bar(A, [B, C], foobar(D, E))` | `[]` |
| `foo_1` | `A` | `[1]` |
| `foo_2_1` | `B` | `[2,#1]` |
| `foo_2_2` | `C` | `[2,#2]` |
| `foo_3_1` | `D` | `[3,1]` |
| `foo_3_2` | `E` | `[3,2]` |

See Section 36.3.2 [FDBG Naming Terms], page 524.

2. If, during the annotation of a term (see Section 36.3.5 [FDBG Annotation], page 527) an unnamed constraint variable is found, it is assigned a unique "anonymous" name. This name consists of the prefix '`fdvar`', an underscore character, and an integer. The integer is automatically incremented when necessary.

### 36.2.7 Legend

The *legend* is a list of variables and their domains, usually appearing after a description of the current constraint. This is necessary because the usual visual representation of a constraint contains only the *names* of the variables in it (see Section 36.3.5 [FDBG Annotation], page 527), and doesn't show anything about their domain. The legend links these names to the corresponding domains. The legend also shows the changes of the domains made by the constraint. Finally, the legend may contain some conclusions regarding the behavior of the constraint, like failure or side-effects.

The format of the legend is somewhat customizable by defining a hook function; see Section 36.4.1 [FDBG Customizing Output], page 530. The default format of the legend is the following:

```
list_2 = 0..3
list_3 = 0..3
list_4 = 0..3
fdvar_2 = 0..3 -> 1..3
```

Here, we see four variables, with initial domains 0..3, but the domain of the (previously unnamed) variable `fdvar_2` is narrowed by the constraint (not shown here) to 1..3.

A legend is automatically printed by the built-in visualizer `fdbg_show`, but it can be easily printed from user defined visualizers too.

### 36.2.8 The `fdbg_output` Stream

The `fdbg_output` is a stream alias created when FDBG is switched on and removed when it is switched off. All built-in visualizers write to this stream, and the user defined visualizers should do the same.

## 36.3 Basics

Here, we describe the set of FDBG services and commands necessary to do a simple debugging session. No major modification of your CLP(FD) program is necessary to use FDBG this way. Debugging more complicated programs, on the other hand, might also require user written extensions to FDBG, since the wallpaper trace produced by the built-in visualizer `fdbg_show` could be too detailed and therefore hard to analyze. See Section 36.4 [FDBG Advanced Usage], page 530.

### 36.3.1 FDBG Options

FDBG is switched on and off with the predicates:

`fdbg_on`
`fdbg_on(:Options)`
: Turns on FDBG by putting advice-points on several predicates of the CLP(FD) module. *Options* is a single option or a list of options; see Section 36.3.1 [FDBG Options], page 523. The empty list is the default value.

  `fdbg_on/[0,1]` can be called safely several times consecutively; only the first call will have an effect.

`fdbg_off`
: Turns the debugger off by removing the previously installed advice-points.

`fdbg_on/1` accepts the following options:

`file(Filename, Mode)`
: Tells FDBG to attach the stream alias `fdbg_output` to the file called *Filename* opened in mode *Mode*. *Mode* can either be `write` or `append`. The file specified is opened on a call to `fdbg_on/1` and is closed on a call to `fdbg_off/0`.

`socket(Host, Port)`
: Tells FDBG to attach the stream alias `fdbg_output` to the socket connected to *Host* on port *Port*. The specified socket is created on a call to `fdbg_on/1` and is closed on a call to `fdbg_off/0`.

`stream(Stream)`
: Tells FDBG to attach the stream alias `fdbg_output` to the stream *Stream*. The specified stream remains open after calling `fdbg_off/0`.

If none of the above three options is used, the stream alias `fdbg_output` is attached to the current output stream.

`constraint_hook(Goal)`
: Tells FDBG to extend *Goal* with two (further) arguments and call it on the exit port of the global constraint dispatcher (`dispatch_global_fast/4`).

`no_constraint_hook`
: Tells FDBG not to use any constraint hook.

If none of the above two options is used, the default is `constraint_hook(fdbg:fdbg_show)`.

`labeling_hook(Goal)`
: Tells FDBG to extend *Goal* with three (further) arguments and call it on any of the three labeling events.

`no_labeling_hook`
: Tells FDBG not to use any labeling hook.

If none of the above two options is used, the default is `labeling_hook(fdbg:fdbg_label_show)`.

For both `constraint_hook` and `labeling_hook`, *Goal* should be a visualizer, either built-in (see Section 36.3.3 [FDBG Built-In Visualizers], page 525) or user defined. More of these two options may appear in the option list, in which case they will be called in their order of occurrence.

See Section 36.4.2 [FDBG Writing Visualizers], page 531, for more details on these two options.

### 36.3.2 Naming Terms

Naming is a procedure of associating names with terms and variables; see Section 36.2.4 [FDBG Names of Terms], page 521. Three predicates are provided to assign and retrieve names, these are the following:

`fdbg_assign_name(+Term, ?Name)`
: Assigns the atom *Name* to *Term*, and a derived name to each variable appearing in *Term*. If Name is a variable, then use a default (generated) name, and return it in Name. See Section 36.2.6 [FDBG Name Auto-Generation], page 521.

`fdbg_current_name(?Term, ?Name)`
: Retrieves *Term* associated with *Name*, or enumerates all term-name pairs.

`fdbg_get_name(+Term, -Name)`

Returns the name associated to *Term* in *Name*, if it exists. Otherwise, silently fails.

### 36.3.3 Built-In Visualizers

The default visualizers are generic predicates to display FDBG events (see Section 36.2.1 [FDBG Events], page 519) in a well readable form. These visualizers naturally don't exploit any problem specific information—to have more "fancy" output, you have to write your own visualizers; see Section 36.4.2 [FDBG Writing Visualizers], page 531. To use these visualizers, pass them in the appropriate argument to `fdbg_on/1`; see Section 36.3.1 [FDBG Options], page 523, or call them directly from user defined visualizers.

`fdbg_show(+Constraint, +Actions)`

This visualizer produces a trace output of all woken global constraints, in which a line showing the constraint is followed by a legend (see Section 36.2.7 [FDBG Legend], page 522) of all the variables appearing in it, and finally an empty line to separate events from each other. The usual output will look like this:

```
<fdvar_1>#=0
    fdvar_1 = {0}
    Constraint exited.
```

Here, we can see an arithmetical constraint being woken. It narrows '`fdvar_1`' to a domain consisting of the singleton value 0, and since this is the narrowest domain possible, the constraint doesn't have anything more to do: it exits.

Note that when you pass `fdbg_show/2` as an option, you should omit the two arguments, like in

```
fdbg_on([..., constraint_hook(fdbg_show), ...]).
```

`fdbg_label_show(+Event, +LabelID, +Variable)`

This visualizer produces a wallpaper trace output of all labeling events. It is best used together with `fdbg_show/2`. Each labeling event produces a single line of output, some of them are followed by an empty line, some others are always followed by another labeling action and therefore the empty line is omitted. Here is a sample output of `fdbg_label_show/3`:

```
Labeling [9, <list_1>]: starting in range 0..3.
Labeling [9, <list_1>]: step: <list_1> = 0
```

What we see here is the following:

- The prefix '`Labeling`' identifies the event.
- The number in the brackets (9) is a unique identification number belonging to a labeling attempt. Only *one* labeling step with this number can be in effect at a time. This number in fact is the invocation number of the predicate doing the labeling for that variable.
- The name in the brackets (`<list_1>`) identifies the variable currently being labeled. Note that several identification numbers might belong to the same variable, depending on the mode of labeling.

- The text after the colon specifies the actual labeling event. This string can be:
  - "starting in range *Range*." meaning the starting of a labeling attempt in range *Range*
  - "*Mode*: *Narrowing*." meaning a labeling step in mode *Mode*. *Narrowing* is the actual narrowing done in the labeling step. *Mode* is one of the following:

    `step` meaning `step` mode labeling

    `indomain_up` meaning `enum` mode labeling or a direct call to `indomain/1`

    `indomain_down` meaning `enum,down` mode labeling

    `bisect` meaning `bisect` mode labeling

    `dual` when the domain contains exactly two values and the labeling attempt is nothing more than a selection between them
  - "failed." meaning the labeling attempt failed.

Note that when you pass `fdbg_label_show/3` as an option, you should omit the three arguments, like in

```
fdbg_on([..., labeling_hook(fdbg_label_show), ...]).
```

### 36.3.4 New Debugger Commands

The Prolog debugger is extended by FDBG. The `&` debugger is modified, and two new commands are added:

*&*
*& N*

This debugger command is extended so that the annotated form of domain variables is also printed when listing the variables with blocked goals.

*A*
*A Selector*

Annotates and prints the current goal and a legend of the variables appearing in it. If a selector is specified, then the subterm specified by it is assumed to be an action list, and is taken into account when displaying the legend. For example:

```
23  2 Exit: clpfd:dispatch_global_fast(no_threat(2,_1001,1),0,0,
            [exit,_1001 in_set[[3|3]]]) ? A [2,4]

clpfd:dispatch_global_fast(no_threat(2,<board_2>,1),0,0,
                           [exit,<board_2> in_set[[3|3]]])
    board_2 = 1..4 -> {3}
    Constraint exited.
```

*W Name=Selector*

Assigns the atom *Name* to the variable specified by the *Selector*. For example:

```
7      15 Call: bar(4, [_101,_102,_103]) ? W foo=[2,#2]
```

This would assign the name `foo` to `_102`, being the second element of the second argument of the current goal.

### 36.3.5 Annotating Programs

In order to use FDBG efficiently, you have to make some changes to your CLP(FD) program. Fortunately the calls you have to add are not numerous, and when FDBG is turned off they don't decrease efficiency significantly or modify the behavior of your program. On the other hand, they are necessary to make FDBG output easier to understand.

Assign names to the more important and more frequently occurring variables by inserting `fdbg_assign_name/2` calls at the beginning of your program. It is advisable to assign names to variables in larger batches (i.e. as lists or compound terms) with a single call.

Use pre-defined labeling predicates if possible. If you define your own labeling predicates and you want to use them even in the debugging session, then you should follow these guidelines:

1. Add a call to `clpfd:fdbg_start_labeling(+Var)` at the beginning of the predicate doing a labeling attempt, and pass the currently labeled variable as an argument to the call.
2. Call `clpfd:fdbg_labeling_step(+Var, +Step)` before each labeling step. *Step* should be a compound term describing the labeling step, this will be
   a. printed "as is" by the built-in visualizer as the mode of the labeling step (see Section 36.3.3 [FDBG Built-In Visualizers], page 525)—you can use `portray/1` to determine how it should be printed;
   b. passed as `step(Step)` to the user defined labeling visualizers in their *Event* argument; see Section 36.4.2 [FDBG Writing Visualizers], page 531.

This way FDBG can inform you about the labeling events created by your labeling predicates exactly like it would do in the case of internal labeling. If you ignore these rules FDBG won't be able to distinguish labeling events from other FDBG events any more.

### 36.3.6 An Example Session

The problem of magic sequences is a well known constraint problem. A magic sequence is a list, where the *i*-th item of the list is equal to the number of occurrences of the number *i* in the list, starting from zero. For example, the following is a magic sequence:

```
[1,2,1,0]
```

The CLP(FD) solution can be found in '`library('clpfd/examples/magicseq')`', which provides a couple of different solutions, one of which uses the `global_cardinality/2` constraint. We'll use this solution to demonstrate a simple session with FDBG.

First, the debugger is imported into the user module:

```
| ?- use_module(fdbg).
% loading /home/matsc/sicstus3/Utils/x86-linux-glibc2.2/lib/sicstus-
3.9.1/library/fdbg.po...
% module fdbg imported into user

[...]

% loaded /home/matsc/sicstus3/Utils/x86-linux-glibc2.2/lib/sicstus-
3.9.1/library/fdbg.po in module fdbg, 220 msec 453936 bytes
```

Then, the magic sequence solver is loaded:

```
| ?- [library('clpfd/examples/magicseq')].
% consulting /home/matsc/sicstus3/Utils/x86-linux-
glibc2.2/lib/sicstus-3.9.1/library/clpfd/examples/magicseq.pl...
%  module magic imported into user
%  module clpfd imported into magic
% consulted /home/matsc/sicstus3/Utils/x86-linux-glibc2.2/lib/sicstus-
3.9.1/library/clpfd/examples/magicseq.pl in mod-
ule magic, 30 msec 9440 bytes
```

Now we turn on the debugger, telling it to save the trace in '`fdbg.log`'.

```
| ?- fdbg_on([file('fdbg.log',write)]).
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched on
```

To produce a well readable trace output, a name has to be assigned to the list representing the magic sequence. To avoid any modifications to the source code, the name is assigned by a separate call before calling the magic sequence finder predicate:

```
| ?- length(L,4), fdbg_assign_name(L,list), magic_gcc(4,L,[enum]).
L = [1,2,1,0] ? ;
L = [2,0,2,0] ? ;

no
```

**Please note**: the call to `length/2` is necessary; otherwise, `L` would be a single variable instead of a list of four variables when the name is assigned.

Finally we turn the debugger off:

```
| ?- fdbg_off.
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched off
```

The output of the sample run can be found in '`fdbg.log`'. Here, we show selected parts of the trace. In each block, the woken constraint appears on the first line, followed by the corresponding legend.

In the first displayed block, `scalar_product/4` removes infeasible domain values from `list_3` and `list_4`, thus adjusting their upper bounds. The legend shows the domains before and after pruning. Note also that the constraint is rewritten to a more readable form:

```
<list_2>+2*<list_3>+3*<list_4>#=4
    list_2 = 0..3
    list_3 = 0..3 -> 0..2
    list_4 = 0..3 -> 0..1
```

The following block shows the initial labeling events, trying the value 0 for `list_1`:

```
Labeling [22, <list_1>]: starting in range 0..3.
Labeling [22, <list_1>]: indomain_up: <list_1> = 0
```

This immediately leads to a dead end:

```
global_cardinality([0,<list_2>,<list_3>,<list_4>],
                   [0-0,1-<list_2>,2-<list_3>,3-<list_4>])
    list_2 = 0..3
    list_3 = 0..2
    list_4 = 0..1
    Constraint failed.
```

We backtrack on `list_1`, trying instead the value 1. This leads to the following propagation steps:

```
Labeling [22, <list_1>]: indomain_up: <list_1> = 1

global_cardinality([1,<list_2>,<list_3>,<list_4>],
                   [0-1,1-<list_2>,2-<list_3>,3-<list_4>])
    list_2 = 0..3 -> 1..3
    list_3 = 0..2
    list_4 = 0..1

<list_2>+2*<list_3>+3*<list_4>#=4
    list_2 = 1..3
    list_3 = 0..2 -> 0..1
    list_4 = 0..1
```

However, we do not yet have a solution, so we try the first feasible value for `list_2`, which is 2. This is in fact enough to solve the goal. In the last two propagation steps, the constraint exits, which means that it holds no matter what value any remaining variable takes (in this example, there are none):

```
Labeling [29, <list_2>]: indomain_up: <list_2> = 2

global_cardinality([1,2,<list_3>,<list_4>],[0-1,1-2,2-<list_3>,3-<list_4>])
    list_3 = 0..1 -> {1}
    list_4 = 0..1 -> {0}

global_cardinality([1,2,1,0],[0-1,1-2,2-1,3-0])
    Constraint exited.

0#=0
    Constraint exited.
```

## 36.4 Advanced Usage

Sometimes the output of the built-in visualizer is inadequate. There might be cases when only minor changes are necessary to produce a more readable output; in other cases, the trace output should be completely reorganized. FDBG provides two ways of changing the appearance of the output by defining hook predicates. In this section, these predicates will be described in detail.

### 36.4.1 Customizing Output

The printing of variable names is customized by defining the following hook predicate.

`fdbg:fdvar_portray(`*`Name`*`, `*`Var`*`, `*`FDSet`*`)` *hook*

This hook predicate is called whenever an annotated constraint variable (see Section 36.3.5 [FDBG Annotation], page 527) is printed. *Name* is the assigned name of the variable *Var*, whose domain *will be FDSet* as soon as the narrowings of the current constraint take effect. The *current* domain is not stored in this compoun, but it can be easily determined with a call to `fd_set/2`. (Although these two sets may be the same if the constraint didn't narrow it.)

If `fdbg:fdvar_portray/3` is undefined or fails the default representation is printed, which is *Name* between angle brackets.

The printing of legend lines is customized by defining the following hook predicate.

`fdbg:legend_portray(`*`Name`*`, `*`Var`*`, `*`FDSet`*`)` *hook*

This hook is called for each line of the legend by the built-in legend printer. The arguments are the same as in the case of `fdbg:fdvar_portray/3`. Note that a prefix of four spaces and a closing newline character is always printed by FDBG.

If `fdbg:fdvar_portray/3` is undefined or fails the default representation is printed, which is

*Name* = *RangeNow* [ -> *RangeAfter* ]

The arrow and *RangeAfter* are only printed if the constraint narrowed the domain of *Var*.

The following example will print a list of all possible values instead of the range for each variable in the legend:

```
:- multifile fdbg:legend_portray/3.
fdbg:legend_portray(Name, Var, Set) :-
        fd_set(Var, Set0),
        fdset_to_list(Set0, L0),
        fdset_to_list(Set, L),
        (   L0 == L
        ->  format('~p = ~p', [Name, L])
        ;   format('~p = ~p -> ~p', [Name, L0, L])
        ).
```

### 36.4.2 Writing Visualizers

For more complicated problems you might want to change the output more drastically. In this case you have to write and use your own visualizers, which could naturally be problem specific, not like `fdbg_show/2` and `fdbg_label_show/3`. As we described earlier, currently there are two types of visualizers:

*constraint visualizer*

*MyGlobalVisualizer*([+*Arg1*, +*Arg2*, ...] +*Constraint*, +*Actions*)

This visualizer is passed in the `constraint_hook` option. It must have at least two arguments, these are the following:

*Constraint*
: the constraint that was handled by the dispatcher

*Actions*
: the action list returned by the dispatcher

Other arguments can be used for any purpose, for example to select the verbosity level of the visualizer. This way you don't have to modify your code if you would like to see less or more information. Note however, that the two obligatory arguments must appear at the *end* of the argument list.

When passing as an option to `fdbg_on/1`, only the optional arguments have to be specified; the two mandatory arguments should be omitted. See Section 36.4.6 [FDBG Debugging Global Constraints], page 539, for an example.

*labeling visualizer*

*MyLabelingVisualizer*([+*Arg1*, +*Arg2*, ...] +*Event*, +*ID*, +*Var*)

This visualizer is passed in the `labeling_hook` option. It must have at least three arguments, these are the following:

*Event* a term representing the labeling event, can be one of the following:

- start — labeling has just started for a variable
- fail — labeling has just failed for a variable
- step(*Step*) — variable has been constrained in a labeling step described by the compound term *Step*, which is either created by `library(clpfd)`'s labeling predicates (in this case, simply print it—FDBG will know how to handle it) or by you; see Section 36.3.5 [FDBG Annotation], page 527.

*ID* identifies the labeling session, i.e. binds step and fail events to the corresponding start event

*Var* the variable being the subject of labeling

The failure of a visualizer is ignored and multiple choices are cut by FDBG. Exceptions, on the other hand, are not caught.

FDBG provides several predicates to ease the work of the visualizer writers. These predicates are the following:

`fdbg_annotate(+Term0, -Term, -Variables)`
`fdbg_annotate(+Term0, +Actions, -Term, -Variables)`

Replaces each constraint variable in *Term0* by a compound term describing it and returns the result in *Term*. Also, collects these compound terms into the list *Variables*. These compound terms have the following form:

```
fdvar(Name, Var, FDSet)
```

*Name* is the name of the variable (auto-generated, if necessary; see Section 36.2.6 [FDBG Name Auto-Generation], page 521)

*Var* is the variable itself

*FDSet* is the domain of the variable *after* narrowing with *Actions*, if specified; otherwise, it is the *current* domain of the variable

`fdbg_legend(+Vars)`

Prints a legend of *Vars*, which is a list of `fdvar/3` compound terms returned by `fdbg_annotate/[3,4]`.

`fdbg_legend(+Vars, +Actions)`

Prints a legend of *Vars* followed by some conclusions regarding the constraint (exiting, failing, etc.) based on *Actions*.

### 36.4.3 Writing Legend Printers

When you write your own visualizers, you might not be satisfied with the default format of the legend. Therefore you might want to write your own legend printer, replacing `fdbg_legend/[1,2]`. This should be quite straightforward based on the variable list returned

by `fdbg_annotate/[3,4]`. Processing the rest of the action list and writing conclusions about the constraint behavior is not that easy though. To help your work, FDBG provides a predicate to transform the raw action list to a more readable form:

`fdbg_transform_actions(+Actions, +Vars, -TransformedActions)`

This will do the following transformations to *Actions*, returning the result in *TransformedActions*:

1. remove all actions concerning variables in *Vars* (the list returned by `fdbg_annotate/[3,4]`);
2. remove multiple `exit` and/or `fail` commands;
3. remove all ground actions, translating those that will cause failure into `fail(Action)`;
4. substitute all other narrowings with an `fdvar/3` compound term per variable.

The transformed action list may contain the following terms:

`exit` the constraint exits

`fail` the constraint fails due to a `fail` action

`fail(Action)`
the constraint fails because of *Action*

`call(Goal)`
*Actions* originally contained this action. FDBG can't do anything with that but to inform the user about it.

`fdvar(Name, Var, FDSet)`
*Actions* also narrowed some variables that didn't appear in the *Vars* list, this is one of them. The meaning of the arguments is the usual, described in Section 36.4.2 [FDBG Writing Visualizers], page 531. This should normally not happen.

*AnythingElse*
*Actions* contained unrecognized actions too, these are copied unmodified. This shouldn't happen!

### 36.4.4 Showing Selected Constraints (simple version)

Sometimes the programmer is not interested in every global constraint, only some selected ones. Such a filter can be easily implemented with a user-defined visualizer. Suppose that you are interested in the constraints `all_different/1` and `all_distinct/1` only:

```
%% spec_filter(+Constraint, +Actions):  Call fdbg_show for all constraints
%%   for which intresting_event(Constraint) succeeds.
%%
%%   Use this filter by giving the constraint_hook(spec_filter) option to
%%   fdbg_on.
spec_filter(Constraint, Actions) :-
        interesting_event(Constraint),
        fdbg_show(Constraint, Actions).

interesting_event(all_different(_)).
interesting_event(all_distinct(_)).
```

Here is a session using the visualizer. Note that the initialization part (`domain/3` events), are filtered out, leaving only the `all_different/1` constraints:

```
| ?- [library('clpfd/examples/suudoku')].
[...]
| ?- fdbg_on(constraint_hook(spec_filter)).
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched on
% advice
| ?- suudoku([], 1, P).
all_different([1,<fdvar_1>,<fdvar_2>,8,<fdvar_3>,
               4,<fdvar_4>,<fdvar_5>,<fdvar_6>])
    fdvar_1 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}
    fdvar_2 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}
    fdvar_3 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}
    fdvar_4 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}
    fdvar_5 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}
    fdvar_6 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}

[...]

all_different([7,6,2,5,8,4,1,3,9])
    Constraint exited.

P = [...] ;
no
% advice
| ?- fdbg_off.
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched off
```

Note that the failure of `spec_filter/2` doesn't cause any unwanted output.

### 36.4.5 Showing Selected Constraints (advanced version)

Suppose that you want to give the constraints that you are interested in as an argument to the visualizer, instead of defining them in a table. The following visualizer implements this.

```
:- use_module(library(lists), [append/3]).

%% filter_events(+CtrSpecs, +Constraint, +Actions):  This predicate will
%%   only show constraint events if they match an element in the list CtrSpecs,
%%   or if CtrSpecs is wrapped in -/1, then all the non-matching events will
%%   be shown.
%%   CtrSpecs can contain the following types of elements:
%%     ctr_name             - matches all constraints of the given name
%%     ctr_name/arity       - matches constraints with the given name and arity
%%     ctr_name(...args...) - matches constraints unifyable with the given term
%%
%%   For the selected events fdbg_show(Constraint, Actions) is called.
%%   This visualizer can be specified when turning fdbg on, e.g.:
%%     fdbg_on([constraint_hook(filter_events([count/4]))]), or
%%     fdbg_on([constraint_hook(filter_events(-[in_set]))]).
filter_events(CtrSpecs, Constraint, Actions) :-
        filter_events(CtrSpecs, fdbg_show, Constraint, Actions).

%% filter_events(+CtrSpecs, +Visualizer, +Constraint, +Actions):  Same as
%%   the above predicate, but the extra argument Visualizer specifies the
%%   predicate to be called for the selected events (in the same form as
%%   in the constraint_hook option, i.e. without the last two arguments). E.g.
%%     fdbg_on([constraint_hook(filter_events([count/4],my_show))]).
filter_events(-CtrSpecs, Visualizer, Constraint, Actions) :- !,
        \+ show_constraint(CtrSpecs, Constraint),
        add_args(Visualizer, [Constraint, Actions], Goal),
        call(Goal).
filter_events(CtrSpecs, Visualizer, Constraint, Actions) :-
        show_constraint(CtrSpecs, Constraint),
        add_args(Visualizer, [Constraint, Actions], Goal),
        call(Goal).

show_constraint([C|_], Constraint) :-
        matches(C, Constraint), !.
show_constraint([_|Cs], Constraint) :-
        show_constraint(Cs, Constraint).

matches(Name/Arity, Constraint) :- !,
        functor(Constraint, Name, Arity).
matches(Name, Constraint) :-
        atom(Name), !,
        functor(Constraint, Name, _).
matches(C, Constraint) :-
        C = Constraint.

add_args(Goal0, NewArgs, Goal) :-
        Goal0 =.. [F|Args0],
        append(Args0, NewArgs, Args),
        Goal =.. [F|Args].
```

Here is a session using the visualizer, filtering out everything but `all_different/1` constraints:

```
| ?- [library('clpfd/examples/suudoku')].
[...]
| ?- fdbg_on(constraint_hook(filter_events([all_different/1]))).
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched on
% advice
| ?- suudoku([], 1, P).
all_different([1,<fdvar_1>,<fdvar_2>,8,<fdvar_3>,
               4,<fdvar_4>,<fdvar_5>,<fdvar_6>])
    fdvar_1 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}
    fdvar_2 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}
    fdvar_3 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}
    fdvar_4 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}
    fdvar_5 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}
    fdvar_6 = 1..9 -> (2..3)\/(5..7)\/{9}

[...]

all_different([7,6,2,5,8,4,1,3,9])
    Constraint exited.

P = [...] ;
no
% advice
| ?- fdbg_off.
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched off
```

In the next session, all constraints named `all_different` are ignored, irrespective of arity. Also, we explicitly specified the visualizer to be called for the events that are kept (here, we have written the default, `fdbg_show`, so the actual behavior is not changed).

```
| ?- [library('clpfd/examples/suudoku')].
[...]
| ?- fdbg_on(constraint_hook(filter_events(-
[all_different],fdbg_show))).
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched on
% advice
| ?- suudoku([], 1, P).
domain([1,<fdvar_1>,<fdvar_2>,8,<fdvar_3>,
        4,<fdvar_4>,<fdvar_5>,<fdvar_6>],1,9)
    fdvar_1 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    fdvar_2 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    fdvar_3 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    fdvar_4 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    fdvar_5 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    fdvar_6 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    Constraint exited.
    Constraint exited.

[...]

domain([2,<fdvar_46>,5,<fdvar_47>,<fdvar_48>,
       <fdvar_49>,<fdvar_50>,<fdvar_51>,9],1,9)
    fdvar_46 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    fdvar_47 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    fdvar_48 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    fdvar_49 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    fdvar_50 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    fdvar_51 = inf..sup -> 1..9
    Constraint exited.

P = [...] ;
no
% advice
| ?- fdbg_off.
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched off
```

In the last session, we specify a list of constraints to ignore, using a pattern to select the appropriate constraints. Since all constraints in the example match one of the items in the given list, no events are printed.

```
| ?- [library('clpfd/examples/suudoku')].
[...]
| ?- fdbg_on(constraint_hook(filter_events(-
[domain(_,1,9),all_different(_)]))).
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched on
% advice
| ?- suudoku([], 1, P).
P = [...] ;
no
% advice
| ?- fdbg_off.
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched off
```

### 36.4.6 Debugging Global Constraints

Missing pruning and excessive pruning are the two major classes of bugs in the implementation of global constraints. Since CLP(FD) is an incomplete constraint solver, missing pruning is mainly an efficiency concern (but *ground* instances for which the constraint does not hold should be rejected). Excessive pruning, however, means that some valid combinations of values are pruned away, leading to missing solutions. The following exported predicate helps spotting excessive pruning in user-defined global constraints:

`fdbg_guard(:Goal, +Constraint, +Actions)`

A constraint visualizer that does no output, but notifies the user by calling *Goal* if a solution is lost through domain narrowings. Naturally you have to inform `fdbg_guard/3` about the solution in question—stating which variables should have which values. To use `fdbg_guard/3`, first:

1. Set it up as a visualizer by calling:

   ```
   fdbg_on([..., constraint_hook(fdbg_guard(Goal)), ...])
   ```

   As usual, the two other arguments will be supplied by the FDBG core when calling `fdbg_guard/3`.
2. At the beginning of your program, form a pair of lists `Xs-Vs` where *Xs* is the list of variables and *Vs* is the list of values in question. This pair should then be assigned the name `fdbg_guard` using:

   ```
   | ?- fdbg_assign_name(Xs-Vs, fdbg_guard).
   ```

When these steps have been taken, `fdbg_guard/3` will watch the domain changes of *Xs* done by each global constraint *C*. Whenever *Vs* is in the domains of *Xs* at entry to *C*, but not at exit from *C*, *Goal* is called with three more arguments:

*Variable List*
: a list of `Variable-Value` terms for which *Value* was removed from the domain of *Variable*

*Constraint*
: the constraint that was handled by the dispatcher

*Actions* the action list returned by the dispatcher

We will now show an example using `fdbg_guard/3`. First, we will need a few extra lines of code:

```
%% print_and_trace(MissValues, Constraint, Actions):  To be used as a Goal for
%%   fdbg_guard to call when the given solution was removed from the domains
%%   of the variables.
%%
%%   MissValues is a list of Var-Value pairs, where Value is the value that
%%   should appear in the domain of Var, but has been removed.  Constraint is
%%   the current constraint and Actions is the list of actions returned by it.
%%
%%   This predicate prints MissValues in a textual form, then shows the current
%%   (culprit) constraint (as done by fdbg_show/2), then turns on the Prolog
%%   tracer.
print_and_trace(MissValues, Constraint, Actions) :-
        print(fdbg_output, '\nFDBG Guard:\n'),
        display_missing_values(MissValues),
        print(fdbg_output, '\nCulprit constraint:\n\n'),
        fdbg_show(Constraint, Actions),
        trace.

display_missing_values([]).
display_missing_values([Var-Val|MissVals]) :-
        fdbg_annotate(Var,AVar,_),
        format(fdbg_output, '  ~d was removed from ~p~n', [Val,AVar]),
        display_missing_values(MissVals).
```

Suppose that we have written the following N Queens program, using a global constraint `no_threat/3` with a bug in it:

```
:- use_module(library(clpfd)).
:- use_module(library(fdbg)).

queens(L, N) :-
        length(L, N),
        domain(L, 1, N),
        constrain_all(L),
        labeling([ff,enum], L).

constrain_all([]).
constrain_all([X|Xs]):-
        constrain_between(X,Xs,1),
        constrain_all(Xs).

constrain_between(_X,[],_N).
constrain_between(X,[Y|Ys],N) :-
        no_threat(X,Y,N),
        N1 is N+1,
        constrain_between(X,Ys,N1).

no_threat(X,Y,I) :-
        fd_global(no_threat(X,Y,I), 0, [val(X),val(Y)]).

:- multifile clpfd:dispatch_global/4.
clpfd:dispatch_global(no_threat(X,Y,I), S, S, Actions) :-
        ground(X), !,
        remove_threat(Y, X, I, NewYSet),
        Actions = [exit, Y in_set NewYSet].
clpfd:dispatch_global(no_threat(X,Y,I), S, S, Actions) :-
        ground(Y), !,
        remove_threat(X, Y, I, NewXSet),
        Actions = [exit, X in_set NewXSet].
clpfd:dispatch_global(no_threat(_,_,_), S, S, []).

remove_threat(X, V, I, Set) :-
        Vp is V+I+1,   % Bug introduced here
%       Vp is V+I,     % Good code
        Vn is V-I,
        fd_set(X, Set0),
        list_to_fdset([Vn, V, Vp], VSet),
        fdset_subtract(Set0, VSet, Set).

missing(L, Tuple) :-
     length(Tuple, N),
     length(L, N),
     fdbg_assign_name(L-Tuple, fdbg_guard),
     fdbg_assign_name(L, board),
     fdbg_on(constraint_hook(fdbg_guard(print_and_trace))),
     queens(L, N).
```

We will now use `print_and_trace/3` as an argument to the `fdbg_guard` visualizer to handle the case when a solution has been removed by a constraint. The bug shown above causes three invalid solutions to be found instead of the two correct solutions. FDBG is told to watch for the disappearance of the first correct solution, `[2,4,1,3]`. First, we get two incorrect solutions before FDBG wakes up, because in these cases the given good solution was made impossible by a labeling event. The second branch of labeling does not by itself remove the solution, but at some point on that branch the bad constraint does remove it, so `fdbg_guard/3` calls the given predicate. This prints the cause of waking (the value that should not have been removed by the constraint), prints the constraint itself, then switches the Prolog debugger to trace mode. At this point, we use the '`A`' debugger command (see Section 36.3.4 [FDBG Debugger Commands], page 526) to print the annotated form of the goal containing the culprit constraint.

For clarity, the labeling events were not turned off in the session below.

This information can be used to track down why the buggy `no_threat/3` performed the invalid pruning.

```
| ?- missing(L, [2,4,1,3]).
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched on
Labeling [8, <board_1>]: starting in range 1..4.
Labeling [8, <board_1>]: indomain_up: <board_1> = 1

Labeling [13, <board_2>]: starting in range {2}\/{4}.
Labeling [13, <board_2>]: dual: <board_2> = 2

L = [1,2,3,4] ? ;
Labeling [13, <board_2>]: dual: <board_2> = 4

L = [1,4,2,3] ? ;
Labeling [13, <board_2>]: failed.

Labeling [8, <board_1>]: indomain_up: <board_1> = 2


FDBG Guard:
  4 was removed from <board_2>

Culprit constraint:

no_threat(2,<board_2>,1)
    board_2 = 1..4 -> {3}
    Constraint exited.

% The debugger will first creep -- showing everything (trace)
23  2 Exit: clpfd:dispatch_global_fast(no_threat(2,_1001,1),0,0,
            [exit,_1001 in_set[[3|3]]]) ? A

clpfd:dispatch_global_fast(no_threat(2,<board_2>,1),0,0,
                           [exit,<board_2> in_set[[3|3]]])
    board_2 = 1..4

23  2 Exit: clpfd:dispatch_global_fast(no_threat(2,_1001,1),0,0,
            [exit,_1001 in_set[[3|3]]]) ? A [2,4]

clpfd:dispatch_global_fast(no_threat(2,<board_2>,1),0,0,
                           [exit,<board_2> in_set[[3|3]]])
    board_2 = 1..4 -> {3}
    Constraint exited.

23  2 Exit: clpfd:dispatch_global_fast(no_threat(2,_1001,1),0,0,
            [exit,_1001 in_set[[3|3]]]) ? a
% Execution aborted
% advice,source_info
| ?- fdbg_off.
% The clp(fd) debugger is switched off
```

### 36.4.7 Code of the Built-In Visualizers

Now that you know everything about writing visualizers, it might be worth having a look at the code of the built-in visualizers, `fdbg_show/2` and `fdbg_label_show/3`.

```
fdbg_show(Constraint, Actions) :-
        fdbg_annotate(Constraint, Actions, AnnotC, CVars),
        print(fdbg_output, AnnotC),
        nl(fdbg_output),
        fdbg_legend(CVars, Actions),
        nl(fdbg_output).

fdbg_label_show(start, I, Var) :-
        fdbg_annotate(Var, AVar, _),
        (   AVar = fdvar(Name, _, Set)
        ->  fdset_to_range(Set, Range),
            format(fdbg_output,
                   'Labeling [~p, <~p>]: starting in range ~p.~n',
                   [I,Name,Range])
        ;   format(fdbg_output,
                   'Labeling [~p, <>]: starting.~n',
                   [I])
        ).
fdbg_label_show(fail, I, Var) :-
        (   var(Var)
        ->  lookup_or_set_name(Var, Name),
            format(fdbg_output,
                   'Labeling [~p, <~p>]: failed.~n~n',
                   [I,Name])
        ;   format(fdbg_output,
                   'Labeling [~p, <>]: failed.~n~n',
                   [I])
        ).
fdbg_label_show(step(Step), I, Var) :-
        (   var(Var)
        ->  lookup_or_set_name(Var, Name),
            format(fdbg_output,
                   'Labeling [~p, <~p>]: ~p~n~n',
                   [I,Name,Step])
        ;   format(fdbg_output,
                   'Labeling [~p, <>]: ~p~n~n',
                   [I,Step])
        ).

lookup_or_set_name(Term, Name) :-
        fdbg_get_name(Term, Name), !.
lookup_or_set_name(Term, Name) :-
        fdbg_assign_name(Term, Name).
```

As you can see, they are quite simple, thanks to the extensive set of support predicates also available to the user.

# 37 SICStus Objects

SICStus Objects is an extension to SICStus Prolog for flexible structuring, sharing and reuse of knowledge in large logic programming applications. It enhances Prolog with an expressive and efficient object-oriented programming component.

SICStus Objects is based on the notion of prototypes. In object-oriented programming a *prototype* is an object that represents a typical behavior of a certain concept. A prototype can be used as is or as a model to construct other objects that share some of the characteristics of the prototypical object. These specialized objects can themselves become prototypes used to construct other objects and so forth. The basic mechanism for sharing is by *inheritance* and *delegation*. Inheritance is known for most readers. By using the delegation mechanism an object can forward a message to another object to invoke a method defined by the recipient but interpreted in the context of the sender.

In SICStus Objects, an *object* is a named collection of predicate definitions. In this sense an object is similar to a Prolog module. The object system can be seen as an extension of SICStus Prolog's module system. In addition an object may have attributes that are modifiable. Predicate definitions belonging to an object are called *methods*. So, an object is conceptually a named collection of methods and attributes. Some of the methods defined for an object need not be stored explicitly within the object, but are rather shared with other objects by the inheritance mechanism.

The Object system allows objects to be defined in a file, or dynamically created during the execution of a program. Objects defined in a file are integrated into SICStus Prolog in a way similar to definite clause grammars. That is to say, objects have a specific syntax as Prolog terms, and can be loaded and expanded into Prolog code. When an object is created, during load-time, or run-time, it inherits the methods and attributes of its prototypical object(s). Objects defined in a file can be either *static* or *dynamic*. Also, methods can be either dynamic or static. these properties are inherited by sub-objects. Objects created during execution are dynamic.

The inheritance mechanism is implemented using the importation mechanism of the module system. The default inheritance is an *inheritance by overriding* mechanism, which means that if a method is defined locally, and the same method is defined in a super-object, then the clauses of the super-method are not part of the definition of the local one. As usual in Prolog, methods can be nondeterminately defined, and alternative answers can be retrieved through backtracking. Using the delegation mechanism, other methods for knowledge sharing can be implemented by the user. In SICStus Objects, there is an initial prototypical proto-object called `object`, from which other objects may be constructed, directly or indirectly.

## 37.1 Getting Started

To load the SICStus Objects library, enter the query:

```
| ?- use_module(library(objects)).
```

SICStus Objects defines some new infix and prefix operators, and redefines some of the built-in ones. The following operators become installed:

```
:- op(1200, xfy, [ & ]).
:- op(1198, xfx, [ :- ]).
:- op(1198,  fx, [ :- ]).
:- op(550,  xfx, [ ::, <: ]).
:- op(550,   fx, [ ::, <: ]).
```

## 37.2 Declared Objects

Declared objects are created when the files defining them are loaded into the system.

### 37.2.1 Object Declaration

An object *object-identifier* is declared by writing it in the following form:

```
object-identifier :: {
        sentence-1 &
        sentence-2 &
        :
        sentence-n
        }.
```

where *object-identifier* is a Prolog term that is either an atom or a compound term of the form *functor(V1,...,Vn)*, where *V1,...,Vn* are distinct variables. The object body consists of a number of *sentences*, possibly none, surrounded by braces, where each sentence is either a *method-directive*, to be executed when the object is created, or a *method-clause*. A *method* is a number of method-clauses with the same principal functor. A method-clause has a clausal syntax similar to that of Prolog, but instead of usual predicate calls in the body of a clause there are *method-calls*. Ordinary Prolog goals are also allowed in a prefixed form, using '`:`' as a prefix. A method-directive is a directive that contains method-calls.

All sentences are subject to term expansion (see Section 8.1.2 [Term and Goal Expansion], page 137, built-in predicate `expand_term/2`) before further processing, so in particular definite clause grammar syntax can be used in method-clauses. In addition, before `expand_term/2`, sentences are expanded by the predicate `user:method_expansion/3`.

`method_expansion(+Term1,+ObjectIdentifier,?Term2)` *hook*
`user:method_expansion(+Term1,+ObjectIdentifier,?Term2)`

Defines transformations on methods similarly as `user:term_expansion/[2,4]`. At the end of an object definition, `user:method_expansion/3` is called with `end_of_object`.

### 37.2.2 Method Declarations

Method-clauses are declared similarly to Prolog clauses. Thus a method-clause can be either a unit clause or a rule. We also allow a default catch-all method-clause as the last clause in an object body. The catch-all clause has as its head a Prolog variable, in order to match messages that are not previously defined or inherited in the object. It can be used to implement alternative inheritance mechanisms.

Goals in the body of a rule have the normal control structures of Prolog:

`:P, :Q` Conjunction

`:P; :Q` Disjunction

`!` Cut

`\+ :P` Negation

`:P -> :Q`
`:P -> :Q; :R`
`if(:P, :Q, :R)`
If-then[-else]

`?A = ?B` Unification

Atomic goals in the body of a method-clause may be one of the following:

*:goal* to call the Prolog predicate *goal* in the source module.

*m:goal* to call the Prolog predicate *goal* in module *m*.

*goal* to send the message *goal* to the object *Self*.

*::goal* to send the message *goal* to a method that may be defined locally or inherited by the object.

*<:goal* to delegate the message *goal* to a method that may be defined locally or inherited by the object.

*object::goal*
to send the message *goal* to object *object*.

*object<:goal*
to delegate the message *goal* to object *object*.

Message sending and delegation will be explained later (see Section 37.3 [Obj Self], page 552).

The following is a definition for the object `list_object`. It is constructed from three methods: `append/3`, `member/2`, and `length/2`. Note that the calls to `append/3` and `length/2` are to the local definition, whereas the `member/2` call is to the predicate imported from the Prolog library module `lists`.

```
list_object :: {
        :- :use_module(library(lists), [append/3,member/2]) &

        append([], L, L) &
        append([X|L1], L2, [X|L3]) :-
                :: append(L1, L2, L3) &

        member(X, L) :-
                :member(X,L) &

        length([], 0) &
        length([_|L], N) :-
                :: length(L, N1),
                :(N is N1+1)
        }.
```

The following object `apt_1` could be part of a larger database about free apartments in a real-estate agency:

```
apt_1 :: {
        super(apartment) &

        street_name('York') &
        street_number(100) &
        wall_color(white) &
        floor_surface(wood)
        }.
```

Another way to define `apt_1` is by using attributes. These can be retrieved and modified efficiently by the methods `get/1` and `set/1` respectively.

```
apt_1 :: {
        super(apartment) &

        attributes([
               street_name('York'),
               street_number(100),
               wall_color(white),
               floor_surface(wood)])
        }.
```

### 37.2.3 Generic Objects for Easy Reuse

Defining objects for easy reuse is a very important property for reducing the cost of large projects. One important technique is to define prototypes in a parameterized way, so that various instantiations of a prototype correspond to different uses. Parameterized or

*generic objects* have been used for this purpose in other object-oriented systems. An object-identifier can be a compound term. The arguments of the term are parameters that are visible in the object-body. Here we show one example. Other examples and techniques that use this facility has been investigated extensively in [McCabe 92].

The following is an object `sort` that sorts lists of different types. `sort` has a parameter that defines the type of the elements of the list. Notice that *Type* is visible to all methods in the body of `sort`, and is used in the method `partition/4`. In the query, we use `sort(rat)` to sort a list of terms denoting rational numbers. We must therefore define a `rat` object and its `<` method also:

```
rat :: {
        (P/Q < R/S) :- :(P*S < Q*R)
        }.

sort(Type) :: {
        :- :use_module(library(lists), [append/3]) &

        qsort([], []) &
        qsort([P|L], S) :-
                partition(L, P, Small, Large),
                qsort(Small, S0),
                qsort(Large, S1),
                :append(S0, [P|S1], S) &

        partition([], _P, [], []) &
        partition([X|L1], P, Small, Large) :-
                (   Type :: (X < P) ->
                    Small = [X|Small1], Large = Large1
                ;   Small = Small1, Large = [X|Large1]
                ),
                partition(L1, P, Small1, Large1)
        }.

| ?- sort(rat) :: qsort([23/3, 34/11, 45/17], L).

L = [45/17,34/11,23/3]
```

Parameterized objects are interesting in their own right in Prolog even if one is not interested in the object-oriented paradigm. They provide global context variables in a Prolog program without having to add such variables as additional context arguments to each clause that potentially uses the context.

## 37.3 Self, Message Sending, and Message Delegation

In SICStus Objects, each method is executed in the context of an object. This object may not be the static object where the method is declared. The current contextual object is used to determine dynamically which attributes are accessed, and which methods are called. This leads to a mechanism known as dynamic binding. This object can be retrieved using the universal method `self(S)`, where *S* will be bound to the current contextual object.

When a message is sent to an object, the corresponding method will be executed in the context of the target object. A message delegated to an object will invoke a method that is executed in the context of the message-delegation operation.

*object :: message*
*:: message*

Message sending. Sends *message* to *object*, setting *Self* of the recipient to the recipient, i.e. *object*. If *object* is omitted, the recipient is the object in which the goal textually appears.

*object* `<`*: message*
`<`*: message*

Message delegation. Sends *message* to *object*, setting *Self* of the recipient to *Self* of the sender. If *object* is omitted, the recipient is the object in which the goal textually appears. *Delegation preserves Self*.

The following objects `physical_object`, `a`, and `b` are written using the default notations for sending and delegation, hiding the contextual variable *Self*:

```
physical_object :: {
        volume(50) &
        density(100) &
        weight(X) :-
                volume(V),
                density(D),
                :(X is V*D)
        }.

a :: {
        volume(5) &
        density(10) &

        Method :-
                physical_object <: Method
        }.

b :: {
        volume(5) &
        density(10) &

        Method :-
                physical_object :: Method
        }.
```

Notice that the difference between the objects `a` and `b` is that `a` *delegates* any message except `volume(_)` and `density(_)` to `physical_object` while `b` *sends* the message to `physical_object`. We may now ask

```
| ?- a :: weight(X), b :: weight(Y).

X = 50
Y = 5000
```

To get hold of the current contextual object, the universal method `self(S)` is provided. Another way to send a message to *Self* is to use the constant `self`. So the following two alternative definition of `physical_object` are equivalent to the previous one:

```
physical_object :: {
        volume(50) &
        density(100) &
        weight(X) :-
                self(S),
                S::volume(V),
                S::density(D),
                :(X is V*D)
        }.

physical_object :: {
        volume(50) &
        density(100) &
        weight(X) :-
                self::volume(V),
                self::density(D),
                :(X is V*D)
        }.
```

## 37.4 Object Hierarchies, Inheritance, and Modules

The SICStus Objects system implements a default inheritance mechanism. By declaring within an object which objects are super-objects, the hierarchy of objects are maintained. The system also maintains for each object its immediate sub-objects (i.e. immediate children). Each object may also call Prolog predicates. At the top of the hierarchy, the proto-object `object` provides various services for other objects. If `object` is not used at the top of the hierarchy many services will not be available for other objects (check what methods are available in `object` by sending the message `method/1` to `object`).

### 37.4.1 Inheritance

Immediate super-objects are declared by defining the method `super/2` within the object. (Any definition `super(`*`Super`*`)` is transformed to `super(`*`Super`*`,[])`). The objects declared by `super/2` are the immediate objects from which a method is inherited if not defined within the object. This implies that the inheritance mechanism is an overriding one. One could possibly have a union inheritance, whereby all clauses defining a method are collected from the super hierarchy and executed in a Prolog fashion. This can easily be programmed in SICStus Objects, using delegation to super objects.

The following example shows some objects used for animal classification.

```
animal :: {}.

bird :: {
        super(animal) &
        skin(feather) &
        habitat(tree) &
        motions(fly)
        }.

penguin :: {
        super(bird) &
        habitat(land) &
        motions(walk) &
        motions(swim) &
        size(medium)
        }.

| ?- penguin :: motions(M).
M = walk ;
M = swim ;
no

| ?- penguin :: skin(S).
S = feather ;
no
```

The following is an example of multiple inheritance: an object `john` is both a sportsman and a professor:

```
john :: {
        super(sportsman) &
        super(professor) &
        :
        }.
```

Inheritance will give priority to the super-objects by the order defined in the `super/2` method. Therefore in the above example John's characteristics of being a sportsman will dominate those of being professor. Other kinds of hierarchy traversal can be programmed explicitly using the delegation mechanism.

### 37.4.2 Differential Inheritance

It is possible to be selective about what is inherited by using the method `super/2`. Its first argument is the super object, and its second is a list of the methods that will not be inherited from the super object.

### 37.4.3 Use of Modules

In SICStus Objects, the visible predicates of the source module (context) for the object definition may be called in the body of a method. (The `:` prefix is used to distinguish such calls from method calls.) Any (`:` prefixed) directives occurring among the method-clauses are also executed in the same source module. For example, to import into the source module and call the public predicates of a module, the built-in predicate `use_module/2` and its variants may be used:

```
some_object :: {
        :- :use_module(library(lists), [append/3]) &
        double_list(X, XX) :- :append(X,X,XX)
        }.
```

### 37.4.4 Super and Sub

Two methods provided by the initial object `object` are `super/1` and `sub/1`. (Note that any definition of `super/1`, except the one in `object`, is transformed to `super/2`). `super/1` if sent to an object will return the immediate parents of the object. `sub/1` will return the immediate children of the object if any. It is important to note that this service is provided only for objects that have `object` as their initial ancestor.

```
| ?- john :: super(S), S :: sub(john).
S = sportsman ;
S = professor ;
no
```

The `sub/1` property allows programs to traverse object hierarchies from a root object `object` down to the leaves.

### 37.4.5 The Keyword Super

To be able to send or delegate messages to the super-objects in a convenient way while following the inheritance protocol, the keyword `super` is provided. The calls:

```
super :: method, or
super <: method
```

mean: send or delegate (respectively) *method* to the super-objects according to the inheritance protocol. A simple example illustrates this concept: assume that `john` in the above example has three id-cards, one stored in his sportsman prototype identifying the club he is member of, one stored in his professor prototype identifying the university he works in, and finally one stored locally identifying his social-security number. Given the following methods in the object `john`:

```
m1(X) :-
        super <: id_card(X) &
m2(X) :-
        super(S), S <: id_card(X) &
```

one may ask the following:

```
| ?- john :: m1(X).
     % will follow the default inheritance and returns:
X = johns_club ;

| ?- john :: m2(X).
     % will backtrack through the possible supers returning:
X = johns_club ;
X = johns_university ;
```

### 37.4.6 Semantic Links to Other Objects

Some object-oriented languages have syntactic constructs for redirecting the inheritance chain for certain methods to totally different objects that are not defined in the object's inheritance hierarchy. This is not needed in SICStus Objects due to delegation. Assume that the method `m/n` is linked to object `some_object`, we just add a method for this:

```
m(X1, ..., Xn) :- some_object <: m(X1, ..., Xn) &
```

### 37.4.7 Dynamically Declared Objects

When an object is declared and compiled into SICStus Objects, its methods cannot be changed during execution. Such an object is said to be *static*. To be able to update any method in an object, the object has to be declared *dynamic*. There is one exception, the inheritance hierarchy declared by `super/[1,2]` cannot be changed. By including the fact `dynamic` as part of the object body, the object becomes dynamic:

```
dynamic_object :: {
        dynamic &
        :
        }.
```

### 37.4.8 Dynamic Methods

To be able to change a method with functor *F/N* in a static object, the method has to be declared dynamic by storing the following fact in the object:

```
some_object :: {
        dynamic F/N &
        :
        }.
```

Each book in a library can be represented as an object, in which the name of the book is stored, the authors, and a borrowing history indicating when a book is borrowed and when it is returned. A history item may have the form `history_item(Person,Status,Date)` where *Status* is either `borrowed` or `returned`, and *Date* has the form YY-MM-DD, for YY year, MM month, DD day.

A typical book `book_12` could have the following status. Note that `history_item/3` is dynamic:

```
book_12 :: {
        super(book) &

        title('The Art of Prolog') &
        authors(['Leon Sterling', 'Ehud Shapiro']) &

        dynamic history_item/3 &

        history_item('Dan Sahlin', returned, 92-01-10) &
        history_item('Dan Sahlin', borrowed, 91-06-10) &
        :
        }.
```

Dynamic methods that are stored in an object can be updated, as in usual Prolog programs, by sending `assert` and `retract` messages directly to the object.

For example, to borrow a book the following method could be defined in the object `book`. We assume that the top most `history_item` fact is the latest transaction, and there is an object `date` from which we can get the current date.

```
borrow(Person) :-
        history_item(_Person0, Status, _Date0), !,
        (   Status = returned ->
            date::current(Date),
            asserta(history_item(Person, borrowed, Date))
        ;   :display('book not available'), :ttynl
        ) &
```

### 37.4.9 Inheritance of Dynamic Behavior

When an object is created, it will inherit from its parents their dynamic behavior. Methods that are declared dynamic in a parent, will be copied into the object, and its dynamic behavior preserved.

```
a:: {
        super(object) &
        dynamic p/1 &
        p(1) &
        p(2)
     }

b :: {
        super(a)
     }

| ?- b::p(X).
X = 1 ? ;
X = 2 ? ;
no
| ?- b::asserta(p(3)).

| ?- b::p(X).
X = 3 ? ;
X = 1 ? ;
X = 2 ? ;
no
```

Notice that by redeclaring a method to be dynamic in a sub-object, amounts to redefining the method, and overriding of the parent definition will take effect.

```
c :: {
        super(a) &
        dynamic p/1
     }

| ?- c::p(X).
no
```

## 37.5 Creating Objects Dynamically

As with dynamically declared objects, the full flexibility of SICStus Objects is achieved when objects are created at runtime. Anything, except the inheritance hierarchy, can be changed: methods can be added or deleted. The services for object creation, destruction, and method modification are defined in the proto-object `object`.

### 37.5.1 Object Creation

`+SomeObject :: new(?NewObject)`
: *NewObject* is created with *SomeObject* as super. *NewObject* could be an atom, variable, or compound term whose arguments are distinct variables.

`+SomeObject :: new(?NewObject,+Supers)`
: *NewObject* is created with *Supers* specifying the super objects (prototypes). *Supers* is a list containing super specifications. A super specification is either an object identifier or a pair *Object-NotInheritList* where *NotInheritList* specifies methods not to inherit from *Object*. *NewObject* could be an atom, variable, or compound term whose arguments are distinct variables.

The object `vehicle` is created having the proto-object `object` as super, followed by creating `moving_van` with `vehicle` as super, followed by creating `truck`.

```
| ?- object :: new(vehicle),
     vehicle :: new(moving_van),
     moving_van :: new(truck).

| ?- truck :: super(X), vehicle :: sub(X).
X = moving_van ;
no
```

### 37.5.2 Method Additions

`+SomeObject :: asserta(+SomeMethod)`
`+SomeObject :: assertz(+SomeMethod)`
`+SomeObject :: assert(+SomeMethod)`
: Asserts *SomeMethod* in *SomeObject* with normal Prolog semantics.

Add some facts to `vehicle` and `truck` with initial value equal to `[]`.

```
| ?- vehicle :: assert(fuel_level([])),
     vehicle :: assert(oil_level([])),
     vehicle :: assert(location([])),
     truck :: assert(capacity([])),
     truck :: assert(total_weight([])).
```

### 37.5.3 Parameter Passing to New Objects

When new objects are created, it is possible to pass parameters. The following example shows:

- How general methods are asserted

In the previous examples one could pass parameters to an object as follows, using the method `augment/1`.

```
| ?- vehicle :: augment({
        new_attrs(Instance, Attribute_list) :-
                self :: new(Instance),
                :: assign_list(Attribute_list, Instance) &

        assign_list([], Instance) &
        assign_list([Att|List], Instance) :-
                :: assign(Att, Instance),
                :: assign_list(List, Instance) &

        assign(P, Instance) :-
                Instance :: assert(P)
        }).

% create a new 'truck'
| ?- vehicle :: new_attrs(truck, [capacity([]),total_weight([])]).
```

## 37.6 Access Driven Programming—Daemons

Access based programming is a paradigm where certain actions are performed, or some constraints are checked, when "access operations" are invoked. Access operations for updates (i.e. assert, retract) can be redefined in an object by redefining these operations and delegating the same operation to `super`. Notice that without a delegation mechanism this would not be possible, since the *Self* would have changed. So assume that we want to print on the screen "p is augmented" whenever the fact `p(X)` is asserted in an object `foo`, we just redefine `assert/1`:

```
foo :: {
        super(object) &

        dynamic p/1 &

        p(0) &
        p(1) &

        assert(p(X)) :- !,   /* assert/1 is redefined for p(X) */
                super <: assert(p(X)),
                :display('p is augmented'), :ttynl &
        assert(M) :-         /* delegating assert(_) messages */
                super <: assert(M) &
        :
        }.
```

## 37.7 Instances

Objects are relatively heavy weight. To be able to create efficiently light weight objects, we introduce the notion of *instances*. An instance is an object with restricted capability. It is created from an object that is considered its class. It gets a copy of the attributes of its class. These can be modified by `get/1` and `set/1`. An instance cannot be a class for other instances. Instances are in general very efficient, both in space and access/modification time. The attribute `'$class'/1` will store the identity of the class of the instance including parameters.

## 37.8 Built-In Objects and Methods

### 37.8.1 Universal Methods

The following methods are "universal", i.e. they are defined locally, if appropriate, for every object:

`super(?Object,?NotInheritList)`
: *Object* is a parent (a super-object) of *Self*. *NotInheritList* specifies methods of *Object* explicitly not inherited by *Self*. The definition `super(Object)` is translated to `super(Object,[])`.

`attributes(+Attributes)`
: *Attributes* is a list of compound terms specifying the local attributes of *Self* and the initial values.

### 37.8.2 Inlined Methods

The following methods are compiled inline i.e. calls are replaced by definitions. This implies (in the current implementation) that they have a fixed semantics and can not be redefined. There are also definitions for these methods in `object` covering the cases of unexpanded calls.

`self(?Self)`
: Unifies *Self* with "self".

`get(+Attribute)`
: Gets the attribute value(s) of the attribute specified by the principal functor of *Attribute*. The value(s) are unified with the argument(s) of *Attribute*.

`set(+Attribute)`
: Sets the attribute value(s) of the attribute specified by the principal functor of *Attribute*. The value(s) are taken from the argument(s) of *Attribute*.

### 37.8.3 The Proto-Object "object"

The proto-object `object` provides basic methods that are available to all other objects by delegation:

`super(?Object)`
: *Object* is a parent (a super-object) of *Self*. Note that any other definition of `super(Object)` are translated to the universal method `super/2`.

`sub(?Object)`
: *Object* is a child (a sub-object) of *Self*.

`self(?Self)`
: Unifies *Self* with "self". **Please note**: this method is inlined when possible.

`object(?Object)`
: One of the defined objects in the system is *Object*.

`dynamic`
: *Self* is a dynamic object.

`static`
: *Self* is a static object.

`dynamic ?Name/?Arity`
: *Name/Arity* is a dynamic method of *Self*.

`static ?Name/?Arity`
: *Name/Arity* is a static method of *Self*.

`new(?Object)`
: Creates a new dynamic *Object*. *Self* will be the prototype of *Object*. *Object* can be a compound term, an atom, or a variable. In the last case the method generates a unique name for *Object*.

`+SomeObject :: new(?NewObject,+Supers)`
: *NewObject* is created with *Supers* specifying the super objects (prototypes). *Supers* is a list containing super specifications. A super specification is either an object identifier or a pair *Object-NotInheritList* where *NotInheritList* specifies methods not to inherit from *Object*. *NewObject* could be an atom, variable, or compound term whose arguments are distinct variables.

`instance(?Instance)`
: Creates a new instance *Instance*. *Self* will be the class of *Instance*. *Instance* can be a compound term, an atom, or a variable. In the last case the method generates a unique name for *Instance*.

`has_instance(?Instance)`
: *Self* has the instance *Instance*.

`has_attribute(?AttributeSpec)`
: *Self* has the attribute *AttributeSpec*, locally defined or inherited. *AttributeSpec* is on the format `Name/Arity`.

`get(+Attribute)`
: Gets the attribute value(s) of the attribute specified by the principal functor of *Attribute*. The value(s) are unified with the argument(s) of *Attribute*. **Please note**: this method is inlined when possible.

`set(+Attribute)`
: Sets the attribute value(s) of the attribute specified by the principal functor of *Attribute*. The value(s) are taken from the argument(s) of *Attribute*. **Please note**: this method is inlined when possible.

`assert(+Fact)`
`assert(+Fact, -Ref)`
`asserta(+Fact)`
`asserta(+Fact, -Ref)`
`assertz(+Fact)`
`assertz(+Fact, -Ref)`
: Asserts a new *Fact* in *Self*. If *Self* is static, the name and arity of *Fact* must be declared as a dynamic method. `asserta` places *Fact* before any old facts. The other forms place it after any old facts. A pointer to the asserted fact is returned in the optional argument *Ref*, and can be used by the Prolog built-in predicates `erase/1` and `instance/2`.

`retract(+Fact)`
: Retracts a *Fact* from *Self*. If *Self* is static, the name and arity of *Fact* must be declared as a dynamic method.

`update(+Fact)`
: Replaces the first fact with the same name and arity as *Fact* in *Self* by *Fact*. If *Self* is static, the name and arity of *Fact* must be declared as a dynamic method.

`retractall(?Head)`
: Removes facts from *Self* that unify with *Head*. If *Self* is static, the name and arity of *Fact* must be declared as a dynamic method.

`abolish`
: Abolishes *Self* if dynamic.

`augment(?ObjectBody)`
`augmenta(?ObjectBody)`
`augmentz(?ObjectBody)`
: *ObjectBody*, having the form `{` *sentence-1 & . . . & sentence-n* `}`, is added to *Self*. `augmenta` places the new clauses before any old clauses. The other forms place it after any old clauses.

### 37.8.4 The built-in object "utility"

The base object `utility` provides methods that could be used in user programs. `utility` has `object` as its super-object.

`subs(?Objects)`
Gives a list of all the children of *Self*.

`supers(?Objects)`
Gives a list of all parents of *Self*.

`objects(?Objects)`
Gives a list of all objects.

`dynamic_objects(?Objects)`
Gives a list of all dynamic objects.

`static_objects(?Objects)`
Gives a list of all static objects.

`methods(?Methods)`
Gives a list of all the methods of *Self*.

`dynamic_methods(?Methods)`
Gives a list of all dynamic methods of *Self*.

`static_methods(?Methods)`
Gives a list of all static methods of *Self*.

`descendant(?Object)`
One of the descendants of *Self* is *Object*.

`descendant(?Object, ?Level)`
*Object* a descendant at depth *Level* of *Self*. A child of *Self* is at level 1.

`descendants(?Objects)`
The list of all descendants of *Self* is *Objects*.

`descendants(?Objects, ?Level)`
*Objects* is the list of descendants at depth *Level* of *Self*.

`ancestor(?Object)`
One of the ancestors of *Self* is *Object*.

`ancestor(?Object, ?Level)`
*Object* is an ancestor of *Self* at height *Level*. A super-object of *Self* has level 1.

`ancestors(?Object)`
The list of all ancestors of *Self* is *Objects*.

`ancestors(?Object, ?Level)`
*Objects* is the list of ancestors at height *Level* of *Self*.

`restart`
Removes all dynamic objects. Note that dynamic methods added to static objects are not removed.

`and_cast(+Objects, ?Message)`
Sends the same message *Message* to all objects in the list *Objects*.

`or_cast(+Objects, ?Message)`
Sends the same message *Message* to one of the objects in the list *Objects*, backtracking through the alternative objects.

## 37.9 Expansion to Prolog Code

As already mentioned, object definitions are expanded to Prolog clauses much as definite clause grammars. This expansion is usually transparent to the user. While debugging a SICStus Objects program, however, the expanded representation may become exposed. This section will explain in detail the source expansion, so as to give the user the possibility to relate back to the source code during a debugging session. The inheritance mechanism, based on module importation, is also described.

First of all, every statically defined object will translate to several Prolog clauses belonging to a unique *object module* with the same identity as the *object-identifier*. Object modules are significantly cheaper to create than ordinary modules, as they do not import built-in predicates.

The module will contain predicates implementing an object declaration, the method code, imported methods and parameter transfer predicates. These predicates will be described in detail below, using the notational convention that variable names in italics are syntactic variables that will be replaced by something else in the translation process.

### 37.9.1 The Inheritance Mechanism

The inheritance mechanism is based on the importation mechanism of the Prolog module system. When an object is created, whether loaded from file or at runtime by `new/[1,2]`, the method predicates (i.e. predicates implementing the methods) visible in the immediate supers are collected. After subtracting from this set the method predicates that are locally defined, and those that are specified in the *don't-inherit-list* , the resulting set is made visible in the module of the inheriting object by means of importation. This implies that inherited methods are shared, expect dynamic methods.

Dynamic methods are inherited in a similar way with the big difference that they are not imported but copied. Even dynamic declarations (methods without clauses) are inherited.

Inheritance from dynamic objects differs in one aspect: Static predicates visible in a dynamic object are not imported directly from the dynamic object but from the static object from where it was imported to the dynamic object. This makes an inheriting object independent of any dynamic ancestor object after its creation.

### 37.9.2 Object Attributes

Attributes are based on an efficient term storage associated to modules. The attributes for an object is collected from its ancestors and itself at compile time and used for initialization at load time. The methods for accessing attributes, `get/1` and `set/1`, are inlined to primitive calls whenever possible. They should hence not be redefined.

### 37.9.3 Object Instances

Instances are different from other objects in that they do not inherit. Instead they share the predicate name space with its class object. They do however have their own attributes. At creation, an instance gets a copy of its class objects attributes. The reserved attribute `'$class'/1`, which is present in any object, is used for an instance to hold its class object identifier. The purpose of this is mainly to store the parameters of the class object when the instance is created.

### 37.9.4 The Object Declaration

The object declaration is only used by certain meta-programming operations. It consists of a fact

```
'$so_type'(Object, Type).
```

where *Object* is the *object-identifier*, and *Type* is either `static` or `dynamic`. If the type is `static`, the other generated predicates will be static; otherwise, they will be dynamic.

### 37.9.5 The Method Code

Each method-clause translates to a Prolog clause with two extra arguments: *Self* (a variable) and *Myself*. The latter argument is needed to cater for passing object parameters to the method body, which is desribed further in next section.

The method body is translated to a Prolog clause body as follows. The code is traversed, and the goals are transformed according to the following transformation patterns and rules. In the transformation rules, the notation `Msg(X,Y)` denotes the term produced by augmenting *Msg* by the two arguments *X* and *Y*:

`Goal` where *Goal* is a variable, is translated to `objects:call_from_body(Goal,Self,Myself,Src)` where *Src* is the source module. `objects:call_from_body/4` will meta-interpret `Goal` at runtime.

`:: Msg` is translated to `Myself:Msg(Myself,Myself)` if *Msg* is a non variable. Otherwise, it is translated to `objects:call_object(Myself, Msg, Myself)`.

`<: Msg` is translated to `Myself:Msg(Self,Myself)` if *Msg* is a non variable. Otherwise, it is translated to `objects:call_object(Myself, Msg, Self)`.

`super :: Msg` is translated to `objects:call_super_exp(Myself,Msg(Super,Myself),Super)` if *Msg* is a non variable. `call_super_exp/3` searches the supers of *Myself*. *Super* is bound to the super object where the method is found. If *Msg* is a variable, the goal is translated to `objects:call_super(Myself,Msg,Super,Super)`, which expands *Msg* and performs otherwise the same actions as `call_super_exp/3`.

`super <: Msg`
: is translated to `objects:call_super_exp(Myself,Msg(Self,Myself),Super)` if *Msg* is a non variable. `call_super_exp/3` searches the supers of *Myself*. *Super* is bound to the super object where the method is found. If *Msg* is a variable, the goal is translated to `objects:call_super(Myself,Msg,Self,Super)`, which expands *Msg* and performs otherwise the same actions as `call_super_exp/3`.

`Obj :: Msg`
: – If *Msg* is non-variable, this is translated to `Obj:Msg(Obj,Obj)`.
  – Otherwise, it is translated to `objects:call_object(Obj,Msg,Obj)`.

`Obj <: Msg`
: – If *Msg* is non-variable, this is translated to `Obj:Msg(Self,Obj)`.
  – Otherwise, if *Msg* is a non-variable, it is translated to `functor(Obj,O,_), O:Msg(Self,Obj)`.
  – Otherwise, it is translated to `objects:call_object(Obj,Msg,Self)`.

`self <: Msg`
`self :: Msg`
`Msg`
: are all translated like `Self :: Msg`.

`Module:Goal`
: is translated to `Module:Goal`.

`:Goal`
: is translated to `Src:Goal` where *Src* is the source module.

To illustrate the expansion, consider the object `history_point` directives, all executed in the `history_point` module:

```
:-objects:create_object(history_point,
  [point-[]],
  [attributes/3,display/3,move/4,new/4,print_history/3,super/4],
  [],
  [y(0),x(0),history([])],
  tree(history_point,[tree(point,[tree(object,[])])])).

history_point:super(point, [], _, history_point).

history_point:attributes([history([])], _, _).

history_point:display(A, B, _) :-
        objects:call_super_exp(history_point, display(A,B,C), C),
        history_point:print_history(A, B, history_point).

history_point:'$so_type'(history_point, static).

history_point:move(A, B, C, _) :-
        objects:call_super_exp(history_point, move(A,B,C,E), E),
        prolog:'$get_module_data'(C, history, D),
        prolog:'$set_module_data'(C, history, [(A,B)|D]).

history_point:print_history(A, B, _) :-
        prolog:'$get_module_data'(B, history, C),
        A:format('with location history ~w~n', [C], A, A).

history_point:new(A, xy(D,E), B, _) :-
        objects:call_super_exp(history_point, new(A,xy(D,E),B,C), C),
        prolog:'$set_module_data'(A, history, [(D,E)]).
```

The directive `create_object/6` creates the object, performs the inheritance by importation, and initializes attributes. The last argument is a tree representing the ancestor hierarchy during compilation. It is used to check that the load time and compile time environments are consistent.

### 37.9.6 Parameter Transfer

As can be seen in the expanded methods above, the second additional argument is simply ignored if the object has no parameter. In contrast regard the following objects:

```
ellipse(RX,RY,Color) :: {
        color(Color) &
        area(A) :-
                :(A is RX*RY*3.14159265)
                        }.

circle(R,Color) :: {
        super(ellipse(R,R,Color))
                   }.

red_circle(R) :: {
        super(circle(R,red))
                 }.
```

. . . and their expansions:

```
ellipse(_, _, _):'$so_type'(ellipse(_,_,_), static).

ellipse(_, _, _):area(A, _, B) :-
        B:'$fix_param'(ellipse(C,D,_), B),
        user:(A is C*D*3.14159265).

ellipse(_, _, _):color(A, _, B) :-
        B:'$fix_param'(ellipse(_,_,A), B).

ellipse(_, _, _):'$fix_param'(ellipse(B,C,D), A) :-
        objects:object_class(ellipse(B,C,D), A).

circle(_, _):'$so_type'(circle(_,_), static).

circle(_, _):super(ellipse(A,A,B), [], _, circle(A,B)).

circle(_, _):'$fix_param'(circle(B,C), A) :-
        objects:object_class(circle(B,C), A).
circle(_, _):'$fix_param'(ellipse(B,B,C), A) :-
        objects:object_class(circle(B,C), A).

red_circle(_):'$so_type'(red_circle(_), static).

red_circle(_):super(circle(A,red), [], _, red_circle(A)).

red_circle(_):'$fix_param'(red_circle(B), A) :-
        objects:object_class(red_circle(B), A).
red_circle(_):'$fix_param'(circle(B,red), A) :-
        objects:object_class(red_circle(B), A).
red_circle(_):'$fix_param'(ellipse(B,B,red), A) :-
        objects:object_class(red_circle(B), A).
```

The second additional argument contains the receiver of a method call. If the method makes use of any parameter of the object where it is defined, it places a call to the reserved predicate `$fix_param/2` in the module of the receiver. The purpose of this call is to bind the parameters used in the method to appropriate values given by the receiver. The receiver may be the object where the method is defined or any of its subs. In order to service these calls, a clause of `$fix_param/2` is generated for each ancestor having parameters. Such a clause may be regarded as the collapsed chain of `super/[1,2]` definitions leading up to the ancestor.

The call `objects:object_class(`*`Class`*`,`*`Object`*`)` serves to pick up the `'$class'/1` attribute if *Object* is an instance; otherwise, *Class* is unified with *Object*.

The following trace illustrates how parameters are transfered:

```
| ?- red_circle(2.5)::area(A).
1  1  Call: red_circle(2.5)::area(_A) ? ⟨RET⟩
2  2  Call: el-
lipse(_,_,_):area(_A,red_circle(2.5),red_circle(2.5)) ? ⟨RET⟩
3  3  Call: red_circle(_):$fix_param(ellipse(_B,_,_),red_circle(2.5)) ? ⟨RET⟩
4  4  Call: ob-
jects:object_class(red_circle(_B),red_circle(2.5)) ? ⟨RET⟩
4  4  Exit: ob-
jects:object_class(red_circle(2.5),red_circle(2.5)) ? ⟨RET⟩
3  3  Exit: red_circle(_):$fix_param(ellipse(2.5,2.5,red),red_circle(2.5)) ? ⟨RET⟩
5  3  Call: _A is 2.5*2.5*3.14159265 ? ⟨RET⟩
5  3  Exit: 19.6349540625 is 2.5*2.5*3.14159265 ? ⟨RET⟩
2  2  Exit: el-
lipse(_,_,_):area(19.6349540625,red_circle(2.5),red_circle(2.5)) ? ⟨RET⟩
1  1  Exit: red_circle(2.5)::area(19.6349540625) ? ⟨RET⟩

A = 19.6349540625
```

## 37.10 Examples

### 37.10.1 Classification of Birds

This example illustrates how Prolog object can be used in classification of certain concepts. This style is common in expert system application for describing its domain.

```
animal :: {
        super(object) &
        relative_size(S) :-
                size(Obj_size),
                super(Obj_prototype),
                Obj_prototype :: size(Prototype_size),
                :(S is Obj_size/Prototype_size * 100)
                }.

bird :: {
        super(animal) &
        moving_method(fly) &
        active_at(daylight)
        }.

albatross :: {
        super(bird) &
        color(black_and_white) &
        size(115)
        }.

kiwi :: {
        super(bird) &
        moving_method(walk) &
        active_at(night) &
        size(40) &
        color(brown)
        }.

albert :: {
        super(albatross) &
        size(120)
        }.

ross :: {
        super(albatross) &
        size(40)
        }.

| ?- ross :: relative_size(R).

R = 34.78
```

### 37.10.2 Inheritance and Delegation

The following example illustrates a number of concepts. Firstly, how to use SICStus Objects for defining traditional classes a la Smalltalk, or other traditional object oriented languages. Secondly, how to create instances of these classes. Finally, how to access *instance variables*.

The concept of instance variables is readily available as the variables belonging to the instances created dynamically and not to the class of the instances. For example, each instance of the class `point` will have two instance variables, `x` and `y`, represented by the attributes `x/1` and `y/1`. The traditional class variables are easily available by accessing the same attributes in the associated class.

Another issue is the pattern used to create new instances. For example, to create an instance of the class `history_point`, the following code is used:

```
new(Instance, xy(IX,IY)) :-
        super <: new(Instance, xy(IX,IY)),
        Instance :: set(history([(IX,IY)])) &
```

Note that the delegation of `new/2` to `super` is necessary in order to create an object whose super is `history_point` and not `point`.

The example shows how delegation can be effective as a tool for flexible sharing of concepts in multiple inheritance. Four prototypes are defined: `point`, `history_point`, `bounded_point`, and `bh_point`. The latter is a bounded history point.

An instance of the `point` class is a point that moves in 2-D space and that can be displayed. An instance of the `history_point` class is similar to an instance of the `point` class but also keeps a history of all the moves made so far. An instance of `bounded_point` is similar to an instance of `point` but moves only in a region of the 2-D space. Finally an instance of `bh_point` inherits most of the features of a `bounded_point` and a `history_point`.

The default inheritance does not work for the methods `display/1` and `move/2` in `bh_point`. Inheritance by delegating messages to both supers of `bh_point` results in redundant actions, (moving and displaying the point twice). Selective delegation solves the problem. Taken from [Elshiewy 90].

```
point :: {
        super(object) &

        attributes([x(0),y(0)]) &

        xy(X, Y) :- get(x(X)), get(y(Y)) &

        new(Instance, xy(IX,IY)) :-
                super <: instance(Instance),
                Instance :: set(x(IX)),
                Instance :: set(y(IY)) &

        location((X,Y)) :- <: xy(X,Y) &

        move_horizontal(X) :-
                set(x(X)) &

        move_vertical(Y) :-
                set(y(Y)) &

        move(X, Y) :-
                <: move_horizontal(X),
                <: move_vertical(Y) &

        display(Terminal) :-
                <: xy(X, Y),
                Terminal :: format('point at (~d,~d)~n',[X,Y])
        }.
```

```
history_point :: {
        super(point) &

        attributes([history([])]) &

        new(Instance, xy(IX,IY)) :-
                super <: new(Instance, xy(IX,IY)),
                Instance :: set(history([(IX,IY)])) &

        move(X, Y) :-
                super <: move(X, Y),
                get(history(History)),
                set(history([(X,Y)|History])) &

        display(Terminal) :-
                super <: display(Terminal),
                <: print_history(Terminal) &

        print_history(Terminal) :-
                get(history(History)),
                Terminal :: format('with location history ~w~n',
                                   [History])
        }.
```

```
bounded_point :: {
        super(point) &

        attributes([bounds(0,0,0,0)]) &

        new(Instance, Coords, Bounds) :-
                super <: new(Instance, Coords),
                Instance :: set_bounds(Bounds) &

        set_bounds(Bounds) :-
                set(Bounds) &

        move(X, Y) :-
                <: bound_constraint(X, Y), !,
                super <: move(X, Y) &
        move(_, _) &

        bound_constraint(X, Y) :-
                get(bounds(X0, X1, Y0, Y1)),
                :(X >= X0),
                :(X =< X1),
                :(Y >= Y0),
                :(Y =< Y1) &

        display(Terminal) :-
                super <: display(Terminal),
                <: print_bounds(Terminal) &

        print_bounds(Terminal) :-
                get(bounds(X0, X1, Y0, Y1)),
                Terminal :: format('xbounds=(~d,~d), \c
                                    ybounds=(~d,~d)~n',
                                   [X0,X1,Y0,Y1])
        }.
```

```
bh_point :: {
        super(history_point) &
        super(bounded_point) &

        new(Instance, Coords, Bounds) :-
                history_point <: new(Instance, Coords),
                Instance :: set_bounds(Bounds) &

        move(X, Y) :-
                bounded_point <: bound_constraint(X, Y), !,
                history_point <: move(X, Y) &
        move(_, _) &

        display(Terminal) :-
                bounded_point <: display(Terminal),
                history_point <: print_history(Terminal)
        }.
tty :: {
        format(X, Y) :- :format(X, Y)
       }.

point at (8,12)
xbounds=(5,15), ybounds=(5,15)
with location history [(8,12),(9,11)]
```

### 37.10.3 Prolog++ programs

Prolog++ is a product by LPA Associates for object-oriented programming extensions of LPA Prolog. Most Prolog++ programs can be easily converted into SICStus Objects programs. The following is a translation of a program for fault diagnosis in LPA's Prolog++ manual, page 83. The program illustrates a top-down diagnosis method starting from general objects to more specific objects. The problem is fault diagnosis for car maintenance. The objects have the following structure:

```
- faults
        - electrical
        |       - lights
        |       - starting
        |               - starter_motor
        |               - sparking
        |                       - plugs
        |                       - distributer
        - fuel_system
        - mechanical
```

The general diagnosis method is defined in the object `faults`, whereas the cause-effect relationships are defined in the specific objects e.g. the object `distributor`.

This program heavily uses the `sub/1` method. We have tried to be as close as possible to the original formulation.

```
faults :: {

        super(utility) &
        dynamic(told/2) &

        /* no fault is the default */
        fault(_, _) :- :fail &

        findall :-
                <: restart,
                :: sub(Sub),
                Sub :: find(Where, Fault),
                <: print(Where, Fault),
                :fail &
        findall &

        print(Where, Fault) :-
                :writeseqnl('Location       : ', [Where]),
                :writeseqnl('Possible Fault : ', [Fault]),
                :nl &

        find(Where, Fault) :-
                self(Where),
                fault(FaultNum, Fault),
                \+ (effect(FaultNum, S),
                    contrary(S, S1),
                    exhibited(S1)
                   ),
                \+ (effect(FaultNum, SymptomNum),
                    \+ exhibited(SymptomNum)) &

        find(Where, Fault) :-
                sub(Sub),
                Sub :: find(Where, Fault) &

        exhibited(S) :-
                :: told(S, R), !,
                R = yes &
        exhibited(S) :-
                symptom(S,Text),
                (   :yesno([Text]) -> R = yes
                ;   R = no
                ),
                :: asserta(told(S,R)),
                R = yes &

        restart :-
                :: retractall(told(_,_))

        }.
```

```
electrical :: {
        super(faults)
        }.

fuel_system :: {
        super(faults)
        }.

mechanical :: {
        super(faults)
        }.

lights :: {
        super(electrical)
        }.

sparking :: {
        super(electrical)
        }.

starting :: {
        super(electrical)
        }.

starter_motor :: {
        super(electrical)
        }.

plugs :: {
        super(sparking)
        }.

engine :: {
        super(mechanical)
        }.

cylinders :: {
        super(engine)
        }.
```

```
distributor :: {
        super(sparking) &

        /* faults */
        fault('F1001', 'Condensation in distributor cap') &
        fault('F1002', 'Faulty distributor arm') &
        fault('F1003', 'Worn distributor brushes') &

        /* symptoms */
        symptom('S1001', 'Starter turns, but engine does not fire') &
        symptom('S1002', 'Engine has difficulty starting') &
        symptom('S1003', 'Engine cuts out shortly after starting') &
        symptom('S1004', 'Engine cuts out at speed') &

        /* symptoms contrary to each other */
        contrary('S1002', 'S1001') &
        contrary('S1003', 'S1001') &

        /* causal-effect relationship */
        effect('F1001', 'S1001') &
        effect('F1002', 'S1001') &
        effect('F1002', 'S1004') &
        effect('F1003', 'S1002') &
        effect('F1003', 'S1003')

        }.

yesno(Value) :- write(Value), nl, read(yes).

writeseqnl(Prompt, L) :- write(Prompt), write_seq(L).

write_seq([]).
write_seq([X|L]) :- write(X), write(' '), write_seq(L), nl.

faults :- faults :: findall.
```

```
| ?- faults.
[Starter turns, but engine does not fire]
|: yes.
Location       : distributor
Possible Fault : Condensation in distributor cap

[Engine cuts out at speed]
|: yes.
Location       : distributor
Possible Fault : Faulty distributor arm

| ?- faults.
[Starter turns, but engine does not fire]
|: no.
[Engine has difficulty starting]
|: yes.
[Engine cuts out shortly after starting]
|: yes.
Location       : distributor
Possible Fault : Worn distributor brushes
```

# 38 The PiLLoW Web Programming Library

The PiLLoW library ("Programming in Logic Languages on the Web") is a free Internet/WWW programming library for Logic Programming Systems that simplifies the process of writing applications for such environment. The library provides facilities for generating HTML or XML structured documents by handling them as Prolog terms, producing HTML forms, writing form handlers, processing HTML templates, accessing and parsing WWW documents (either HTML or XML), accessing code posted at HTTP addresses, etc.

PiLLoW is documented in its own reference manual, located in http://www.clip.dia.fi.upm.es/Software/pillow/pillow_doc_html/pillow_doc_toc.html (HTML) or http://www.clip.dia.fi.upm.es/Software/pillow/pillow_doc.ps (Postscript). The following points are worth noting wrt. the PiLLoW reference manual:

- PiLLoW is automatically installed with the SICStus Prolog distribution. No extra action needs to be taken.
- PilloW comes as a single library module. To load it, enter the query:

  ```
  | ?- use_module(library(pillow)).
  ```

  This subsumes the various `load_package/1` and `use_module/1` queries mentioned in the PiLLoW reference manual.

Further information can be found at the PiLLoW home page, http://clip.dia.fi.upm.es/Software/pillow/pillow.html.

# 39 Parsing and Generating XML

`library(xml)` is a package for parsing XML with Prolog, which provides Prolog applications with a simple "Document Value Model" interface to XML documents. A description of the subset of XML that it supports can be found at: http://homepages.tesco.net/binding-time/xml.pl.html

The package, originally written by Binding Time Ltd., is in the public domain and unsupported. To use the package, enter the query:

```
| ?- use_module(library(xml)).
```

The package represents XML documents by the abstract data type *document*, which is defined by the following grammar:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *document* | ::= `xml(`*attributes*`,`*content*`)` | { well-formed document } |
| | \| `malformed(`*attributes*`,`*content*`)` | { malformed document } |
| *attributes* | ::= `[]` | |
| | \| `[`*name*`=`*chardata*`\|`*attributes*`]` | |
| *content* | ::= `[]` | |
| | \| `[`*cterm*`\|`*content*`]` | |
| *cterm* | ::= `pcdata(`*chardata*`)` | { text } |
| | \| `comment(`*chardata*`)` | { an XML comment } |
| | \| `namespace(`*URI*`,`*prefix*`,`*element*`)` | { a Namespace } |
| | \| `element(`*tag*`,`*attributes*`,`*content*`)` | { <*tag*>..</*tag*> encloses *content* or <*tag* /> if empty } |
| | \| `instructions(`*name*`,`*chardata*`)` | { A PI <? *name chardata* ?> } |
| | \| `cdata(`*chardata*`)` | { <![CDATA[*chardata*]]> } |
| | \| `doctype(`*tag*`,`*doctypeid*`)` | { DTD <!DOCTYPE .. > } |
| | \| `unparsed(`*chardata*`)` | { text that hasn't been parsed } |
| | \| `out_of_context(`*tag*`)` | { *tag* is not closed } |
| *tag* | ::= *atom* | { naming an element } |
| *name* | ::= *atom* | { not naming an element } |
| *URI* | ::= *atom* | { giving the URI of a namespace } |
| *chardata* | ::= *code-list* | |
| *doctypeid* | ::= `public(`*chardata*`,`*chardata*`)` | |
| | \| `system(`*chardata*`)` | |
| | \| `local` | |

The following predicates are exported by the package:

`xml_parse(+Chars, -Document[, +Options])`

Parses *Chars*, a *code-list*, to *Document*, a *document*. *Chars* is not required to represent strictly well-formed XML.

*Options* is a list of zero or more of the following, where *Boolean* must be `true` or `false`:

`format(Boolean)`
: Indent the element content (default `true`).

`extended_characters(Boolean)`
: Use the extended character entities for XHTML (default `true`).

`remove_attribute_prefixes(Boolean)`
: Remove namespace prefixes from attributes when it's the same as the prefix of the parent element (default `false`).

`xml_parse(-Chars, +Document[, +Options])`

Generates *Chars*, a *code-list*, from *Document*, a *document*. If *Document* is not a valid *document* term representing well-formed XML, an exception is raised.

In this usage of the predicate, the only option available is `format/1`.

`xml_subterm(+Term, ?Subterm)`

Unifies *Subterm* with a sub-term of *Term*, a *document*. This can be especially useful when trying to test or retrieve a deeply-nested subterm from a document.

`xml_pp(+Document)`

"Pretty prints" *Document*, a *document*, on the current output stream.

# 40 Tcl/Tk Interface

## 40.1 Introduction

This is a basic tutorial for those SICStus Prolog users who would like to add Tcl/Tk user interfaces to their Prolog applications. The tutorial assumes no prior knowledge of Tcl/Tk but, of course, does assume the reader is proficient in Prolog.

Aware that the reader may not have heard of Tcl/Tk, we will start by answering three questions: what is Tcl/Tk? what is it good for? what relationship does it have to Prolog?

### 40.1.1 What Is Tcl/Tk?

Tcl/Tk, as its title suggests, is actually two software packages: Tcl and Tk. Tcl, pronounced *tickle*, stands for *tool command language* and is a scripting language that provides a programming environment and programming facilities such as variables, loops, and procedures. It is designed to be easily extensible.

Tk, pronounced *tee-kay*, is just such an extension to Tcl, which is a *toolkit* for windowing systems. In other words, Tk adds facilities to Tcl for creating and manipulating user interfaces based on windows and widgets within those windows.

### 40.1.2 What Is Tcl/Tk Good For?

In combination the Tcl and Tk packages (we will call the combination simply Tcl/Tk) are useful for creating graphical user interfaces (GUIs) to applications. The GUI is described in terms of instances of Tk widgets, created through calls in Tcl, and Tcl scripts that form the glue that binds together the GUI and the application. (If you are a little lost at this point, all will be clear in a moment with a simple example.)

There are lots of systems out there for adding GUIs to applications so why choose Tcl/Tk? Tcl/Tk has several advantages that make it attractive for this kind of work. Firstly, it is good for rapid prototyping of GUIs. Tcl is an interpreted scripting language. The scripts can be modified and executed quickly, with no compilation phase, so speeding up the development loop.

Secondly, it is easier to use a system based on a scripting language, such as Tcl/Tk, than many of the conventional packages available. For example, getting to grips with the X windows suite of C libraries is not an easy task. Tcl/Tk can produce the same thing using simple scripting with much less to learn. The penalty for this is that programs written in an interpreted scripting language will execute more slowly than those written using compiled C library calls, but for many interfaces that do not need great speed Tcl/Tk is fast enough

and its ease of use more than outweighs the loss of speed. In any case, Tcl/Tk can easily handle hundreds of events per mouse movement without the user noticing.

Thirdly, Tcl/Tk is good for making cross-platform GUIs. The Tk toolkit has been ported to native look-and-feel widgets on Mac, PC (Windows), and UNIX (X windows) platforms. You can write your scripts once and they will execute on any of these platforms.

Lastly, the software is distributed under a free software license and so is available in both binary and source formats free of charge.

### 40.1.3 What Is Tcl/Tks Relationship to SICStus Prolog?

SICStus Prolog comes with a Prolog library for interfacing to Tcl/Tk. The purpose of the library is to enable Prolog application developers to add GUIs to their applications rapidly and easily.

### 40.1.4 A Quick Example of Tcl/Tk in Action

As a taster, we will show you two simple examples programs that use SICStus Prolog with the Tcl/Tk extensions: the ubiquitous "hello world" example; and a very simple telephone book look up example.

You are not expected to understand how these examples work at this stage. They are something for you to quickly type in to see how easy it is to add GUIs to Prolog programs through Tcl/Tk. After reading through the rest of this tutorial you will fully understand these examples and be able to write your own GUIs.

#### 40.1.4.1 hello world

Here is the program; also in `library('tcltk/examples/ex1.pl')`:

```
:- use_module(library(tcltk)).

go :-
    tk_new([name('Example 1')], Interp),
    tcl_eval(Interp, 'button .fred -text "hello world"
                      -command { puts "hello world"}', _),
    tcl_eval(Interp, 'pack .fred', _),
    tk_main_loop.
```

SICStus+Tcl/Tk hello world program.

To run it just start up SICStus (under Windows use `sicstus`, not `spwin`), load the program, and evaluate the Prolog goal `go`. The first line of the `go` clause calls `tk_new/2`, which creates a Tcl/Tk interpreter and returns a handle `Interp` through which Prolog will interact with the interpreter. Next a call to `tcl_eval/3` is made, which creates a button displaying the '`hello world`' text. Next a call is made to `tcl_eval/3` that causes the button to be displayed in the main application window. Finally, a call is make to `tk_main_loop/0` that passes control to Tcl/Tk, making sure that window events are serviced.

See how simple it is with just a three line Prolog program to create an application window and display a button in it. Click on the button and see what it does.

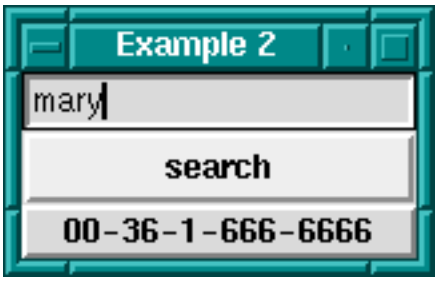
The reason you should use `sicstus` under Windows instead of `spwin` is that the latter does not have the C standard streams (`stdin`,`stdout`,`stderr`) and the Tcl command `puts` will give an error if there is no `stdout`.

### 40.1.4.2 telephone book

The previous example showed us how to create a button and display some text in it. It was basically pure Tcl/Tk generated from within Prolog but did not have any interaction with Prolog. The following example demonstrates a simple callback mechanism. A name is typed into a text entry box, a button is pressed, which looks up the telephone number corresponding to the name in a Prolog database, and the telephone number is then displayed.

Here is the code; also in `library('tcltk/examples/ex2.pl')`:

```
:- use_module(library(tcltk)).

telephone(fred, '123-456').
telephone(wilbert, '222-2222').
telephone(taxi, '200-0000').
telephone(mary, '00-36-1-666-6666').

go :-
     tk_new([name('Example 2')], T),
     tcl_eval(T, 'entry .name -textvariable name',_),
     tcl_eval(T, 'button .search -text search -command {
                     prolog telephone($name,X);
                     set result $prolog_variables(X) }', _),
     tcl_eval(T, 'label .result -relief raised -textvariable result', _),
     tcl_eval(T, 'pack .name .search .result -side top -fill x', _),
     tk_main_loop.
```




SICStus+Tcl/Tk telephone number lookup

Again, to run the example, start up SICStus Prolog, load the code, and run the goal `go`.

You will notice that three widgets will appear in a window: one is for entering the name of the person or thing that you want to find the telephone number for, the button is for initiating the search, and the text box at the bottom is for displaying the result.

Type *`fred`* into the entry box, hit the search button and you should see the phone number displayed. You can then try the same thing but with *`wilbert`*, *`taxi`* or *`mary`* typed into the text entry box.

What is happening is that when the button is pressed, the value in the entry box is retrieved, then the `telephone/2` predicate is called in Prolog with the entry box value as first argument, then the second argument of telephone is retrieved (by this time bound to the number) and is displayed below the button.

This is a very crude example of what can be done with the Tcl/Tk module in Prolog. For example, this program does not handle cases where there is no corresponding phone number or where there is more than one corresponding phone number. The example is just supposed to wet your appetite, but all these problems can be handled by Prolog + Tcl/Tk, although with a more sophisticated program. You will learn how to do this in the subsequent chapters.

### 40.1.5 Outline of This Tutorial

Now we have motivated using Tcl/Tk as a means of creating GUIs for Prolog programs, this document goes into the details of using Tcl/Tk as a means of building GUIs for SICStus Prolog applications.

Firstly, Tcl is introduced and its syntax and core commands described. Then the Tk extensions to Tcl are introduced. We show how with Tcl and Tk together the user can build sophisticated GUIs easily and quickly. At the end of this Tcl/Tk part of the tutorial an example of a pure Tcl/Tk program will be presented together with some tips on how to design and code Tcl/Tk GUIs.

The second phase of this document describes the SICStus Prolog `tcltk` library. It provides extensions to Prolog that allow Prolog applications to interact with Tcl/Tk: Prolog can make calls to Tcl/Tk code and vice versa.

Having reached this point in the tutorial the user will know how to write a Tcl/Tk GUI interface and how to get a Prolog program to interact with it, but arranging which process (the Prolog process or the Tcl/Tk process) is the dominant partner is non-trivial and so is described in a separate chapter on event handling. This will help the user choose the most appropriate method of cooperation between Tcl/Tk and Prolog to suit their particular application.

This section, the Tcl/Tk+Prolog section, will be rounded off with the presentation of some example applications that make use of Tcl/Tk and Prolog.

Then there is a short discussion section on how to use other Tcl extension packages with Tcl/Tk and Prolog. Many such extension packages have been written and when added to Prolog enhanced with Tcl/Tk can offer further functionality to a Prolog application.

The appendices provide a full listing with description of the predicates available in the `tcltk` SICStus Prolog library, and the extensions made to Tcl/Tk for interacting with Prolog.

Lastly, a section on resources gives pointers to where the reader can find more information on Tcl/Tk.

## 40.2 Tcl

Tcl is an interpreted scripting language. In this chapter, first the syntax of Tcl is described and then the core commands are described. It is not intended to give a comprehensive description of the Tcl language here but an overview of the core commands, enough to get the user motivated to start writing their own scripts.

For pointers to more information on Tcl; see Section 40.7 [Resources], page 685.

### 40.2.1 Syntax

A Tcl script consists of a series of strings separated from each other by a newline character. Each string contains a command or series of semi-colon separated commands. A command is a series of words separated by spaces. The first word in a command is the name of the command and subsequent words are its arguments.

An example is:

```
set a 1
set b 2
```

which is a Tcl script of two commands: the first command sets the value of variable `a` to `1`, and the second command sets the value of variable `b` to `2`.

An example of two commands on the same line separated by a semi-colon is:

```
set a 1; set b 2
```

which is equivalent to the previous example but written entirely on one line.

A command is executed in two phases. In the first phase, the command is broken down into its constituent words and various textual substitutions are performed on those words. In the second phase, the procedure to call is identified from the first word in the command, and the procedure is called with the remaining words as arguments.

There are special syntactic characters that control how the first phase, the substitution phase, is carried out. The three major substitution types are variable substitution, command substitution, and backslash substitution.

#### 40.2.1.1 Variable Substitution

Variable substitution happens when a '`$`' prefixed word is found in a command. There are three types of variable substitution:

- `$`*name*
  - where *name* is a scalar variable. *name* is simply substituted in the word for its value. *name* can contain only letters, digits, or underscores.
- `$`*name*`(`*index*`)`
  - where *name* is the name of an array variable and *index* is the index into it. This is substituted by the value of the array element. *name* must contain only letters, digits, or underscores. *index* has variable, command, and backslash substitution performed on it too.
- `${`*name*`}`
  - where *name* can have any characters in it except closing curly bracket. This is more or less the same as `$`*name* substitution except it is used to get around the restrictions in the characters that can form *name*.

An example of variable substitution is:

```
set a 1
set b $a
```

which sets the value of variable `a` to `1`, and then sets the value of variable `b` to the value of variable `a`.

#### 40.2.1.2 Command Substitution

Command substitution happens when a word contains an open square bracket, '`[`'. The string between the open bracket and matching closing bracket are treated as a Tcl script. The script is evaluated and its result is substituted in place of the original command substitution word.

A simple example of command substitution is:

```
set a 1
set b [set a]
```

which does the same as the previous example but using command substitution. The result of a `set a` command is to return the value of `a`, which is then passed as an argument to `set b` and so variable `b` acquires the value of variable `a`.

#### 40.2.1.3 Backslash Substitution

Backslash substitution is performed whenever the interpreter comes across a backslash. The backslash is an escape character and when it is encountered is causes the interpreter to handle the next characters specially. Commonly escaped characters are '`\a`' for audible bell, '`\b`' for backspace, '`\f`' for form feed, '`\n`' for newline, '`\r`' for carriage return, '`\t`' for horizontal tab, and '`\v`' for vertical tab. Double-backslash, '`\\`', is substituted with a single backslash. Other special backslash substitutions have the following forms:

- `\ooo`
  - the digits `ooo` give the octal value of the escaped character
- `\xHH`
  - the `x` denotes that the following hexadecimal digits are the value of the escaped character

Any other character that is backslash escaped is simply substituted by the character itself. For example, `\W` is replaced by `W`.

#### 40.2.1.4 Delaying Substitution

A further syntactic construction is used to delay substitution. When the beginning of a word starts with a curly bracket, '`{`', it does not do any of the above substitutions between the opening curly bracket and its matching closing curly bracket. The word ends with the matching closing curly bracket. This construct is used to make the bodies of procedures in which substitutions happen when the procedure is called, not when it is constructed. Or it is used anywhere when the programmer does not want the normal substitutions to happen. For example:

```
puts {I have $20}
```

will print the string '`I have $20`' and will not try variable substitution on the '`$20`' part.

A word delineated by curly brackets is replaced with the characters within the brackets without performing the usual substitutions.

#### 40.2.1.5 Double-Quotes

A word can begin with a double-quote and ending with the matching closing double-quote. Substitutions as detailed above are done on the characters between the quotes, and the result is then substituted for the original word. Typically double-quotes are used to group sequences of characters that contain spaces into a single command word.

For example:

```
set name "Fred the Great"
puts "Hello my name is $name"
```

outputs '`Hello my name is Fred the Great`'. The first command sets the value of variable `name` to the following double-quoted string `"Fred the Great"`. The the next command prints its argument, a single argument because it is a word delineated by double-quotes, that has had variable substitution performed on it.

Here is the same example but using curly brackets instead of double-quotes:

```
set name {Fred the Great}
puts {Hello my name is $name}
```

gives the output '`Hello my name is $name`' because substitutions are suppressed by the curly bracket notation.

And again the same example but without either curly brackets or double-quotes:

```
set name Fred the Great
puts Hello my name is $name
```

simply fails because both `set` and `puts` expect a single argument but without the word grouping effects of double-quotes or curly brackets they find that they have more than one argument and throw an exception.

Being a simple scripting language, Tcl does not have any real idea of data types. The interpreter simply manipulates strings. The Tcl interpreter is not concerned with whether those strings contain representations of numbers or names or lists. It is up to the commands themselves to interpret the strings that are passed to them as arguments in any manner those choose.

### 40.2.2 Variables

This has been dealt with implicitly above. A variable has a name and a value. A name can be any string whatsoever, as can its value.

For example,

```
set "Old King Cole" "merry soul"
```

sets the value of the variable named `Old King Cole` to the value `merry soul`. Variable names can also be numbers:

```
set 123 "one two three"
```

sets the variable with name `123` to the value `one two three`. In general, it is better to use the usual conventions — start with a letter then follow with a combination of letters, digits, and underscores — when giving variables names to avoid confusion.

Array variables are also available in Tcl. These are denoted by an array name followed by an array index enclosed in round brackets. As an example:

```
set fred(one) 1
set fred(two) 2
```

will set the variable `fred(one)` to the value `1` and `fred(two)` to the value `2`.

Tcl arrays are associative arrays in that both the array name and the array index can be arbitrary strings. This also makes multidimensional arrays possible if the index contains a comma:

```
set fred(one,two) 12
```

It is cheating in that the array is not stored as a multidimensional array with a pair of indices, but as a linear array with a single index that happens to contain a comma.

### 40.2.3 Commands

Now that the Tcl syntax and variables have been been dealt with, we will now look at some of the commands that are available.

Each command when executed returns a value. The return value will be described along with the command.

#### 40.2.3.1 Notation

A quick word about the notation used to describe Tcl commands. In general, a description of a command is the name of the command followed by its arguments separated by spaces. An example is:

```
set varName ?value?
```

which is a description of the Tcl set command, which takes a variable name *varName* and an optional argument, a *value*.

Optional arguments are enclosed in question mark, *?*, pairs, as in the example.

A series of three dots ... represents repeated arguments. An example is a description of the `unset` command:

```
unset varName ?varName varName ...?
```

which shows that the `unset` command has at least one compulsory argument *varName* but has any number of subsequent optional arguments.

### 40.2.3.2 Commands to Do with Variables

The most used command over variables is the `set` command. It has the form

```
set varName ?value?
```

The value of *value* is determined, the variable *varName* is set to it, and the value is returned. If there is no *value* argument then simply the value of the variable is returned. It is thus used to set and/or get the value of a variable.

The `unset` command is used to remove variables completely from the system:

```
unset varName ?varName varName ...?
```

which given a series of variable names deletes them. The empty string is always returned.

There is a special command for incrementing the value of a variable:

```
incr varName ?increment?
```

which, given the name of a variable thats value is an integer string, increments it by the amount *increment*. If the *increment* part is left out then it defaults to `1`. The return value is the new value of the variable.

### 40.2.3.3 Expressions

Expressions are constructed from operands and operators and can then be evaluated. The most general expression evaluator in Tcl is the `expr` command:

```
expr arg ?arg arg ... arg?
```

which evaluates its arguments as an expression and returns the value of the evaluation.

A simple example expression is

```
expr 2 * 2
```

which when executed returns the value `4`.

There are different classes of operators: arithmetic, relational, logical, bitwise, and choice. Here are some example expressions involving various operators:

| | |
|---|---|
| arithmetic | `$x * 2` |
| relational | `$x > 2` |
| logical | `($x == $y) \|\| ($x == $z)` |
| bitwise | `8 & 2` |
| choice | `($a == 1) ? $x : $y` |

Basically the operators follow the syntax and meaning of their ANSI C counterparts.

Expressions to the `expr` command can be contained in curly brackets in which case the usual substitutions are not done before the `expr` command is evaluated, but the command does its own round of substitutions. So evaluating a script such as:

```
set a 1
expr { ($a==1) : "yes" ? "no" }
```

will evaluate to `yes`.

Tcl also has a whole host of math functions that can be used in expressions. Their evaluation is again the same as that for their ANSI C counterparts. For example:

```
expr { 2*log($x) }
```

will return 2 times the natural log of the value of variable `x`.

### 40.2.3.4 Lists

Tcl has a notion of lists, but as with everything it is implemented through strings. A list is a string that contains words.

A simple list is just a space separated series of strings:

```
set a {one two three four five}
```

will set the variable `a` to the list containing the five strings shown. The empty list is denoted by an open and close curly bracket pair with nothing in between: `{}`.

For the Prolog programmer, there is much confusion between a Prolog implementation of lists and the Tcl implementation of lists. In Prolog we have a definite notion of the printed representation of a list: a list is a sequence of terms enclosed in square brackets (we ignore dot notation for now); a nested list is just another term.

In Tcl, however, a list is really just a string that conforms to a certain syntax: a string of space separated words. But in Tcl there is more than one way of generating such a string. For example,

```
set fred {a b c d}
```

sets `fred` to

```
"a b c d"
```

as does

```
set fred "a b c d"
```

because `{a b c d}` evaluates to the string `a b c d`, which has the correct syntax for a list. But what about nested lists? Those are represented in the final list-string as being contained in curly brackets. For example:

```
set fred {a b c {1 2 3} e f}
```

results in `fred` having the value

```
"a b c {1 2 3} e f"
```

The outer curly brackets from the `set` command have disappeared, which causes confusion. The curly brackets within a list denote a nested list, but there are no curly brackets at the top-level of the list. (We can't help thinking that life would have been easier if the creators of Tcl would have chosen a consistent representation for lists, as Prolog and LISP do.)

So remember: a list is really a string with a certain syntax, space separated items or words; a nested list is surrounded by curly brackets.

There are a dozen commands that operate on lists.

`concat` *?list list ...?*

This makes a list out of a series of lists by concatenating its argument lists together. The return result is the list resulting from the concatenation.

`lindex` *list index*

returns the *index*-th element of the *list*. The first element of a list has an index of 0.

`linsert` *list index value ?value ...?*

returns a new list in which the *value* arguments have been inserted in turn before the *index*-th element of *list*.

`list` *?value value ...?*

returns a list where each element is one of the *value* arguments.

`llength` *list*

returns the number of elements in list *list*.

`lrange` *list first last*

returns a slice of a list consisting of the elements of the list *list* from index *first* until index *last*.

`lreplace list first last ?value ... value?`

returns a copy of list *list* but with the elements between indices *first* and *last* replaced with a list formed from the *value* arguments.

`lsearch ?-exact? ?-glob? ?-regexp? list pattern`

returns the index of the first element in the list that matches the given pattern. The type of matching done depends on which of the switch is present '`-exact`', '`-glob`', '`-regexp`', is present. Default is '`-glob`'.

```
lsort ?-ascii? ?-integer? ?-real? ?-command command? ?-increasing?
?-decreasing{? list
```

returns a list, which is the original list *list* sorted by the chosen technique. If none of the switches supplies the intended sorting technique then the user can provide one through the '`-command command`' switch.

There are also two useful commands for converting between lists and strings:

`join list ?joinString?`

which concatenates the elements of the list together, with the separator *joinString* between them, and returns the resulting string. This can be used to construct filenames; for example:

```
set a {{} usr local bin}
set filename [join $a /]
```

results in the variable `filename` having the value `/usr/local/bin`.

The reverse of the `join` command is the `split` command:

`split string ?splitChars?`

which takes the string *string* and splits it into string on *splitChars* boundaries and returns a list with the strings as elements. An example is splitting a filename into its constituent parts:

```
set a [split /usr/local/src /]
```

gives `a` the value `{{} usr local src}`, a list.

### 40.2.3.5 Control Flow

Tcl has the four usual classes of control flow found in most other programming languages:

`if...elseif...else, while, for, foreach, switch, and eval.`

We go through each in turn.

The general form of an `if` command is the following:

```
if test1 body1 ?elseif test2 body2 elseif ...? ?else bodyn?
```

which when evaluated, evaluates expression *test1*, which if true causes *body1* to be evaluated, but if false, causes *test2* to be evaluated, and so on. If there is a final `else` clause then its *bodyn* part is evaluated if all of the preceding tests failed. The return result of an `if` statement is the result of the last *body* command evaluated, or the empty list if none of the bodies are evaluated.

Conditional looping is done through the `while` command:

```
while test body
```

which evaluates expression *test*, which if true then evaluates *body*. It continues to do that until *test* evaluates to 0, and returns the empty string.

A simple example is:

```
set a 10
while {$a > 0} { puts $a; incr a -1 }
```

which initializes variable `a` with value ten and then loops printing out the value of `a` and decrementing it until its value is 0, when the loop terminates.

The `for` loop has the following form:

```
for init test reinit body
```

which initializes the loop by executing *init*, then each time around the loop the expression *test* is evaluated, which if true causes *body* to be executed and then executes *reinit*. The loop spins around until *test* evaluates to 0. The return result of a `for` loop is the empty string.

An example of a `for` loop:

```
for {set a 10} ($a>0) {incr a -1} {puts $a}
```

which initializes the variable `a` with value `10`, then goes around the loop printing the value of `a` and decrementing it as long as its value is greater than `0`. Once it reaches `0` the loop terminates.

The `foreach` command has the following form:

```
foreach varName list body
```

where *varName* is the name of a variable, *list* is an instance of a list, and *body* is a series of commands to evaluate. A `foreach` then iterates over the elements of a list, setting the

variable *varName* to the current element, and executes *body*. The result of a `foreach` loop is always the empty string.

An example of a `foreach` loop:

```
foreach friend {joe mary john wilbert} {puts "I like $friend"}
```

will produce the output:

```
I like joe
I like mary
I like john
I like wilbert
```

There are also a couple of commands for controlling the flow of loops: `continue` and `break`.

`continue` stops the current evaluation of the body of a loop and goes on to the next one.

`break` terminates the loop altogether.

Tcl has a general switch statement, which has two forms:

```
switch ?options? string pattern body ?pattern body ... ?
switch ?options? string { pattern body ?pattern body ...? }
```

When executed, the switch command matches its *string* argument against each of the *pattern* arguments, and the *body* of the first matching pattern is evaluated. The matching algorithm depends on the options chosen, which can be one of

| | |
|---|---|
| '`-exact`' | use exact matching |
| '`-glob`' | use glob-style matching |
| '`-regexp`' | use regular expression matchinig |

An example is:

```
set a rob
switch -glob $a {
    a*z { puts "A to Z"}
    r*b { puts "rob or rab"}
}
```

which will produce the output:

```
rob or rab
```

There are two forms of the `switch` command. The second form has the command arguments surrounded in curly brackets. This is primarily so that multi-line switch commands can be formed, but it also means that the arguments in brackets are not evaluated (curly brackets suppress evaluation), whereas in the first type of switch statement the arguments are first evaluated before the switch is evaluated. These effects should be borne in mind when choosing which kind of switch statement to use.

The final form of control statement is `eval`:

```
eval arg ?arg ...?
```

which takes one or more arguments, concatenates them into a string, and executes the string as a command. The return result is the normal return result of the execution of the string as a command.

An example is

```
set a b
set b 0
eval set $a 10
```

which results in the variable `b` being set to `10`. In this case, the return result of the `eval` is `10`, the result of executing the string `"set b 10"` as a command.

### 40.2.3.6 Commands over Strings

Tcl has several commands over strings. There are commands for searching for patterns in strings, formatting and parsing strings (much the same as `printf` and `scanf` in the C language), and general string manipulation commands.

Firstly we will deal with formatting and parsing of strings. The commands for this are `format` and `scan` respectively.

```
format formatString ?value value ...?
```

which works in a similar to C's `printf`; given a format string with placeholders for values and a series of values, return the appropriate string.

Here is an example of printing out a table for base 10 logarithms for the numbers 1 to 10:

```
for {set n 1} {$n <= 10} {incr n} {
    puts [format "log10(%d) = %.4f" $n [expr log10($n)]]
}
```

which produces the output

```
ln(1) = 0.0000
ln(2) = 0.3010
ln(3) = 0.4771
ln(4) = 0.6021
ln(5) = 0.6990
ln(6) = 0.7782
ln(7) = 0.8451
ln(8) = 0.9031
ln(9) = 0.9542
ln(10) = 1.0000
```

The reverse function of `format` is `scan`:

```
scan string formatString varName ?varName ...?
```

which parses the string according to the format string and assigns the appropriate values to the variables. it returns the number of fields successfully parsed.

An example,

```
scan "qty 10, unit cost 1.5, total 15.0" \
     "qty %d, unit cost %f, total %f"    \
     quantity cost_per_unit total
```

would assign the value 10 to the variable `quantity`, 1.5 to the variable `cost_per_unit` and the value 15.0 to the variable `total`.

There are commands for performing two kinds of pattern matching on strings: one for matching using regular expressions, and one for matching using UNIX-style wildcard pattern matching (globbing).

The command for regular expressions matching is as follows:

```
regexp ?-indices? ?-nocase? exp string ?matchVar? ?subVar subVar ...?
```

where *exp* is the regular expression and *string* is the string on which the matching is performed. The regexp command returns 1 if the expression matches the string, 0 otherwise. The optional '`-nocase`' switch does matching without regard to the case of letters in the string. The optional *matchVar* and *subVar* variables, if present, are set to the values of string matches. In the regular expression, a match that is to be saved into a variable is enclosed in round braces. An example is

```
regexp {([0-9]+)} "I have 3 oranges" a
```

will assign the value 3 to the variable `a`.

If the optional switch '`-indices`' is present then instead of storing the matching substrings in the variables, the indices of the substrings are stored; that is a list with a pair of numbers denoting the start and end position of the substring in the string. Using the same example:

```
regexp -indices {([0-9]+)} "I have 3 oranges" a
```

will assign the value "7 7", because the matched numeral 3 is in the eighth position in the string, and indices count from 0.

String matching using the UNIX-style wildcard pattern matching technique is done through the `string match` command:

`string match` *`pattern string`*

where *pattern* is a wildcard pattern and *string* is the string to match. If the match succeeds, the command returns 1; otherwise, it returns 0. An example is

```
string match {[a-z]*[0-9]} {a_$%^_3}
```

which matches because the command says match any string that starts with a lower case letter and ends with a number, regardless of anything in between.

There is a command for performing string substitutions using regular expressions:

`regsub` *?*`-all`*? ?*`-nocase`*? exp string subSpec varName*

where *exp* is the regular expression and *string* is the input string on which the substitution is made, *subSpec* is the string that is substituted for the part of the string matched by the regular expression, and *varName* is the variable on which the resulting string is copied into. With the '`-nocase`' switch, then the matching is done without regard to the case of letters in the input string. The '`-all`' switch causes repeated matching and substitution to happen on the input string. The result of a `regsub` command is the number of substitutions made.

An example of string substitution is:

```
regsub {#name#} {My name is #name#} Rob result
```

which sets the variable `result` to the value "My name is Rob". An example of using the '`-all`' switch:

```
regsub -all {#name#} {#name#'s name is #name#} Rob result
```

sets the variable `result` to the value "Rob's name is Rob" and it returns the value 2 because two substitutions were made.

The are a host of other ways to manipulate strings through variants of the `string` command. Here we will go through them.

To select a character from a string given the character position, use the `string index` command. An example is:

```
string index "Hello world" 6
```

which returns `w`, the 7th character of the string. (Strings are indexed from 0).

To select a substring of a string, given a range of indices use the `string range` command. An example is:

```
string range "Hello world" 3 7
```

which returns the string "lo wo". There is a special index marker named `end`, which is used to denote the the end of a string, so the code

```
string range "Hello world" 6 end
```

will return the string "world".

There are two ways to do simple search for a substring on a string, using the `string first` and `string last` commands. An example of `string first` is:

```
string first "dog" "My dog is a big dog"
```

find the first position in string "My dog is a big dog" that matches "dog". It will return the position in the string in which the substring was found, in this case 3. If the substring cannot be found then the value -1 is returned.

Similarly,

```
string last "dog" "My dog is a big dog"
```

will return the value 16 because it returns the index of the last place in the string that the substring matches. Again, if there is no match, -1 is returned.

To find the length of a string use `string length`, which given a string simply returns its length.

```
string length "123456"
```

returns the value 6.

To convert a string completely to upper case use `string toupper`:

```
string toupper "this is in upper case"
```

returns the string "THIS IS IN UPPER CASE".

Similarly,

```
string tolower "THIS IS IN LOWER CASE"
```

returns the string "this is in lower case".

There are commands for removing characters from strings: `string trim`, `string trimright`, and `string trimleft`.

`string trim` *`string ?chars?`*

which removes the characters in the string *chars* from the string *string* and returns the trimmed string. If *chars* is not present, then whitespace characters are removed. An example is:

```
string string "The dog ate the exercise book" "doe"
```

which would return the string "Th g at th xrcis bk".

`string trimleft` is the same as `string trim` except only leading characters are removed. Similarly `string trimright` removes only trailing characters. For example:

```
string trimright $my_input
```

would return a copy of the string contained in `$my_input` but with all the trailing whitespace characters removed.

### 40.2.3.7 File I/O

There is a comprehensive set of commands for file manipulation. We will cover only the some of the more important ones here.

To open a file the `open` command is used:

```
open name ?access?
```

where *name* is a string containing the filename, and the option *access* parameter contains a string of access flags, in the UNIX style. The return result is a handle to the open file.

If *access* is not present then the access permissions default to `"r"`, which means open for reading only. The command returns a file handle that can be used with other commands. An example of the use of the `open` command is

```
set fid [open "myfile" "r+"]
```

which means open the file `myfile` for both reading and writing and set the variable `fid` to the file handle returned.

To close a file simply use

```
close fileId
```

For example,

```
close $fid
```

will close the file that has the file handle stored in the variable `fid`.

To read from a file, the `read` command is used:

```
read fileId numBytes
```

which reads *numBytes* bytes from the file attached to file handle *fileId*, and returns the bytes actually read.

To read a single line from a file use `gets`:

```
gets fileId ?varName?
```

which reads a line from the file attached to file handle *fileId* but chops off the trailing newline. If variable *varName* is specified then the string read in is stored there and the number of bytes is returned by the command. If the variable is not specified, then the command returns the string only.

To write to a file, use `puts`:

```
puts ?-nonewline? ?fileId? string
```

which outputs the string *string*. If the file handle *fileId* is present then the string is output to that file; otherwise, it is printed on `stdout`. If the switch '`-nonewline`' is present then a trailing newline is not output.

To check if the end of a file has been reached, use `eof`:

```
eof fileId
```

which, given a file handle *fileId* returns 1 if the end has been reached, and 0 otherwise.

The are a host of other commands over files and processes, which we will not go into here.

(For extra information on file I/O commands, refer to the Tcl manual pages.)

### 40.2.3.8 User Defined Procedures

Tcl provides a way of creating new commands, called procedures, that can be executed in scripts. The arguments of a procedure can be call-by-value or call-by-reference, and there is also a facility for creating new user defined control structures using procedures.

A procedure is declared using the `proc` command:

```
proc name argList body
```

where the name of the procedure is *name*, the arguments are contained in *argList* and the body of the procedure is the script *body*. An example of a procedure is:

```
proc namePrint { first family } {
    puts "My first name is $first"
    puts "My family name is $family"
}
```

which can be called with

```
namePrint Tony Blair
```

to produce the output:

```
My first name is Tony
My family name is Blair
```

A procedure with no arguments is specified with an empty argument list. An example is a procedure that just prints out a string:

```
proc stringThing {} {
    puts "I just print this string"
}
```

Arguments can be given defaults by pairing them with a value in a list. An example here is a counter procedure:

```
proc counter { value { inc 1 } } {
    eval $value + $inc
}
```

which can be called with two arguments like this

```
set v 10
set v [counter $v 5]
```

which will set variable `v` to the value 15; or it can be called with one argument:

```
set v 10
set v [counter $v]
```

in which case `v` will have the value 11, because the default of the argument `inc` inside the procedure is the value 1.

There is a special argument for handling procedures with variable number of arguments, the `args` argument. An example is a procedure that sums a list of numbers:

```
proc sum { args } {
    set result 0;

    foreach n $args {
     set result [expr $result + $n ]
    }

    return $result;
}
```

which can be called like this:

```
sum 1 2 3 4 5
```

which returns the value 15.

The restriction on using defaulted arguments is that all the arguments that come after the defaulted ones must also be defaulted. If using `args` then it must be the last argument in the argument list.

A procedure can return a value through the `return` command:

```
return ?options? ?value?
```

which terminates the procedure returning value *value*, if specified, or just causes the procedure to return, if no value specified. (The *?options?* part has to do with raising exceptions, which we will will not cover here.)

The return result of a user defined procedure is the return result of the last command executed by it.

So far we have seen the arguments of a procedure are passed using the call-by-value mechanism. They can be passed call by reference using the `upvar` command:

```
upvar ?level? otherVar1 myVar1 ?otherVar2 myVar2 ...?
```

which makes accessible variables somewhere in a calling context with the current context. The optional argument *level* describes how many calling levels up to look for the variable. This is best shown with an example:

```
set a 10
set b 20

proc add { first second } {
    upvar $first f $second s
    expr $f+$s
}
```

which when called with

```
add a b
```

will produce the result 30. If you use call-by-value instead:

```
add $a $b
```

then the program will fail because when executing the procedure `add` it will take the first argument 10 as the level argument, a bad level. (Also variable `20` doesn't exist at any level.)

New control structures can be generated using the `uplevel` command:

```
uplevel ?level? arg ?arg arg ...?
```

which is like `eval`, but it evaluates its arguments in a context higher up the calling stack. How far up the stack to go is given by the optional *level* argument.

```
proc do { loop condition } {
    set nostop 1

    while { $nostop } {
        uplevel $loop
        if {[uplevel "expr $condition"] == 0} {
            set nostop 0
         }
    }
}
```

which when called with this

```
set x 5
do { puts $x; incr x -1 } { $x > 0 }
```

will print

```
5
4
3
2
1
```

(**Please note**: this doesn't quite work for all kinds of calls because of `break`, `continue`, and `return`. It is possible to get around these problem, but that is outside the scope of this tutorial.)

### 40.2.3.9 Global Variables

A word about the scope of variables. Variables used within procedures are normally created only for the duration of that procedure and have local scope.

It is possible to declare a variable as having global scope, through the `global` command:

`global` *`name1 ? name2 ...?`*

where *name1*, *name2*, . . . , are the names of global variables. Any references to those names will be taken to denote global variables for the duration of the procedure call.

Global variables are those variables declared at the topmost calling context. It is possible to run a `global` command at anytime in a procedure call. After such a command, the variable name will refer to a global variable until the procedure exits.

An example:

```
set x 10

proc fred { } {
    set y 20
    global x
    puts [expr $x + $y]
}

fred
```

will print the result `30` where 20 comes from the local variable `y` and 10 comes from the global variable `x`.

Without the `global x` line, the call to `fred` will fail with an error because there is no variable `x` defined locally in the procedure for the `expr` to evaluate over.

#### 40.2.3.10 source

In common with other scripting languages, there is a command for evaluating the contents of a file in the Tcl interpreter:

```
source fileName
```

where *fileName* is the filename of the file containing the Tcl source to be evaluated. Control returns to the Tcl interpreter once the file has been evaluated.

### 40.2.4 What We Have Left Out

We have left out a number of Tcl commands as they are outside of the scope of this tutorial. We list some of them here to show some of what Tcl can do. Please refer to the Tcl manual for more information.

*http* implements the HTTP protocol for retrieving web pages

*namespaces*
a modules systems for Tcl

*trace* commands can be attached to variables that are triggered when the variable changes value (amongst other things)

*processes* start, stop, and manage processes

*sockets* UNIX and Internet style socket management

*exception handling*
*3rd party extension packages*
load extension packages into Tcl and use their facilities as native Tcl commands

## 40.3 Tk

Tk is an extension to Tcl. It provides Tcl with commands for easily creating and managing graphical objects, or widgets, so providing a way to add graphical user interfaces (GUIs) to Tcl applications.

In this section we will describe the main Tk widgets, the Tcl commands used to manipulate them, how to give them behaviors, and generally how to arrange them into groups to create a GUI.

### 40.3.1 Widgets

A widget is a "window object". It is something that is displayed that has at least two parts: a state and a behavior. An example of a widget is a button. Its state is things like what color is it, what text is written it in, and how big it is. Its behavior is things like what it does when you click on it, or what happens when the cursor is moved over or away from it.

In Tcl/Tk there are three parts to creating a useful widget. The first is creating an instance of the widget with its initial state. The second is giving it a behavior by defining how the widget behaves when certain events happen — event handling. The third is actually displaying the widget possibly in a group of widgets or inside another widget — geometry management. In fact, after creating all the widgets for a GUI, they are not displayed until handled by a geometry manager, which has rules about how to calculate the size of the widgets and how they will appear in relation to each other.

### 40.3.2 Types of Widget

In Tcl/Tk there are currently 15 types of widget. In alphabetical order they are (see also `library('tcltk/examples/widgets.tcl')`):

`button` a simple press button

`canvas` is a container for displaying "drawn" objects such as lines, circles, and polygons.

`checkbutton`
a button that hold a state of either on or off

`entry` a text entry field

`frame` a widget that is a container for other widgets

`label` a simple label

`listbox` a box containing a list of options

`menu` a widget for creating menu bars

`menubutton`
a button, which when pressed offers a selection of choices

`message` a multi-line text display widget

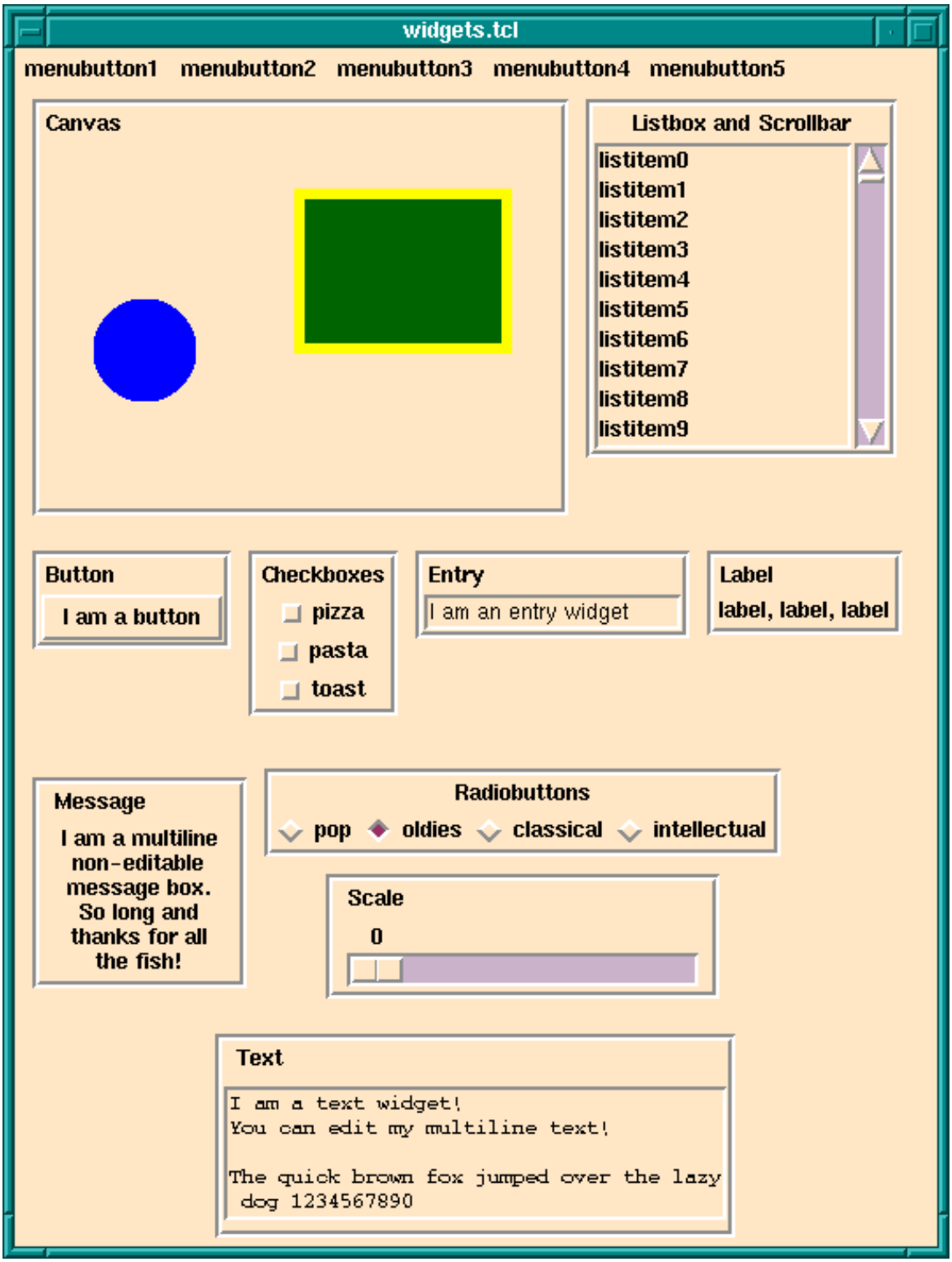
`radiobutton`
a button used to form groups of mutually interacting buttons (When one button is pressed down, the others pop up.)

`scale` is like a slider on a music console. It consists of a trough scale and a slider. Moving the slider to a position on the scale sets the overall value of the widget to that value.

`scollbar` used to add scrollbars to windows or canvases. The scrollbar has a slider, which when moved changes the value of the slider widget.

`text` a sophisticated multi-line text widget that can also display other widgets such as buttons

`toplevel` for creating new standalone toplevel windows. (These windows are containers for other widgets. They are not terminal windows.)




Meet The Main Tk Widgets

### 40.3.3 Widgets Hierarchies

Before going further it is necessary to understand how instances of widgets are named. Widgets are arranged in a hierarchy. The names of widget instances are formed from dot separated words. The root window is simply `.` on its own. So for, example, a button widget that is displayed in the root window might have the name `.b1`. A button that is displayed inside a frame that is displayed inside the root window may have the name `.frame1.b1`. The frame would have the name `.frame1`.

Following this notation, it is clear that widgets are both formed in hierarchies, with the dot notation giving the path to a widget, and in groups, all widgets with the same leading path are notionaly in the same group.

(It is a similar to the way file systems are organized. A file has a path that shows where to find it in the hierarchical file system. But also files with the same leading path are in the same directory/folder and so are notionaly grouped together.)

An instance of a widget is created through the a Tcl command for that widget. The widget command my have optional arguments set for specifying various attributes of the widget that it will have when it is created. The result of a successful widget command is the name of the new widget.

For example, a command to create a button widget named `.mybutton` that displays the text "I am a button" would look like this:

```
button .mybutton -text "I am a button"
```

and this will return the name `.mybutton`.

A widget will only be created if all the windows/widgets in the leading path of the new widget also exist, and also that the name of the new widget does not already exist.

For example, the following

```
button .mybutton -text "I am a button"
button .mybutton -text "and so am I"
```

will fail at the second command because there is also a widget named `.mybutton` from the first command.

The following will also fail

```
button .frame.mybutton -text "I am a button"
```

if there is no existing widget with the name `.frame` to be the parent of `.mybutton`.

All this begs the question: why are widgets named and arranged in a hierarchy? Isn't a GUI just a bunch of widgets displayed in a window?

This is not generally how GUIs are arranged. For example, they often have a menubar over the top of each window. The menubar contains pulldown menus. The pulldown menus may have cascading menu items that may cascade down several levels. Under the menu bar is the main part of the window that may also be split into several "frames". A left hand frame my have a set of buttons in it, for example. And so on. From this you can see that the widgets in GUIs are naturally arranged in a hierarchy. To achieve this in Tcl/Tk instances of widgets are placed in a hierarchy, which is reflected in their names.

Now we will go through each of the widget commands in turn. Each widget command has many options most of which will not be described here. Just enough will be touched on for the reader to understand the basic operation of each widget. For a complete description of each widget and its many options refer to the Tk manual.

### 40.3.4 Widget Creation

As has already been said, a widget is a window object that has state and behavior. In terms of Tcl/Tk a widget is created by calling a widget creation command. There is a specific widget creation for each type of widget.

The widget creation command is supplied with arguments. The first argument is always the name you want to give to the resulting widget; the other arguments set the initial state of the widget.

The immediate result of calling a widget creation command is that it returns the name of the new widget. A side-effect is that the instance of the widget is created and its name is defined as in the Tcl interpreter as a procedure through which the widget state can be accessed and manipulated.

This needs an example. We will use the widget creator command `button` to make a button widget:

```
button .fred -text 'Fred' -background red
```

which creates an instance of a button widget named `.fred` that will display the text `Fred` on the button and will have a red background color. Evaluating this command returns the string `.fred`, the name of the newly created widget.

As a side-effect, a Tcl procedure named `.fred` is created. A call to a widget instance has the following form:

```
widgetName method methodArgs
```

where *widgetName* is the name of the widget to be manipulated, *method* is the action to be performed on the widget, and *methodArgs* are the arguments passed to the method that is performed on the widget.

The two standard methods for widgets are `configure` and `cget`. `configure -` is used to change the state of a widget; for example:

```
.fred configure -background green -text 'Sid'
```

will change the background color of the widget `.fred` to green and the text displayed to `Sid`.

`cget` is used to get part of the state of a widget; for example:

```
.fred cget -text
```

will return `Sid` if the text on the button `.fred` is `Sid`.

In addition to these general methods, there are special methods for each widget type. For example, with button widgets you have the `flash` and `invoke` methods.

For example,

```
.fred invoke
```

can be called somewhere in the Tcl code to invoke button `.fred` as though it had been clicked on.

```
.fred flash
```

can be called somewhere in the Tcl code to cause the button to flash.

We will come across some of these special method when we discuss the widgets in detail. For a comprehensive list of widget methods, refer to entry for the appropriate widget creation command in the Tcl/Tk manual.

We now discuss the widget creation command for each widget type.

#### 40.3.4.1 `label`

A label is a simple widget for displaying a single line of text. An example of creating an instance of a label is

```
label .l -text "Hello world!"
```

which simply creates the label named `.l` with the text '`Hello world!`' displayed in it. Most widgets that display text can have a variable associated with them through the option '`-textvariable`'. When the value of the variable is changed the text changes in the associated label. For example,

```
label .l -text "Hello world!" -textvariable mytext
```

creates a text label called `.l` displaying the initial text '`Hello world!`' and associated text variable `mytext`; `mytext` will start with the value '`Hello world!`'. However, if the following script is executed:

```
set mytext "Goodbye moon!"
```

then magically the text in the label will change to '`Goodbye moon!`'.

#### 40.3.4.2 `message`

A message widget is similar to a label widget but for multi-line text. As its name suggests it is mostly used for creating popup message information boxes.

An example of a message widget is

```
message .msg -text "Your data is incorrect.\n\n \
              Please correct it and try again." \
    -justify center
```

which will create a message widget displaying the text shown, center justified. The width of the message box can be given through the '`-width`' switch. Any lines that exceed the width of the box are wrapped at word boundaries.

#### 40.3.4.3 `button`

Calling the `button` command creates an instance of a button widget. An example is:

```
button .mybutton -text "hello" -command {puts "howdie!"}
```

which creates a button with name `.mybutton` that will display the text `"hello"` and will execute the Tcl script `puts "howdie!"` (that is print `howdie!` to the terminal) when clicked on.

#### 40.3.4.4 `checkbutton`

Checkbuttons are buttons that have a fixed state that is either on or off. Clicking on the button toggles the state. To store the state, a checkbutton is associated with a variable. When the state of the checkbutton changes, so does that of the variable. An example is:

```
checkbutton .on_or_off -text "I like ice cream" -variable ice
```

which will create a checkbutton with name `.on_or_off` displaying the text '`I like ice cream`' and associated with the variable `ice`. If the checkbutton is checked then `ice` will have the value 1; if not checked then it will have the value 0. The state of the checkbutton can also be changed by changing the state of the variable. For example, executing

```
set ice 0
```

will set the state of `.on_or_off` to not checked.

#### 40.3.4.5 radiobutton

Radiobuttons are buttons that are grouped together to select one value among many. Each button has a value, but only one in the button group is active at any one time. In Tcl/Tk this is achieved by creating a series of radiobutton that share an associated variable. Each button has a value. When a radiobutton is clicked on, the variable has that value and all the other buttons in the group are put into the off state. Similarly, setting the value of the variable is reflected in the state of the button group. An example is:

```
radiobutton .first -value one -text one -variable count
radiobutton .second -value two -text two -variable count
radiobutton .third -value three -text three -variable count
```

which creates three radiobuttons that are linked through the variable `count`. If button `.second` is active, for example, then the other two buttons are in the inactive state and `count` has the value `two`. The following code sets the button group to make the button `.third` active and the rest inactive regardless of the current state:

```
set count three
```

If the value of `count` does not match any of the values of the radiobuttons then they will all be off. For example executing the script

```
set count four
```

will turn all the radiobuttons off.

#### 40.3.4.6 entry

An entry widget allows input of a one line string. An example of an entry widget:

```
label .l -text "Enter your name"
entry .e -width 40 -textvariable your_name
```

would display a label widget named `.l` showing the string '`Enter your name`' and an entry widget named `.e` of width 40 characters. The value of variable `your_name` will reflect the string in the entry widget: as the entry widget string is updated, so is the value of the variable. Similarly, changing the value of `your_name` in a Tcl script will change the string displayed in the entry field.

#### 40.3.4.7 scale

A scale widget is for displaying an adjustable slider. As the slider is moved its value, which is displayed next to the slider, changes. To specify a scale, it must have '`-from`' and '`-to`'

attributes, which is the range of the scale. It can have a '`-command`' option, which is set to a script to evaluate when the value of the slider changes.

An example of a scale widget is:

```
scale .s -from 0 -to 100
```

which creates a scale widget with name `.s` that will slide over a range of integers from 0 to 100.

There are several other options that scales can have. For example it is possible to display tick marks along the length of the scale through the '`-tickinterval`' attribute, and it is possible to specify both vertically and horizontally displayed scales through the '`-orient`' attribute.

#### 40.3.4.8 `listbox`

A listbox is a widget that displays a list of single line strings. One or more of the strings may be selected through using the mouse. Initializing and manipulating the contents of a listbox is done through invoking methods on the instance of the listbox. As examples, the `insert` method is used to insert a string into a listbox, `delete` to delete one, and `get` to retrieve a particular entry. Also the currently selected list items can be retrieved through the `selection` command.

Here is an example of a listbox that is filled with entries of the form `entry N`:

```
listbox .l
for { set i 0 } { $i<10 } { incr i } {
    .l insert end "entry $i"
}
```

A listbox may be given a height and/or width attribute, in which case it is likely that not all of the strings in the list are visible at the same time. There are a number of methods for affecting the display of such a listbox.

The `see` method causes the listbox display to change so that a particular list element is in view. For example,

```
.l see 5
```

will make sure that the sixth list item is visible. (List elements are counted from element 0.)

#### 40.3.4.9 `scrollbar`

A scrollbar widget is intended to be used with any widget that is likely to be able to display only part of its contents at one time. Examples are listboxes, canvases, text widgets, and frames, amongst others.

A scrollbar widget is displayed as a movable slider between two arrows. Clicking on either arrow moves the slider in the direction of the arrow. The slider can be moved by dragging it with the cursor.

The scollbar and the widget it scrolls are connected through Tcl script calls. A scrollable widgets will have a `scrollcommand` attribute that is set to a Tcl script to call when the widget changes its view. When the view changes the command is called, and the command is usually set to change the state of its associated scrollbar.

Similarly, the scrollbar will have a `command` attribute that is another script that is called when an action is performed on the scrollbar, like moving the slider or clicking on one of its arrows. That action will be to update the display of the associated scrollable widget (which redraws itself and then invokes its `scrollcommand`, which causes the scrollbar to be redrawn).

How this is all done is best shown through an example:

```
listbox .l -yscrollcommand ".s set" -height 10
scrollbar .s -command ".l yview"
for { set i 0 } { $i < 50 } { incr i } {
    .l insert end "entry $i"
}
```

creates a listbox named `.l` and a scrollbar named `.s`. Fifty strings of the form `entry N` are inserted into the listbox. The clever part is the way the scrollbar and listbox are linked. The listbox has its '`-yscrollcommand`' attribute set to the script `".s set"`. What happens is that if the view of `.l` is changed, then this script is called with 4 arguments attached: the number of entries in the listbox, the size of the listbox window, the index of the first entry currently visible, and the index of the last entry currently visible. This is exactly enough information for the scrollbar to work out how to redisplay itself. For example, changing the display of the above listbox could result in the following '`-yscrollcommand`' script being called:

```
.s set 50 10 5 15
```

which says that the listbox contains 50 elements, it can display 10 at one time, the first element displayed has index 5 and the last one on display has index 15. This call invokes the `set` method of the scrollbar widget `.s`, which causes it to redraw itself appropriately.

If, instead, the user interacts with the scrollbar, then the scrollbar will invoke its '`-command`' script, which in this example is `".l yview"`. Before invoking the script, the scrollbar widget calculates which element should the first displayed in its associated widget and appends its

index to the call. For example, if element with index 20 should be the first to be displayed, then the following call will be made:

```
.l yview 20
```

which invokes the `yview` method of the listbox `.l`. This causes `.l` to be updated (which then causes its '`-yscrollcommand`' to be called, which updates the scrollbar).

### 40.3.4.10 `frame`

A frame widget does not do anything by itself except reserve an area of the display. Although this does not seem to have much purpose, it is a very important widget. It is a container widget; that is, it is used to group together collections of other widgets into logical groups. For example, a row of buttons may be grouped into a frame, then as the frame is manipulated so will the widgets displayed inside it. A frame widget can also be used to create large areas of color inside another container widget (such as another frame widget or a toplevel widget).

An example of the use of a frame widget as a container:

```
canvas .c -background red
frame .f
button .b1 -text button1
button .b2 -text button2
button .b3 -text button3
button .b4 -text button4
button .b5 -text button5
pack .b1 .b2 .b3 .b4 .b5 -in .f -side left
pack .c -side top -fill both -expand 1
pack .f -side bottom
```

which specifies that there are two main widgets a canvas named `.c` and a frame named `.f`. There are also 5 buttons, `.b1` through `.b5`. The buttons are displayed inside the frame. Then then the canvas is displayed at the top of the main window and the frame is displayed at the bottom. As the frame is displayed at the bottom, then so will the buttons because they are displayed inside the frame.

(The `pack` command causes the widgets to be handled for display by the packer geometry manager. The '`-fill`' and '`-expand 1`' options to pack for `.c` tell the display manager that if the window is resized then the canvas is to expand to fill most of the window. You will learn about geometry managers later in the Geometry Managers section.)

### 40.3.4.11 `toplevel`

A toplevel widget is a new toplevel window. It is a container widget inside which other widgets are displayed. The root toplevel widget has path `.` — i.e. dot on its own. Subsequent

toplevel widgets must have a name that is lower down the path tree just like any other widget.

An example of creating a toplevel widget is:

```
toplevel .t
```

All the widgets displayed inside `.t` must also have `.t` as the root of their path. For example, to create a button widget for display inside the `.t` toplevel the following would work:

```
button .t.b -text "Inside 't'"
```

(Attributes, such as size and title, of toplevel widgets can be changed through the `wm` command, which we will not cover in this tutorial. The reader is referred to the Tk manual.)

#### 40.3.4.12 `menu`

Yet another kind of container is a menu widget. It contains a list of widgets to display inside itself, as a pulldown menu. A simple entry in a menu widget is a `command` widget, displayed as an option in the menu widget, which if chosen executes a Tcl command. Other types of widgets allowed inside a menu widget are radiobuttons and checkboxes. A special kind of menu item is a `separator` that is used to group together menu items within a menu. (It should be noted that the widgets inside a menu widget are special to that menu widget and do not have an independent existence, and so do not have their own Tk name.)

A menu widget is built by first creating an instance of a menu widget (the container) and then invoking the `add` method to make entries into the menu. An example of a menu widget is as follows:

```
menu .m
.m add command -label "Open file" -command "open_file"
.m add command -label "Open directory" -command "open_directory"
.m add command -label "Save buffer" -command "save_buffer"
.m add command -label "Save buffer as..." -command "save_buffer_as"
.m add separator
.m add command -label "Make new frame" -command "new_frame"
.m add command -label "Open new display" -command "new_display"
.m add command -label "Delete frame" -command "delete_frame"
```

which creates a menu widget called `.m`, which contains eight menu items, the first four of which are commands, then comes a separator widget, then the final three command entries. (Some of you will notice that this menu is a small part of the `Files` menu from the menubar of the Emacs text editor.)

An example of a checkbox and some radiobutton widget entries:

```
.m add checkbox -label "Inverse video" -variable inv_vid
.m add radiobutton -label "black" -variable color
.m add radiobutton -label "blue" -variable color
.m add radiobutton -label "red" -variable color
```

which gives a checkbox displaying '`Inverse video`', keeping its state in the variable `inv_vid`, and three radiobuttons linked through the variable `color`.

Another menu item variant is the `cascade` variant, which is used to make cascadable menus, i.e. menus that have submenus. An example of a cascade entry is the following:

```
.m add cascade -label "I cascade" -menu .m.c
```

which adds a cascade entry to the menu `.m` that displays the text '`I cascade`'. If the '`I cascade`' option is chosen from the `.m` menu then the menu `.m.c` will be displayed.

The cascade option is also used to make menubars at the top of an application window. A menu bar is simply a menu each element of which is a cascade entry, (for example). The menubar menu is attached to the application window through a special configuration option for toplevel widgets, the '`-menu`' option. Then a menu is defined for each of the cascade entry in the menubar menu.

There are a large number of other variants to menu widgets: menu items can display bitmaps instead of text; menus can be specified as tear-off menus; accelerator keys can be defined for menu items; and so on.

#### 40.3.4.13 `menubutton`

A menubutton widget displays like a button, but when activated a menu pops up. The menu of the menubutton is defined through the `menu` command and is attached to the menubutton. An example of a menu button:

```
menubutton .mb -menu .mb.m -text "mymenu"
menu .mb.m
.mb.m add command -label hello
.mb.m add command -label goodbye
```

which crates a menubutton widget named `.mb` with attached menu `.mb.m` and displays the text '`mymenu`'. Menu `.mb.m` is defined as two command options, one labelled `hello` and the other labelled `goodbye`. When the menubutton `.mb` is clicked on then the menu `.mb.m` will popup and its options can be chosen.

#### 40.3.4.14 `canvas`

A canvas widget is a container widget that is used to manage the drawing of complex shapes; for example, squares, circles, ovals, and polygons. (It can also handle bitmaps, text and

most of the Tk widgets too.) The shapes may have borders, filled in, be clicked on, moved around, and manipulated.

We will not cover the working of the canvas widget here. It is enough to know that there is a powerful widget in the Tk toolkit that can handle all manner of graphical objects. The interested reader is referred to the Tk manual.

#### 40.3.4.15 `text`

A text widget is another powerful container widget that handles multi-line texts. The textwidget can display texts with varying font styles, sizes, and colors in the same text, and can also handle other Tk widgets embedded in the text.

The text widget is a rich and complicated widget and will not be covered here. The interested reader is referred to the Tk manual.

### 40.3.5 Geometry Managers

So far we have described each of the Tk widgets but have not mentioned how they are arranged to be displayed. Tk separates the creating of widgets from the way they are arranged for display. The "geometry" of the display is handled by a "geometry manager". A geometry manager is handed the set of widgets to display with instructions on their layout. The layout instructions are particular to each geometry manager.

Tk comes with three distinct geometry managers: `grid`, `place`, and `pack`. As might be expected the `grid` geometry manager is useful for creating tables of widgets, for example, a table of buttons.

The `place` geometry manager simply gives each widget an X and Y coordinate and places them at that coordinate in their particular parent window.

The `pack` geometry manager places widgets according to constraints, like "these three button widgets should be packed together from the left in their parent widget, and should resize with the parent".

(In practice the `grid` and `pack` geometry managers are the most useful because they can easily handle events such as resizing of the toplevel window, automatically adjusting the display in a sensible manner. `place` is not so useful for this.)

Each container widget (the master) has a geometry manager associated with it, which tells the container how to display its sub-widgets (slaves) inside it. A single master has one and only one kind of geometry manager associated with it, but each master can have a different kind. For example, a frame widget can use the packer to pack other frames inside it. One of the slave frames could use the grid manager to display buttons inside it itself, while another slave frame could use the packer to pack labels inside it itself.

### 40.3.5.1 `pack`

The problem is how to display widgets. For example, there is an empty frame widget inside which a bunch of other widgets will be displayed. The `pack` geometry manager's solution to this problem is to successively pack widgets into the empty space left in the container widget. The container widget is the master widget, and the widgets packed into it are its slaves. The slaves are packed in a sequence: the packing order.

What the packer does is to take the next slave to be packed. It allocates an area for the slave to be packed into from the remaining space in the master. Which part of the space is allocated depends on instructions to the packer. When the size of the space has been determined, this is sliced off the free space, and allocated to the widget that is displayed in it. Then the remaining space is available to subsequent slaves.

At any one time the space left for packing is a rectangle. If the widget is too small to use up a whole slice from the length or breadth of the free rectangle, still a whole slice is allocated so that the free space is always rectangular.

It can be tricky to get the packing instructions right to get the desired finished effect, but a large number of arrangements of widgets is possible using the packer.

Let us take a simple example: three buttons packed into the root window. First we create the buttons; see also `library('tcltk/examples/ex3.tcl')`:

```
button .b1 -text b1
button .b2 -text b2
button .b3 -text b3
```

then we can pack them thus:

```
pack .b1 .b2 .b3
```

which produces a display of the three buttons, one on top of the other, button `.b1` on the top, and button `.b3` on the bottom.

Three Plain Buttons

If we change the size of the text in button `.b2` through the command:

```
.b2 config -text "hello world"
```

then we see that the window grows to fit the middle button, but the other two buttons stay their original size.

Middle Button Widens

The packer defaults to packing widgets in from the top of the master. Other directions can be specified. For example, the command:

```
pack .b1 .b2 .b3 -side left
```

will pack starting at the left hand side of the window. The result of this is that the buttons are formed in a horizontal row with the wider button, `.b2`, in the middle.

Packing From The Left

## pad-ding

It is possible to leave space between widgets through the padding options to the packer: '`-padx`' and '`-pady`'. What these do is to allocate space to the slave that is padded with the padding distances. An example would be:

```
pack .b1 .b2 .b3 -side left -padx 10
```

External Padding

which adds 10 pixels of space to either side of the button widgets. This has the effect of leaving 10 pixels at the left side of button `.b1`, 20 pixels between buttons `.b1` and `.b2`, 20 pixels between buttons `.b2` and `.b3`, and finally 10 pixels on the right side of button `.b3`.

That was external padding for spacing widgets. There is also internal padding for increasing the size of widgets in the X and Y directions by a certain amount, through '`-ipadx`' and '`-ipady`' options; i.e. internal padding. For example:

```
pack .b1 .b2 .b3 -side left -ipadx 10 -ipady 10
```

Internal Padding

instead of spacing out the widgets, will increase their dimensions by 10 pixels in each direction.

## `fill`-ing

Remember that space is allocated to a widget from the currently available space left in the master widget by cutting off a complete slice from that space. It is often the case that the slice is bigger that the widget to be displayed in it.

There are further options for allowing a widget to fill the whole slice allocated to it. This is done through the '`-fill`' option, which can have one of four values: `none` for no filling (default), `x` to fill horizontally only, `y` to fill vertically only, and `both` to fill both horizontally and vertically at the same time.

Filling is useful, for example, for creating buttons that are the same size even though they display texts of differing lengths. To take our button example again, the following code produces three buttons, one on top of each other, but of the same size:

```
button .b1 -text b1
button .b2 -text "hello world"
button .b3 -text b3
pack .b1 .b2 .b3 -fill x
```

Using `fill` For Evenly Sized Widgets

How does this work? The width of the toplevel windows is dictated by button `.b2` because it has the widest text. Because the three buttons are packed from top to bottom, then the slices of space allocated to them are cut progressively straight along the top of the remaining space. i.e. each widget gets a horizontal slice of space the same width cut from the top-level widget. Only the wide button `.b2` would normally fit the whole width of its slice. But by allowing the other two widgets to fill horizontally, then they will also take up the whole width of their slices. The result: 3 buttons stacked on top of each other, each with the same width, although the texts they display are not the same length.

A further common example is adding a scrollbar to a listbox. The trick is to get the scrollbar to size itself to the listbox; see also `library('tcltk/examples/ex9a.tcl')`:

```
listbox .l
scrollbar .s
pack .l .s -side left
```

Scrollbar With Listbox, First Try

So far we have a listbox on the left and a tiny scrollbar on the right. To get the scrollbar to fill up the vertical space around it add the following command:

```
pack .s -fill y
```

Now the display looks like a normal listbox with a scrollbar.

Scrollbar With Listbox, Second Try

Why does this work? They are packed from the left, so first a large vertical slice of the master is given to the listbox, then a thin vertical slice is given to the scrollbar. The scrollbar has a small default width and height and so it does not fill the vertical space of its slice. But filling in the vertical direction (through the `pack .s -fill y` command) allows it to fill its space, and so it adjusts to the height of the listbox.

## `expand`-ing

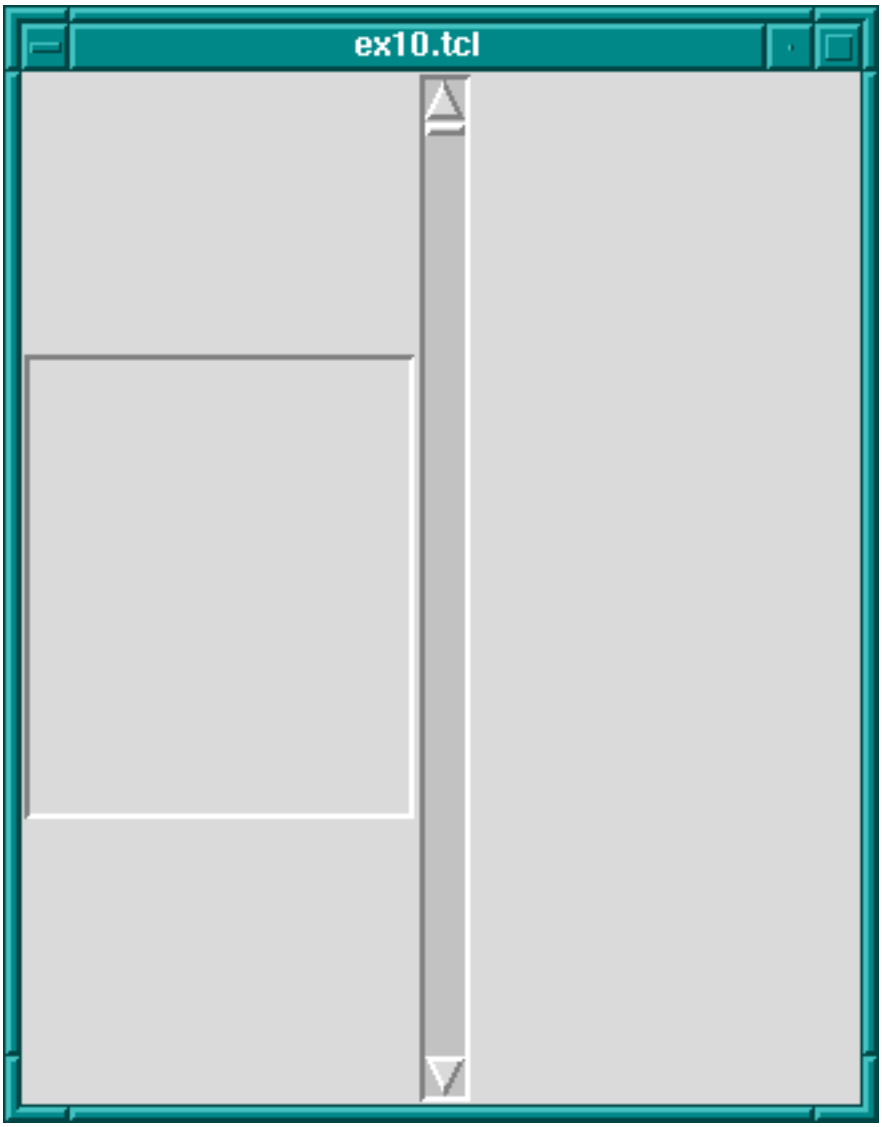
The `fill` packing option specifies whether the widget should fill space left over in its slice of space. A further option to take into account is what happens when the space allocated to the master widget is much greater than the that used by its slaves. This is not usually a problem initially because the master container widget is sized to shrink-wrap around the space used by its slaves. If the container is subsequently resized, however, to a much larger size there is a question as to what should happen to the slave widgets. A common example of resizing a container widget is the resizing of a top-level window widget.

The default behavior of the packer is not to change the size or arrangement of the slave widgets. There is an option though through the `expand` option to cause the slices of space allocated to slaves to expand to fill the newly available space in the master. `expand` can have one of two values: `0` for no expansion, and `1` for expansion.

Take the listbox-scrollbar example; see also `library('tcltk/examples/ex10.tcl')`:

```
listbox .l
scrollbar .s
pack .l -side left
pack .s -side left -fill y
```

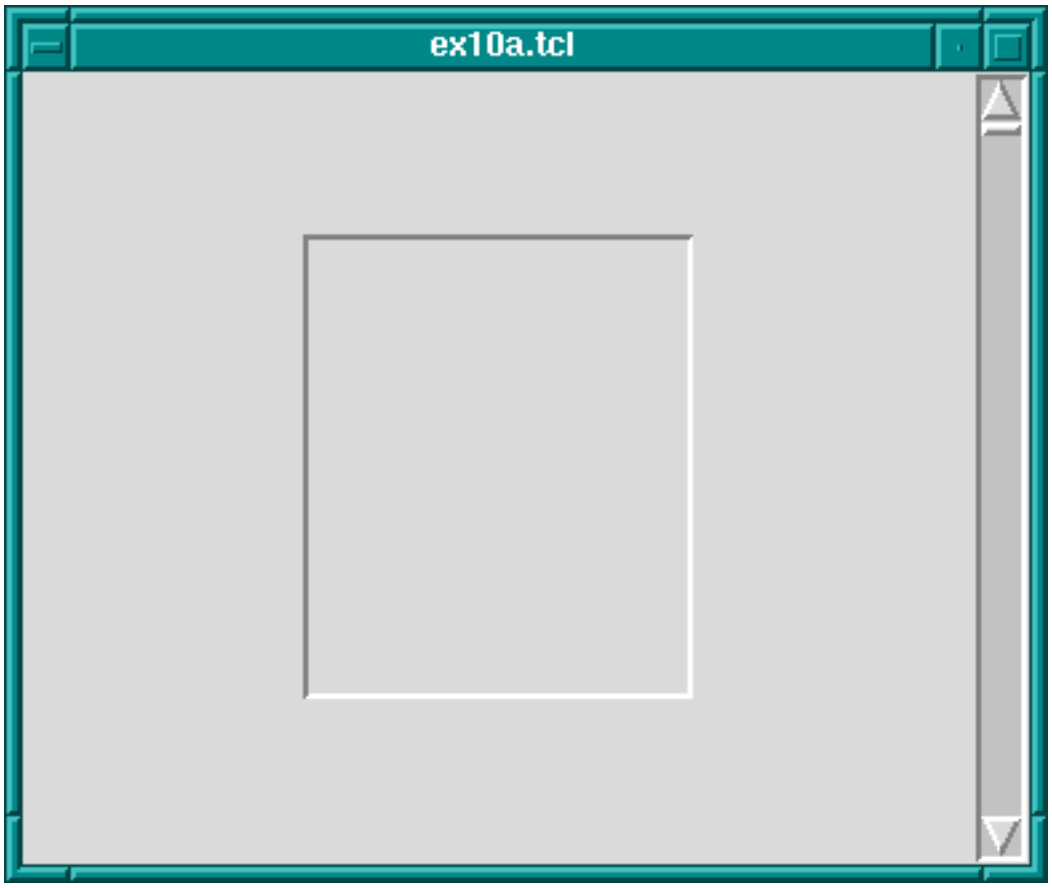
Initially this looks good, but now resize the window to a much bigger size. You will find that the listbox stays the same size and that empty space appears at the top and bottom of it, and that the scrollbar resizes in the vertical. It is now not so nice.




Scrollbar And Listbox, Problems With Resizing

We can fix part of the problem by having the listbox expand to fill the extra space generated by resizing the window.

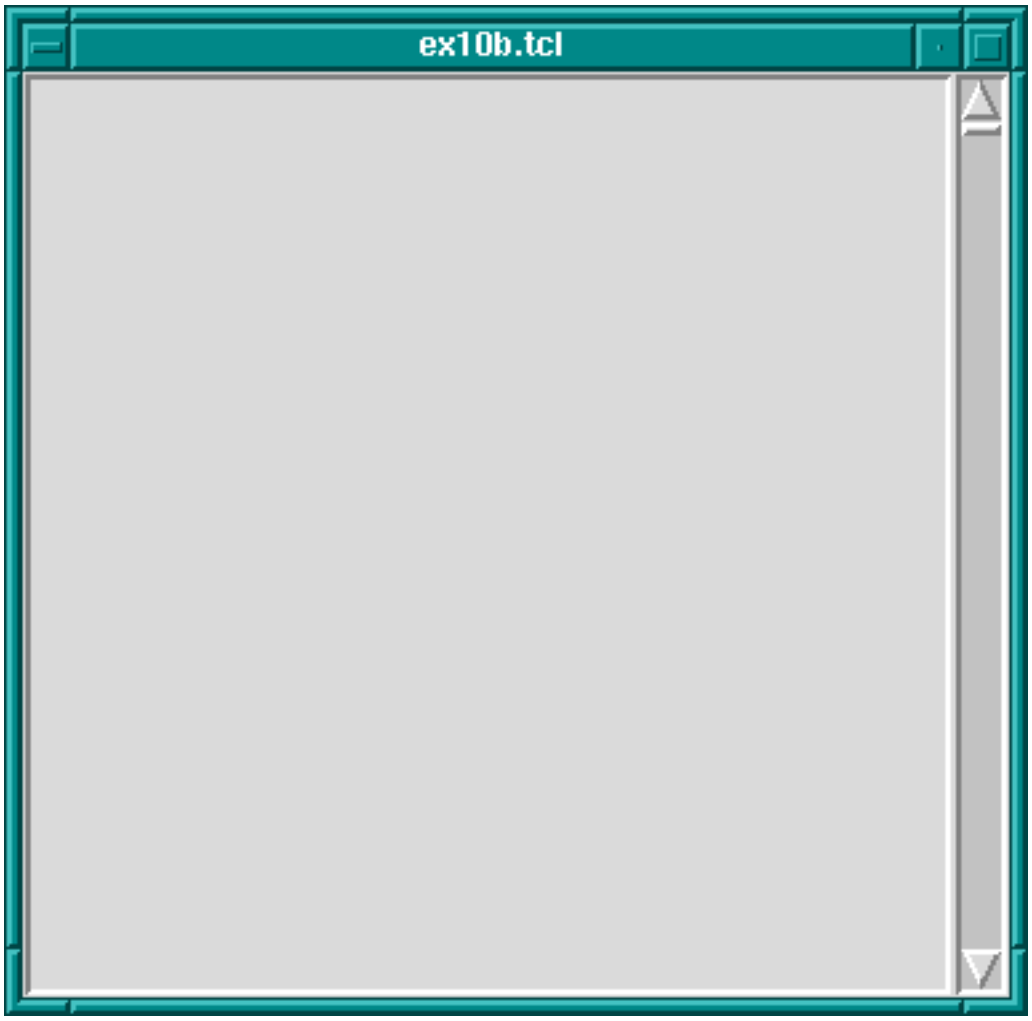
```
pack .l -side left -expand 1
```




Scrollbar And Listbox, Almost There

The problem now is that `expand` just expands the space allocated to the listbox, it doesn't stretch the listbox itself. To achieve that we need to apply the `fill` option to the listbox too.

```
pack .l -side left -expand 1 -fill both
```

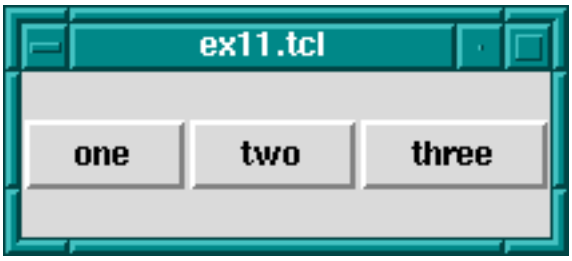



Scrollbar And Listbox, Problem Solved Using `fill`

Now whichever way the top-level window is resized, the listbox-scrollbar combination should look good.

If more than one widget has the expansion bit set, then the space is allocated equally to those widgets. This can be used, for example, to make a row of buttons of equal size that resize to fill the widget of their container. Try the following code; see also `library('tcltk/examples/ex11.tcl')`:

```
button .b1 -text "one"
button .b2 -text "two"
button .b3 -text "three"
pack .b1 .b2 .b3 -side left -fill x -expand 1
```




Resizing Evenly Sized Widgets

Now resize the window. You will see that the buttons resize to fill the width of the window, each taking an equal third of the width.

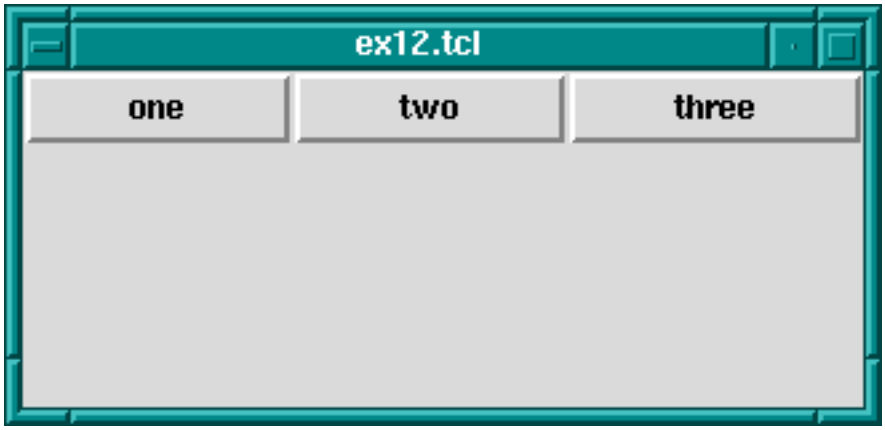
> **Please note**: the best way to get the hang of the packer is to play with it. Often the results are not what you expect, especially when it comes to fill and expand options. When you have created a display that looks pleasing, always try resizing the window to see if it still looks pleasing, or whether some of your fill and expand options need revising.

## Anchors and Packing Order

There is an option to change how a slave is displayed if its allocated space is larger than itself. Normally it will be displayed centered. That can be changed by anchoring it with the '`-anchor`' option. The option takes a compass direction as its argument: `n`, `s`, `e`, `w`, `nw`, `ne`, `sw`, `se`, or `c` (for center).

For example, the previous example with the resizing buttons displays the buttons in the center of the window, the default anchoring point. If we wanted the buttons to be displayed at the top of the window then we would anchor them there thus; see also `library('tcltk/examples/ex12.tcl')`:

```
button .b1 -text "one"
button .b2 -text "two"
button .b3 -text "three"
pack .b1 .b2 .b3 -side left -fill x -expand 1 -anchor n
```



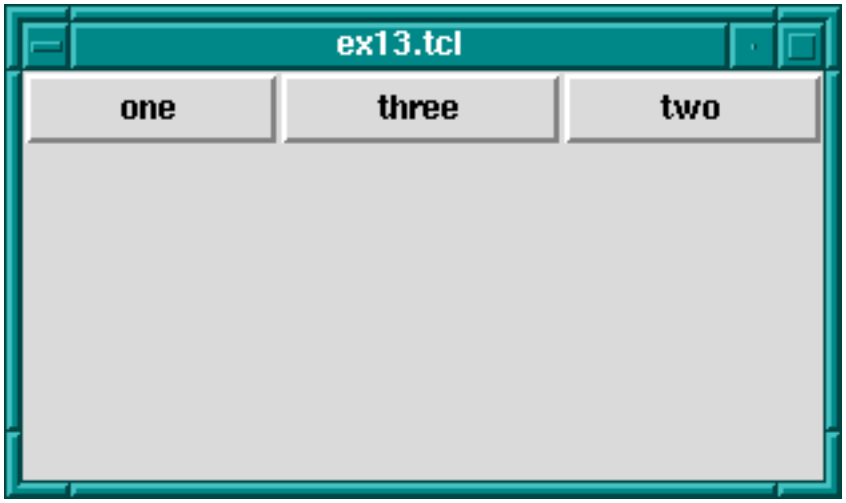
Anchoring Widgets

Each button is anchored at the top of its slice and so in this case is displayed at the top of the window.

The packing order of widget can also be changed. For example,

```
pack .b3 -before .b2
```

will change the positions of `.b2` and `.b3` in our examples.




Changing The Packing Order Of Widgets

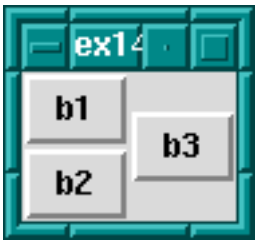
### 40.3.5.2 `grid`

The grid geometry manager is useful for arranging widgets in grids or tables. A grid has a number of rows and columns and a widget can occupy one of more adjacent rows and columns.

A simple example of arranging three buttons; see also `library('tcltk/examples/ex14.tcl')`:

```
button .b1 -text b1
button .b2 -text b2
button .b3 -text b3
grid .b1 -row 0 -column 0
grid .b2 -row 1 -column 0
grid .b3 -row 0 -column 1 -rowspan 2
```

this will display button `.b1` above button `.b2`. Button `.b3` will be displayed in the next column and it will take up two rows.




Using the `grid` Geometry Manager

However, `.b3` will be displayed in the center of the space allocated to it. It is possible to get it to expand to fill the two rows it has using the '`-sticky`' option. The '`-sticky`' option says to which edges of its cells a widget "sticks" to, i.e. expands to reach. (This is like the fill and expand options in the pack manager.) So to get `.b3` to expand to fill its space we could use the following:

```
grid .b3 -sticky ns
```

which says stick in the north and south directions (top and bottom). This results in `.b3` taking up two rows and filling them.

`grid` Geometry Manager, Cells With Sticky Edges

There are plenty of other options to the grid geometry manager. For example, it is possible to give some rows/columns more "weight" than others, which gives them more space in the master. For example, if in the above example you wanted to allocate 1/3 of the width of the master to column 0 and 2/3 of the width to column 1, then the following commands would achieve that:

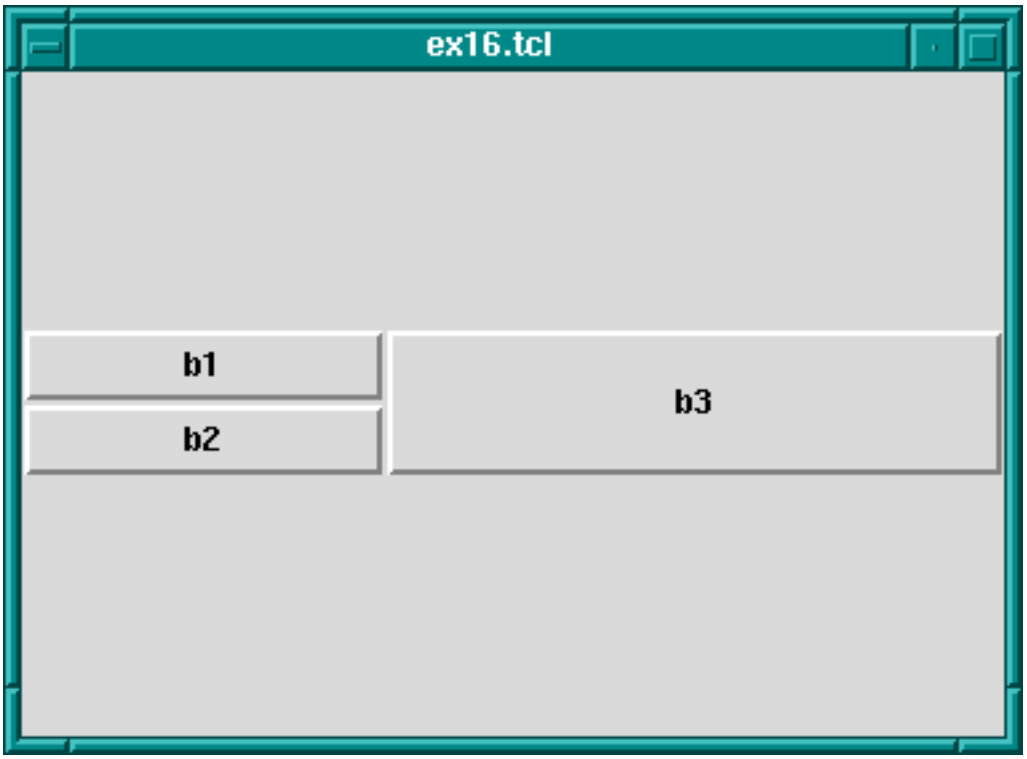
```
grid columnconfigure . 0 -weight 1
grid columnconfigure . 1 -weight 2
```

which says that the weight of column 0 for master `.` (the root window) is 1 and the weight of column 1 is 2. Since column 1 has more weight than column 0 it gets proportionately more space in the master.

It may not be apparent that this works until you resize the window. You can see even more easily how much space is allocated to each button by making expanding them to fill their space through the sticky option. The whole example looks like this; see also `library('tcltk/examples/ex16.tcl')`:

```
button .b1 -text b1
button .b2 -text b2
button .b3 -text b3
grid .b1 -row 0 -column 0 -sticky nsew
grid .b2 -row 1 -column 0 -sticky nsew
grid .b3 -row 0 -column 1 -rowspan 2 -sticky nsew
grid columnconfigure . 0 -weight 1
grid columnconfigure . 1 -weight 2
```

Now resize the window to various sizes and we will see that button `.b3` has twice the width of buttons `.b1` and `.b2`.




Changing Row/Column Ratios

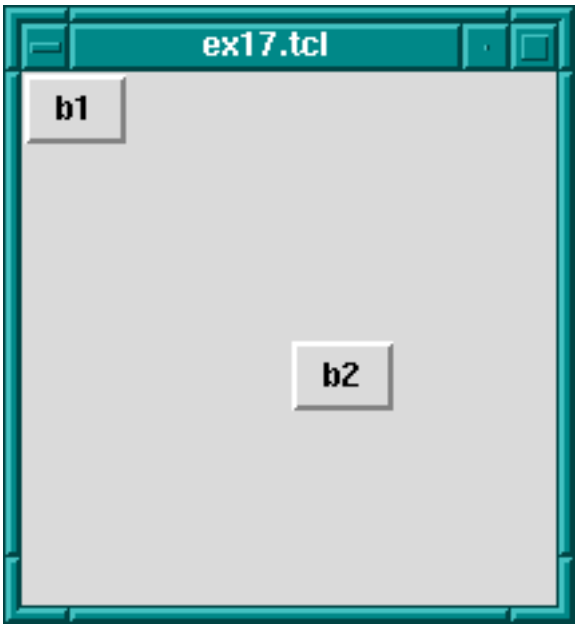
The same kind of thing can be specified for each row too via the `grid rowconfigure` command.

For other options and a full explanation of the grid manager see the manual.

### 40.3.5.3 `place`

Place simply places the slave widgets in the master at the given x and y coordinates. It displays the widgets with the given width and height. For example (see also `library('tcltk/examples/ex17.tcl')`):

```
button .b1 -text b1
button .b2 -text b2
button .b3 -text b3
place .b1 -x 0 -y 0
place .b2 -x 100 -y 100
place .b3 -x 200 -y 200
```




Using The `place` Geometry Manager

will place the buttons `.b1`, `.b2`, and `.b3` along a diagonal 100 pixels apart in both the x and y directions. Heights and widths can be given in absolute sizes, or relative to the size of the master in which case they are specified as a floating point proportion of the master; 0.0 being no size and 1.0 being the size of the master. x and y coordinates can also be specified in a relative way, also as a floating point number. For example, a relative y coordinate of 0.0 refers to the top edge of the master, while 1.0 refers to the bottom edge. If both relative and absolute x and y values are specified then they are summed.

Through this system the placer allows widgets to be placed on a kind of rubber sheet. If all the coordinates are specified in relative terms, then as the master is resized then so will the slaves move to their new relative positions.

### 40.3.6 Event Handling

So far we have covered the widgets types, how instances of them are created, how their attributes can be set and queried, and how they can be managed for display using geometry managers. What we have not touched on is how to give each widget a behavior.

This is done through event handlers. Each widget instance can be given a window event handler for each kind of window event. A window event is something like the cursor moving into or out of the widget, a key press happening while the widget is active (in focus), or the widget being destroyed.

Event handlers are specified through the `bind` command:

```
bind widgetName eventSequence command
```

where *widgetName* is the name or class of the widget to which the event handler should be attached, *eventSqueuence* is a description of the event that this event handler will handle, and *command* is a script that is invoked when the event happens (i.e. it is the event handler).

Common event types are

`Key`
`KeyPress` when a key was pressed

`KeyRelease`
when a key was released

`Button`
`ButtonPress`
when a mouse button was pressed

`ButtonRelease`
when a mouse button was released

`Enter` when the cursor moves into a widget

`Leave` when the cursor moved our of a widget

`Motion` when the cursor moves within a widget

There are other event types. Please refer to the Tk documentation for a complete list.

The *eventSequence* part of a `bind` command is a list of one or more of these events, each event surrounded by angled brackets. (Mostly, an event sequence consists of handling a single event. Later we will show more complicated event sequences.)

An example is the following:

```
button .b -text "click me"
pack .b
bind .b <Enter> { puts "entering .b" }
```

makes a button `.b` displaying text '`click me`' and displays it in the root window using the packing geometry manager. The `bind` command specifies that when the cursor enters (i.e. goes onto) the widget, then the text `entering .b` is printed at the terminal.

We can make the button change color as the cursor enters or leaves it like this:

```
button .b -text "click me" -background red
pack .b
bind .b <Enter> { .b config -background blue }
bind .b <Leave> { .b config -background red }
```

which causes the background color of the button to change to blue when the cursor enters it and to change back to red when the cursor leaves.

An action can be appended to an event handler by prefixing the action with a `+` sign. An example is:

```
bind .b <Enter> {+puts "entering .b"}
```

which, when added to the example above, would not only change the color of the button to red when the cursor enters it, but would also print `entering .b` to the terminal.

A binding can be revoked simply by binding the empty command to it:

```
bind .b <Enter> {}
```

A list of events that are bound can be found by querying the widget thus:

```
bind .b
```

which will return a list of bound events.

To get the current command(s) bound to an event on a widget, invoke `bind` with the widget name and the event. An example is:

```
bind .b <Enter>
```

which will return a list of the commands bound to the event `<Enter>` on widget `.b`.

Binding can be generalized to sequences of events. For example, we can create an entry widget that prints `spells rob` each time the key sequence `ESC r o b` happens:

```
entry .e
pack .e
bind .e <Escape>rob {puts "spells rob"}
```

(A letter on its own in an event sequence stands for that key being pressed when the corresponding widget is in focus.)

Events can also be bound for entire classes of widgets. For example, if we wanted to perform the same trick for ALL entry widgets we could use the following command:

```
bind entry <Escape>rob {puts "spells rob"}
```

In fact, we can bind events over all widgets using `all` as the widget class specifier.

The event script can have substitutions specified in it. Certain textual substitutions are then made at the time the event is processed. For example, `%x` in a script gets the x coordinate of the mouse substituted for it. Similarly, `%y` becomes the y coordinate, `%W` the dot path of the window on which the event happened, `%K` the keysym of the button that was pressed, and so on. For a complete list, see the manual.

In this way it is possible to execute the event script in the context of the event.

A clever example of using the `all` widget specifier and text substitutions is given in John Ousterhout's book on Tcl/Tk (see Section 40.7 [Resources], page 685):

```
bind all <Enter> {puts "Entering %W at (%x, %y)"}
bind all <Leave> {puts "Leaving %W at (%x, %y)"}
bind all <Motion> {puts "Pointer at (%x, %y)"}
```

which implements a mouse tracker for all the widgets in a Tcl/Tk application. The widget's name and x and y coordinates are printed at the terminal when the mouse enters or leaves any widget, and also the x and y coordinates are printed when the mouse moves within a widget.

### 40.3.7 Miscellaneous

There are a couple of other Tk commands that we ought to mention: `destroy` and `update`.

The `destroy` command is used to destroy a widget, i.e. remove it from the Tk interpreter entirely and so from the display. Any children that the widget may have are also `destroy`ed. Anything connected to the destroyed widget, such as bindings, are also cleaned up automatically.

For example, to create a window containing a button that is destroyed when the button is pressed:

```
button .b -text "Die!" -command { destroy . }
pack .b
```

creates a button `.b` displaying the text '`Die!`', which runs the command `destroy .` when it is pressed. Because the widget `.` is the main toplevel widget or window, running that command will kill the entire application associated with that button.

The command `update` is used to process any pending Tk events. An event is not just such things as moving the mouse but also updating the display for newly created and displayed widgets. This may be necessary in that usually Tk draws widgets only when it is idle. Using the `update` command forces Tk to stop and handle any outstanding events including updating the display to its actually current state, i.e. flushing out the pending display of any widgets. (This is analogous to the `fflush` command in C that flushes writes on a stream to disk. In Tk displaying of widgets is "buffered"; calling the `update` command flushes the buffer.)

### 40.3.8 What We Have Left Out

There are a number of Tk features that we have not described but we list some of them here in case the reader is interested. Refer to the Tk manual for more explanation.

`photo` creating full color images through the command

`wm` setting and getting window attributes

selection and focus commands
modal interaction
(not recommended)

`send` sending messages between Tk applications

### 40.3.9 Example pure Tcl/Tk program

To show some of what can be done with Tcl/Tk, we will show an example of part of a GUI for an 8-queens program. Most people will be familiar with the 8-queens problem: how to place 8 queens on a chess board such that they do not attack each other according to the normal rules of chess.

Our example will not be a program to solve the 8-queens problem (that will come later in the tutorial) but just the Tcl/Tk part for displaying a solution. The code can be found in `library('tcltk/examples/ex18.tcl')`.

The way an 8-queens solution is normally presented is as a list of numbers. The position of a number in the list indicates the column the queens is placed at and the number itself indicates the row. For example, the Prolog list `[8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1]` would indicate 8 queens along the diagonal starting a column 1, row 8 and finishing at column 8 row 1.

The problem then becomes, given this list of numbers as a solution, how to display the solution using Tcl/Tk. This can be divided into two parts: how to display the initial empty chess board, and how to display a queen in one of the squares.

Here is our code for setting up the chess board:

```
                                                        % ex18.pl
#! /usr/bin/wish

proc setup_board { } {
    # create container for the board
    frame .queens

    # loop of rows and columns
    for {set row 1} {$row <= 8} {incr row} {
        for {set column 1} {$column <= 8} {incr column} {

            # create label with a queen displayed in it
            label .queens.$column-$row -bitmap @bitmaps/q64s.bm -relief flat

            # choose a background color depending on the position of the
            # square; make the queen invisible by setting the foreground
            # to the same color as the background
            if { [expr ($column + $row) % 2] } {
                .queens.$column-$row config -background #ffff99
                .queens.$column-$row config -foreground #ffff99
            } else {
                .queens.$column-$row config -background #66ff99
                .queens.$column-$row config -foreground #66ff99
            }

            # place the square in a chess board grid
            grid .queens.$column-$row -row $row -column $column -padx 1 -pady 1
        }
    }
    pack .queens
}

setup_board
```

The first thing that happens is that a frame widget is created to contain the board. Then there are two nested loops that loop over the rows and columns of the chess board. Inside the loop, the first thing that happens is that a label widget is created. It is named using the row and column variables so that it can be easily referenced later. The label will not be used to display text but to display an image, a bitmap of a queen. The label creation command therefore has the special argument '`-bitmap @q64s.bm`', which says that the label will display the bitmap loaded from the file '`q64s.bm`'.

The label with the queen displayed in it has now been created. The next thing that happens is that the background color of the label (square) is chosen. Depending on the position of the square it becomes either a "black" or a "white" square. At the same time, the foreground color is set to the background color. This is so that the queen (displayed in the foreground color) will be invisible, at least when the board is first displayed.

The final action in the loop is to place the label (square) in relation to all the other squares for display. A chess board is a simple grid of squares, and so this is most easily done through the `grid` geometry manager.

After the board has been set up square-by-square it still needs to be displayed, which is done by `pack`-ing the outermost frame widget.

To create and display a chess board widget, all that is needed is to call the procedure

```
setup_board
```

which creates the chess board widget.

Once the chess board has been displayed, we need to be able to take a solution, a list of rows ordered by column, and place queens in the positions indicated.

Taking a topdown approach, our procedure for taking a solution and displaying is as follows:

```
proc show_solution { solution } {
    clear_board
    set column 1
    foreach row $solution {
        place_queen $column $row
        incr column
    }
}
```

This takes a solution in `solution`, clears the board of all queens, and then places each queen from the solution on the board.

Next we will handle clearing the board:

```
proc clear_board { } {
    for { set column 1 } {$column <= 8} {incr column} {
        reset_column $column
    }
}

proc reset_column { column } {
    for {set row 1 } { $row <= 8 } {incr row} {
        set_queens $column $row off
    }
}

proc set_queens { column row state } {
    if { $state == "on" } {
        .queens.$column-$row config -foreground black
    } else {
        .queens.$column-$row config
        -foreground [.queens.$column-$row cget -background]
    }
}
```

The procedure `clear_board` clears the board of queens by calling the procedure `reset_column` for each of the 8 columns on a board. `reset_column` goes through each square of a column and sets the square to `off` through `set_queens`. In turn, `set_queens` sets the foreground color of a square to black if the square is turned `on`, thus revealing the queen bitmap, or sets the foreground color of a square to its background color, thus making the queens invisible, if it is called with something other than `on`.

That handles clearing the board, clearing a column or turning a queen on or off on a particular square.

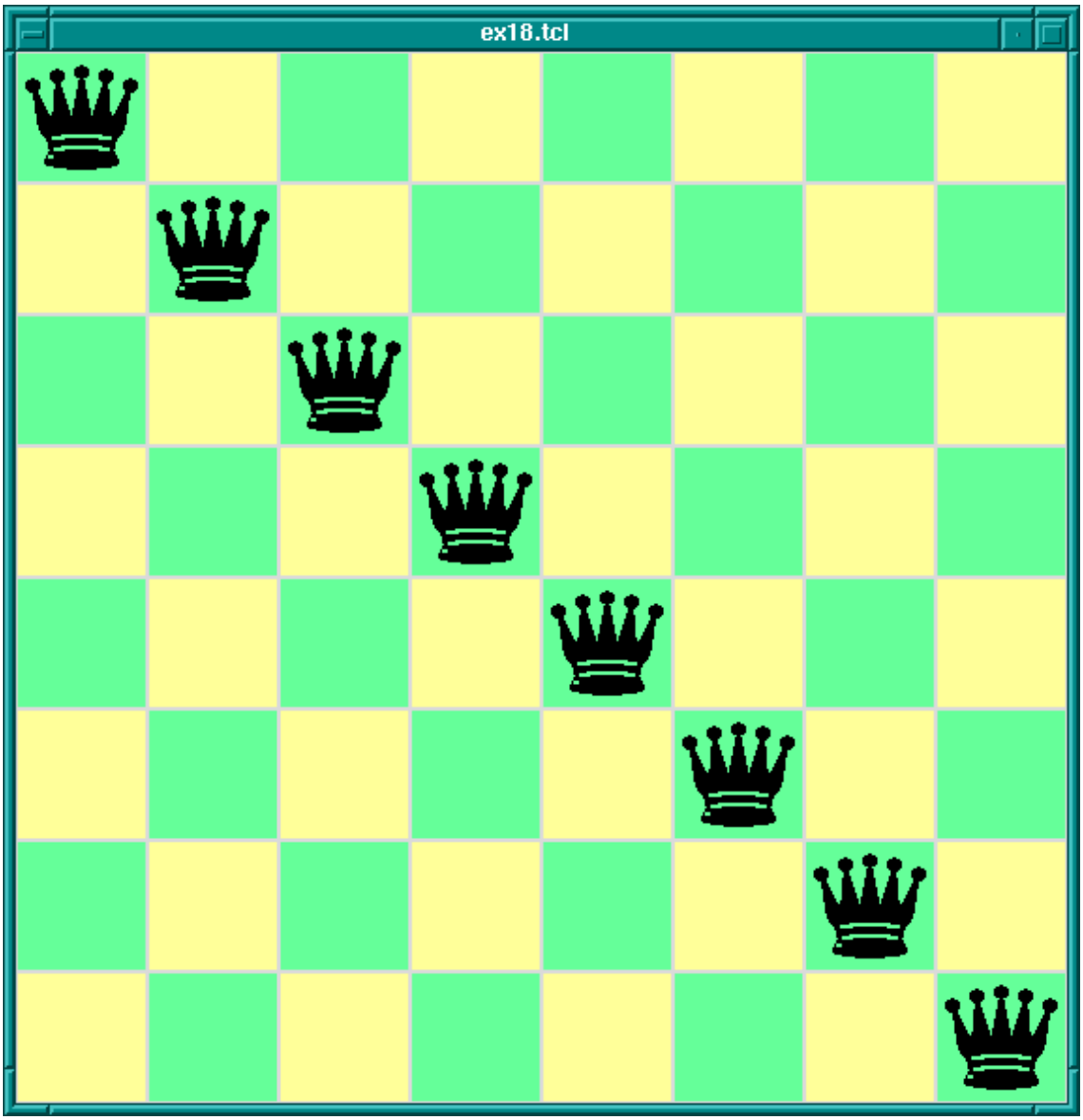
The final part is `place_queen`:

```
proc place_queen { column row } {
    reset_column $column
    set_queens $column $row on
}
```

This resets a column so that all queens on it are invisible and then sets the square with coordinates given in `row` and `column` to on.

A typical call would be:

```
show_solution "1 2 3 4 5 6 7 6 8"
```




8-Queens Display In Tcl/Tk

which would display queens along a diagonal. (This is of course not a solution to the 8-queens problem. This Tcl/Tk code only displays possible queens solutions; it doesn't check if the solution is valid. Later we will combine this Tcl/Tk display code with Prolog code for generating solutions to the 8-queens problem.)

## 40.4 The Tcl/Tk Prolog Library

Now we have covered the wonders of Tcl/Tk, we come to the real meat of the tutorial: how to couple the power of Tcl/Tk with the power of SICStus Prolog.

Tcl/Tk is included in SICStus Prolog by loading a special library. The library provides a bidirectional interface between Tcl/Tk and Prolog.

### 40.4.1 How it Works - An Overview

Before describing the details of the Tcl/Tk library we will give an overview of how it works with the Prolog system.

The Tcl/Tk library provides a loosely coupled integration of Prolog and Tcl/Tk. By this we mean that the two systems, Prolog and Tcl/Tk, although joined through the library, are mostly separate; Prolog variables have nothing to do with Tcl variables, Prolog and Tcl program states are separate, and so on.

The Tcl/Tk library extends Prolog so that Prolog can create a number of independent Tcl interpreters with which it can interact. Basically, there is a predicate, which when executed creates a Tcl interpreter and returns a handle with which Prolog can interact with the interpreter.

Prolog and a Tcl interpreter interact, and so communicate and cooperate, through two ways:

1. One system evaluates a code fragment in the other system and retrieves the result. For example, Prolog evaluates a Tcl code fragment in an attached Tcl interpreter and gets the result of the evaluation in a Prolog variable. Similarly, a Tcl interpreter can evaluate a Prolog goal and get the result back through a Tcl variable.

   This is synchronous communication in that the caller waits until the callee has finished their evaluation and reads the result.
2. One system passing a "message" to the other on an "event" queue.

   This is asynchronous communication in that the receiver of the message can read the message whenever it likes, and the sender can send the message without having to wait for a reply.

The Tk part of Tcl/Tk comes in because an attached Tcl interpreter may be extended with the Tk widget set and so be a Tcl/Tk interpreter. This makes it possible to add GUIs to a Prolog application: the application loads the Tcl/Tk Prolog library, creates a Tcl/Tk interpreter, and sends commands to the interpreter to create a Tk GUI. The user interacts with the GUI and therefore with the underlying Prolog system.

There are two main ways to partition the Tcl/Tk library functions: by function, i.e. the task they perform; or by package, i.e. whether they are Tcl, Tk, or Prolog functions. We will describe the library in terms of the former because it fits in with the tutorial style better, but at the end is a summary section that summarizes the library functions both ways.

Taking the functional approach, the library can be split into six function groups:

- basic functions
  - loading the library
  - creating and destroying Tcl and Tcl/Tk interpreters
- evaluation functions

  - evaluating Tcl expressions from Prolog
  - evaluating Prolog expressions from Tcl
- Prolog event functions
  - handling the Prolog/Tcl event queue
- Tk event handling
- passing control to Tk
- housekeeping functions

We go through each group in turn.

### 40.4.2 Basic Functions

#### 40.4.2.1 Loading the Library

First we need to know how to load the Tcl/Tk library into Prolog. This is done through the `use_module/1` predicate thus:

```
| ?- use_module(library(tcltk)).
```

#### 40.4.2.2 Creating a Tcl Interpreter

The heart of the system is the ability to create an embedded Tcl interpreter with which the Prolog system can interact. A Tcl interpreter is created within Prolog through a call to `tcl_new/1`:

```
tcl_new(-TclInterpreter)
```

which creates a new interpreter, initializes it, and returns a reference to it in the variable *TclInterpreter*. The reference can then be used in subsequent calls to manipulate the interpreter. More than one Tcl interpreter object can be active in the Prolog system at any one time.

#### 40.4.2.3 Creating a Tcl Interpreter Extended with Tk

To start a Tcl interpreter extended with Tk, the `tk_new/2` predicate is called from Prolog. It has the following form:

```
tk_new(+Options, -TclInterpreter)
```

which returns through the variable *TclInterpreter* a handle to the underlying Tcl interpreter. The usual Tcl/Tk window pops up after this call is made and it is with reference to that

window that subsequent widgets are created. As with the `tcl_new/1` predicate, many Tcl/Tk interpreters may be created from Prolog at the same time through calls to `tk_new/2`.

The *Options* part of the call is a list of some (or none) of the following elements:

`top_level_events`
: This allows Tk events to be handled while Prolog is waiting for terminal input; for example, while the Prolog system is waiting for input at the Prolog prompt. Without this option, Tk events are not serviced while the Prolog system is waiting for terminal input. (For information on Tk events; see Section 40.3.6 [Event Handling], page 638).

  **Please note**: This option is not currently supported under Windows.

`name(+ApplicationName)`
: This gives the main window a title *ApplicationName*. This name is also used for communicating between Tcl/Tk applications via the Tcl `send` command. (`send` is not covered in this document. Please refer to the Tcl/Tk documentation.)

`display(+Display)`
: (This is X windows specific.) Gives the name of the screen on which to create the main window. If this is not given, the default display is determined by the `DISPLAY` environment variable.

An example of using `tk_new/2`:

```
| ?- tk_new([top_level_events, name('My SICStus/Tk App')], Tcl).
```

which creates a Tcl/Tk interpreter, returns a handle to it in the variable `Tcl` and Tk events are serviced while Prolog is waiting at the Prolog prompt. The window that pops up will have the title `My SICStus/Tk App`.

The reference to a Tcl interpreter returned by a call to `tk_new/2` is used in the same way and in the same places as a reference returned by a call to `tcl_new/1`. They are both references to Tcl interpreters.

#### 40.4.2.4 Removing a Tcl Interpreter

To remove a Tcl interpreter from the system, use the `tcl_delete/1` predicate:

```
tcl_delete(+TclInterpreter)
```

which given a reference to a Tcl interpreter, closes down the interpreter and removes it. The reference can be for a plain Tcl interpreter or for a Tk enhanced one; `tcl_delete/1` removes both kinds.

### 40.4.3 Evaluation Functions

There are two functions in this category: Prolog extended to be able to evaluate Tcl expressions in a Tcl interpreter; Tcl extended to be able to evaluate a Prolog expression in the Prolog system.

#### 40.4.3.1 Command format

There is a mechanism for describing Tcl commands in Prolog as Prolog terms. This is used in two ways: firstly, to be able to represent Tcl commands in Prolog so that they can be subsequently passed to Tcl for evaluation; and secondly for passing terms back from Tcl to Prolog by doing the reverse transformation.

Why not represent a Tcl command as a simple atom or string? This can indeed be done, but commands are often not static and each time they are called require slightly different parameters. This means constructing different atoms or strings for each command in Prolog, which are expensive operations. A better solution is to represent a Tcl command as a Prolog term, something that can be quickly and efficiently constructed and stored by a Prolog system. Variable parts to a Tcl command (for example command arguments) can be passed in through Prolog variables.

In the special command format, a Tcl command is specified as follows.

```
Command          ::= Name
                   | chars(code-list)
                   | write(term)
                   | writeq(term)
                   | write_canonical(term)
                   | format(Fmt,Args)
                   | dq(Command)
                   | br(Command)
                   | sqb(Command)
                   | min(Command)
                   | dot(ListOfNames)
                   | list(ListOfCommands)
                   | ListOfCommands
Fmt              ::= atom
Name             ::= atom                          { other than [] }
                   | number
ListOfCommands   ::= []
                   | [ Command | ListOfCommands ]
ListOfNames      ::= []
                   | [ Name | ListOfNames ]
Args             ::= []
                   | [ term | Args ]
```

where

*Atom*
*Number* denote their printed representations

`chars(`*`PrologString`*`)`
denotes the string represented by *PrologString* (a code-list)

`write(`*`Term`*`)`
`writeq(`*`Term`*`)`
`write_canonical(`*`Term`*`)`
denotes the string that is printed by the corresponding built-in predicate.

> **Please note**: In general it is not possible to reconstruct *Term* from the string printed by `write/1`. If *Term* will be passed back into Prolog it therefore safest to use `write_canonical(`*`Term`*`)` (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142).

`format(`*`Fmt, Args`*`)`
denotes the string that is printed by the corresponding built-in predicate

`dq(`*`Command`*`)`
denotes the string specified by *Command*, enclosed in double quotes

`br(`*`Command`*`)`
denotes the string specified by *Command*, enclosed in curly brackets

`sqb(`*`Command`*`)`
denotes the string specified by *Command*, enclosed in square brackets

`min(`*`Command`*`)`
denotes the string specified by *Command*, immediately preceded by a hyphen

`dot(`*`ListOfName`*`)`
denotes the widget path specified by *ListOfName*, preceded by and separated by dots

`list(`*`ListOfCommands`*`)`
denotes the TCL list with one element for each element in *ListOfCommands*. This differs from just using *ListOfCommands* or `br(`*`ListOfCommands`*`)` when any of the elements contains spaces, braces or other characters treated specially by TCL.

*ListOfCommands*
denotes the string denoted by each element, separated by spaces. In many cases `list(`*`ListOfCommands`*`)` is a better choice.

Examples of command specifications and the resulting Tcl code:

```
[set, x, 32]
    ⇒ set x 32

[set, x, br([a, b, c])]
    ⇒ set x {a b c}
```

```
[dot([panel,value_info,name]), configure, min(text), br(write('$display'/1))]
     ⇒ .panel.value_info.name configure -text {$display/1

['foo bar',baz]
     ⇒foo bar baz

list(['foo bar',bar])
     ⇒ {foo bar} baz

list(['foo { bar'',bar])
     ⇒ foo\ \{ \bar baz
```

### 40.4.3.2 Evaluating Tcl Expressions from Prolog

Prolog calls Tcl through the predicate `tcl_eval/3`, which has the following form:

```
tcl_eval(+TclInterpreter, +Command, -Result)
```

which causes the interpreter *TclInterpreter* to evaluate the Tcl command *Command* and return the result *Result*. The result is a string (a code-list) that is the usual return string from evaluating a Tcl command. *Command* is not just a simple Tcl command string (although that is a possibility) but a Tcl command represented as a Prolog term in the special Command Format (see Section 40.4.3.1 [Command Format], page 650).

Through `tcl_eval/3`, Prolog has a method of synchronous communication with an embedded Tcl interpreter and a way of manipulating the state of the interpreter.

An example:

```
| ?- tcl_new(Interp),
     tcl_eval(Interp, 'set x 1', _),
     tcl_eval(Interp, 'incr x', R).
```

which creates a Tcl interpreter the handle of which is stored in the variable `Interp`. Then variable `x` is set to the value `"1"` and then variable `x` is incremented and the result returned in `R` as a string. The result will be `"2"`. By evaluating the Tcl commands in separate `tcl_eval/3` calls, we show that we are manipulating the state of the Tcl interpreter and that it remembers its state between manipulations.

It is worth mentioning here also that because of the possibility of the Tcl command causing an error to occur in the Tcl interpreter, two new exceptions are added by the `tcltk` library:

```
tcl_error(Goal, Message)
tk_error(Goal, Message)
```

where *Message* is a code-list detailing the reason for the exception. Also two new `user:portray_message/2` rules are provided so that any such uncaught exceptions are displayed at the Prolog top-level as

```
[TCL ERROR: Goal - Message]
[TK ERROR: Goal - Message]
```

respectively.

These exception conditions can be raised/caught/displayed in the usual way through the built-in predicates `raise_exception/3`, `on_exception/1`, and `portray_message/2`.

As an example, the following Prolog code will raise such an exception:

```
| ?- tcl_new(X), tcl_eval(X, 'wilbert', R).
```

which causes a `tcl_error/2` exception and prints the following:

```
{TCL ERROR: tcl_eval/3 - invalid command name "wilbert"}
```

assuming that there is no command or procedure defined in Tcl called `wilbert`.

### 40.4.3.3 Evaluating Prolog Expressions from Tcl

The Tcl interpreters created through the SICStus Prolog Tcl/Tk library have been extended to allow calls to the underlying Prolog system.

To evaluate a Prolog expression in the Prolog system from a Tcl interpreter, the new `prolog` Tcl command is invoked. It has the following form:

```
prolog PrologGoal
```

where *PrologGoal* is the printed form of a Prolog goal. This causes the goal to be executed in Prolog. It will be executed in the `user` module unless it is prefixed by a module name. Execution is always determinate.

The return value of the command either of the following:

`"1"`, if execution succeeded,

`"0"`, if execution failed,

If succeeded (and `"1"` was returned) then any variable in *PrologGoal* that has become bound to a Prolog term will be returned to Tcl in the Tcl array named `prolog_variables` with the variable name as index. The term is converted to Tcl using the same conversion as used for Tcl commands (see Section 40.4.3.1 [Command Format], page 650). As a special case the values of unbound variables and variables with names starting with '`_`', are not recorded and need not conform to the special command format, this is similar to the threatment of such variables by the Prolog top-level.

An example:

```
test_callback(Result) :-
    tcl_new(Interp),
    tcl_eval(Interp,
        'if {[prolog "foo(X,Y,Z)"] == 1} \\
            {list $prolog_variables(X) \\
                  $prolog_variables(Y) \\
                  $prolog_variables(Z)}',
            Result),
    tcl_delete(Interp).

foo(1, bar, [a, b, c]).
```

When called with the query:

```
| ?- test_callback(Result).
```

will succeed, binding the variable `Result` to:

```
"1 bar {a b c}"
```

This is because execution of the `tcl_eval/3` predicate causes the execution of the `prolog` command in Tcl, which executes `foo(X, Y, Z)` in Prolog making the following bindings: `X = 1`, `Y = bar`, `Z = [a, b, c]`. The bindings are returned to Tcl in the associative array `prolog_variables` where `prolog_variables(X)` is `"1"`, `prolog_variables(Y)` is `"bar"`, and `prolog_variables(Z)` is `"a b c"`. Then Tcl goes on to execute the `list` command as

```
list "1" "bar" "a b c"
```

which returns the result

```
"1 bar {a b c}"
```

(remember: nested lists magically get represented with curly brackets) which is the string returned in the *Result* part of the Tcl call, and is ultimately returned in the `Result` variable of the top-level call to `test_callback(Result)`.

If an error occurs during execution of the `prolog` Tcl command, a `tcl_error/2` exception will be raised. The message part of the exception will be formed from the string '`Exception during Prolog execution:` ' appended to the Prolog exception message. An example is the following:

```
| ?- tcl_new(T), tcl_eval(T, 'prolog wilbert', R).
```

which will print

```
{TCL ERROR: tcl_eval/3 - Exception during Prolog execution:
  wilbert  existence_error(wilbert,0,procedure,user:wilbert/0,0)}
```

at the Prolog top-level, assuming that the predicate `wilbert/0` is not defined on the Prolog side of the system. (This is a `tcl_error` exception containing information about the un-

derlying exception, an `existence_error` exception, which was caused by trying to execute the non-existent predicate `wilbert`.)

### 40.4.4 Event Functions

#### 40.4.4.1 Evaluate a Tcl Expression And Get Prolog Events

Another way for Prolog to communicate with Tcl is through the predicate `tcl_event/3`:

```
tcl_event(+TclInterpreter, +Command, -Events)
```

This is similar to `tcl_eval/3` in that the command *Command* is evaluated in the Tcl interpreter *TclInterpreter*, but the call returns a list of events in *Events* rather than the result of the Tcl evaluation. *Command* is again a Tcl command represented as a Prolog term in the special Command Format described previously (see Section 40.4.3.1 [Command Format], page 650).

This begs the questions what are these events and where does the event list come from? The Tcl interpreters in the SICStus Prolog Tcl/Tk library have been extended with the notion of a Prolog event queue. (This is not available in plain standalone Tcl interpreters.) The Tcl interpreter can put events on the event queue by executing a `prolog_event` command. Each event is a Prolog term. So a Tcl interpreter has a method of putting Prolog terms onto a queue, which can later be picked up by Prolog as a list as the result of a call to `tcl_event/3`. (It may be helpful to think of this as a way of passing messages as Prolog terms from Tcl to Prolog.)

A call to `tcl_event/3` blocks until there is something on the event queue.

A second way of getting Prolog events from a Prolog event queue is through the `tk_next_event/[2,3]` predicates. These have the form:

```
tk_next_event(+TclInterpreter, -Event)
tk_next_event(+ListOrBitMask, +TclInterpreter, -Event)
```

where *TclInterpreter* reference to a Tcl interpreter and *Event* is the Prolog term at the head of the associated Prolog event queue. (The *ListOrBitMask* feature will be described below in the Housekeeping section when we talk about Tcl and Tk events; see Section 40.4.7 [Housekeeping], page 660.).

(We will meet `tk_next_event/[2,3]` again later when we discuss how it can be used to service Tk events; see Section 40.4.5 [Servicing Tk Events], page 658).

If the interpreter has been deleted then the empty list `[]` is returned.

### 40.4.4.2 Adding events to the Prolog event queue

The Tcl interpreters under the SICStus Prolog library are extended with a command, `prolog_event`, for adding events to a Prolog event queue.

The `prolog_event` command has the following form:

```
prolog_event Terms ...
```

where *Terms* are strings that contain the printed representation of Prolog terms. These are stored in a queue and retrieved as Prolog terms by `tcl_event/3` or `tk_next_event/[2,3]` (described above).

An example of using the `prolog_event` command:

```
test_event(Event) :-
    tcl_new(Interp),
    tcl_event(Interp, [prolog_event, dq(write(zap(42)))], Event),
    tcl_delete(Interp).
```

with the query:

```
| ?- test_event(Event).
```

will succeed, binding `Event` to the list `[zap(42)]`.

This is because `tcl_event` converts its argument using the special Command Format conversion (see Section 40.4.3.1 [Command Format], page 650), which yields the Tcl command `prolog_event "zap(42)"`. This command is evaluated in the Tcl interpreter referenced by the variable `Interp`. The effect of the command is to take the string given as argument to `prolog_event` (in this case `"zap(42)"`) and to place it on the Tcl to Prolog event queue. The final action of a `tcl_event/3` call is to pick up any strings on the Prolog queue from Tcl, add a trailing full stop and space to each string, and parse them as Prolog terms, binding `Event` to the list of values, which in this case is the singleton list `[zap(42)]`. (The queue is a list the elements of which are terms put there through calls to `prolog_event`).

If any of the *Term*-s in the list of arguments to `prolog_event` is not a valid representation of a Prolog term, then an exception is raised in Prolog when it is converted from the Tcl string to the Prolog term using `read`. To ensure that Prolog will be able to read the term correctly it is better to always use `write_canonical` and to ensure that Tcl is not confused by special characters in the printed representation of the prolog term it is best to wrap the list with `list`.

A safer variant that safely passes any term from Prolog via Tcl and back to Prolog is thus:

```
test_event(Term, Event) :-
    tcl_new(Interp),
    tcl_event(Interp, list([prolog_event, write_canonical(Term)]), Event),
    tcl_delete(Interp).
```

#### 40.4.4.3 An example

As an example of using the prolog event system supplied by the `tcltk` library, we will return to our 8-queens example but now approaching from the Prolog side rather than the Tcl/Tk side:

```
:- use_module(library(tcltk)).

setup :-
    tk_new([name('SICStus+Tcl/Tk - Queens')], Tcl),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'source queens.tcl', _),
    tk_next_event(Tcl, Event),
    (   Event = next -> go(Tcl),
    ;   closedown(Tcl)
    ).

closedown(Tcl) :-
    tcl_delete(Tcl).

go(Tcl) :-
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'clear_board', _),
    queens(8, Qs),
    show_solution(Qs, Tcl),
    tk_next_event(Tcl, Event),
    (   Event = next -> fail
    ;   closedown(Tcl)
    ).
go(Tcl) :-
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'disable_next', _),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'clear_board', _),
    tk_next_event(Tcl, _Event),
    closedown(Tcl).
```

This is the top-level fragment of the Prolog side of the 8-queens example. It has three predicates: `setup/0`, `closedown/1`, and `go/1`. `setup/0` simply creates the Tcl interpreter, loads the Tcl code into the interpreter using a call to `tcl_eval/3` (which also initialises the display) but then calls `tk_next_event/2` to wait for a message from the Tk side.

The Tk part that sends `prolog_event`-s to Prolog looks like this:

```
button .next -text next -command {prolog_event  next}
pack .next

button .stop -text stop -command {prolog_event stop}
pack .stop
```

that is two buttons, one that sends the atom `next`, the other that sends the atom `stop`. They are used to get the next solution and to stop the program respectively.

So if the user presses the `next` button in the Tk window, then the Prolog program will receive a `next` atom via a `prolog_event/tk_next_event` pair, and the program can proceed to execute `go/1`.

`go/1` is a failure driven loop that generates 8-queens solutions and displays them. First it generates a solution in Prolog and displays it through a `tcl_eval/3` call. Then it waits again for a Prolog events via `tk_next_event/2`. If the term received on the Prolog event queue is `next`, corresponding to the user pressing the "next solution" button, then fail is executed and the next solution found, thus driving the loop.

If the `stop` button is pressed then the program does some tidying up (clearing the display and so on) and then executes `closedown/1`, which deletes the Tcl interpreter and the corresponding Tk windows altoegther, and the program terminates.

This example fragment show how it is possible for a Prolog program and a Tcl/Tk program to communicate via the Prolog event queue.

### 40.4.5 Servicing Tcl and Tk events

The notion of an event in the Prolog+Tcl/Tk system is overloaded. We have already come across the following kinds of events:

- Tk widget events captured in Tcl/Tk through the `bind` command
- Prolog queue events controlled through the `tcl_event/3`, `tk_next_event(2,3)`, and `prolog_event` functions

It is further about to be overloaded with the notion of Tcl/Tk events. It is possible to create event handlers in Tcl/Tk for reacting to other kinds of events. We will not cover them here but describe them so that the library functions are understandable and in case the user needs these features in an advanced application.

There are the following kinds of Tcl/Tk events:

idle events happen when the Tcl/Tk system is idle

file events happen when input arrives on a file handle that has a file event handler attached to it

timer events
happen when a Tcl/Tk timer times out

window events
when something happens to a Tk window, such as being resized or destroyed

The problem is that in advanced Tcl/Tk applications it is possible to create event handlers for each of these kinds of event, but they are not normally serviced while in Prolog code.

This can result in unresponsive behavior in the application; for example, if window events are not serviced regularly then if the user tries to resize a Tk window, it will not resize in a timely fashion.

The solution to this is to introduce a Prolog predicate that passes control to Tk for a while so that it can process its events, `tk_do_one_event/[0,1]`. If an application is unresponsive because it is spending a lot of time in Prolog and is not servicing Tk events often enough, then critical sections of the Prolog code can be sprinkled with calls to `tk_do_one_event/[0,1]` to alleviate the problem.

`tk_do_one_event/[0,1]` has the following forms:

```
tk_do_one_event
tk_do_one_event(+ListOrBitMask)
```

which passes control to Tk to handle a single event before passing control back to Prolog. The type of events handled is passed through the *ListOrBitMask* variable. As indicated, this is either a list of atoms that are event types, or a bit mask as specified in the Tcl/Tk documentation. (The bit mask should be avoided for portability between Tcl/Tk versions.)

The *ListOrBitMask* list can contain the following atoms:

`tk_dont_wait`
: don't wait for new events, process only those that are ready

`tk_x_events`
`tk_window_events`
: process window events

`tk_file_events`
: process file events

`tk_timer_events`
: process timer events

`tk_idle_events`
: process `Tk_DoWhenIdle` events

`tk_all_events`
: process any event

Calling `tk_do_one_event/0` is equivalent to a call to `tk_do_one_event/1` with all flags set.

A call to either of these predicates succeeds only if an event of the appropriate type happens in the Tcl/Tk interpreter. If there are no such events, then `tk_do_one_event/1` will fail if the `tk_dont_wait` wait flag is present, as will `tk_do_one_event/0`, which has that flag set implicitly.

If the `tk_dont_wait` flag is not set, then a call to `tk_do_one_event/1` will block until an appropriate Tk event happens (in which case it will succeed).

It is straight forward to define a predicate that handles all Tk events and then returns:

```
tk_do_all_events :-
    tk_do_one_event, !,
    tk_do_all_events.
tk_do_all_events.
```

The predicate `tk_next_event/[2,3]` is similar to `tk_do_one_event/[0,1]` except that it processes Tk events until at least one Prolog event happens. (We came across this predicate before when discussing Prolog event queue predicates. This shows the overloading of the notion event where we have a predicate that handles both Tcl/Tk events and Prolog queue events.)

It has the following forms:

```
tk_next_event(+TclInterpreter, -Event)
tk_next_event(+ListOrBitMask, +TclInterpreter, -Event)
```

The Prolog event is returned in the variable *Event* and is the first term on the Prolog event queue associated with the interpreter *TclInterpreter*. (Prolog events are initiated on the Tcl side through the new Tcl command `prolog_event`, covered earlier; see Section 40.4.4.2 [prolog_event], page 656).

### 40.4.6 Passing Control to Tk

There is a predicate for passing control completely over to Tk, the `tk_main_loop/0` command. This passes control to Tk until all windows in all the Tcl/Tk interpreters in the Prolog have have been destroyed:

```
tk_main_loop
```

### 40.4.7 Housekeeping functions

Here we will described the functions that do not fit into any of the above categories and are essentially housekeeping functions.

There is a predicate that returns a reference to the main window of a Tcl/Tk interpreter:

```
tk_main_window(+TclInterpreter, -TkWindow)
```

which given a reference to a Tcl interpreter *TclInterpreter*, returns a reference to its main window in *TkWindow*.

The window reference can then be used in `tk_destroy_window/1`:

```
tk_destroy_window(+TkWindow)
```

which destroys the window or widget referenced by *TkWindow* and all of its sub-widgets.

The predicate `tk_make_window_exist/1` also takes a window reference:

```
tk_make_window_exist(+TkWindow)
```

which causes the window referenced by *TkWindow* in the Tcl interpreter *TclInterpreter* to be immediately mapped to the display. This is useful because normally Tk delays displaying new information for a long as possible (waiting until the machine is idle, for example), but using this call causes Tk to display the window immediately.

There is a predicate for determining how many main windows, and hence Tcl/Tk interpreters (excluding simple Tcl interpreters), are currently in use:

```
tk_num_main_windows(-NumberOfWindows)
```

which returns an integer in the variable *NumberOfWindows*.

### 40.4.8 Summary

The functions provided by the SICStus Prolog Tcl/Tk library can be grouped in two ways: by function, and by package.

By function, we can group them like this:

- basic functions

  `tcl_new/1`
  : create a Tcl interpreter

  `tcl_delete/1`
  : remove a Tcl interpreter

  `tk_new/2` create a Tcl interpreter with Tk extensions
- evaluation functions

  `tcl_eval/3`
  : evaluate a Tcl expression from Prolog

  `prolog` evaluate a Prolog expression from Tcl
- Prolog event queue functions

  `tcl_event/3`
  : evaluate a Tcl expression and return a Prolog queue event list

  `tk_next_event/[2,3]`
  : pass control to Tk until a Prolog queue event happens and return the head of the queue

  `prolog_event`
  : place a Prolog term on the Prolog event queue from Tcl
- servicing Tcl and Tk events

`tk_do_one_event/[0,1]`
: pass control to Tk until one Tk event is serviced

`tk_next_event/[2,3]`
: also services Tk events but returns when a Prolog queue event happens and returns the head of the queue

- passing control completely to Tk

`tk_main_loop/0`
: control passed to Tk until all windows in all Tcl/Tk interpreters are gone

- housekeeping

`tk_main_window/2`
: return reference to main in of a Tcl/Tk interpreter

`tk_destroy_window/1`
: destroy a window or widget

`tk_make_window_exist/1`
: force display of a window or widget

`tk_num_main_windows/1`
: return a count of the total number of Tk main windows existing in the system

By package, we can group them like this:

- predicates for Prolog to interact with Tcl interpreters

`tcl_new/1`
: create a Tcl interpreter

`tcl_delete/1`
: remove a Tcl interpreter

`tcl_eval/3`
: evaluate a Tcl expression from Prolog

`tcl_event/3`
: evaluate a Tcl expression and return a Prolog event list

- predicates for Prolog to interact with Tcl interpreters with Tk extensions

`tk_new/2` create a Tcl interpreter with Tk extensions

`tk_do_one_event/[0,1]`
: pass control to Tk until one Tk event is serviced

`tk_next_event/[2,3]`
: also services Tk events but returns when a Prolog queue event happens and returns the head of the queue

`tk_main_loop/0`
: control passed to Tk until all windows in all Tcl/Tk interpreters are gone

`tk_main_window/2`
: return reference to main in of a Tcl/Tk interpreter

`tk_destroy_window/1`
: destroy a window or widget

`tk_make_window_exist/1`
: force display of a window or widget

`tk_num_main_windows/1`
: return a count of the total number of Tk main windows existing in the system

- commands for the Tcl interpreters to interact with the Prolog system

`prolog` evaluate a Prolog expression from Tcl

`prolog_event`
: place a Prolog term on the Prolog event queue from Tcl

In the next section we will discuss how to use the `tcltk` library to build graphical user interfaces to Prolog applications. More specifically we will discuss the ways in which co-operation between Prolog and Tcl/Tk can be arranged: how to achieve them, and their benefits.

## 40.5 Putting It All Together

At this point we now know Tcl, the Tk extensions, and how they can be integrated into SICStus Prolog through the `tcltk` library module. The next problem is how to get all this to work together to produce a coherent application. Because Tcl can make Prolog calls and Prolog can make Tcl calls it is easy to create programming spaghetti. In this section we will discuss some general principles of organizing the Prolog and Tcl code to make writing applications easier.

The first thing to do is to review the tools that we have. We have two programming systems: Prolog and Tcl/Tk. They can interact in the following ways:

- Prolog evaluates a Tcl expression in a Tcl interpreter, using `tcl_eval`
- Tcl evaluates a Prolog expression in the Prolog interpreter, using `prolog`
- Prolog evaluates a Tcl expression in a Tcl interpreter and waits for a Prolog event, using `tcl_event`
- Prolog waits for a Prolog event from a Tcl interpreter, using `tk_next_event`
- Tcl sends a Prolog predicate to Prolog on a Prolog event queue using `prolog_event`

With these interaction primitives there are three basic ways in which Prolog and Tcl/Tk can be organized:

1. Tcl the master, Prolog the slave: program control is with Tcl, which makes occasional calls to Prolog, through the `prolog` function.
2. Prolog the master, Tcl the slave: program control is with Prolog, which makes occasional call to Tcl through the `tcl_eval` function

3. Prolog and Tcl share control: program control is shared with Tcl and Prolog interacting via the Prolog event queue, through `tcl_event`, `tk_next_event`, and `prolog_event`.

These are three ways of organizing cooperation between Tcl/Tk and Prolog to produce an application. In practice an application my use only one of these methods throughout, or may use a combination of them where appropriate. We describe them here so that the developer can see the different patterns of organization and can pick those relevant to their application.

### 40.5.1 Tcl The Master, Prolog The Slave

This is the classical way that GUIs are bolted onto applications. The slave (in this case Prolog) sits mostly idle while the user interacts with the GUI, for example filling in a form. When some action happens in the GUI that requires information from the slave (a form submit, for example), the slave is called, performs a calculation, and the GUI retrieves the result and updates its display accordingly.

In our Prolog+Tcl/Tk setting this involves the following steps:

- start Prolog and load the Tcl/Tk library
- load Prolog application code
- start a Tcl/Tk interpreter through `tk_new/2`
- set up the Tk GUI through calls to `tcl_eval/3`
- pass control to Tcl/Tk through `tk_main_loop`

Some of The Tk widgets in the GUI will have "callbacks" to Prolog, i.e. they will call the `prolog` Tcl command. When the Prolog call returns, the values stored in the `prolog_variables` array in the Tcl interpreter can then be used by Tcl to update the display.

Here is a simple example of a callback. The Prolog part is this:

```
:- use_module(library(tcltk)).

hello('world').

go :-
    tk_new([], Tcl),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'source simple.tcl', _),
    tk_main_loop.
```

which just loads the `library(tcltk)`, defines a `hello/1` data clause, and `go/0`, which starts a new Tcl/Tk interpreter, loads the code `simple.tcl` into it, and passes control to Tcl/Tk.

The Tcl part, `simple.tcl`, is this:

```
label .l -textvariable tvar
button .b -text "push me" -command { call_and_display }
pack .l .b -side top

proc call_and_display { } {
    global tvar

    prolog "hello(X)"
    set tvar $prolog_variables(X)
}
```

which creates a label, with an associated text variable, and a button, that has a call back procedure, `call_and_display`, attached to it. When the button is pressed, `call_and_display` is executed, which simply evaluates the goal `hello(X)` in Prolog and the text variable of the label `.l` to whatever `X` becomes bound to, which happens to be '`world`'. In short, pressing the button causes the word '`world`' to be displayed in the label.

Having Tcl as the master and Prolog as the slave, although a simple model to understand and implement, does have disadvantages. The Tcl command `prolog` is determinate, i.e. it can return only one result with no backtracking. If more than one result is needed it means either performing some kind of all-solutions search and returning a list of results for Tcl to process, or asserting a clause into the Prolog clause store reflecting the state of the computation.

Here is an example of how an all-solutions search can be done. It is a program that calculates the outcome of certain ancestor relationships; i.e. enter the name of a person, click on a button and it will tell you the mother, father, parents or ancestors of that person.

The Prolog portion looks like this (see also `library('tcltk/examples/ancestors.pl')`):

```
:- use_module(library(tcltk)).

go :- tk_new([name('ancestors')], X),
    tcl_eval(X, 'source ancestors.tcl', _),
    tk_main_loop,
    tcl_delete(X).

father(ann, fred).
father(fred, jim).
mother(ann, lynn).
mother(fred, lucy).
father(jim, sam).

parent(X, Y) :- mother(X, Y).
parent(X, Y) :- father(X, Y).

ancestor(X, Y) :- parent(X, Y).
ancestor(X, Y) :- parent(X, Z), ancestor(Z, Y).

all_ancestors(X, Z) :- findall(Y, ancestor(X, Y), Z).

all_parents(X, Z) :-   findall(Y, parent(X, Y), Z).
```

This program consists of three parts. The first part is defined by `go/0`, the now familiar way in which a Prolog program can create a Tcl/Tk interpreter, load a Tcl file into that interpreter, and pass control over to the interpreter.

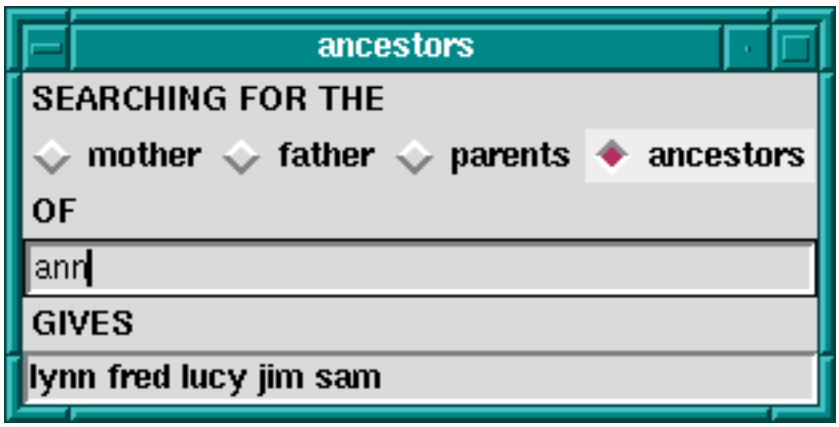
The second part is a small database of mother/father relationships between certain people through the clauses `mother/2` and `father/2`.

The third part is a set of "rules" for determining certain relationships between people: `parent/2`, `ancestor/2`, `all_ancestors/2` and `all_parents/2`.

The Tcl part looks like this (see also `library('tcltk/examples/ancestors.tcl')`):

```
                                                    % ancestors.pl
#!/usr/bin/wish

# set up the tk display

# construct text filler labels
label .search_for -text "SEARCHING FOR THE" -anchor w
label .of         -text "OF"                -anchor w
label .gives      -text "GIVES"             -anchor w

# construct frame to hold buttons
frame .button_frame

# construct radio button group
radiobutton .mother    -text mother    -variable type -value mother
radiobutton .father    -text father    -variable type -value father
radiobutton .parents   -text parents   -variable type -value parents
radiobutton .ancestors -text ancestors -variable type -value ancestors

# add behaviors to radio buttons
.mother    config -command { one_solution mother $name}
.father    config -command { one_solution father $name}
.parents   config -command { all_solutions all_parents $name}
.ancestors config -command { all_solutions all_ancestors $name}

# create entry box and result display widgets
entry .name -textvariable name
label .result -text ">>> result <<<" -relief sunken -anchor nw -justify left

# pack buttons into button frame
pack .mother .father .parents .ancestors -fill x -side left -in .button_frame

# pack everything together into the main window
pack .search_for .button_frame .of .name .gives .result -side top -fill x

# now everything is set up
```

```
                                                        % ancestors.pl
# defined the callback procedures

# called for one solution results
proc one_solution { type name } {
    if [prolog "${type}('$name', R)"] {
        display_result $prolog_variables(R)
    } else {
        display_result ""
    }
}

# called for all solution results
proc all_solutions { type name } {
    prolog  "${type}('$name', R)"
    display_result $prolog_variables(R)
}

# display the result of the search in the results box
proc display_result { result } {
    if { $result != "" } {
# create a multiline result
        .result config -text $result
    } else {
        .result config -text "*** no result ***"
    }
}
```




Ancestors Calculator

This program is in two parts. The first part sets up the Tk display, which consists of four radiobuttons to choose the kind of relationship we want to calculate, an entry box to put the name of the person we want to calculate the relationship over, and a label in which to display the result.

Each radio buttons has an associated callback. Clicking on the radio button will invoke the appropriate callback, apply the appropriate relationship to the name entered in the text entry box, and display the result in the results label.

The second part consists of the callback procedures themselves. There are actually just two of them: one for a single solution calculation, and one for an all-solutions calculation. The single solution callback is used when we want to know the mother or father as we know that a person can have only one of each. The all-solutions callback is used when we want to know the parents or ancestors as we know that these can return more than one results. (We could have used the all-solutions callback for the single solutions cases too, but we would like to illustrate the difference in the two approaches.) There is little difference between the two approaches, except that in the single solution callback, it is possible that the call to Prolog will fail, so we wrap it in an `if ... else` construct to catch this case. An all-solutions search, however, cannot fail, and so the `if ... else` is not needed.

But there are some technical problems too with this approach. During a callback Tk events are not serviced until the callback returns. For Prolog callbacks that take a very short time to complete this is not a problem, but in other cases, for example during a long search call when the callback takes a significant time to complete, this can cause problems. Imagine that, in our example, we had a vast database describing the parent relationships of millions of people. Performing an all-solutions ancestors search could take a long time. The classic problem is that the GUI no longer reacts to the user until the callback completes.

The solution to this is to sprinkle `tk_do_one_event/[0,1]` calls throughout the critical parts of the Prolog code, to keep various kinds of Tk events serviced.

If this method is used in its purest form, then it is recommended that after initialization and passing of control to Tcl, Prolog do not make calls to Tcl through `tcl_eval/3`. This is to avoid programming spaghetti. In the pure master/slave relationship it is a general principle that the master only call the slave, and not the other way around.

### 40.5.2 Prolog The Master, Tk The Slave

The second approach is to have Prolog be the master and Tk the slave. This is suitable when heavy processing is done in the Prolog code and Tk is used mostly to display the state of the computation in some way rather than as a traditional GUI; i.e. during computation Prolog often makes calls to Tk to show some state, but the user rarely interacts with the application.

In our Prolog+Tcl/Tk setting this involves the following steps:

- start Prolog and load the Tcl/Tk library
- load Prolog application code
- start a Tcl/Tk interpreter through `tk_new/2`
- set up the Tk GUI through calls to `tcl_eval/3`
- Prolog calls `tcl_eval` to update the Tk display

- values are passed to Prolog through the Result string of `tcl_eval`

Again it its purest form, Prolog makes calls to Tcl, but Tcl does not make calls to Prolog. The result of a call to Tcl is either passed back through the `Result` variable of a `tcl_eval/3` call.

A good example of this is the Tcl/Tk display for our 8-queens problem, that we saw earlier; see Section 40.3.9 [Queens Display], page 642.

We will now fill out the example by presenting the Prolog master part. The Prolog program calculates a solution to the 8-queens problem and then makes calls Tcl/Tk to display the solution. In this way Tcl/Tk is the slave, just being used as a simple display.

We have already seen the Tcl/Tk part, but here is the Prolog part for generating a solution and displaying it:

```
:- use_module(library(tcltk)).
:- use_module(library(lists)).

go :-
    tk_new([name('SICStus+Tcl/Tk - Queens')], Tcl),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'source queens.tcl', _),
    tk_next_event(Tcl, Event),
    queens(8, Qs),
    reverse(L, LR),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, [show_solution, br(LR)], _),
    fail.
go.

queens(N, Qs) :-
    range(1, N, Ns),
    queens(Ns, [], Qs).

queens(UnplacedQs, SafeQs, Qs) :-
    select(Q, UnplacedQs, UnplacedQs1),
    \+ attack(Q, SafeQs),
    queens(UnplacedQs1, [Q|SafeQs], Qs).
    queens([], Qs, Qs).

attack(X, Xs) :- attack(X, 1, Xs).

attack(X, N, [Y|_Ys]) :- X is Y + N.
attack(X, N, [Y|_Ys]) :- X is Y - N.
attack(X, N, [_Y|Ys]) :-
    N1 is N + 1,
attack(X, N1, Ys).

range(M, N, [M|Ns]) :-
    M < N,
    M1 is M + 1,
    range(M1, N, Ns).
range(N, N, [N]).

:- go.
```

All this simply does it to create a Tcl/Tk interpreter, load the Tcl code for displaying queens into it, generate a solution to the 8-queens problem as a list of integers, and then calls `show_solution/2` in the Tcl interpreter to display the solution. At the end of first clause for `go/0` is a fail clause that turns `go/0` into a failure driven loop. The result of this is that the program will calculate all the solutions to the 8-queens problem, displaying them rapidly one after the other, until there are none left.

### 40.5.3 Prolog And Tcl Interact through Prolog Event Queue

In the previous two methods, one of the language systems was the master and the other slave, the master called the slave to perform some action or calculation, the slave sits waiting until the master calls it. We have seen that this has disadvantages when Prolog is the slave in that the state of the Prolog call is lost. Each Prolog call starts from the beginning unless we save the state using message database manipulation through calls to `assert` and `retract`.

Using the Prolog event queue, however, it is possible to get a more balanced model where the two language systems cooperate without either really being the master or the slave.

One way to do this is the following:

- Prolog is started
- load Tcl/Tk library
- load and set up the Tcl side of the program
- Prolog starts a processing loop
- it periodically checks for a Prolog event and processes it
- Prolog updates the Tcl display through `tcl_eval` calls

What can processing a Prolog event mean? Well, for example, a button press from Tk could tell the Prolog program to finish or to start processing something else. The Tcl program is not making an explicit call to the Prolog system but sending a message to Prolog. The Prolog system can pick up the message and process it when it chooses, in the meantime keeping its run state and variables intact.

To illustrate this, we return to the 8-queens example. If Tcl/Tk is the master and Prolog the slave, then we have shown that using a callback to Prolog, we can imagine that we hit a button, call Prolog to get a solution and then display it. But how do we get the next solution? We could get all the solutions, and then use Tcl/Tk code to step through them, but that doesn't seem satisfactory. If we use the Prolog is the master and Tcl/Tk is the slave model then we have shown how we can use Tcl/Tk to display the solutions generate from the Prolog side: Prolog just make a call to the Tcl side when it has a solution. But in this model Tcl/Tk widgets do not interact with the Prolog side; Tcl/Tk is mearly an add-on display to Prolog.

But using the Prolog event queue we can get the best of both worlds: Prolog can generate each solution in turn as Tcl/Tk asks for it.

Here is the code on the Prolog side that does this. (We have left out parts of the code that haven't changed from our previous example, see Section 40.3.9 [Queens Display], page 642).

```
:- use_module(library(tcltk)).
:- use_module(library(lists)).

setup :-
    tk_new([name('SICStus+Tcl/Tk - Queens')], Tcl),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'source queens2.tcl', _),
    tk_next_event(Tcl, Event),
    (   Event = next -> go(Tcl)
    ;   closedown(Tcl)
    ).

closedown(Tcl) :-
    tcl_delete(Tcl).

go(Tcl) :-
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'clear_board', _),
    queens(8, Qs),
    show_solution(Qs),
    tk_next_event(Tcl, Event),
    (   Event = next -> fail
    ;   closedown(Tcl)
    ).
go(Tcl) :-
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'disable_next', _),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'clear_board', _),
    tk_next_event(Tcl, _Event),
    closedown(Tcl).

show_solution(Tcl, L) :-
    tcl(Tcl),
    reverse(L, LR),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, [show_solution, br(LR)], _),
    tk_do_all_events.
```

Notice here that we have used `tk_next_event/2` in several places. The code is executed by calling `setup/0`. As usual, this loads in the Tcl part of the program, but then Prolog waits for a message from the Tcl side. This message can either be `next`, indicating that we want to show the next solution, or `stop`, indicating that we want to stop the program.

If `next` is received, then the program goes on to execute `go/1`. What this does it to first calculate a solution to the 8-queens problem, displays the solution through `show_solution/2`, and then waits for another message from Tcl/Tk. Again this can be either `next` or `stop`. If `next`, the the program goes into the failure part of a failure driven loop and generates and displays the next solution.

If at any time `stop` is received, the program terminates gracefully, cleaning up the Tcl interpreter.

On the Tcl/Tk side all we need are a couple of buttons: one for sending the `next` message, and the other for sending the `stop` message.

```
button .next -text next -command {prolog_event next}
pack .next

button .stop -text stop -command {prolog_event stop}
pack .stop
```

(We could get more sophisticated. We might want it so that when the button it is depressed until Prolog has finished processing the last message, when the button is allowed to pop back up. This would avoid the problem of the user pressing the button many times while the program is still processing the last request. We leave this as an exercise for the reader.)

### 40.5.4 The Whole 8-Queens Example

To finish off, we our complete 8-queens program.

Here is the Prolog part, which we have covered in previous sections. The code is in `library('tcltk/examples/8-queens.pl')`:

```
                                                    % 8-queens.pl
:- use_module(library(tcltk)).
:- use_module(library(lists)).

setup :-
    tk_new([name('SICStus+Tcl/Tk - Queens')], Tcl),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'source 8-queens.tcl', _),
    tk_next_event(Tcl, Event),
    (   Event = next -> go(Tcl)
    ;   closedown(Tcl)
    ).

closedown(Tcl) :-
    tcl_delete(Tcl).

go(Tcl) :-
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'clear_board', _),
    queens(8, Qs),
    show_solution(Tcl,Qs),
    tk_next_event(Tcl, Event),
    (   Event = next -> fail
    ;   closedown(Tcl)
    ).
go(Tcl) :-
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'disable_next', _),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, 'clear_board', _),
    tk_next_event(Tcl, _Event),
    closedown(Tcl).
```

```
                                                        % 8-queens.pl
queens(N, Qs) :-
    range(1, N, Ns),
    queens(Ns, [], Qs).

queens(UnplacedQs, SafeQs, Qs) :-
    select(Q, UnplacedQs, UnplacedQs1),
    \+ attack(Q, SafeQs),
    queens(UnplacedQs1, [Q|SafeQs], Qs).
    queens([], Qs, Qs).

attack(X, Xs) :- attack(X, 1, Xs).

attack(X, N, [Y|_Ys]) :- X is Y + N.
attack(X, N, [Y|_Ys]) :- X is Y - N.
attack(X, N, [_Y|Ys]) :-
    N1 is N + 1,
    attack(X, N1, Ys).

range(M, N, [M|Ns]) :-
    M < N,
    M1 is M + 1,
    range(M1, N, Ns).
range(N, N, [N]).

show_solution(Tcl, L) :-
    reverse(L, LR),
    tcl_eval(Tcl, [show_solution, br(LR)], _),
    tk_do_all_events.

tk_do_all_events :-
    tk_do_one_event, !,
    tk_do_all_events.
tk_do_all_events.

:- setup.
```

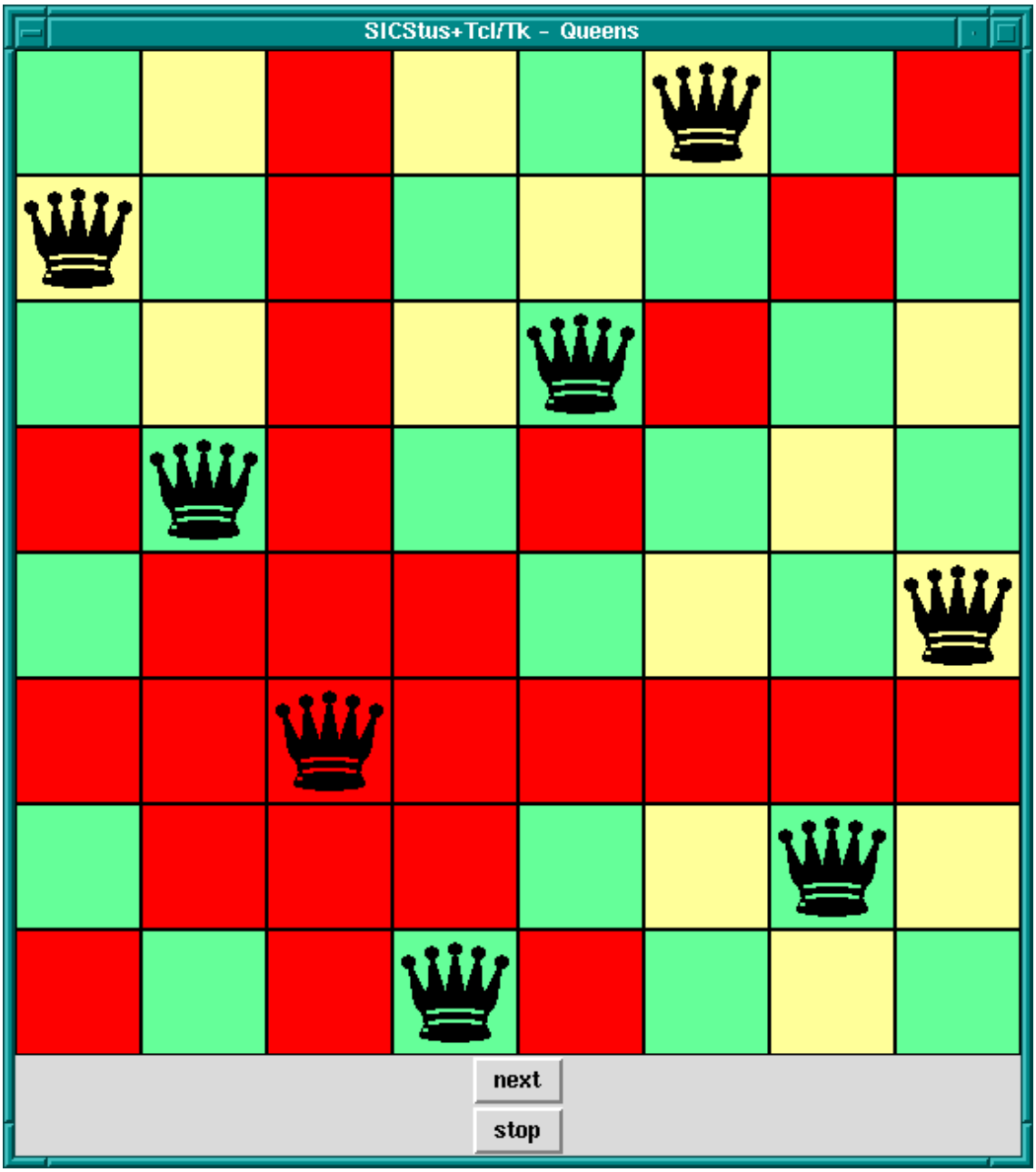
And here is the Tcl/Tk part, which we have covered in bits and pieces but here is the whole thing. We have added an enhancement where when the mouse is moved over one of the queens, the squares that the queen attacks are highlighted. Move the mouse away and the board reverts to normal. This is an illustration of how the Tcl/Tk `bind` feature can be used. The code is in `library('tcltk/examples/8-queens.tcl')`:

```
                                                    # 8-queens.tcl
#! /usr/bin/wish
# create an 8x8 grid of labels
proc setup_display { } {
    frame .queens -background black
    pack .queens

    for {set y 1} {$y <= 8} {incr y} {
        for {set x 1} {$x <= 8} {incr x} {

            # create a label and display a queen in it
            label .queens.$x-$y -bitmap @bitmaps/q64s.bm -relief flat

            # color alternate squares with different colors
            # to create the chessboard pattern
            if { [expr ($x + $y) % 2] } {
                .queens.$x-$y config -background #ffff99
            } else {
                .queens.$x-$y config -background #66ff99
            }

            # set foreground to the background color to
            # make queen image invisible
            .queens.$x-$y config -foreground [.queens.$x-$y cget -background]

            # bind the mouse to highlight the squares attacked by a
            # queen on this square
            bind .queens.$x-$y <Enter> "highlight_attack on $x $y"
            bind .queens.$x-$y <Leave> "highlight_attack off $x $y"

            # arrange the queens in a grid
            grid .queens.$x-$y -row $y -column $x -padx 1 -pady 1

            }
        }
}
```

```
                                                        # 8-queens.tcl
# clear a whole column
proc reset_column { column } {
    for {set y 1 } { $y <= 8 } {incr y} {
        set_queens $column $y ""
    }
}

# place or unplace a queen
proc set_queens { x y v } {
    if { $v == "Q" } {
        .queens.$x-$y config -foreground black
    } else {
        .queens.$x-$y config -foreground [.queens.$x-$y cget -background]
    }
}

# place a queen on a column
proc place_queen { x y } {
    reset_column $x
    set_queens $x $y Q
}

# clear the whole board by clearing each column in turn
proc clear_board { } {
    for { set x 1 } {$x <= 8} {incr x} {
        reset_column $x
    }
}

# given a solution as a list of queens in column positions
# place each queen on the board
proc show_solution { solution } {
    clear_board
    set x 1
    foreach y $solution {
        place_queen $x $y
        incr x
    }
}
```

```
                                                    # 8-queens.tcl
proc highlight_square { mode x y } {
    # check if the square we want to highlight is on the board
    if { $x < 1 || $y < 1 || $x > 8 || $y > 8 } { return };

    # if turning the square on make it red,
    # otherwise determine what color it should be and set it to that
    if { $mode == "on" } { set color red } else {
        if { [expr ($x + $y) % 2] } { set color "#ffff99" } else {
            set color "#66ff99" }
        }

        # get the current settings
        set bg [ .queens.$x-$y cget -bg ]
        set fg [ .queens.$x-$y cget -fg ]

        # if the current foreground and background are the same
        # there is no queen there
        if { $bg == $fg } {
            # no queens
            .queens.$x-$y config -bg $color -fg $color
         } else {
             .queens.$x-$y config -bg $color
    }
}

proc highlight_attack { mode x y } {
    # get current colors of square at x y
    set bg [ .queens.$x-$y cget -bg ]
    set fg [ .queens.$x-$y cget -fg ]

    # no queen there, give up
    if { $bg == $fg } { return };

    # highlight the sqaure the queen is on
    highlight_square $mode $x $y

    # highlight vertical and horizontal
    for { set i 1 } {$i <= 8} {incr i} {
        highlight_square $mode $x $i
        highlight_square $mode $i $y
    }

    # highlight diagonals
    for { set i 1} { $i <= 8} {incr i} {
        highlight_square $mode [expr $x+$i] [expr $y+$i]
        highlight_square $mode [expr $x-$i] [expr $y-$i]
        highlight_square $mode [expr $x+$i] [expr $y-$i]
        highlight_square $mode [expr $x-$i] [expr $y+$i]
    }
}
```

```
                                                        # 8-queens.tcl
proc disable_next {} {
    .next config -state disabled
}

setup_display

# button for sending a 'next' message
button .next -text next -command {prolog_event next}
pack .next

# button for sending a 'stop' message
button .stop -text stop -command {prolog_event stop}
pack .stop
```




8-Queens Solution, Attacked Squares Highlighted

## 40.6 Quick Reference

### 40.6.1 Command Format Summary

*Command* ::= *Name*
| `chars(`*`code-list`*`)`
| `write(`*`term`*`)`

```
                    | writeq(term)
                    | write_canonical(term)
                    | format(Fmt,Args)
                    | dq(Command)
                    | br(Command)
                    | sqb(Command)
                    | min(Command)
                    | dot(ListOfNames)
                    | list(ListOfCommands)
                    | ListOfCommands
Fmt                 ::= atom
Name                ::= atom                    { other than [] }
                    | number
ListOfCommands      ::= []
                    | [ Command | ListOfCommands ]
ListOfNames         ::= []
                    | [ Name | ListOfNames ]
Args                ::= []
                    | [ term | Args ]
```

where

*Atom*
*Number* denote their printed representations

`chars(`*`PrologString`*`)`
: denotes the string represented by *PrologString* (a code-list)

`write(`*`Term`*`)`
`writeq(`*`Term`*`)`
`write_canonical(`*`Term`*`)`
: denotes the string that is printed by the corresponding built-in predicate

`format(`*`Fmt`*`, `*`Args`*`)`
: denotes the string that is printed by the corresponding built-in predicate

`dq(`*`Command`*`)`
: denotes the string specified by *Command*, enclosed in double quotes

`br(`*`Command`*`)`
: denotes the string specified by *Command*, enclosed in curly brackets

`sqb(`*`Command`*`)`
: denotes the string specified by *Command*, enclosed in square brackets

`min(`*`Command`*`)`
: denotes the string specified by *Command*, immediately preceded by a hyphen

`dot(`*`ListOfName`*`)`
: denotes the widget path specified by *ListOfName*, preceded by and separated by dots

`list(`*`ListOfCommands`*`)`
: denotes the TCL list with one element for each element in *ListOfCommands*.

*ListOfCommands*
: denotes the string denoted by each element, separated by spaces

### 40.6.2 Predicates for Prolog to Interact with Tcl Interpreters

`tcl_new(-`*`TclInterpreter`*`)`
: Create a Tcl interpreter and return a handle to it in the variable *Interpreter*.

`tcl_delete(+`*`TclInterpreter`*`)`
: Given a handle to a Tcl interpreter in variable *TclInterpreter*, it deletes the interpreter from the system.

`tcl_eval(+`*`TclInterp`*`, +`*`Command`*`, -`*`Result`*`)`
: Evaluates the Tcl command term given in *Command* in the Tcl interpreter handle provided in *TclInterpreter*. The result of the evaluation is returned as a string in *Result*.

`tcl_event(+`*`TclInterp`*`, +`*`Command`*`, -`*`Events`*`)`
: Evaluates the Tcl command term given in *Command* in the Tcl interpreter handle provided in *TclInterpreter*. The first Prolog events arising from the evaluation is returned as a list in *Events*. Blocks until there is something on the event queue.

### 40.6.3 Predicates for Prolog to Interact with Tcl Interpreters with Tk Extensions

`tk_new(+`*`Options`*`, -`*`Interp`*`)`
: Create a Tcl interpreter with Tk extensions.

  *Options* should be a list of options described following:

  `top_level_events`
  : This allows Tk events to be handled while Prolog is waiting for terminal input; for example, while the Prolog system is waiting for input at the Prolog prompt. Without this option, Tk events are not serviced while the Prolog system is waiting for terminal input.

    **Please note**: This option is not currently supported under Windows.

  `name(+`*`ApplicationName`*`)`
  : This gives the main window a title *ApplicationName*. This name is also used for communicating between Tcl/Tk applications via the Tcl `send` command.

  `display(+`*`Display`*`)`
  : (This is X windows specific.) Gives the name of the screen on which to create the main window. If this is not given, the default display is determined by the `DISPLAY` environment variable.

`tk_do_one_event`
`tk_do_one_event(+ListOrBitMask)`

Passes control to Tk to handle a single event before passing control back to Prolog. The type of events handled is passed through the *ListOrBitMask* variable. As indicated, this is either a list of atoms that are event types, or a bit mask as specified in the Tcl/Tk documentation. (The bit mask should be avoided for portability between Tcl/Tk versions.)

The *ListOrBitMask* list can contain the following atoms:

`tk_dont_wait`
: don't wait for new events, process only those that are ready

`tk_x_events`
`tk_window_events`
: process window events

`tk_file_events`
: process file events

`tk_timer_events`
: process timer events

`tk_idle_events`
: process `Tk_DoWhenIdle` events

`tk_all_events`
: process any event

Calling `tk_do_one_event/0` is equivalent to a call to `tk_do_one_event/1` with all flags set. If the `tk_dont_wait` flag is set and there is no event to handle, the call will fail.

`tk_next_event(+TclInterpreter, -Event)`
`tk_next_event(+ListOrBitMask, +TclInterpreter, -Event)`

These predicates are similar to `tk_do_one_event/[0,1]` except that they processes Tk events until is at least one Prolog event happens, when they succeed binding *Event* to the first term on the Prolog event queue associated with the interpreter *TclInterpreter*.

`tk_main_loop`

Pass control to Tk until all windows in all Tcl/Tk interpreters are gone.

`tk_main_window(+TclInterpreter, -TkWindow)`

Return in *TkWindow* a reference to the main window of a Tcl/Tk interpreter with handle passed in *TclInterpreter*.

`tk_destroy_window(+TkWindow)`

Destroy a window or widget.

`tk_make_window_exist(+TkWindow)`

Force display of a window or widget.

`tk_num_main_windows(-NumberOfWindows)`

Return in *NumberOfWindows* the total number of Tk main windows existing in the system.

### 40.6.4 Commands for Tcl Interpreters to Interact with The Prolog System

`prolog` Evaluate a Prolog expression from Tcl.

`prolog_event`
Place a Prolog term on the Prolog event queue from inside Tcl.

## 40.7 Resources

We do not know of any resources out there specifically for helping with creating Prolog applications with Tcl/Tk interfaces. Instead we list here some resources for Tcl/Tk, which may help readers to build the Tcl/Tk side of the application.

### 40.7.1 Web Sites

The home of Tcl/Tk is at:

http://tcl.sourceforge.net

The Tcl Developer Xchange site is at:

http://www.tcl.tk

### 40.7.2 Books

There are a surprising number of books on Tcl/Tk, extensions to Tcl/Tk, and Tk as an extension to other languages. Here we mention just a few of the well-known books that will get you started with building Tcl/Tk GUIs, which can then be interfaced to your Prolog applications.

- Brent Welch, *Practical Programming in Tcl and Tk*. Prentice Hall, 1999. 3rd Edition ISBN: 0-13-022028-0 http://www.beedub.com/book/
- John Ousterhout, *Tcl and the Tk Toolkit*. Addison-Wesley, 1994, ISBN 0-201-63337-X
- Paul Raines, *Tcl/Tk Pocket Reference*, 1st Ed., Oct. 1998, ISBN 1-56592-498-3
- Paul Raines & Jeff Tranter, *Tcl/Tk in a Nutshell*, 1st Ed., March 1999, 1-56592-433-9

Also visit the '`books`' section of the Tcl/Tk web site:

http://resource.tcl.tk/resource/doc/books/

### 40.7.3 Manual Pages

Complete manual pages in various formats and for various versions of the Tcl/Tk library can be found at the Tcl/Tk web site:

http://resource.tcl.tk/resource/doc/manual/

### 40.7.4 Usenet News Groups

The newsgroup for everything Tcl is

news:comp.lang.tcl

# 41 The Gauge Profiling Tool

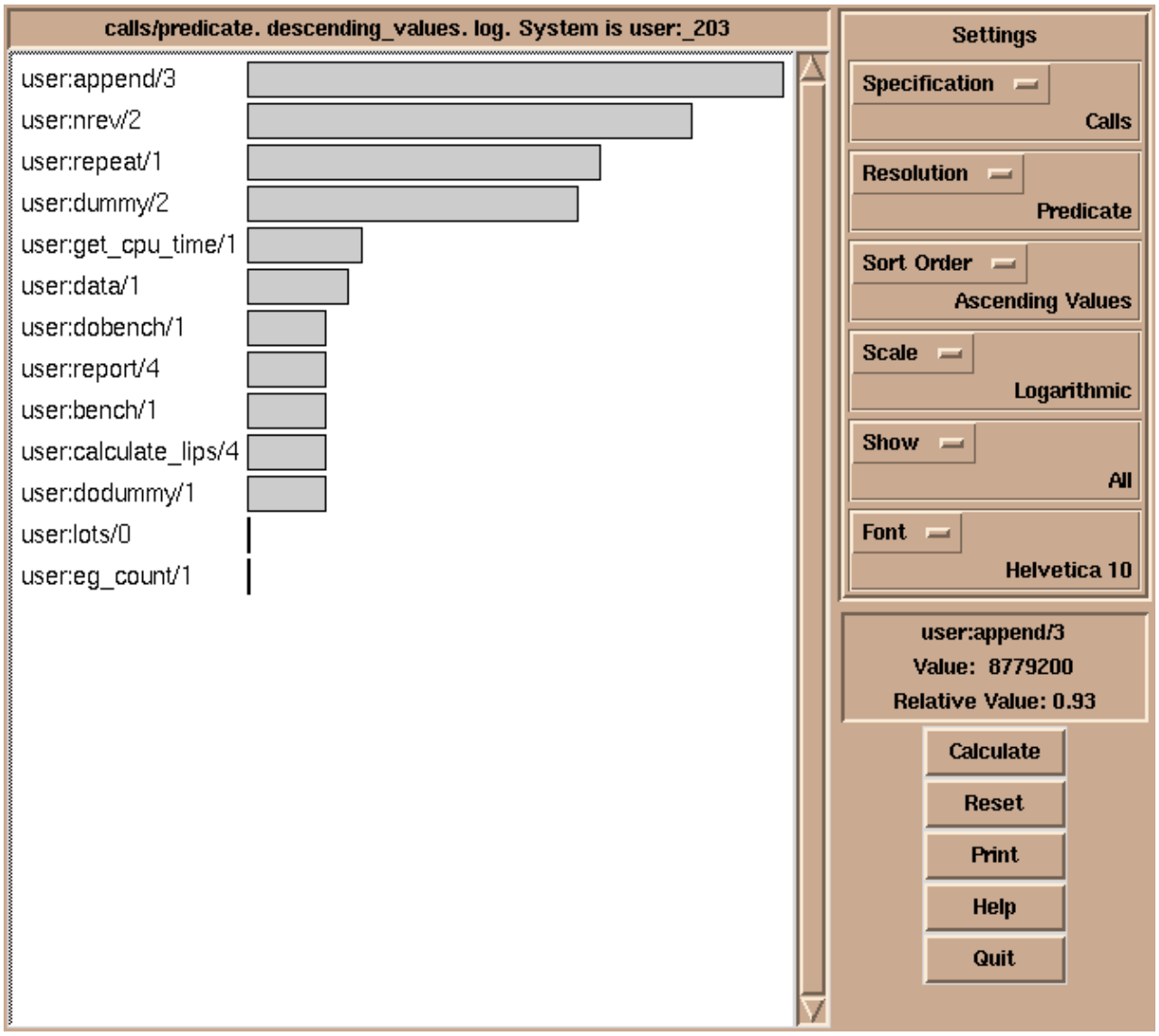
The Gauge library package is a graphical interface to the SICStus built-in predicates `profile_data/4` and `profile_reset/1`. See Section 8.16 [Profiling], page 211, for more information about execution profiling. The interface is based on Tcl/Tk (see Chapter 40 [Tcl/Tk], page 587).

To use the Gauge package, enter the query:

```
| ?- use_module(library(gauge)).
```

`view(:Spec)`

Creates a graphical user interface for viewing the profile data for the predicates covered by the generalized predicate spec *Spec*. For example, the call `view([user:_,m2:_])`, will bring up the graphical user interface on the predicates contained in the modules `user` and `m2`. When the display first comes up it is blank except for the control panel. A screen shot is shown below.




Gauge graphical user interface

The menus and buttons on the control panel are used as follows:

*Specification*
: Selects what statistics to display. One of:

  *Calls*
  : The number of times a predicate/clause was called.

  *Execution Time*
  : The execution time. Beware, this is a synthetic value.

  *Choicepoints*
  : Number of choicepoints created.

  *Shallow Failures*
  : Number of failures in the "if" part of if-then-else statements, or in the "guard" part of guarded clauses.

*Deep Failures*
Number of failures that don't count as shallow.

*Backtracking*
Number of times a clause was backtracked into.

*Calls+Backtracking*
The number of times a predicate/clause was called or backtracked into. This is particularly useful with clause level resolution.

*Resolution* Selects the level of resolution. One of:

*Predicate* Compute results on a per predicate basis.

*Clause* Compute results on a per clause basis, not counting disjunctions and similar control structures as full predicates.

*User+System Clauses*
Compute results on a per clause basis, counting disjunctions and similar control structures as full predicates.

*Sort Order*
Selects the sort order of the histogram. One of:

*Alphabetic* Sort the bars in alphabetic order.

*Descending values*
Sort the bars by descending values.

*Ascending values*
Sort the bars by ascending values.

*Top 40* Show just the 40 highest values in descending order.

*Scale* Controls the scaling of the bars. One of:

*Linear* Display values with a linear scale.

*Logarithmic*
Display values with a logarithmic scale.

*Show* Controls whether to show bars with zero counts. One of:

*All* Show all values in the histogram.

*No zero values*
Show only non-zero values.

*Font* The font used in the histogram chart.

*Calculate* Calculates the values according to the current settings. The values are displayed in a histogram.

*Reset* The execution counters of the selected predicates and clauses are reset.

*Print* A choice of printing the histogram on a Postscript printer, or to a file.

*Help* Shows a help text.

*Quit* Quits Gauge and closes its windows.

By clicking on the bars of the histogram, the figures are displayed in the *Value Info* window.

# 42 I/O on Lists of Character Codes

This package defines I/O predicates that read from, or write to, a code-list. There are also predicates to open a stream referring to a code-list. The stream may be used with general Stream I/O predicates.

Note that the predicates in this section properly handle wide characters, irrespectively of the wide character encodings selected.

> **Please note**: here, the term '`chars`' refers to a code-list, rather than to a char-list.

This library fully supports multiple SICStus run-times in a process.

To load the package, enter the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(charsio)).
```

`format_to_chars(+Format, :Arguments, -Chars)`
`format_to_chars(+Format, :Arguments, ?S0, ?S)`

Prints *Arguments* into a code-list using `format/3` (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142). *Chars* is unified with the list, alternatively *S0* and *S* are unified with the head and tail of the list, respectively.

`write_to_chars(+Term, -Chars)`
`write_to_chars(+Term, ?S0, ?S)`

A specialized `format_to_chars/[3,4]`. Writes *Term* into a code-list using `write/2` (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142). *Chars* is unified with the list. Alternatively, *S0* and *S* are unified with the head and tail of the list, respectively.

`write_term_to_chars(+Term, -Chars, +Options)`
`write_term_to_chars(+Term, ?S0, ?S, +Options)`

A specialized `format_to_chars/[3,4]`. Writes *Term* into a code-list using `write_term/3` and *Options* (see Section 8.1.3 [Term I/O], page 142). *Chars* is unified with the list. Alternatively, *S0* and *S* are unified with the head and tail of the list, respectively.

`atom_to_chars(+Atom, -Chars)`
`atom_to_chars(+Atom, ?S0, ?S)`

A specialized `format_to_chars/[3,4]`. Converts *Atom* to the list of characters comprising its name. *Chars* is unified with the list, alternatively *S0* and *S* are unified with the head and tail of the list, respectively.

`number_to_chars(+Number, -Chars)`
`number_to_chars(+Number, ?S0, ?S)`

A specialized `format_to_chars/[3,4]`. Converts *Number* to the list of characters comprising its name. *Chars* is unified with the list, alternatively *S0* and *S* are unified with the head and tail of the list, respectively.

`read_from_chars(+Chars, -Term)`

Reads *Term* from *Chars* using `read/2`. The *Chars* must, as usual, be terminated by a *full-stop*, i.e. a '`.`', possibly followed by *layout-text*.

`read_term_from_chars(+Chars, -Term, +Options)`

Reads *Term* from *Chars* using `read_from_term/3` and *Options*. The *Chars* must, as usual, be terminated by a *full-stop*, i.e. a '`.`', possibly followed by *layout-text*.

`open_chars_stream(+Chars, -Stream)`

*Stream* is opened as an input stream to an existing code-list. The stream may be read with the Stream I/O predicates and must be closed using `close/1`. The list is copied to an internal buffer when the stream is opened and must therefore be a ground code-list at that point.

`with_output_to_chars(:Goal, -Chars)`
`with_output_to_chars(:Goal, ?S0, ?S)`
`with_output_to_chars(:Goal, -Stream, ?S0, ?S)`

*Goal* is called with the `current_output` stream set to a new stream. This stream writes to an internal buffer, which is, after the successful execution of *Goal*, converted to a list of character codes. *Chars* is unified with the list, alternatively *S0* and *S* are unified with the head and tail of the list, respectively. `with_output_to_chars/4` also passes the stream in the *Stream* argument. It can be used only by *Goal* for writing.

# 43 Jasper Java Interface

## 43.1 Jasper Overview

Jasper is a bi-directional interface between Java and SICStus. The Java-side of the interface consists of a Java package (`se.sics.jasper`) containing classes representing the SICStus run-time system (`SICStus`, `SPTerm`, etc). The Prolog part is designed as a library module (`library(jasper)`).

The library module `library(jasper)` (see Section 43.8 [The Jasper Library], page 708) provides functionality for controlling the loading and unloading the JVM (Java Virtual Machine), method call functionality (`jasper_call/4`), and predicates for managing object references.

Jasper can be used in two modes, depending on which system acts as *Parent Application*. If Java is the parent application, the SICStus runtime kernel will be loaded into the JVM using the `System.loadLibrary()` method (this is done indirectly when instantiating a `SICStus` object). In this mode, SICStus is loaded as a runtime system (see Section 9.8.1 [Runtime Systems], page 254).

As of SICStus 3.9, it is possible to use Jasper in multi threaded mode. This means that several Java threads can call SICStus runtime via a server thread. The communication between the client threads and the server thread is hidden from the programmer, and the API is based on Java `Interfaces`, which are implemented both by the multi thread capable classes and the pre-3.9 classes, which are restricted to single threaded mode. The decision whether to run in single thread mode or in multi threaded mode can thus be left until runtime.

If SICStus is the parent application, Java will be loaded as a foreign resource using the query `use_module(library(jasper))`. The Java engine is initialized using `jasper_initialize/[1,2]`.

- Some of the information in this chapter is a recapitulation of the information in Chapter 9 [Mixing C and Prolog], page 217. The intention is that this chapter should be possible to read fairly independently.
- Before proceeding, please read section "Jasper Notes" in *SICStus Prolog Release Notes* . It contains important information about requirements, availability, installation tips, limitations, and how to access other (online) Jasper/Java resources.

## 43.2 Getting Started

See section "Getting Started" in *SICStus Prolog Release Notes*, for a detailed description of how to get started using the interface. It addresses issues such as finding SICStus from

within Java and vice versa, setting the classpath correctly, etc. If you have trouble in getting started with Jasper, read that chapter before contacting SICStus Support.

## 43.3 Calling Prolog from Java

Calling Prolog from Java is done by using the Java package `se.sics.jasper`. This package contains a set of Java classes, which can be used to create and manipulate terms, ask queries and request one or more solutions. The functionality provided by this set of classes is basically the same as the functionality provided by the C-Prolog interface (see Chapter 9 [Mixing C and Prolog], page 217).

The usage is easiest described by some examples.

### 43.3.1 Single Threaded Example

The following is a Java version of the `train` example. See Section 9.9.1 [Train Example], page 279, for information about how the '`train.sav`' file is created.

This code demonstrates the use of Jasper in single threaded mode. In this mode only one thread can access the SICStus runtime via a `SICStus` object.

```
                                                        // Simple.java
import se.sics.jasper.SICStus;
import se.sics.jasper.Query;
import java.util.HashMap;

public class Simple
{
    public static void main(String argv[]) {

        SICStus sp;
        Query query;
        HashMap WayMap = new HashMap();

        try {
            sp = new SICStus(argv,null);

    sp.restore("train.sav");

            query = sp.openPrologQuery("connected('Örebro', 'Stockholm',
                                        Way, Way).",
                                 WayMap);

            try {
                while (query.nextSolution()) {
                    System.out.println(WayMap);
                }
            } finally {
                query.close();
            }
        }
        catch ( Exception e ) {
            e.printStackTrace();
        }
    }
}
```

It is assumed that the reader has read the section on Section 43.2 [Getting Started], page 693, which describes how to get the basics up and running.

This is how the example works:

1. Before any predicates can be called, the SICStus run-time system must be initialized. This is done by instantiating the `SICStus` class. Each SICStus object correspond to one independent copy of the SICStus run-time system (a rather heavy-weight entity).

   In this example, we have specified `null` as the second argument to `SICStus`. This instructs SICStus to search for `sprt.sav` using its own internal methods, or using a path specified by passing '`-Dsicstus.path=[...]`' to the JVM.

2. Queries are made through method `query`. The arguments to this method are a string specifying a Prolog goal, and a `Map`, which will contain a mapping of variable names to bindings. This method is for finding a single solution. Note that the string is read by the Prolog reader, so it must conform to the syntax rules for Prolog, including the terminating period. There are two more methods for making queries: `queryCutFail`, for side-effects only, and `openQuery` to produce several solutions through backtracking.
3. The next step is to load the Prolog code. This is done by the method `restore`. Corresponds to `SP_restore()` in the C-interface. See Section 9.8.4.2 [Loading Prolog Code], page 277. Note that this method must be called before any other SICStus method is called. See the HTML Jasper documentation for details.
4. The `openQuery` method returns a reference to a query, an object implementing the `Query` interface. To obtain solutions, the method `nextSolution` is called with no arguments. `nextSolution` returns `true` as long as there are more solutions, and the example above will print the value of the Map `WayMap` until there are no more solutions. Note that the query must be closed, even if `nextSolution` has indicated that there are no more solutions.

### 43.3.2 Multi Threaded Example

Following is a Java version of the `train` example.

This is a multi threaded version of the `train` example. In this mode several threads can access the SICStus runtime via a `Prolog interface`. The static method `Jasper.newProlog()` returns an object that implements a `Prolog interface`. A thread can make queries by calling the query-methods of the Prolog object. The calls will be sent to a separate server thread that does the actual call to SICStus runtime.

```
                                                    // MultiSimple.java
import se.sics.jasper.Jasper;
import se.sics.jasper.Query;
import se.sics.jasper.Prolog;
import java.util.HashMap;

public class MultiSimple
{
    class Client extends Thread
    {
        Prolog jp;
        String qs;

        Client(Prolog p,String queryString)
        {
            jp = p;
            qs = queryString;
        }
        public void run()
        {
            HashMap WayMap = new HashMap();
            try {
                synchronized(jp) {
                    Query query = jp.openPrologQuery(qs, WayMap);
                    try {
                        while (query.nextSolution()) {
                            System.out.println(WayMap);
                        }
                    } finally {
                        query.close();
                    }
                }
            } catch ( Exception e ) {
                e.printStackTrace();
            }
        }
    }
```

```
    {
        try {
            Prolog jp = Jasper.newProlog(argv,null,"train.sav");

            Client c1 =
                new Client(jp,"connected('Örebro', 'Hallsberg',
                           Way1, Way1).");
            c1.start();
            // The prolog variable names are different from above
            // so we can tell which query gives what solution.
            Client c2 =
                new Client(jp,"connected('Stockholm', 'Hallsberg',
                           Way2, Way2).");
            c2.start();
        }
        catch ( Exception e ) {
            e.printStackTrace();
        }
    }

    public static void main(String argv[])
    {
        new MultiSimple(argv);
    }
}
```

1. The `Prolog` object `jp` is the interface to SICStus. It implements the methods of `interface Prolog`, making it possible to write quite similar code for single threaded and multi threaded usage of Jasper. The static method `Jasper.newProlog()` returns such an object.
2. In this example, the Prolog code is loaded by the server thread just after creating the SICStus object (which is invisible to the user). The third argument to the method `Jasper.newProlog` is the .sav file to restore. Two threads are then started, which will make different queries with the `connected` predicate.
3. `openPrologQuery` is not recommended in multi threaded mode, but if you must use it from more than one Java thread, you should enclose the call to `openPrologQuery` and the closing of the query in a single synchronized block, synchronizing on the Prolog object. See Section 43.6 [SPTerm and Memory], page 705, for details on one of the reasons why this is necessary.

### 43.3.3 Another Multi Threaded Example (Prolog Top Level)

This is another multi threaded version of the `train` example (see Section 9.9.1 [Train Example], page 279).

In this example prolog is the toplevel and Java is invoked via '`library(jasper)`'.

```
                                                    // MultiSimple2.java
import se.sics.jasper.Jasper;
import se.sics.jasper.Query;
import se.sics.jasper.Prolog;
import se.sics.jasper.SICStus;
import java.util.ArrayList;
import java.util.HashMap;
import java.util.ListIterator;

public class MultiSimple2
{
    class Client extends Thread
    {
        Prolog jp;
        SICStus sp;
        String qs;

        Client(Prolog p, SICStus s, String queryString)
        {
            jp = p;
            sp = s;
            qs = queryString;
        }
        public void run()
        {
            HashMap WayMap = new HashMap();
            try {
                synchronized(jp) {
                    Query query = jp.openPrologQuery(qs, WayMap);
                    try {
                        while (query.nextSolution()) {
                            System.out.println(WayMap);
                        }
                    } finally {
                        query.close();
                    }
                }
            } catch ( Exception e ) {
                e.printStackTrace();
            }
        }
    }
```

```
class Watcher extends Thread
{
    SICStus mySp;
    ArrayList threadList = new ArrayList(2);

    public boolean add(Client cl)
    {
        return threadList.add((Object)cl);
    }
    boolean at_least_one_is_alive(ArrayList tl)
    {
        ListIterator li = tl.listIterator();
        boolean f = false;
        while (li.hasNext()) {
            boolean alive = ((Client)(li.next())).isAlive();
            f = f || alive;
        }
        return f;
    }
    public void run()
    {
        while (at_least_one_is_alive(threadList)) {
            try {
                this.sleep(1000);
            } catch (InterruptedException ie) {
                System.err.println("Watcher interrupted.");
            }
        }
        mySp.stopServer();
    }
    Watcher(SICStus sp)
    {
        mySp = sp;
    }
}
```

```
    public void CallBack()
    {
        try {
            SICStus sp = SICStus.getCaller(); // get the SICStus object
            sp.load("train.ql");
            Prolog jp = sp.newProlog(); // Create a new Prolog Interface
            Client c1 =
                new Client(jp, sp,
                           "connected('Örebro', 'Hallsberg', Way1, Way1).");
            c1.start();
            // The prolog variable names in the Map are different from above so
            // we can tell which query gives what solution.
            Client c2 =
                new Client(jp, sp,
                           "connected('Stockholm', 'Hallsberg', Way2, Way2).");
            c2.start();
            Watcher w = new Watcher(sp);
            w.add(c1);
            w.add(c2);
            w.start();
            sp.startServer();   // And finally start the server. This
                                //  method call does not return until
                                //  some other thread calls sp.stopServer().
        }
        catch ( Exception e ) {
            e.printStackTrace();
        }
    }

}
```

```
                                                    % multisimple2.pl
:- use_module(library(jasper)).
main:-
        jasper_initialize(JVM),
        jasper_new_object(JVM,
                          'MultiSimple2',
                          init,
                          init,
                          Obj),
        jasper_call(JVM,
                    method('', 'CallBack', [instance]),
                    'CallBack'(+object('')),
                    'CallBack'(Obj)).
```

1. This example is similar to the previous multi threaded example See Section 43.3.2

[Multi Threaded Example], page 696, but in this case Prolog is the top level.

2. Since a SICStus object already exists when the java method `CallBack` is called, we cannot use `Jasper.newProlog` to obtain a `Prolog` interface. Instead we can use the `SICStus` method `getCaller` to get a handle on the `SICStus` object.
3. In this example we cannot use the `restore` method to load the prolog saved state, since it unloads all foreign resources. This includes `library(jasper)` from which the call to Java was made. Instead the method `SICStus.load` can be used to load a compiled prolog file. See the HTML Jasper documentation for details on this method. See Section 6.1 [Load Predicates], page 66, for how to create a '`.ql`' file.
4. The rest of the example is similar to the previous multi threaded example with the addition of a watcher class, which is used to monitor the client threads. This is necessary if the method `startServer` is to return. See the HTML Jasper documentation on the methods `SICStus.startServer` and `SICStus.stopServer`.

## 43.4 Jasper Package Class Reference

Detailed documentation of the classes in the `jasper` package can be found in the HTML documentation installed with SICStus and also at the SICStus documentation page (http://www.sics.se/sicstus/docs/).

> **Please note**: None of the `se.sics.jasper` methods are thread safe, unless explicitly mentioned, they can only be called from the thread that created the SICStus object. (This is different from how `se.sics.jasper` worked in SICStus 3.8)

However, Jasper in SICStus 3.9 and later supports multi threaded mode. Several Java threads can access SICStus runtime through a server thread that does the actual calls.

The API is defined by three `interfaces`: `Prolog`, `Query` and `Term`. The methods of these `interfaces` are implemented by inner classes of the `Jasper` server. Instances of these inner classes are returned by methods of the class `Jasper` and can then be used from multiple threads by the Java programmer.

In multi threaded mode the Java programmer obtains an object implementing the `interface Prolog`. That interface has methods similar to the methods of the `SICStus` class described below. `Interface Query` and `interface Term` have the same relations to `class SPQuery` and `class SPTerm`, respectively. In addition the `SICStus` class, the `SPQuery` class and the `SPTerm` class all implement the above interfaces. The methods of the interfaces are preferred over the old methods.

See the HTML documentation for details on the methods of the `interfaces`.

See section "Jasper Notes" in *SICStus Prolog Release Notes*, for limitations in multi threaded Jasper.

`boolean` **query** (`String module, String name, SPTerm args[]`) [Method on `SICStus`]

Call *name* with *args* (a vector of `SPTerm` objects). Like `once(Module:Name(Args...))`.

Returns `true` if the call succeeded, `false` if the call failed, i.e. there were no solutions.

Introduced in SICStus 3.8.5.

`boolean` **query** (`String goal, Map varMap`) [Method on `SICStus`]

Call a goal specified as a string.

`goal` The textual representation of the goal to execute, with terminating period.

`varMap` A map from variable names to SPTerm objects. Used both for passing variable bindings into the goal and to obtain the bindings produced by the goal. May be null.

On success, the values of variables with names that do not start with underscore ('_') will be added to the map.

Returns `true` if the call succeeded, `false` if the call failed, i.e. there were no solutions.

```
HashMap varMap = new HashMap();

varMap.put("File", new SPTerm(sp, "datafile.txt"));

if (sp.query("see(File),do_something(Result),seen.", varMap)) {
   System.out.println("Result==" +
                      ((SPTerm)varMap.get("Result")).toString());
} else {
   System.out.println("Failed);
}
```

Introduced in SICStus 3.8.5.

`boolean` **query** (`SPPredicate pred, SPTerm args[]`) [Method on `SICStus`]

Obsolescent version of `SICStus::query()` above.

`boolean` **queryCutFail** (`String module, String name, SPTerm args[]`) [Method on `SICStus`]

Call *name* with *args* for side-effect only.

As `SICStus.query()` it only finds the first solution, and then it cuts away all other solutions and fails.

It corresponds roughly to the following Prolog code:

```
( \+ call(Module:Name(Args...)) -> fail; true )
```

Introduced in SICStus 3.8.5.

`boolean` **queryCutFail** (`String goal, Map varMap`) [Method on `SICStus`]

Call a goal specified as a string, for side-effect only. The map is only used for passing variable bindings *into* the goal. See `query` for details

Introduced in SICStus 3.8.5.

`boolean` **queryCutFail** (`SPPredicate pred, SPTerm args[]`) [Method on `SICStus`]

Obsolescent version of `queryCutFail` above.

`SPQuery` **openQuery** (`String module, String name, SPTerm args[]`) [Method on `SICStus`]

Sets up a query (an object of class `SPQuery`), which can later be asked to produce solutions. You must *close* an opened query when no more solutions are required; see below.

It corresponds roughly to the following Prolog code:

```
( true     % just calling openQuery does not call the predicate

; % failing (nextSolution) will backtrack for more solutions
  call(Module:Name(Args...))
)
```

Introduced in SICStus 3.8.5.

`boolean` **openQuery** (`String goal, Map varMap`) [Method on `SICStus`]

Sets up a query specified as a string. See `openQuery` and `query` for details.

Introduced in SICStus 3.8.5.

`SPQuery` **openQuery** (`SPPredicate pred, SPTerm args[]`) [Method on `SICStus`]

Obsolescent version of `openQuery` above.

The following methods are used to obtain solutions from an opened query and to tell the SICStus run-time system that no more answers are required.

`boolean` **nextSolution** () [Method on `SPQuery`]

Obtain the next solution. Returns `true` on success and `false` if there were no more solutions. When you are no longer interested in any more solutions, you should call `SPQuery.close` or `SPQuery.cut` to *close* the query.

Returns `true` if a new solution was produced, `false` if there were no more solutions. This corresponds roughly to `fail/0`. See Section 43.6 [SPTerm and Memory], page 705, for additional details.

**close** () [Method on `SPQuery`]

Cut and fail away any previous solution to the query. After closing a query object, you should not use it anymore. This corresponds roughly to `!, fail`. See Section 43.6 [SPTerm and Memory], page 705, for additional details.

**cut** () [Method on `SPQuery`]

Cut, but do not fail away, any previous solution. After closing a query object with `cut`, you should not use it anymore. This corresponds roughly to `!`. See Section 43.6 [SPTerm and Memory], page 705, for additional details.

## 43.5 Java Exception Handling

Exceptions are handled seamlessly between Java and Prolog. This means that exceptions can be thrown in Prolog and caught in Java and the other way around. For example, if a predicate called from Java throws an exception with `throw/1` and the predicate itself does not catch the exception, the Java-method that performed the query, `queryCutFail()` for example, will throw an exception (of class `SPException`) containing the exception term. Symmetrically, a Java-exception thrown (and not caught) in a method called from Prolog will cause the corresponding predicate (`simple/2` in the example above) to throw an exception consisting of the exception object (in the internal Prolog representation of a Java object). See Section 43.8.5 [Handling Java Exceptions], page 718, for examples of catching Java exceptions in Prolog.

## 43.6 SPTerm and Memory

Java and Prolog have quite different memory management policies. In Java, memory is reclaimed when the garbage collector can determine that no code will ever use the object occupying the memory. In Prolog, the garbage collector additionally reclaims memory upon failure (such as the failure implied in the use of `SPQuery.close()` and `SPQuery::nextSolution()`). This mismatch in the notion of memory lifetime can occasionally cause problems.

### 43.6.1 Lifetime of SPTerms and Prolog Memory

There are three separate memory areas involved when manipulating Prolog terms from Java using `SPTerm` objects. These areas have largely independent life times.

1. The `SPTerm` object itself.
2. Creating `SPTerm` object also tells Prolog to allocate an SP_term_ref. SP_term_refs have a life-time that is independent of the lifetime of the corresponding SPTerm object.
3. Any Prolog terms allocated on the Prolog heap. An `SPTerm` refer to a Prolog term indirectly via a SP_term_ref.

A SP_term_ref *ref* (created as a side-effect of creating a `SPTerm` object) will be reclaimed if either:

- Java returns to Prolog. This may never happen, especially if Java is the top-level application.
- Assume there exists a still open query *q* that was opened before the SP_term_ref *ref* was created. The SP_term_ref *ref* will be reclaimed if the query *q* is closed (using `q.close()` or `q.cut()`) or if `q.nextSolution()` is called.

An `SPTerm` object will be invalidated (and eventually reclaimed by the garbage collector) if the corresponding SP_term_ref is reclaimed as above. If passed an invalidated SP_term_ref, most methods will throw an `IllegalTermException` exception.

A Prolog term (allocated on the Prolog heap) will be deallocated when:

- Assume there exists a still open query *q* that was openend before the term was created. The memory of the term will be reclaimed if the query *q* is closed using `q.close()` or if `q.nextSolution()` is called. The memory is not reclaimed if the query is closed with `q.cut()`.

  **Please note**: it is possible to get a `SPTerm` object and its SP_term_ref to refer to deallocated Prolog terms, in effect creating "dangling" pointers in cases where the `SPTerm` would ordinarily still be valid. This will be detected and invalidate the `SPTerm`:

```
{
  SPTerm old = new SPTerm(sp);
  SPQuery q;

  q = sp.openQuery(....);
  ...
  old.consFunctor(...);  // allocate a Prolog term newer
than q
  ...
  q.nextSolution(); // or q.close()
  // error:
  // The SP_term_ref in q refers to an invalid part of the Prolog heap
  // the SPTerm old will be invalidated by q.nextSolution()
}
```

### 43.6.2 Preventing SPTerm Memory Leaks

Some uses of `SPTerm` will leak memory on the Prolog side. This happens if a new `SPTerm` object is allocate, but Java neither returns to Prolog nor backtracks (using the method `close`, `cut` or `nextSolution`) into a query opened before the allocation of the `SPTerm` object.

As of SICStus 3.8.5, it is possible to explicitly delete a `SPTerm` object using the `SPTerm.delete()` method. The `delete()` method invalidates the SPTerm object and makes the associated SP_term_ref available for re-use.

Another way to ensure that all SP_term_refs are deallocated is to open a dummy query only for this purpose. The following code demonstrates this:

```
// Always synchronize over creation and closing of SPQuery objects
synchronized (sp) {
    // Create a dummy query that invokes true/0
    SPQuery context = sp.openQuery("user","true",new SPTerm[]{});
    // All SP_term_refs created after this point will be reclaimed by
    // Prolog when doing context.close() (or context.cut())

    try {           // ensure context is always closed
        SPTerm tmp = new SPTerm(sp); // created after context
        int i = 0;

        while (i++ < 5) {
            // re-used instead of doing tmp = new SPTerm(sp,"...");
            tmp.putString("Iteration #" + i + "\n");
            // e.g. user:write('Iteration #1\n')
            sp.queryCutFail("user", "write", new SPTerm[]{tmp});
        }
    }
    finally {
        // This will invalidate tmp and make Prolog
        // reclaim the corresponding SP_term_ref
        context.close(); // or context.cut() to retain variable bindings.
    }
}
```

## 43.7 Java Threads

None of the pre-3.9 methods in `se.sics.jasper` are thread safe. They can only be called from the thread that created the SICStus object. (This is different from how `se.sics.jasper` used to work in SICStus 3.8).

As of 3.9 there are two ways to set up for calls to SICStus from multiple threads.

One way is to use the static method `newProlog` in the class `Jasper`:

`Prolog` **newProlog** (`String argv[], String bootPath`) [Method on `Jasper`]

Creates a `Prolog` interface object. Starts a server thread, which will serve that `Prolog`. The server thread takes care of all interaction with the Prolog runtime,

making sure that all calls to the Prolog runtime will be done from one and the same thread.

See the HTML documentation on the `interface Prolog` for details on what methods are available for a client thread.

Another way is to create a SICStus object and use the following methods:

`Prolog` **newProlog** () [Method on `SICStus`]

Returns the `Prolog` interface for this SICStus object. Creates a server and a client (`Prolog`) interface for this SICStus object. The server may be started by calling `startServer()`

**startServer** () [Method on `SICStus`]

Start serving requests from a Prolog client. This method does not return until another thread calls `stopServer()`. Before calling this method you should call `newProlog()` and hand the result over to another Thread.

**stopServer** () [Method on `SICStus`]

Stops the server. Calling this method causes the Thread running in the `startServer()` method to return.

As with the first method, the `interface Prolog` defines the methods available for the client threads.

## 43.8 The Jasper Library

The Jasper library module is the Prolog interface to the Java VM. It corresponds to the `se.sics.jasper` package in Java. It is loaded by executing the query:

```
| ?- use_module(library(jasper)).
```

The Jasper library fully supports multiple SICStus run-times in a process.

Jasper cannot be used when the SICStus run-time is statically linked to the executable, such as when using `spld --static`.

The following functionality is provided:

- Initializing the Java VM using the *JNI Invocation API* (`jasper_initialize/[1,2]`, `jasper_deinitialize/1`).
- Creating and deleting Java objects directly from Prolog (`jasper_new_object/5`).
- Method calls (`jasper_call/4`).
- Global and local (object) reference management (`jasper_create_global_ref/3`, `jasper_delete_global_ref/2`, `jasper_delete_local_ref/2`). Global references are used to prevent the JVM from garbage collecting a Java object referenced from Prolog.

- There is also a sub-directory containing example programs (`library('jasper/examples')`).

### 43.8.1 Jasper Method Call Example

We begin with a small example.

```
                                                    // Simple.java
import se.sics.jasper.*;

public class Simple {
  private String instanceDatum = "this is instance data";

  static int simpleMethod(int value) {
    return value*42;
  }

  public String getInstanceData(String arg) {
    return instanceDatum + arg;
  }
}
```

Compile '`Simple.java`' (UNIX):

```
% javac -deprecation \
  -classpath <installdir>/lib/sicstus-
3.12.7/bin/jasper.jar Simple.java
```

Under Windows this may look like (the command should go on a single line):

```
C:\> c:\jdk1.2.2\bin\javac -deprecation
 -classpath "D:\Program Files\SICStus Prolog
3.12.7\bin\jasper.jar" Simple.java
```

The option '`-deprecation`' is always a good idea, it makes `javac` warn if your code use deprecated methods.

```
                                                        % simple.pl
:- use_module(library(jasper)).
main :-
   %% Replace '/my/java/dir' below with the path containing
   %% 'Simple.class', e.g. to look in the current directory use
   %% classpath(['.']).
   %% You can also use the CLASSPATH environment variable and call
   %% jasper_initialize(JVM)
   %% Under Windows it may look like classpath(['C:/MyTest'])
   jasper_initialize([classpath(['/my/java/dir'])],JVM),

   format('Calling a static method...~n',[]),
   jasper_call(JVM,
               method('Simple','simpleMethod',[static]), % Which method
               simple_method(+integer,[-integer]), % Types of arguments
               simple_method(42,X)), % The arguments.
   format('simpleMethod(~w) = ~w~n',[42,X]),

   format('Creating an object...~n',[]),
   jasper_new_object(JVM, 'Simple', init, init, Object),

   format('Calling an instance method on ~w...~n',[Object]),
   jasper_call(JVM,
               method('Simple','getInstanceData',[instance]),
               %% first arg is the instance to call
               get_instance_data(+object('Simple'), +string,[-string]),
               get_instance_data(Object, 'foobar', X1)),
   format('getInstanceData(~w) = ~w~n',['foobar',X1]).
```

Then, run SICStus:

```
% echo "[simple],main." | sicstus
SICStus 3.12.7 ...
Licensed to SICS
% consulting /home1/jojo/simple.pl...
[...]
% consulted /home1/jojo/simple.pl in module user, 100 msec 26644 bytes
Calling a static method...
simpleMethod(42) = 1764
Creating an object...
Calling and instance method on $java_object(135057576)...
getInstanceData(foobar) = this is instance datafoobar
```

This example performed three things.

- The static method `simpleMethod` was called with argument '42', and returned the square of '42', '1764'.

- An object of class `Simple` was created.
- The method `getInstanceData` was executed on the object just created. The method took an atom as an argument and appended the atom to a string stored as a field in the object, yielding `"this is instance datafoobar"`.

### 43.8.2 Jasper Library Predicates

`jasper_initialize(-JVM)`
`jasper_initialize(+Options, -JVM)`

Loads and initializes the Java VM. *JVM* is a reference to the Java VM. *Options* is a list of options. The options can be of the following types:

`classpath(<classpath>)`

If `<classpath>` is an atom it will be added (unmodified) to the Java VM's classpath. If `<classpath>` is a list, each element will be expanded using `absolute_file_name/2` and concatenated using the Java VM's path-separator. Example:

```
classpath([library('jasper/examples'),'$HOME/joe'])
```

In addition to the classpaths specified here, Jasper will automatically add `jasper.jar` to the classpath together with the contents of the `CLASSPATH` environment variable.

`if_exists(option)`

This option determines what happens if a JVM has already been initialized, either through a previous call to `jasper_initialize` or because Prolog have been called from Java. If a JVM already exists then the other options are ignored.

`ok` The default. Argument *JVM* is bound to the existing JVM.

`fail` The call to `jasper_initialize/2` fails.

`error` The call to `jasper_initialize/2` throws an exception (`java_exception(`*some text*`)`).

`if_not_exists(option)`

This option determines what happens if a JVM has not already been initialized.

`ok` The default. The remaining options are used to initialize the JVM.

`fail` The call to `jasper_initialize/2` fails.

`error` The call to `jasper_initialize/2` throws an exception (`java_exception(`*some text*`)`).

As an example, to access the currently running JVM and to give an error if there is no running JVM use `jasper_initialize([if_exists(ok),if_not_exists(error)], JVM)`.

*Option* The option is an atom that will be passed directly to the Java VM as an option. This enables the user to send additional options to the Java VM. Example:

```
jasper_initialize(['-Dkenny.is.dead=42'],JVM),
```

In addition to the options specified by the user, Jasper adds a couple of options on its own in order for Java to find the Jasper classes and the Jasper native library.

There is currently no support for creating multiple JVMs (few JDKs, if any, supports this).

`jasper_deinitialize(+JVM)`

De-initialize Java. Do not call this, current versions of the JVM does not support deinitialization.

`jasper_call(+JVM,+Method,+TypeInfo,+Args)`

Calls a Java static or instance method.

*JVM* A reference to the Java VM, as obtained by `jasper_initialize/[1,2]`.

*TypeInfo* Information about the argument types and the argument conversion that should be applied. See Section 43.8.3 [Conversion between Prolog Arguments and Java Types], page 714, for more information on specifying argument types.

Note that for an instance method the first argument must be an object reference (specified with `+object(Class)`). In this case the class is ignored but should still be an atom, e.g. `''`.

*Args* A term with one position for each argument to the constructor.

*Method*

A term of the form `method(ClassName, MethodName, Flags)` that identifies the method to call.

*ClassName*

This is the *Fully Qualified Classname* of the class (for example, `java/lang/String`) of the object or where to look for the static method. Note that you need to surround the atom with single quotes since it contains `/` characters. The class is ignored when calling instance methods but should still be an atom, e.g. `''`.

*Name* This is the name of the method, as an atom.

*Flags* This is the singleton list `[instance]` for instance methods and `[static]` for static methods.

`jasper_new_object(+JVM,+ClassName,+TypeInfo,+Args,-Object)`

Creates a new Java object.

See `jasper_call/4` above for an explanation of the arguments *JVM*, *ClassName*, *TypeInfo* and *Args*.

*ClassName*
: An an atom containing the *fully qualified classname*

*TypeInfo*
: *TypeInfo* has the same format as for a static void method.

*Args*
: A term with one position for each argument to the constructor.

*Object*
: This argument is bound to a (local) reference to the created object. See Section 43.8.4 [Global vs. Local References], page 717.

As an example, the following code creates a `java/lang/Integer` object initialized from a string of digits. It then calls the instance method `doubleValue` to obtain the floating point representation of the Integer.

```
| ?- Chars = "4711",
     %% get existing JVM
     jasper_initialize([if_not_exists(error)], JVM),
     jasper_new_object(JVM, 'java/lang/Integer',
                       init(+chars), init(Chars), S),
     jasper_call(JVM,
                 method('java/lang/Integer', double-
Value, [instance]),
                 to_double(+object('java/lang/Integer'), [-
double]),
                 to_double(S,X)).

S = '$java_object'(135875344),
X = 4711.0,  % note that this is now a floating point number
JVM = '$jvm'(1076414148),
Chars = [52,55,49,49]  % a.k.a. "4711"
```

`jasper_create_global_ref(+JVM,+Ref,-GlobalRef)`
: Creates a global reference (*GlobalRef*) for a (non-null) Java object (*Ref*). See Section 43.8.4 [Global vs. Local References], page 717.

`jasper_delete_global_ref(+JVM,+GlobalRef)`
: Destroys a global reference. See Section 43.8.4 [Global vs. Local References], page 717.

`jasper_create_local_ref(+JVM,+Ref,-LocalRef)`
: Creates a local reference (*LocalRef*) for a (non-null) Java object (*Ref*). See Section 43.8.4 [Global vs. Local References], page 717. Rarely needed.

`jasper_delete_local_ref(+JVM,+GlobalRef)`
: Destroys a local reference. See Section 43.8.4 [Global vs. Local References], page 717.

`jasper_is_jvm(+JVM)`
: Succeeds if *JVM* is a reference to a Java Virtual Machine.

`jasper_is_object(+Object)`
`jasper_is_object(+JVM,+Object)`
: Succeeds if *Object* is a reference to a Java object. The representation of Java object *will* change so use `jasper_is_object/1` to recognize objects instead of

relying on the internal representation. Currently the *JVM* argument is ignored. If, and when, multiple JVMs becomes a possibility `jasper_is_object/2` will verify that *Object* is an object in a particular JVM.

`jasper_is_same_object(+JVM,+Object1,+Object2)`
: Succeeds if *Object1* and *Object2* refers to the same Java object (or both are null object references). The same object may be represented by two different terms in prolog so `==/2` can *not* be used to reliably detect if two object references refer to the same object.

`jasper_is_instance_of(+JVM,+Object,+ClassName)`
: Succeeds if *Object* is an instance of class *ClassName*; fails otherwise. *ClassName* is a fully qualified classname, see `jasper_call/4`.

`jasper_object_class_name(+JVM,+Object,-ClassName)`
: Returns the fully qualified name of the class of `+`*Object* as an atom.

`jasper_null(+JVM,-NullRef)`
: Create a null object reference.

`jasper_is_null(+JVM,+Ref)`
: Succeeds if *Ref* is a null object reference, fails otherwise, e.g. if *Ref* is not an object reference.

### 43.8.3 Conversion between Prolog Arguments and Java Types

The following table lists the possible values of arguments of the argument type specification to `jasper_call/4` and `jasper_new_object/5` (see Section 43.8.2 [Jasper Library Predicates], page 711). The value specifies which conversion between corresponding Prolog argument and Java type will take place.

There is currently no mechanism for specifying Java arrays in this way.

In the following the package prefix (`java/lang` or `se/sics/jasper`) has been left out for brevity.

For several of the numerical types there is the possibility that the target type cannot accurately represent the source type, e.g. when converting from a Prolog integer to a Java byte. The behavior in such cases is unspecified.

`Prolog: +integer`
`Java: int`
: The argument should be a number. It is converted to a Java `int`, a 32 bit signed integer.

`Prolog: +byte`
`Java: byte`
: The argument should be a number. It is converted to a Java `byte`.

`Prolog: +short`
`Java: short`

The argument should be a number. It is converted to a Java `short`, a 16 bit signed integer.

`Prolog: +long`
`Java: long`

The argument should be a number. It is converted to a Java `long`, a 64-bit signed integer.

In SICStus versions prior to 3.9.1, the value was truncated to 32 bits when passed between Java and Prolog. This is no longer the case.

`Prolog: +float`
`Java: float`

The argument should be a number. It is converted to a Java `float`.

`Prolog: +double`
`Java: double`

The argument should be a number. It is converted to a Java `double`.

`Prolog: +term`
`Java: SPTerm`

The argument can be any term. It is passed to Java as an object of the class `SPTerm`.

`Prolog: +object(`*`Class`*`)`
`Java:` *`Class`*

The argument should be the Prolog representation of a Java object of class *Class*. Unless it is the first argument in a non-static method (in which case is it treated as the object on which the method should be invoked), it is passed to the Java method as an object of class `Class`.

`Prolog: +atom` **obsolescent**
`Java: SPCanonicalAtom`

The argument should be an atom. The Java method will be passed an object of class `SPCanonicalAtom`. Often `+string`, see below, is more useful.

`Prolog: +boolean`
`Java: boolean`

The argument should be an atom in `{true,false}`. The Java method will receive a `boolean`.

`Prolog: +chars`
`Java: String`

The argument should be a code-list. The Java method will receive an object of class `String`.

`Prolog: +string`
`Java: String`

The argument should be an atom. The Java method will receive an object of class `String`.

`Prolog: -atom` **obsolescent**
`Java: SPTerm`

The Java method will receive an object of class `SPTerm`, which should be set to an atom (e.g. using `SPTerm.putString`). The argument will be bound to the value of the atom when the method returns. Often `-term`, see below, is more useful.

`Prolog: -chars`
`Java: StringBuffer`

The Java method will receive an (empty) object of type `StringBuffer`, which can be modified. The argument will be bound to a code-list of the `StringBuffer` object.

`Prolog: -string`
`Java: StringBuffer`

The Java method will receive an object of type `StringBuffer`, which can be modified. The argument will be bound to an atom converted from the `StringBuffer` object.

`Prolog: -term`
`Java: SPTerm`

The Java method will receive an object of class `SPTerm`, which can be set to a term (e.g. using `SPTerm.consFunctor`). The argument will be bound to the term when the method returns.

`Prolog: [-integer]`
`Java: int` *M*`()`

The Java method should return an `int`. The value will be converted to a Prolog integer.

`Prolog: [-byte]`
`Java: byte` *M*`()`

The Java method should return a `byte`. The value will be converted to a Prolog integer.

`Prolog: [-short]`
`Java: short` *M*`()`

The Java method should return a `short`. The value will be converted to a Prolog integer.

`Prolog: [-long]`
`Java: long` *M*`()`

The Java method should return a `long`, a 64 bit signed integer. The value will be converted to a Prolog integer.

`Prolog: [-float]`
`Java: float` *M*`()`

The Java method should return a `float`. The value will be converted to a Prolog float.

`Prolog: [-double]`
`Java: double M()`
The Java method should return a `double`. The value will be converted to a Prolog float.

`Prolog: [-term]`
`Java: SPTerm M()`
The Java method should return an object of class `SPTerm`, which will be converted to a Prolog term.

`Prolog: [-object(Class)]`
`Java: SPTerm M()`
The Java method should return an object of class *Class*, which will be converted to the internal Prolog representation of the Java object.

`Prolog: [-atom]` **obsolescent**
`Java: SPTerm M()`
The Java method should return an object of class `SPCanonicalAtom`, which will be converted to a Prolog atom. Often `[-term]`, see above, is more useful.

`Prolog: [-boolean]`
`Java: boolean M()`
The Java should return a `boolean`. The value will be converted to a Prolog atom in `{true,false}`.

`Prolog: [-chars]`
`Java: String M()`
The Java method should return an object of class `String`, which will be converted to a code-list.

`Prolog: [-string]`
`Java: String M()`
The Java method should return an object of class `String`, which will be converted to an atom.

### 43.8.4 Global vs. Local References

It is important to understand the rules determining the life-span of Java object references. These are similar in spirit to the SP_term_refs of the C-Prolog interface, but since they are used to handle Java objects instead of Prolog terms they work a little differently.

Java object references (*currently* represented in Prolog as `'$java_object'/1` terms) exist in two flavors: *local* and *global*. Their validity are governed by the following rules.

1. A local reference is valid until Prolog returns to Java or the reference is deleted with `jasper_delete_local_ref/2`. It is only valid in the (native) thread in which is was created. As a rule of thumb a local reference can be used safely as long as it is not saved away using `assert/3` or similar.

Since local references are *never* reclaimed until Prolog returns to Java (which may never happen) you should typically call `jasper_delete_local_ref/2` when your code is done with an object.

2. A global reference is valid until explicitly freed. It can be used from any native thread.
3. All objects returned by Java methods are converted to local references.
4. Java exceptions not caught by Java are thrown as prolog exceptions consisting of a *global* reference to the exception object, see Section 43.8.5 [Handling Java Exceptions], page 718.

Local references can be converted into global references (`jasper_create_global_ref/3`). When the global reference is no longer needed, it should be delete using `jasper_delete_global_ref/2`.

For a more in-depth discussion of global and local references, consult the JNI Documentation.

Using a local (or global) reference that has been deleted (either explicitly or by returning to Java) is illegal and will generally lead to crashes. This is a limitation of the Java Native Interface used to implement the low level interface to Java.

### 43.8.5 Handling Java Exceptions

If a Java method throws an exception, e.g. by using `throw new Exception("...")` and the exception is not caught by Java then it is passed on as a Prolog exception. The thrown term is a *global* reference to the Exception object. The following example code illustrates how to handle Java exceptions in Prolog:

```
exception_example(JVM, ...) :-
   catch(
         %% Call Java method that may raise an exception
         jasper_call(JVM, ...),
         Excp,
         (
           ( is_java_exception(JVM, Excp)
           -> print_exception_info(JVM, Excp)
           ; throw(Excp)       % pass non-Java exceptions to caller
           )
         )
        ).

is_java_exception(_JVM, Thing) :- var(Thing), !, fail.
is_java_exception(_JVM, Thing) :-
   Thing = java_exception(_),      % misc error in Java/Prolog glue
   !.
is_java_exception(JVM, Thing) :-
   jasper_is_object(JVM, Thing),
   jasper_is_instance_of(JVM, Thing, 'java/lang/Throwable').
```

```
print_exception_info(_JVM, java_exception(Message)) :- !,
   format(user_error, '~NJasper exception: ~w~n', [Message]).
print_exception_info(JVM, Excp) :-
   /*
   // Approximate Java code
   {
      String messageChars = excp.getMessage();
   }
   */
   jasper_call(JVM,
               method('java/lang/Throwable', 'getMessage', [instance]),
               get_message(+object('java/lang/Throwable'), [-chars]),
               get_message(Excp, MessageChars)),
   /* // Approximate Java code
   {
      StringWriter stringWriter = new StringWriter();
      PrintWriter printWriter =  new PrintWriter(stringWriter);
      excp.printStackTrace(printWriter);
      printWriter.close();
      stackTraceChars = StringWriter.toString();
   }
   */
   jasper_new_object(JVM, 'java/io/StringWriter',
                     init, init, StringWriter),
   jasper_new_object(JVM, 'java/io/PrintWriter',
                     init(+object('java/io/Writer')),
                     init(StringWriter), PrintWriter),
   jasper_call(JVM,
               method('java/lang/Throwable', 'printStackTrace', [instance]),
               print_stack_trace(+object('java/lang/Throwable'),
                                 +object('java/io/PrintWriter')),
               print_stack_trace(Excp, PrintWriter)),
   jasper_call(JVM,
               method('java/io/PrintWriter','close',[instance]),
               close(+object('java/io/PrintWriter')),
               close(PrintWriter)),
   jasper_call(JVM,
               method('java/io/StringWriter','toString',[instance]),
               to_string(+object('java/io/StringWriter'),[-chars]),
               to_string(StringWriter, StackTraceChars)),
   jasper_delete_local_ref(JVM, PrintWriter),
   jasper_delete_local_ref(JVM, StringWriter),
   %% ! exceptions are thrown as global references
   jasper_delete_global_ref(JVM, Excp),
   format(user_error, '~NJava Exception: ~s\nStackTrace: ~s~n',
          [MessageChars, StackTraceChars]).
```

### 43.8.6 Deprecated Jasper API

The information in this section is only of interest to those that need to read or modify code that used `library(jasper)` before SICStus 3.8.5.

A different way of doing method call and creating objects was used in versions of '`library(jasper)`' earlier than SICStus 3.8.5. Use of these facilities are strongly discouraged although they are still available in the interest of backward compatibility.

The old method call predicates are `jasper_call_static/6` and `jasper_call_instance/6` as well as the old way of calling `jasper_new_object/5`.

#### 43.8.6.1 Deprecated Argument Conversions

The pre SICStus 3.8.5 method call predicates in this library use a specific form of argument lists containing conversion information so the predicates know how to convert the input arguments from Prolog datatypes to Java datatypes. This is similar to the (new) mechanism described in Section 43.8.3 [Conversion between Prolog Arguments and Java Types], page 714. The argument lists are standard Prolog lists containing terms on the following form:

`jboolean(X)`
: *X* is the atom `true` or `false`, representing a Java `boolean` primitive type.

`jbyte(X)`
: *X* is an integer, which is converted to a Java `byte`.

`jchar(X)`
: *X* is an integer, which is converted to a Java `char`.

`jdouble(X)`
: *X* is a float, which is converted to a Java `double`.

`jfloat(X)`
: *X* is a float, which is converted to a Java `float`.

`jint(X)`
: *X* is an integer, which is converted to a Java `int`.

`jlong(X)`
: *X* is an integer, which is converted to a Java `long`.

`jshort(X)`
: *X* is an integer, which is converted to a Java `short`.

`jobject(X)`
: *X* is a reference to a Java object, as returned by `jasper_new_object/5` (see Section 43.8.2 [Jasper Library Predicates], page 711).

`jstring(X)`
: *X* is an atom, which is converted to a Java `String`.

If the Prolog term does not fit in the corresponding Java data type (`jbyte(4711)`, for example), the result is undefined.

### 43.8.6.2 Deprecated Jasper Predicates

`jasper_new_object(+JVM,+Class,+TypeSig,+Args,-Object)` **obsolescent**

Creates a new Java object.

*JVM* A reference to the Java VM, as obtained by `jasper_initialize/[1,2]`.

*Class* An an atom containing the *fully qualified classname* (i.e. package name separated with '/', followed by the class name), for example `java/lang/String`, `se/sics/jasper/SICStus`.

*TypeSig* The *type signature* of the class constructor. A type signature is a string that uniquely defines a method within a class. For a definition of type signatures, see the JNI Documentation.

*Args* A list of argument specifiers. See Section 43.8.6.1 [Deprecated Argument Conversions], page 721.

*Object* A term on the form `'$java_object'(X)`, where X is a Java object reference. This is the Prolog handle to the Java object. See Section 43.8.4 [Global vs. Local References], page 717.

`jasper_call_static(+JVM,+Class,+MethodName,+TypeSig,+Args,-RetVal)` **obsolescent**

Calls a static Java method. For an explanation of the *JVM*, *Class*, *TypeSig*, and *Args*, see `jasper_new_object/5`. *MethodName* is the name of the static method. *RetVal* is the return value of the method.

`jasper_call_instance(+JVM,+Object,+MethodName,+TypeSig,+Args,-RetVal)` **obsolescent**

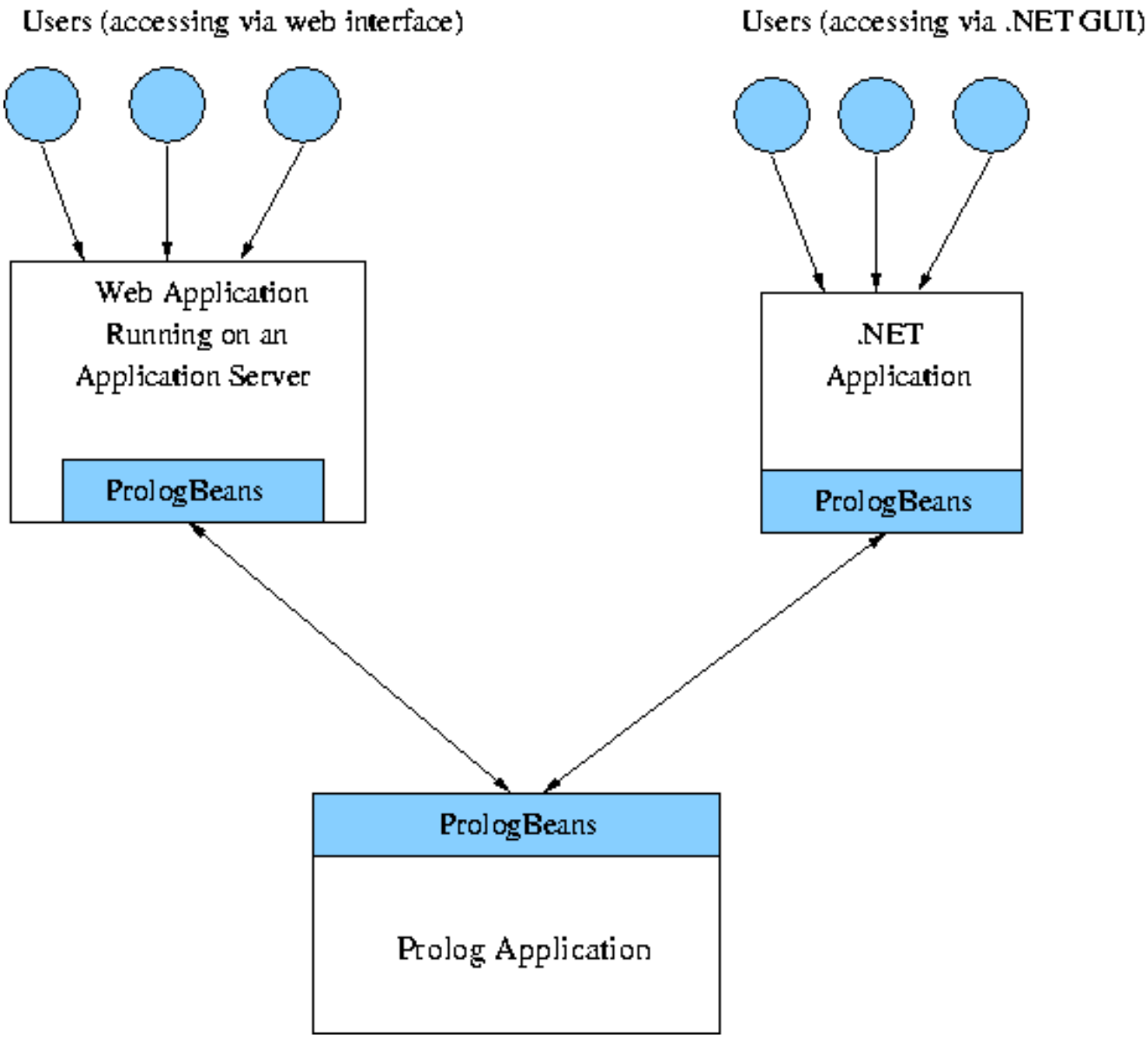
Calls a Java method on an object. For an explanation of the *JVM*, *Class*, *TypeSig*, and *Args*, see `jasper_new_object/5`. *Object* is an object reference as obtained from `jasper_new_object/5`. *RetVal* is the return value of the method.

# 44 PrologBeans Interface

## 44.1 Introduction

PrologBeans is a package for integrating Prolog with applications written in other languages. Currently Java and .NET are supported. PrologBeans is based on running Prolog as a separate server process, and the other part of the application as a client process. (This is in contrast to the Java-Prolog interface Jasper, in which both Prolog and Java run in the same process). This makes PrologBeans automatically distributable since the server and the client can run on different computers anywhere on the Internet.

PrologBeans is designed to be used when client applications need to send queries to a Prolog server (and less intended for showing a GUI from a Prolog program). One typical application would be to connect a Java or .NET based web application to a Prolog server (see examples later).




*PrologBeans setup where the Prolog application serves several users accessing both via a web application server and a .NET GUI.*

The PrologBeans package consists of two parts. The Prolog server is a library module, '`library(prologbeans)`'. The client is a class library, '`prologbeans.jar`' for Java and '`prologbeans.dll`' for .NET.

## 44.2 Features

The current version of PrologBeans is designed to be used mainly as a connection from the client (Java or .NET) to Prolog. Current features are:

- Socket based communication [Java and .NET]

- Allows the client application and Prolog server to run on different machines [Java and .NET]
- Multiple client applications can connect to same Prolog server [Java and .NET]
- Client applications can make use of several Prolog servers [Java and .NET]
- Allows Java Applets to access Prolog server [Java]
- Platform independent (e.g. any platform where Prolog and Java or .NET exist) [Java and .NET]
- Simplifies the use of Prolog in Java application servers (Tomcat, etc) [Java]
- Prohibits unwanted use of Prolog server by host control (only specified hosts can access the Prolog server) [Java and .NET]
- Supports Java servlet sessions [Java]
- Supports JNDI lookup (Java Naming and Directory Interface) [Java]
- Supports .NET server pages (ASPX). [.NET]

## 44.3 A First Example

This section provides an example to illustrate how PrologBeans can be used. This application has a simple Java GUI where the user can enter expressions that will be evaluated by an expression evaluation server.

```
import java.awt.*;
import java.awt.event.*;
import javax.swing.*;
import se.sics.prologbeans.*;

public class EvaluateGUI implements ActionListener {

  private JTextArea text = new JTextArea(20, 40);
  private JTextField input = new JTextField(36);
  private JButton evaluate = new JButton("Evaluate");
  private PrologSession session = new PrologSession();

  public EvaluateGUI() {
    JFrame frame = new JFrame("Prolog Evaluator");
    Container panel = frame.getContentPane();
    panel.add(new JScrollPane(text), BorderLayout.CENTER);
    JPanel inputPanel = new JPanel(new BorderLayout());
    inputPanel.add(input, BorderLayout.CENTER);
    inputPanel.add(evaluate, BorderLayout.EAST);
    panel.add(inputPanel, BorderLayout. SOUTH);
    text.setEditable(false);
    evaluate.addActionListener(this);
    input.addActionListener(this);

    frame.setDefaultCloseOperation(JFrame.EXIT_ON_CLOSE);
    frame.pack();
    frame.setVisible(true);
  }

  public void actionPerformed(ActionEvent event) {
    try {
      Bindings bindings = new Bindings().bind("E",
                          input.getText() + '.');
      QueryAnswer answer =
        session.executeQuery("evaluate(E,R)", bindings);
      Term result = answer.getValue("R");
      if (result != null) {
        text.append(input.getText() + " = " + result + '\n');
        input.setText("");
      } else {
        text.append("Error: " + answer.getError() + "\n");
      }
    } catch (Exception e) {
      text.append("Error when querying Prolog Server: " +
                  e.getMessage() + '\n');
    }
  }

  public static void main(String[] args) {
    new EvaluateGUI();
  }
}
```

The Java code above first sets up the GUI with a text area for showing results, a text field for entering expressions, and a button for requesting an evaluation (the constructor `EvaluateGUI()`). It will also add itself as `ActionListener` on both the text field and the button. The method `actionPerformed(ActionEvent event)` will be called whenever the user has pressed ⟨RET⟩ or clicked on the button. `actionPerformed` first binds the variable $E$ to the value of the text field, and then sends the query to the Prolog server with `session.executeQuery("evaluate(E,R)", bindings);`. If everything goes well, the Prolog server will return an answer (bound to $R$), which will be appended to the text area.

```
:- module(evaluate,[main/0,my_predicate/2]).
:- use_module(library(prologbeans)).
:- use_module(library(charsio), [read_from_chars/2]).

%% Register acceptable queries and start the server (using default port)
main:-
    register_query(evaluate(C,P), my_predicate(C,P)),
    start.

%% We have received a list of characters,
%% which needs to be converted into an expression
my_predicate(Chars, P) :-
    read_from_chars(Chars, X),
    P is X.
```

The Prolog code above first defines the module and imports the needed modules. Then, in the `main/0` predicate, it configures the server to answer queries on the form `evaluate(C,P)` and starts the server. The last few lines defines the predicate `my_predicate(Chars, P)`, which is the predicate that performs the evaluation. Note that the expression to evaluate is represented as a list of characters and must be converted into a term before evaluation.

**Please note**: the environment variable `SP_PATH` as used here is meant to be a shorthand for the SICStus Prolog installation directory, and does not need to be set explicitly.

To start the example, first start the Prolog server by going to the '`pbexamples(evaluate)`' directory and type:

```
% sicstus -l evaluate.pl --goal "main."
```

To start the GUI type (from the same directory as above):

`> java -classpath "%SP_PATH%\bin\prologbeans.jar;." EvaluateGUI` (Windows), or
`% java -classpath "$SP_PATH/bin/prologbeans.jar:." EvaluateGUI` (UNIX)

## 44.4 Prolog Server Interface

The Prolog interface is based on the idea of a Prolog server that provides its service by answering queries from external applications (typically Java applications). The Prolog interface in PrologBeans is defined in '`library(prologbeans)`', which implements the Prolog server and exports the following predicates:

`start`
`start(+Options)`

starts the Prolog server using the options specified. **Please note**: `start/[0,1]` will not return until a server shutdown occurs. *Options* should be a list of zero or more of:

`port(?Val)`
: an integer denoting the port number of the Prolog server (default: 8066). If *Val* is a variable then some unused port will be selected by the OS, the actual port number can be obtained with `get_server_property/1`, typically from a `server_started` event listener.

`accepted_hosts(+Val)`
: a list of atoms denoting the hosts (in form of IP-addresses) that are accepted by the Prolog server (default: `['127.0.0.1']`).

`session_timeout(+Val)`
: an integer denoting the duration of a session in seconds. The session will be removed if it has been inactive more than this timeout when the session garbage collect starts. If the session timeout is set to zero there will be no garbage collect on sessions (default: `0`).

`session_gc_timeout(+Val)`
: an integer denoting the minimum time in seconds between two consecutive session garbage collections. If the timeout is set to zero there will be no garbage collect on sessions (default: `0`).

For example:

```
:- start([port(7500),
          accepted_hosts(['127.0.0.1','99.8.7.6'])]).
```

`shutdown`
`shutdown(+Mode)`

shuts down the server and closes the sockets and the streams after processing all available input. There are three modes:

`now`
: as soon as possible (default).

`no_sessions`
: after all sessions have ended (all sessions have either been explicitly removed by request of the client application, or they have been garbage collected). **Please note**: there can still be connections to the Prolog server even when all sessions have ended.

`no_connections`
after all connections to the Prolog server are closed. **Please note**: there can still be user sessions left when all connections have been closed.

`register_query(+Query, :PredicateToCall, +SessionVar)`
registers a query and the corresponding predicate. Before the registration any previously registered query matching `Query` will be removed (as if `unregister_query(Query)` was called). The predicate, `PredicateToCall` will be called, as if by `once(PredicateToCall)`, when a query matching `Query` is received. Before calling the query, the variable *SessionVar*, if given, is bound to the id of the current session. Session ids are typically generated in web applications that track users and mark all consecutive web-accesses with the same session id.

`unregister_query(+Query)`
unregisters all queries matching *Query*.

`session_get(+SessionID, +ParameterName, +DefaultValue, -Value)`
returns the value of a given parameter in a given session. If no value exists, it will return the default value. Arguments:

*SessionID* is the id of the session for which values have been stored

*ParameterName*
an atom, is the name of the parameter to retrieve

*DefaultValue*
is the value that will be used if no value is stored

*Value* is the stored value or the default value if nothing was stored

`session_put(+SessionID, +ParameterName, +Value)`
stores the value of the given parameter. **Please note**: any pre-existing value for this parameter will be overwritten. Note that `session_put/3` will not be undone when backtracking (the current implementation is based on `assert`). Arguments:

*SessionID* is the id of the session for the values to store

*ParameterName*
an atom, is the name of the parameter to store

*Value* the value to be stored

`register_event_listener(+Event, :PredicateToCall, -Id)`
`register_event_listener(+Event, :PredicateToCall)`
Registers `PredicateToCall` to be called (as if by `once(PredicateToCall)`) when the event matching `Event` occurs (event matching is on principal functor only). If the goal fails or raises an exception a warning is written to `user_error` but the failure or exception is otherwise ignored. Arguments:

*Event* is the event template, see below.

*PredicateToCall*
an arbitrary goal.

*Id* becomes bound to a (ground) term that can be used with `unregister_event_listener/1` to remove this event listener.

The predefined events are as follows:

`session_started(+SessionID)`
called before the first call to a query for this session

`session_ended(+SessionID)`
called before the session is about to be garbage collected (removed)

`server_started`
called when the server is about to start (enter its main loop)

`server_shutdown`
called when the server is about to shut down

Attempt to register an event listener for other events than the predefined events will throw an exception.

More than one listeners can be defined for the same event. They will be called in some unspecified order when the event occurs.

`unregister_event_listener(+Id)`
Unregister a previously registered event listener. The *Id* is the value returned by the corresponding call to `register_event_listener/3`. It is an error to attempt to unregister an event listener more than once.

## 44.5 Java Client Interface

The Java interface is centered around the class `PrologSession`, which represents a connection (or session) to a Prolog server. `PrologSession` contains static methods for looking up named `PrologSession` instances using JNDI (Java Naming and Directory Interface) as well as methods for querying the Prolog server. Other important classes are: `QueryAnswer`, which contains the answer for a query sent to the Prolog server; `Term`, which represents a Prolog term; and `Bindings`, which supports stuffing of variable values used in queries.

General information about Java, Servlets and JNDI is available at the Java Technology site: http://java.sun.com/

A brief description of the methods in the provided Java classes are presented below. More information about the Java APIs is available in the JavaDoc files in the directory http://www.sics.se/sicstus/docs/.

The `PrologSession` object is the connection to the Prolog server. The constructor `PrologSession()` creates a `PrologSession` with the default settings (`host = localhost`, `port = 8066`.

`PrologSession` contains the following methods:

`static` **PrologSession** `getPrologSession` (`String name`) [Method on `PrologSession`]

returns the `PrologSession` registered in JNDI with the given name. Use this method in application servers where services are registered using JNDI. **Please note**: the application server must be configured to register the `PrologSession` with the given name for this method to work. See Tomcat configuration in Section 44.6.3 [PB Ex Tomcat], page 736.

`static` **PrologSession** `getPrologSession` (`String name, HTTPSession session`) [Method on `PrologSession`]

returns the `PrologSession` registered in JNDI with the given name. The `PrologSession` will make use of sessions and the session id will be the same as in the `HTTPSession`. Use this method in web application servers with support for servlets and `HTTPSession` (and when support for sessions is desired).

**String** *getHost* () [Method on `PrologSession`]

returns the host of the Prolog server (exactly as registered in `setHost`).

**void** *setHost* (`String prologServerHost`) [Method on `PrologSession`]

sets the host of the Prolog server (default `localhost`). Either IP-address or host name is allowed.

**int** *getPort* () [Method on `PrologSession`]

returns the port of the Prolog server.

**void** *setPort* (`int port`) [Method on `PrologSession`]

sets the port of the Prolog server (default `8066`).

**void** *connect* () [Method on `PrologSession`]

connects to the Prolog server. By default the `executeQuery` will automatically connect to the server when called.

**void** *setAutoConnect* (`boolean autoConnect`) [Method on `PrologSession`]

sets the connection mode of this `PrologSession`. If set to `true` it will ensure that it is connected to the Prolog server as soon as a call to `executeQuery` or anything else causing a need for communication happens. This is by default set to `true`

**boolean** *isAutoConnecting* () [Method on `PrologSession`]

returns the state of the AutoConnect mode.

**QueryAnswer** *executeQuery* (`String query`) [Method on `PrologSession`]

sends a query to the Prolog server and waits for the answer before returning the `QueryAnswer`. Anonymous variables (underscore, '`_`'), will be ignored, and thus not accessible in the `QueryAnswer`. `executeQuery` throws `IOException` if communication problems with the server occurs. **Please note**: `executeQuery` will only return one answer.

**QueryAnswer** *executeQuery* (`String query, Bindings bindings`) [Method on `PrologSession`]

sends a query to the Prolog server and waits for the answer before returning the `QueryAnswer`. `Bindings` are variable bindings for the given *query* and will ensure that the values are stuffed correctly. An example:

```
QueryAnswer answer =
   executeQuery("evaluate(In,Out)",
                new Bindings().bind("In","4*9."));
```

The `QueryAnswer` contains the answer (new bindings) for a query (or the error that occurred during the query process). `QueryAnswer` inherits from `Bindings`, and extends and modifies it with the following methods:

**Term** *getValue* (`String variableName`) [Method on `QueryAnswer`]

returns the value of the given variable. If there is a value a `Term` (a parsed Prolog term) is returned, otherwise `null` is returned. All bindings from the query are available in the `QueryAnswer`.

**boolean** *queryFailed* () [Method on `QueryAnswer`]

returns `true` if the query failed (e.g. the Prolog returned `no`). In this case, there will be no answers (no new bindings, and `isError` will return `false`).

**boolean** *isError* () [Method on `QueryAnswer`]

returns `true` if there was an error.

**String** *getError* () [Method on `QueryAnswer`]

returns the error message (which is only set if there was an error, otherwise it will be `null`).

The `Term` object is for representing parsed Prolog terms, and has the following methods:

**boolean** *isAtom* () [Method on `Term`]

returns `true` if the `Term` is an atom.

**boolean** *isInteger* () [Method on `Term`]

returns `true` if the `Term` is an integer.

**boolean** *isFloat* () [Method on `Term`]

returns `true` if the `Term` is a floating-point number.

**boolean** *isCompound* () [Method on `Term`]

returns `true` if the `Term` is a compound term.

**boolean** *isList* () [Method on `Term`]

returns `true` if and only if `Term` is a compound term with principal functor `./2`.

**boolean** *isString* () [Method on `Term`]
returns `true` if the `Term` is an instance of `PBString` (which can be used for fast string access by a type-cast to `PBString` and the use of the method `getString()` that returns the string).

**boolean** *isVariable* () [Method on `Term`]
returns `true` if the `Term` is a variable.

**int** *intValue* () [Method on `Term`]
returns the `int` value of the integer.

**long** *longValue* () [Method on `Term`]
returns the `long` value of the integer.

**float** *floatValue* () [Method on `Term`]
returns the `float` value of the floating-point number.

**double** *doubleValue* () [Method on `Term`]
returns the `double` value of the floating-point number.

**String** *getName* () [Method on `Term`]
returns the functor name of the `Term` (see `functor/3`). If the Term represents a variable (`isVariable()` returns `true`), the variable name is returned.

**int** *getArity* () [Method on `Term`]
returns the number of arguments of this term (e.g. `parent(A1,A2)` would return 2) (see `functor/3`). If the term is not a compound term, `getArity()` will return 0.

**Term** *getArgument* (`int index`) [Method on `Term`]
returns the `Term` representing the argument at the position given by *index*. If there are no arguments, or if an argument with the specified index does not exist, `IndexOutOfBoundsException` will be thrown. The first argument has index one (see `arg/3`).

`Bindings` is used for binding variables to values in a query sent to the Prolog. The values will be automatically stuffed before they are sent to the Prolog server.

**void** *bind* (`String name, int value`) [Method on `Bindings`]
binds the variable with the given name to the given value. **Please note**: this method is also available for values of type `long`, `float`, `double`, and `Term`.

**void** *bind* (`String name, String value`) [Method on `Bindings`]
binds the variable with the given name to the given value. The value will be seen as a list of `UNICODE` character codes in Prolog.

**void** *bindAtom* (`String name, String value`) [Method on `Bindings`]
binds the variable with the given name to the given value. **Please note**: this method will encode the String as an atom when querying the Prolog server.

## 44.6 Java Examples

The PrologBeans examples for Java can be found in the directory corresponding to the file search path '`pbexamples`', defined as if by a clause:

```
user:file_search_path(pbexamples, library('prologbeans/examples')).
```

### 44.6.1 Embedding Prolog in Java Applications

If you have an advanced Prolog application that needs a GUI you can write a stand-alone Java application that handles the GUI and set up the Prolog server to call the right predicates in the Prolog application.

An example of how to do this can be found under the '`pbexamples(evaluate)`' directory (see the example code in Section 44.3 [PB First Example], page 725).

Another example of this is '`pbexamples(pbtest)`', which illustrates several advanced features like:

- registering several queries
- listening to server events (`server_started`)
- shutting down the Prolog server from Java
- starting up the Prolog server from Java
- using dynamic (OS assigned) ports for the Java/Prolog communication

The example is run by executing the Java program `PBTest`:

> *`java -classpath "%SP_PATH%\bin\prologbeans.jar;." PBTest`* (Windows), or
*`% java -classpath "$SP_PATH/bin/prologbeans.jar:." PBTest`* (UNIX)

### 44.6.2 Application Servers

If you want to get your Prolog application to be accessible from an intranet or the Internet you can use this package to embed the Prolog programs into a Java application server such as Tomcat, WebSphere, etc.

An example of how to do this is provided in '`pbexamples(sessionsum)`'. This example uses sessions to keep track of users so that the application can hold a state for a user session (as in the example below, remember the sum of all expressions evaluated in the session).

```
<% page import = "se.sics.prologbeans.*" %>
<html>
<head><title>Sum Calculator</title></head>
<body bgcolor="white">
<font size=4>Prolog Sum Calculator, enter expression to evaluate:
<form><input type=text name=query></form>
<%
   PrologSession pSession =
   PrologSession.getPrologSession("prolog/PrologSession", session);

   String evQuery = request.getParameter("query");
   String output = "";
   if (evQuery != null) {
     Bindings bindings = new Bindings().bind("E",evQuery + '.');
     QueryAnswer answer =
        pSession.executeQuery("sum(E,Sum,Average,Count)", bindings);
     Term average = answer.getValue("Average");
     if (average != null) {
        Term sum = answer.getValue("Sum");
        Term count = answer.getValue("Count");

        output = "<h4>Average =" + average + ", Sum = "
        + sum + " Count = " + count + "</h4>";
     } else {
        output = "<h4>Error: " + answer.getError() + "</h4>";
     }
  }
%>
<%= output  %><br></font>
<p><hr>Powered by SICStus Prolog
</body></html>
```

The example shows the code of a JSP (Java Server Page). It makes use of the method `PrologSession.getPrologSession(String jndiName, HTTPSession session)`, which uses JNDI to look up a registered `PrologSession`, which is connected to the Prolog server. The variable *session* is in a JSP bound to the current `HTTPSession`, and the variable *request* is bound to the current `HTTPRequest`. Since the `HTTPSession` object `session` is specified all queries to the Prolog server will contain a session id. The rest of the example shows how to send a query and output the answer.

Example usage of sessions (from the '`sessionsum`' example) is shown below, and is from '`pbexamples('sessionsum/sessionsum.pl')`':

```
:- module(sessionsum,[main/0,sum/5]).
:- use_module(library(prologbeans)).
:- use_module(library(charsio), [read_from_chars/2]).

%% Register the acceptable queries (session based)
main:-
    register_query(sum(C,Sum,Average,Count),
                   sum(C,Session,Sum,Average,Count),
                   Session),
    start.

%% The sum predicate which gets the information from a session database,
%% makes some updates and then stores it back in to the session store
%% (and returns the information back to the application server)
sum(ExprChars, Session, Sum, Average, Count) :-
    session_get(Session, sum, 0, OldSum),
    session_get(Session, count, 0, OldCount),
    read_from_chars(ExprChars, Expr),
    Val is Expr,
    Sum is OldSum + Val,
    Count is OldCount + 1,
    Average is Sum / Count,
    session_put(Session, sum, Sum),
    session_put(Session, count, Count).
```

In this example a query `sum/4` is registered to use a predicate `sum/5` where one of the variables, *Session* will be bound to the session id associated to the query. The `sum/5` predicate uses the `session_get/4` predicate to access stored information about the particular session, and then it performs the evaluation of the expression. Finally, it updates and stores the values for this session.

### 44.6.3 Configuring Tomcat for PrologBeans

This section will briefly describe how to set up a Tomcat server so that is it possible to test the example JSPs. Some knowledge about how to run Tomcat and how to set up your own web application is required. Detailed information about Tomcat is available at http://jakarta.apache.org/tomcat/.

The example described below has been tested with Tomcat 5.5.4.

Assuming that the environment variable CATALINA_HOME is set to the installation directory of Tomcat, do the following:

1. Create the directory '`$CATALINA_HOME/webapps/PB_example`'
2. Copy the file '`pbexamples('sessionsum/sessionsum.jsp')`' to '`$CATALINA_HOME/webapps/PB_example/sessionsum.jsp`'

3. Create the directory '$CATALINA_HOME/webapps/PB_example/WEB-INF/lib'
4. Copy the file '$SP_PATH/bin/prologbeans.jar' to '$CATALINA_HOME/webapps/PB_example/WEB-INF/lib/prologbeans.jar'
5. Create the directory '$CATALINA_HOME/webapps/PB_example/META-INF'
6. Create the file '$CATALINA_HOME/webapps/PB_example/META-INF/context.xml' with the following content:

```
<Context docBase="PB_example">
   <Resource name="prolog/PrologSession" auth="Container"
             type="se.sics.prologbeans.PrologSession"
     factory="org.apache.naming.factory.BeanFactory" />

</Context>
```

7. Create the file '$CATALINA_HOME/webapps/PB_example/WEB-INF/web.xml' with the following content:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="ISO-8859-1"?>
<!DOCTYPE web-app
     PUBLIC "-//Sun Microsystems, Inc.//DTD Web Application 2.3//EN"
    "http://java.sun.com/dtd/web-app_2_3.dtd">
<web-app>

    <resource-env-ref>
      <description>
        Object factory for PrologSession instances.
      </description>
      <resource-env-ref-name>
        prolog/PrologSession
      </resource-env-ref-name>
      <resource-env-ref-type>
        se.sics.prologbeans.PrologSession
      </resource-env-ref-type>
    </resource-env-ref>

</web-app>
```

8. Start SICStus, load 'sessionsum.pl' and run main.
9. Start the Tomcat server.
10. In a web browser, enter http://localhost:8080/PB_example/sessionsum.jsp

## 44.7 .NET Client Interface

The class PrologSession in the .NET interface represents a connection to a Prolog server. PrologSession contains methods for establishing a connection and querying the Prolog server. Other important classes are: QueryAnswer, which contains the answer for a query sent to the Prolog server; Term, which represents a Prolog term; and Bindings, which supports stuffing of variable values used in queries.

The `PrologSession` object is the connection to the Prolog server. The constructor `PrologSession()` creates a `PrologSession` with the default settings (`host = localhost, port = 8066`.

Detailed documentation on the .NET APIs of PrologBeans is available in the PrologBeans.NET documentation files in the directory http://www.sics.se/sicstus/docs/html or locally at '`%SP_PATH%/doc/html`' (where `SP_PATH` is the path to your SICStus Prolog installation directory).

## 44.8 .NET Examples

The PrologBeans examples for .NET can be found in the directory corresponding to the file search path '`pbnetexamples`', defined as if by a clause:

```
user:file_search_path(pbnetexamples, library('prologbeans.NET/examples')).
```

### 44.8.1 C# Examples

#### 44.8.1.1 .NET Embedding

If you have an advanced Prolog application that needs a GUI you can write a stand-alone .NET application that handles the GUI and set up the Prolog server to call the right predicates in the Prolog application.

An example of how to do this can be found under the '`pbnetexamples('evaluate.NET')`' directory. This example is the C# version of the example shown in Section 44.3 [PB First Example], page 725).

To start the example, first start the Prolog server by going to the '`pbnetexamples('evaluate.NET')`' directory and type:

```
> sicstus -l evaluate.pl --goal "main."
```

To start the GUI type (from the same directory as above):

```
> run.bat
```

Another example of this is '`pbnetexamples('pbtest.NET')`', which illustrates several advanced features like:

- registering several queries
- listening to server events (`server_started`)
- shutting down the Prolog server from .NET

- starting up the Prolog server from .NET
- using dynamic (OS assigned) ports for the .NET/Prolog communication

The example is run by executing the C# program `PBTest`:

```
> PBTest
```

#### 44.8.1.2 ASPX Servers Pages

If you want to get your Prolog application to be accessible from an intranet or the Internet you can use this package to embed the Prolog programs into a .NET ASP page which can be served by e.g. Internet Information Services.

An example of how to do this is provided in '`pbnetexamples('prologasp.NET/eval.aspx')`'. Consult your IIS documentation for how to configure it for an ASPX page.

### 44.8.2 Visual Basic Example

A Visual Basic .NET example can be found in '`pbnetexamples('vb_examples.NET/calculator')`'. It is a simple calculator similar to the first C# `EvaluateGUI` example in Section 44.8.1.1 [PB .NET Embedding], page 738. This example is in the form of a Visual Studio project.

To run the example:

1. Open the project files in Visual Studio .NET
2. Add a reference in Visual Studio .NET to the installed '`prologbeans.dll`'
3. Start sicstus with the following command:

   ```
   sicstus -l %SP_PATH%/library/prologbeans/examples/evaluate/evaluate --goal "main."
   ```
4. Build and run the example in Visual Studio .NET

# 45 COM Client

This library provides rudimentary access to COM automation objects. As an example it is possible to manipulate Microsoft Office applications and Internet Explorer. It is not possible, at present, to build COM objects using this library.

Feedback is very welcome. Please contact SICStus support (`sicstus-support@sics.se`) if you have suggestions for how this library could be improved.

## 45.1 Preliminaries

In most contexts both atoms and code-lists are treated as strings. With the wide character support available in release 3.8 and later, is should now be possible to pass UNICODE atoms and strings successfully to the COM interface.

## 45.2 Terminology

*ProgID* A human readable name for an object class, typically as an atom, e.g. `'Excel.Application'`.

*CLSID* (Class Identifier)
A globally unique identifier of a class, typically as an atom, e.g. `'{00024500-0000-0000-C000-000000000046}'`.

Where it makes sense a *ProgID* can be used instead of the corresponding *CLSID*.

*IID* (Interface Identifier)
A globally unique identifier of an interface. Currently only the `'IDispatch'` interface is used so you do not have to care about this.

*IName* (Interface Name)
The human readable name of an interface, e.g. `'IDispatch'`.

Where it makes sense an *IName* can be used instead of the corresponding *IID*.

*Object* A COM-object (or rather a pointer to an interface).

*ComValue* A value that can be passed from COM to SICStus Prolog. Currently numeric types, booleans (treated as 1 for `true`, 0 for `false`), strings, and COM objects.

*ComInArg* A value that can be passed as an input argument to COM, currently one of:

atom Passed as a string (BSTR)

numeric Passed as the corresponding number

list A code-list is treated as a string.

COM object
A compound term referring to a COM object.

compound Other compound terms are presently illegal but will be used to extend the permitted types.

*SimpleCallSpec*

Denotes a single method and its arguments. As an example, to call the method named `foo` with the arguments `42` and the string `"bar"` the *SimpleCallSpec* would be the compound term `foo(42,'bar')` or, as an alternative, `foo(42,"bar")`.

The arguments of the compound term are treated as follows:

*ComInArg* See above

*variable* The argument is assumed to be output. The variable is bound to the resulting value when the method returns.

*mutable* The argument is assumed to be input/output. The value of the mutable is passed to the method and when the method returns the mutable is updated with the corresponding return value.

*CallSpec* Either a SimpleCallSpec or a list of CallSpecs. If it is a list then all but the last SimpleCallSpec are assumed to denote method calls that return a COM-object. So for instance the VB statement `app.workbooks.add` can be expressed either as:

```
comclient_invoke_method_proc(App, [workbooks, add])
```

or as

```
comclient_invoke_method_fun(App, workbooks, WorkBooks),
comclient_invoke_method_proc(WorkBooks, add),
comclient_release(WorkBooks)
```

## 45.3 Predicate Reference

`comclient_is_object(+Object)`

Succeeds if *Object* "looks like" an object. It does not check that the object is (still) reachable from SICStus Prolog, see `comclient_valid_object/1`. Currently an object looks like `'$comclient_object'(stuff)` where *stuff* is some prolog term. Do not rely on this representation!

`comclient_valid_object(+Object)`

Succeeds if *Object* is an object that is still available to SICStus Prolog.

`comclient_create_instance(+CLSID/ProgID, -Object)`

Create an instance of the Class identified by *CLSID* (or *ProgID*).

```
comclient_create_instance('Excel.Application', App)
```

Corresponds to `CoCreateInstance`.

`comclient_get_active_object(+CLSID/ProgID, -Object)`

Retrieves a running object of the Class identified by *CLSID* (or *ProgID*).

```
comclient_get_active_object('Excel.Application', App)
```

An exception is thrown if there is no suitable running object. Corresponds to `GetActiveObject`.

`comclient_invoke_put(+Object, +CallSpec, +ComInArg)`
Set the property denoted by *CallSpec* to *ComValue*. Example: `comclient_invoke_put(App, visible, 1)`

`comclient_invoke_method_proc(+Object, +CallSpec)`
Call a method that does not return a value. See the desorption of *CallSpec* above for an example.

`comclient_invoke_method_fun(+Object, +CallSpec, -ComValue)`
Call a method that returns a value. Also use this to get the value of properties. See the desciption of *CallSpec* above for an example.

`comclient_release(+Object)`
Release the object and free the datastructures used by SICStus Prolog to keep track of this object. After releasing an object the term denoting the object can no longer be used to access the object (any attempt to do so will raise an exception).

> **Please note**: The same COM-object can be represented by different prolog terms. A COM object is not released from SICStus Prolog until all such representations have been released, either explicitly by calling `comclient_release/1` or by calling `comclient_garbage_collect/0`.
>
> You cannot use *`Obj1 == Obj2`* to determine whether two COM-objects are identical. Instead use `comclient_equal/2`.

`comclient_equal(+Object1, +Object2)`
Succeeds if *Object1* and *Object2* are the same object. (It succeeds if their `'IUnknown'` interfaces are identical)

`comclient_garbage_collect`
Release Objects that are no longer reachable from SICStus Prolog. To achieve this the predicate `comclient_garbage_collect/0` performs an atom garbage collection, i.e. `garbage_collect_atoms/0`, so it should be used sparingly.

`comclient_is_exception(+ExceptionTerm)`
Succeeds if *ExceptionTerm* is an exception raised by the comclient module.

```
catch(<some code>,
      Exception,
      ( comclient_is_exception(E) ->
         handle_com_related_errors(E)
      ; otherwise -> % Pass other exceptions upwards
         throw(E)
      ))
```

`comclient_exception_code(+ExceptionTerm, -ErrorCode)`
`comclient_exception_culprit(+ExceptionTerm, -Culprit)`
`comclient_exception_description(+ExceptionTerm, -Description)`
Access the various parts of a comclient exception. The *ErrorCode* is the `HRESULT` causing the exception. *Culprit* is a term corresponding to the call that gave an exception. *Description*, if available, is either

a term `'EXCEPINFO'(...)` corresponding to an `EXCEPINFO` structure or `'ARGERR'(MethodName, ArgNumber)`.

The `EXCEPINFO` has six arguments corresponding to, and in the same order as, the arguments of the `EXCEPINFO` struct.

`comclient_clsid_from_progid(+ProgID, -CLSID).`
Obtain the *CLSID* corresponding to a particular *ProgID*. Uses the Win32 routine `CLSIDFromProgID`. You rarely need this since you can use the ProgID directly in most cases.

`comclient_progid_from_clsid(+CLSID, -ProgID).`
Obtain the *ProgID* corresponding to a particular *CLSID*. Uses the Win32 routine `ProgIDFromCLSID`. Rarely needed. The *ProgID* returned will typically have the version suffix appended.

Example, to determine what version of `Excel.Application` is installed:

```
| ?- comclient_clsid_from_progid('Excel.Application, CLSID),
     comclient_progid_from_clsid(CLSID, ProgID).
CLSID = '{00024500-0000-0000-C000-000000000046}',
ProgID = 'Excel.Application.8'
```

`comclient_iid_from_name(+IName, -IID)`
Look in the registry for the *IID* corresponding to a particular Interface. Currently of little use.

```
| ?- comclient_iid_from_name('IDispatch', IID).
IID = '{00020400-0000-0000-C000-000000000046}'
```

`comclient_name_from_iid(+IID, -IName)`
Look in the registry for the name corresponding to a particular *IID*. Currently of little use.

## 45.4 Examples

The following example launches *Microsoft Excel*, adds a new worksheet, fill in some fields and finally clears the worksheet and quits *Excel*

```
:- use_module(library(comclient)).
:- use_module(library(lists)).

test :-
   test('Excel.Application').

test(ProgID) :-
   comclient_create_instance(ProgID, App),
   %% Visuall Basic: app.visible = 1
   comclient_invoke_put(App, visible, 1),
   %% VB: app.workbooks.add
   comclient_invoke_method_proc(App, [workbooks, add]),
   %% VB: with app.activesheet
   comclient_invoke_method_fun(App, activesheet, ActiveSheet),

   Rows = [1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15],
   Cols = Rows,
   %% VB: .cells i,j . value = i+j/100
   (
     member(I, Rows),
     member(J, Cols),
     ValIJ is I+J/100,

     comclient_invoke_put(ActiveSheet, [cells(I,J),value], ValIJ),
     fail
   ; true
   ),
   (
     member(I, Rows),
     member(J, Cols),
     %% retrieve cell values
     comclient_invoke_method_fun(ActiveSheet, [cells(I,J), value],CellValue),
     format(user_error, '~nCell(~w,~w) = ~w', [I,J,CellValue]),
     fail
   ; true
   ),

   Range = 'A1:O15',
   format(user_error, '~Npress return to clear range (~w)', [Range]),
   flush_output(user_error),
   get0(_),

   %% VB: .range A1:O15 .Clear
   comclient_invoke_method_proc(ActiveSheet, [range(Range),clear]),

   %% Avoid Excel query "do you want to save..."
   %%  VB: app.activeworkbook.saved = 1
   comclient_invoke_put(App, [activeworkbook,saved], 1),

   format(user_error, '~Npress return to quit \'~w\'', [ProgID]),
   flush_output(user_error),
   get0(_),
```

# 46 The Visual Basic Interface

SICStus Prolog provides an interface that lets you load and call SICStus Prolog programs from Visual Basic.

## 46.1 Overview

SICStus Prolog provides an easy-to-use one-directional Visual Basic interface that lets you load and call SICStus Prolog programs from Visual Basic but not the other way around. The idea is that Visual Basic is used for creating the user interface while the Prolog program works as a knowledge server in the background.

The control structure of this interface is rather similar to that of the foreign language interface. However, in contrary to that interface, there is currently no way of handling pointers to Prolog terms or queries. The queries to be passed to Prolog have to be given as strings on the Visual Basic side and the terms output by Prolog are received as strings or integers in Visual Basic variables.

The interface provides functions for:

- passing a query to Prolog
- evaluating the Prolog query
- retrieving a value (string or integer) assigned to a variable by the Prolog query
- getting information about the exceptions that have occurred in the Prolog query

## 46.2 How to Call Prolog from Visual Basic

### 46.2.1 Opening and Closing a Query

Prolog queries are represented in Visual Basic in textual form, i.e. as a string containing the query, but not followed by a full stop. For example, the following Visual Basic code fragments create valid Prolog queries:

```
'Q1 is a query finding the first "good" element of the list [1,2,3]
Q1 = "member(X,[1,2,3]), good(X)"

'create a Q2 query finding the first "good" element of the list
'[1,2,...,N]:
Q2 = "member(X,["
For i = 1 To N-1
   Q2 = Q2 & i & ","
Next
Q2 = Q2 & N & "]), good(X)"
```

Before executing a query, it has to be explicitly opened, via the `PrologOpenQuery` function, which will return a *query identifier* that can be used for successive retrieval of solutions.

The `PrologCloseQuery` procedure will close the query represented by a query identifier. The use of an invalid query identifier will result in undefined behavior. For example:

```
Dim qid As Long

Q1 = "member(X,[1,2,3]), good(X)"
qid = PrologOpenQuery(Q1)

   ... <execution of the query> ...

PrologCloseQuery(qid)
```

### 46.2.2 Finding the Solutions of a Query

Prolog queries can be executed with the help of the `PrologNextSolution` function: this retrieves a solution to the open query represented by the query identifier given as the parameter. Returns 1 on success, 0 on failure, -1 on error.

### 46.2.3 Retrieving Variable Values

After the successful return of `PrologNextSolution`, the values assigned to the variables of the query can be retrieved by specific functions of the interface. There are separate functions for retrieving the variable values in string, quoted string and integer formats.

The `PrologGetLong` function retrieves the integer value of a given variable within a query and assigns it to a variable. That is, the value of the given variable is converted to an integer. Returns 1 on success.

Example: The following code fragment assigns the value 2 to the variable `v`:

```
Dim qid As Long

Q = "member(X,[1,2,3]), X > 1"

qid = PrologOpenQuery(Q)
Call PrologNextSolution(qid)
Call PrologGetLong(qid,"X",v)
```

The `PrologGetString` function retrieves the value of a given variable in a query as a string. That is, the value of the variable is written out using the `write/2` Prolog predicate, and the resulting output is stored in a Visual Basic variable. Retuns 1 on success.

Example: suppose we have the following clause in a Prolog program:

```
capital_of('Sweden'-'Stockholm').
```

The code fragment below assigns the string `"Sweden-Stockholm"` to the variable `capital`:

```
Dim qid As Long

Q = "capital_of(Expr)"

qid = PrologOpenQuery(Q)
If PrologNextSolution(qid) = 1 Then
  Call PrologGetString(qid,"Expr",capital)
End if
Call PrologCloseQuery(qid)
```

The `PrologGetStringQuoted` function is the same as `PrologGetString`, but the conversion uses the `writeq/2` Prolog predicate. Returns 1 on success.

Example: if the function `PrologGetStringQuoted` is used in the code above instead of the `PrologGetString` function, then the value assigned to the variable `capital` is `"'Sweden'-'Stockholm'"`.

The only way of transferring information from Prolog to Visual Basic is by the above three `PrologGet...` functions. This means that, although arbitrary terms can be passed to Visual Basic, there is no support for the transfer of compound terms such as lists or structures. We will show examples of how to overcome this limitation later in the manual (see Section 46.4 [Examples], page 751).

### 46.2.4 Evaluating a Query with Side-Effects

If you are only interested in the side-effects of a predicate you can execute it with the `PrologQueryCutFail` function call, which will find the first solution of the Prolog goal provided, cut away the rest of the solutions, and finally fail. This will reclaim the storage used by the call.

Example: this is how a Prolog file can be loaded into the Visual Basic program:

```
ret = PrologQueryCutFail("load_files(myfile)")
```

This code will return 1 if `myfile` was loaded successfully, and -1 otherwise (this may indicate, for example, the `existence_error` exception if the file does not exist).

### 46.2.5 Handling Exceptions in Visual Basic

If an exception has been raised during Prolog execution, the functions `PrologQueryCutFail` or `PrologNextSolution` return -1. To access the exception term, the procedure `PrologGetException` can be used. This procedure will deposit the exception term in string format into an output parameter, as if written via the `writeq/2` predicate.

Example: when the following code fragment is executed, the message box will display the `domain_error(_1268 is 1+a,2,expression,a)` error string.

```
Dim exc As String

qid = PrologOpenQuery("X is 1+a")
If PrologNextSolution(qid) < 0 Then
   PrologGetException(exc)
   Msg exc,48,"Error"
End if
```

## 46.3 How to Use the Interface

In this section we describe how to create a Visual Basic program that is to execute Prolog queries.

### 46.3.1 Setting Up the Interface

See section "Visual Basic Notes" in *SICStus Prolog Release Notes*, for information about installing the Visual basic interface.

### 46.3.2 Initializing the Prolog Engine From VB

The Visual Basic interface must be explicitly initialized: you must call `PrologInit()` before calling any other interface function. The `PrologInit()` function loads and initializes the interface. It returns 1 if the initialization was successful, and -1 otherwise.

### 46.3.3 Deinitializing the Prolog Engine From VB

The Visual Basic interface should be deinitialized: you should call `PrologDeInit()` before exiting e.g. from a `Form_Unload` method.

This procedure was introduced in SICStus 3.10.1. Earlier versions never deinitialized the SICStus engine. This could cause problems, e.g. by leaving memory allocated and by not giving foreign resources a chance to clean up through their deinit functions.

### 46.3.4 Loading the Prolog Code

Prolog code (source or object code) can be loaded by submitting normal Prolog load predicates as queries. Note that SICStus uses slashes '/' in file names where Windows uses backslash '\'. Example:

```
PrologQueryCutFail("load_files('d:/xxx/myfile')")
```

To facilitate the location of Prolog files, two file search paths are predefined:

`app` identifies the directory path of the Visual Basic project or the applications executable.

That is, you can load the file `myfile` located in the same directory as the project/executable, issuing the query:

```
PrologQueryCutFail("load_files(app(myfile))")
```

right in cope with initial backslash

`vbsp` identifies the directory path of the `vbsp.dll` file.

That is, you can use the following query to load the file `myfile` if it is located in the same directory as `vbsp.dll`:

```
PrologQueryCutFail("load_files(vbsp
(myfile))")
```

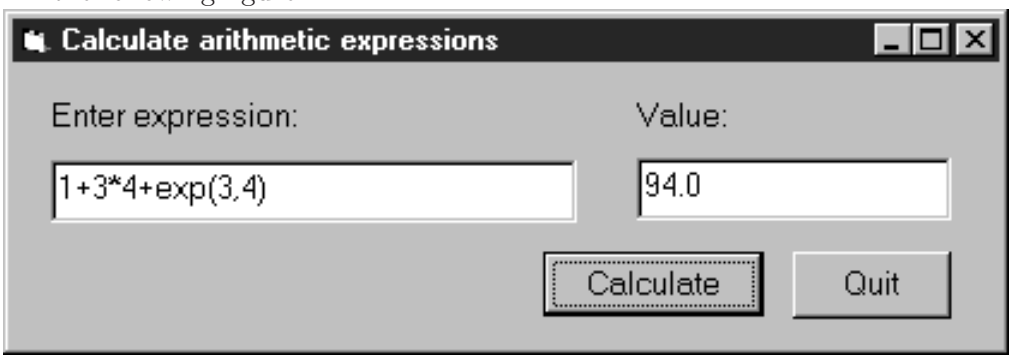
Note that, as of SICStus 3.10, you can use the `application` and `runtime` file search paths to achieve a similar effect.

## 46.4 Examples

The code for the following examples are available in the directory '`library\vbsp\examples`' in the SICStus installation directory.

### 46.4.1 Example 1 - Calculator

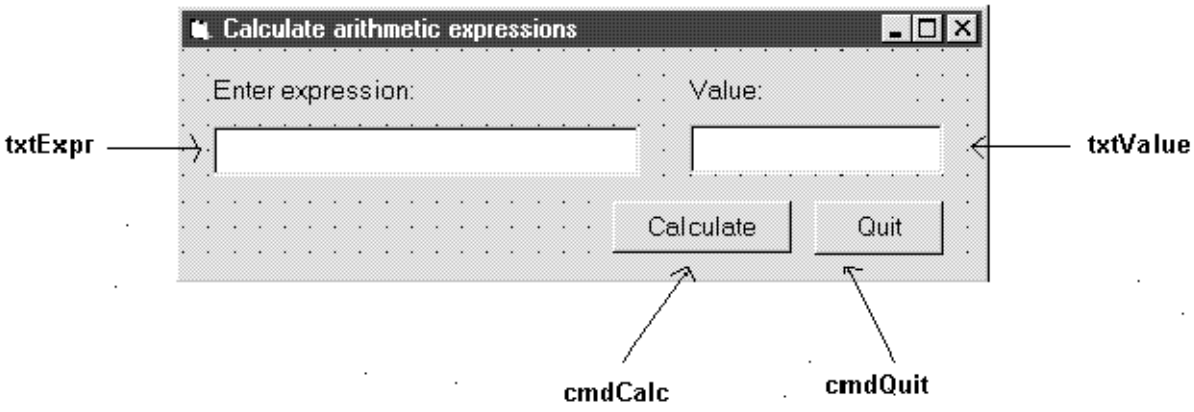
This example contains a simple program that allows you to enter an arithmetic expression (conforming to Prolog syntax) as a string and displays the value of the given expression, as shown in the following figure:



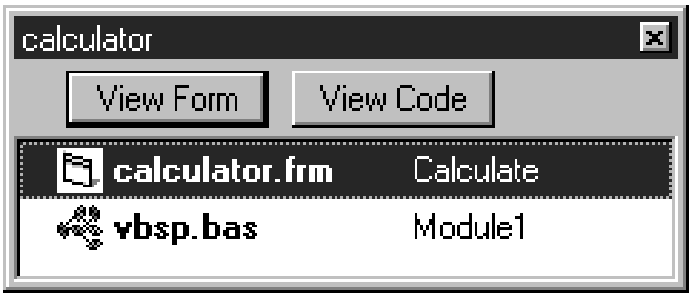

The calculation itself will be done in Prolog.

We now we will go through the steps of developing this program.

1. Start a new project called `calculator`.
2. Add the '`vbsp.bas`' file to the project.
3. Create a form window called `calculator`. Edit it, adding two textboxes `txtExpr` and `txtValue`, and two command buttons, `cmdCalc` and `cmdQuit`:




Save the form window to the `calculator.frm` file. Then the project will contain the following two files:




4. Write the Prolog code in the file `calc.pl`, evaluating the given expression with the `is/2` predicate, and providing a minimal level of exception handling:

```
prolog_calculate(Expr, Value) :-
   on_exception(Exc, Value is Expr, handler(Exc,Value)).

handler(domain_error(_,_,_,_),'Incorrect expression').
handler(Exc,Exc).
```

   Note that this example focuses on a minimal implementation of the problem, more elaborate exception handling will be illustrated in the Train example (see Section 46.4.2 [Example 2 - Train], page 754).

   Compile this file, and deposit the file '`calc`' in the directory where the `calculator.vbp` project is contained.

5. Now you have to write the Visual Basic code in which SICStus Prolog will be called at two points:

   - Initialize Prolog in the `Form_Load` procedure executed when the `calc` form is loaded, calling the `PrologInit()` function and loading the '`calc`' file with the help of the `PrologQueryCutFail(..))` function:

```
Private Sub Form_Load()
    If PrologInit() <> 1 Then GoTo Err
    If PrologQueryCutFail("ensure_loaded(app(calc))") <> 1 Then GoTo Err
    Exit Sub

Err:
    MsgBox "Prolog initialization failed", 48, "Error"
    Unload Me
End Sub
```

   - Do the expression evaluation in the `calculate` procedure activated by the `cmdRun` command button. This procedure will execute the `prolog_calculate(X,Y)` procedure defined in the '`calc.pl`' Prolog file:

```
Public Function calculate(ByVal Expr As String) As String
    Dim qid As Long
    Dim result As String
    Dim ret As Long
    Dim Q As String

    Q = "prolog_calculate(" & Expr & ",Value)"
    qid = PrologOpenQuery(Q)
    If qid = -1 Then GoTo Err ' e.g. syntax error

    ret = PrologNextSolution(qid)
    If ret <> 1 Then GoTo Err ' failed or error

    ret = PrologGetString(qid, "Value", result)
    If ret <> 1 Then GoTo Err
    calculate = result
    Call PrologCloseQuery(qid)

    Exit Function

Err:
    MsgBox "Bad expression", 48, "Error!"
    calculate = ""
End Function
```

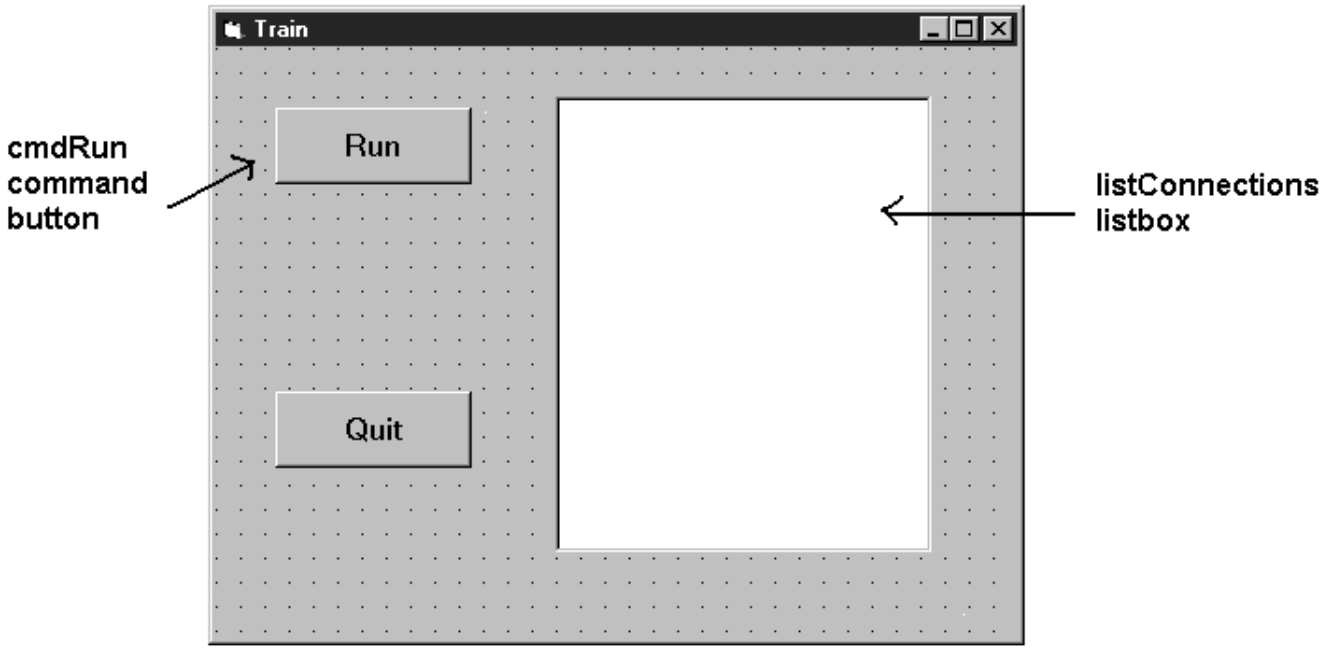
- Deinitialize Prolog in the `Form_Unload` procedure executed when the `calc` form is unloaded, e.g. when the application exits.

```
Private Sub Form_Unload(Cancel As Integer)
    PrologDeInit
End Sub
```

### 46.4.2 Example 2 - Train

This example provides a Visual Basic user interface to the Prolog program finding train routes between two points.

The Visual Basic program `train` contains the following form window:




Clicking the `cmdRun` command button will display all the available routes between Stockholm and Orebro. These are calculated as solutions of the Prolog query `places('Stockholm','Örebro',Way)`. For each solution, the value assigned to the variable `Way` is retrieved into the Visual Basic variable `result` and is inserted as a new item into the `listConnection` listbox.

The Visual Basic program consists of four parts:

- loading the Prolog code
- opening the query
- a loop generating the solutions, each cycle doing the following
  - requesting the next solution
  - getting the value of the solution variable
  - adding the solution to the listbox
- closing the query

```
Private Sub cmdRun_Click()
    Dim qid As Long
    Dim result As String
    Dim s As String
    Dim rc As Integer

    qid = -1 ' make it safe to PrologCloseQuery(qid) in Err:

    'load the 'train.pl' Prolog file
    rc = PrologQueryCutFail("ensure_loaded(app(train))")
    If rc < 1 Then
        Msg = "ensure_loaded(train)"
        GoTo Err
    End If
    'open the query
    qid = PrologOpenQuery("places('Stockholm','Örebro',Way)")
    If qid = -1 Then
        rc = 0
        Msg = "Open places/3"
        GoTo Err
    End If
    'generate solutions
    Do
        rc = PrologNextSolution(qid)
        If rc = 0 Then Exit Do ' failed
        If rc < 0 Then
            Msg = "places/3"
            GoTo Err
        End If
        If PrologGetString(qid, "Way", result) < 1 Then
            rc = 0
            Msg = "PrologGetString Way"
            GoTo Err
        End If
        listConnections.AddItem result
    Loop While True
    'after all solutions are found, the query is closed
    Call PrologCloseQuery(qid)
    Exit Sub
```

Note that each part does elaborate error checking and passes control to the error display instructions shown below:

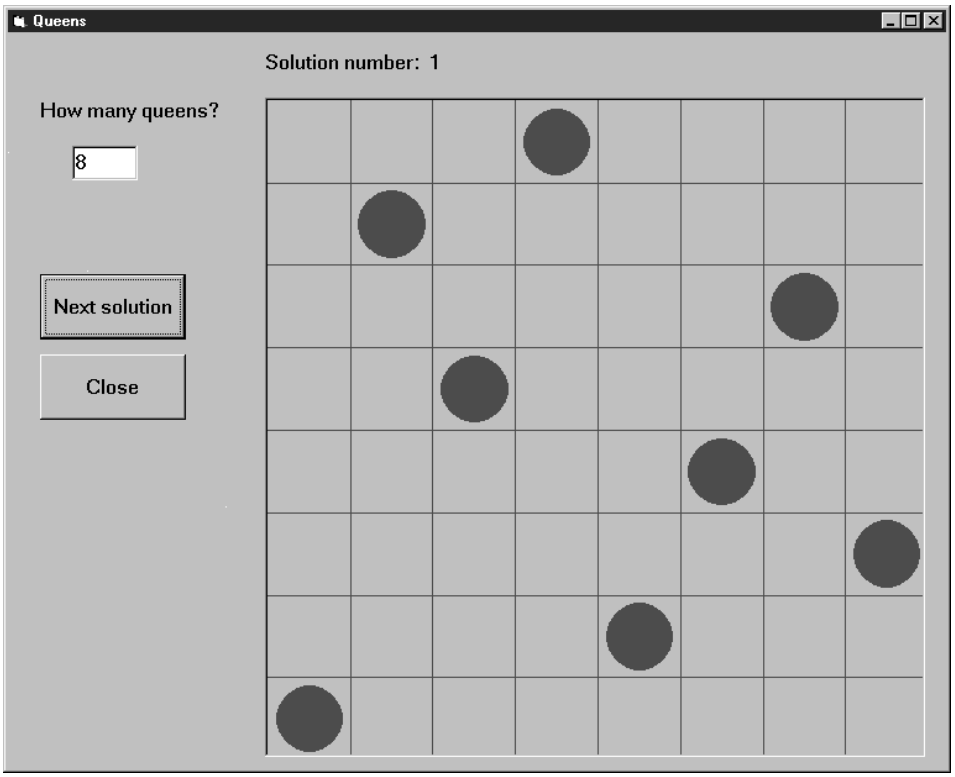
```
Err:
    Call PrologCloseQuery(qid) ' Always close opened queries

    'error message is prepared, adding either the - failed - or
    'the - raised exception - suffix to the Msg string specific
    'to the function called
    If rc = 0 Then
         Msg = Msg + " failed"
    Else
        Call PrologGetException(s)
        Msg = Msg + " raised exception: " + s
    End If
    MsgBox Msg, 48, "Error"
End Sub
```

The Prolog predicate `places/3` is defined in the '`train.pl`' file, as shown earlier (see Section 9.9.1 [Train Example], page 279). The only difference is the use of the Swedish characters å, ä and ö.

### 46.4.3 Example 3 - Queens

This example gives a Visual Basic user interface to an N-queens program. The purpose of this example is to show how to handle Prolog lists through the Visual Basic interface. The full source code of the example is found in the distribution.

The user interface shown in this example will allow the user to specify the number of queens, and, with the help of the `Next Solution` command button all the solutions of the N-Queens problem will be enumerated. A given solution will be represented in a simple graphical way as a PictureBox, using the basic `Circle` and `Line` methods.




The problem itself will be solved in Prolog, using a `queens(+N,?PositionList)` Prolog predicate, stored in the file '`queens`'.

We now present two solutions, using different techniques for retrieving Prolog lists.

**Example 3a - N-Queens, generating a variable list into the Prolog call**

The first implementation of the N-Queens problem is based on the technique of generating a given length list of Prolog variables into the Prolog query.

For example, if the N-Queens problem is to be solved for N = 4, i.e. with the query `"queens(4,L)"`, then the problem of retrieving a list from Visual Basic will arise. However, if the query is presented as `"queens(4,[X1,X2,X3,X4])"`, then instead of retrieving the list it is enough to access the `X1,X2,X3,X4` values. Since the number of queens is not fixed in the program, this query has to be generated, and the retrieval of the *Xi* values must be done in a cycle.

This approach can always be applied when the format of the solution is known at the time of calling the query.

We now go over the complete code of the program.

Global declarations used in the program ('`General/declarations`'):

```
Dim nQueens As Long        'number of queens
Dim nSol As Long           'index of solution
Dim nActqid As Long        'actual query identifier
Dim nQueryOpen As Boolean  'there is an open query
```

The initialization of the program will be done when the form window is loaded:

```
Private Sub Form_Load()
    nQueens = 0
    nSol = 1
    nQueryOpen = False

    'initialize Prolog
    If PrologInit() <> 1 Then GoTo Err
    'Load 'queens.pl'
    If PrologQueryCutFail("load_files(app(queens))") <> 1 Then GoTo Err
    Exit Sub

Err:
    MsgBox "Prolog initialization failed", 48, "Error"
    Unload Me
End Sub
```

Deinitialization of the Prolog engine will be done when the form windows is closed, exactly as for the calculator example.

When the number of queens changes (i.e. the value of the text box `textSpecNo` changes), a new query has to be opened, after the previous query, if there has been any, is closed.

```
Private Sub textSpecNo_Change()
    nQueens = Val(textSpecNo)
    nSol = 1

    If nQueryOpen Then PrologCloseQuery (nActqid)

    'create Prolog query in form: queens(4,[X1,X2,X3,X4])

    Q = "queens(" & Str(nQueens) & ", ["
    For i = 1 To nQueens - 1 Step 1
        Q = Q & "X" & i & ","
    Next
    Q = Q & "X" & nQueens & "])"

    nActqid = PrologOpenQuery(Q)
    nQueryOpen = True
End Sub
```

The `Next command` button executes and shows the next solution of the current query:

```
Private Sub cmdNext_Click()
    Dim nPos As Long
    Dim aPos(100) As Long

    If Not nQueryOpen Then
        MsgBox "Specify number of queens first!", 48, ""
        Exit Sub
    End If
    If PrologNextSolution(nActqid) < 1 Then
        MsgBox "No more solutions!", 48, ""
    Else
        For i = 1 To nQueens Step 1
           If PrologGetLong(nActqid, "X" & i, nPos) = 1 Then
               aPos(i - 1) = nPos
           End If
        Next i

        'display nth solution
        txtSolNo = "Solution number: " & Str(nSol)
        Call draw_grid(nQueens)

        nLine = 1
        For Each xElem In aPos
            Call draw_circle(nLine, xElem, nQueens)
            nLine = nLine + 1
        Next

        nSol = nSol + 1
    End If
End Sub
```

Drawing itself is performed by the `draw_grid` and `draw_circle` procedures.

**Example 3b - N-Queens, converting the resulting Prolog list to an atom**

The second variant of the N-Queens program uses the technique of converting the resulting Prolog list into a string via the `PrologGetString` function, and decomposing it into an array in Visual Basic. Here we show only those parts of the program that have changed with respect to the first version.

In the `textSpecNo_Change` routine the `queens/2` predicate is called with a single variable in its second argument:

```
Q = "queens(" & Str(nQueens) & ",Queens)"
nActqid = PrologOpenQuery(Q)
```

In the `cmdNext_Click` routine the solution list is retrieved into a single string, which is then split up along the commas, and deposited into the `aPos` array by the `convert_prolog_list` routine. (`aPos` is now an array of strings, rather than integers.)

Finally, we include the code of the routine for splitting up a Prolog list:

```
Private Sub convert_prolog_list(ByVal inList As String,
                                ByRef inArray() As String)
    'drop brackets
    xList = Mid(inList, 2, Len(inList) - 2)

    i = 0

    startPos = 1
    xList = Mid(xList, startPos)

    Do While xList <> ""
        endPos = InStr(xList, ",")
        If endPos = 0 Then
            xElem = xList
            inArray(i) = xElem
            Exit Do
        End If
        xElem = Mid(xList, 1, endPos - 1)
        inArray(i) = xElem
        i = i + 1
        xList = Mid(xList, endPos + 1)
        startPos = endPos + 1
    Loop
End Sub
```

## 46.5 Summary of the Interface Functions

In this section you will find a summary of the functions and procedures of the Visual Basic interface:

`Function PrologOpenQuery (ByVal Goal As String) As Long`

This function will return a query identifier that can be used for successive retrieval of solutions. Returns -1 on error, e.g. a syntax error in the query.

`Sub PrologCloseQuery (ByVal qid As Long)`

This procedure will close the query represented by a query identifier `qid`. **Please note:** if `qid` is not the *innermost* query (i.e. the one opened last), then all more recently opened queries are closed as well.

`Function PrologNextSolution(ByVal qid As Long) As Integer`

This function retrieves a solution to the open query represented by the query identifier `qid`. Returns 1 on success, 0 on failure, -1 on error. In case of an erroneous execution, the Prolog exception raised can be retrieved with the `PrologGetException` procedure. **Please note:** Several queries may be open at the same time, however, if `qid` is not the *innermost* query, then all more recently opened queries are implicitly closed.

`Function PrologGetLong(ByVal qid As Long, ByVal VarName As String, Value As Long) As Integer`

Retrieves into `Value` the integer value bound to the variable `VarName` of the query identified by `qid`, as an integer. That is, the value of the given variable is converted to an integer. Returns 1 on success, i.e. if the given goal assigned an integer value to the variable; otherwise, it returns 0. If an error occurred it returns -1, e.g. if an invalid `qid` was used.

`Function PrologGetString(ByVal qid As Long, Val VarName As String, Value As String) As Integer`

Retrieves into `Value` the string value bound to a variable `VarName` of the query, as a string. That is, the value assigned to the given variable is written out into an internal stream by the `write/2` Prolog predicate, and the characters output to this stream will be transferred to Visual Basic as a string. Retuns 1 on success, i.e. if the given goal assigned a value to the variable; otherwise, it returns 0. If an error occurred it returns -1, e.g. if an invalid `qid` was used.

`Function PrologGetStringQuoted(ByVal qid As Long, ByVal VarName As String, Value As String) As Integer`

Same as `PrologGetString`, but conversion uses Prolog `writeq/2`. Returns 1 on success, i.e. if the given goal assigned a value to the variable; otherwise, it returns 0. If an error occurred it returns -1, e.g. if an invalid `qid` was used.

`Function PrologQueryCutFail (ByVal Goal As String) As Integer`

This function will try to evaluate the Prolog goal, provided in string format, cut away the rest of the solutions, and finally fail. This will reclaim the storage used by the call. Returns 1 on success, 0 on failure and -1 on error.

`Sub PrologGetException(ByRef Exc As String)`

The exception term is returned in string format into the `Exc` string as if written by the `writeq/2` predicate. If there is no exception available then the empty string is returned.

`Function PrologInit() As Long`

The function loads and initializes the interface. It returns 1 on success, and -1 otherwise.

`Function PrologDeInit() As Long`

The function deinitializes and unloads the interface, and returns any memory used by the interface to the operating system. It returns 1 on success, and -1 otherwise.

# 47 Glue Code Generator

This chapter used to describe Prolog utilities for generating glue code for the Foreign Language Interface (see Section 9.2.4 [Interface Predicates], page 223). As of SICStus 3.9, this is only supported using the `splfr` tool (see Section 9.2.5 [The Foreign Resource Linker], page 224).

You can invoke `splfr` (as well as `spld`) with the flags '`--verbose`' and '`--keep`', in addition to the ordinary arguments. This way you can see what is going on and you can also access any generated files. The steps performed by `splfr` and the files generated will change between releases so you should avoid depending on it. If, for some reason, `splfr` is not suitable for your purposes you should contact SICStus Support.

# 48 Meta-Call with Limit on Memory Use

The `spaceout` package, which may be loaded by the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(spaceout)).
```

contains the predicate:

`space_out(:Goal, +Space, ?Result)`

The *Goal* is executed as if by `call/1`. If computing any solution causes the global stack usage to increase more than *Space* bytes, the goal will be aborted and *Result* unified with the atom `space_out`. If the goal succeeds without exceeding that space limit, *Result* is unified with the atom `success`. *Space* must be a positive integer.

Note that only the global stack usage is considered, i.e. the value reported by `statistics(global_stack, [Used|_])` (see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175).

`space_out/3` is implemented by raising and handling memory `resource_error` exceptions, so any exception handler in the scope of *Goal* must be prepared to pass on such exceptions. Note that the format of such exceptions varies depending on the execution mode, Section 8.5 [Error and Exception Handling], page 173.

Before deciding whether to interrupt the computation a garbage collection is performed to try to reduce the size of the global stack enough to allow the computation to continue. As usual, garbage collection can be prevented by setting the Prolog flag `gc` to `off`; see Section 8.6 [State Info], page 175.

```
%% Call foo/0 with space_out and do not allow GC.
%% Ensure the gc flag is restored when we no longer need it
%% By wrapping the goal foo in once/1 we ensure that call_cleanup
%% will call the clean-up goal immediately when foo succeeds.
...
Size is 10*1024,                % 10kB
prolog_flag(gc, OldGC),
call_cleanup((set_prolog_flag(gc,off),
              space_out(once(foo), Size, Flag)),
             set_prolog_flag(gc,OldGC)),
%% prolog_flag(gc, OldGC) will be true here
...
```

The precision of `space_out` can be improved by calling explicitly `garbage_collect/0` before the call to `space_out/3`.

```
%% Call foo/0 with space_out
...
Size is 10*1024,                % 10kB
garbage_collect, % ensure no garbage for foo/0 to use
space_out(foo, Size, Flag),
(   Flag == space_out
->  write('foo used too much space'), nl
;   write('foo used less than 10kB'), nl
),
...
```

A memory resource error triggered by a *real* out of memory condition will not be caught by `space_out/3`.

The *Goal* will not be interrupted before the global stack has grown by *Size* bytes. However, the global stack may, under unusual circumstances, grow more than *Space* bytes before *Goal* is interrupted. Such growth is unlikely to exceed 10kB.

# 49 Meta-Call with Timeout

The `timeout` package, which may be loaded by the query

```
| ?- use_module(library(timeout)).
```

contains the predicate:

`time_out(:Goal, +Time, ?Result)`

The *Goal* is executed as if by `call/1`. If computing any solution takes more than *Time* milliseconds, the goal will be aborted and *Result* unified with the atom `time_out`. If the goal succeeds within the specified time, *Result* is unified with the atom `success`. *Time* must be a number between (not including) 0 and 2147483647.

The time is measured in process virtual time under UNIX. Under Windows NT/2000/XP, as of SICStus 3.10, thread virtual time is used, which is the same as process virtual time for single-threaded processes. Under Windows 98/ME the time is measured in real time (wall time), due to limitations in those operating systems.

The precision of the time out interval is usually not better than several tens of milliseconds. This is due to limitations in the timing mechanisms used to implement '`library(timeout)`'.

`time_out/3` is implemented by raising and handling `time_out` exceptions, so any exception handler in the scope of *Goal* must be prepared to pass on `time_out` exceptions. The following incorrect example shows what can happen otherwise:

```
| ?- time_out(on_exception(Q,(repeat,false),true), 1000, Res).
Q = time_out,
Res = success
```

# Summary of Built-In Predicates

`!` *ISO*

Commits to any choices taken in the current predicate.

`(+P,+Q)` *ISO*

*P* and *Q*.

`(Head --> Body)` *reserved*

Not a built-in predicate; reserved syntax for grammar rules.

`(+P -> +Q ; +R)` *ISO*

If *P* then *Q* else *R*, using first solution of *P* only.

`(+P -> +Q)` *ISO*

If *P* then *Q* else false, using first solution of *P* only.

`[]`
`[:File|+Files]`

Updates the program with interpreted clauses from *File* and *Files*.

`(:- Directive)` *reserved*

Not a built-in predicate; reserved syntax for directives.

`(?- Query)` *reserved*

Not a built-in predicate; reserved syntax for queries.

`(Head :- Body)` *reserved*

Not a built-in predicate; reserved syntax for clauses.

`(+P;+Q)` *ISO*

*P* or *Q*.

`?X = ?Y` *ISO*

*X* and *Y* are unified.

`+Term =.. ?List` *ISO*
`?Term =.. +List` *ISO*

The functor and arguments of *Term* comprise the list *List*.

`+X =:= +Y` *ISO*

*X* is numerically equal to *Y*.

`?Term1 == ?Term2` *ISO*

*Term1* and *Term2* are strictly identical.

`+X =\= +Y` *ISO*

*X* is not numerically equal to *Y*.

`+X =< +Y` *ISO*

*X* is less than or equal to *Y*.

`+X > +Y` *ISO*

*X* is greater than *Y*.

`+X >= +Y` *ISO*
: $X$ is greater than or equal to $Y$.

`?X \= ?Y` *ISO*
: $X$ and $Y$ are not unifiable.

`?X ^ :P`
: Executes the procedure call $P$.

`\+ +P` *ISO*
: Goal $P$ is not provable.

`?Term1 \== ?Term2` *ISO*
: *Term1* and *Term2* are not strictly identical.

`+X < +Y` *ISO*
: $X$ is less than $Y$.

`?Term1 @=< ?Term2` *ISO*
: *Term1* precedes or is identical to *Term2* in the standard order.

`?Term1 @> ?Term2` *ISO*
: *Term1* follows *Term2* in the standard order.

`?Term1 @>= ?Term2` *ISO*
: *Term1* follows or is identical to *Term2* in the standard order.

`?Term1 @< ?Term2` *ISO*
: *Term1* precedes *Term2* in the standard order.

`?=(?X,?Y)`
: $X$ and $Y$ are either syntactically identical or syntactically non-unifiable.

`abolish(:Preds)` *ISO*
: Makes the predicate(s) specified by *Preds* undefined.

`abolish(:Atom,+Arity)`
: Makes the predicate specified by `Atom/Arity` undefined.

`abort`
: Aborts execution of the current query (returns to C in recursive calls to Prolog from C).

`absolute_file_name(+RelativeName,?AbsoluteName)`
`absolute_file_name(+RelativeName,?AbsoluteName,+Options)`
: *AbsoluteName* is the absolute pathname of *RelativeName*.

`add_breakpoint(:Conditions, ?BID)` *development*
: Creates a breakpoint with *Conditions* and with identifier *BID*.

`arg(+ArgNo,+Term,?Arg)` *ISO,meta-logical*
: The argument *ArgNo* of *Term* is *Arg*.

`ask_query(+QueryClass, +Query, +Help, -Answer)` *hookable*
: Prints the question *Query*, then reads and processes user input according to *QueryClass*, and returns the result of the processing, the abstract answer term *Answer*. The *Help* message is printed in case of invalid input.

`assert(:Clause)`
`assert(:Clause,-Ref)`
: Asserts clause *Clause* with unique identifier *Ref*.

`asserta(:Clause)` *ISO*
`asserta(:Clause,-Ref)`
Asserts *Clause* as first clause with unique identifier *Ref*.

`assertz(:Clause)` *ISO*
`assertz(:Clause,-Ref)`
Asserts *Clause* as last clause with unique identifier *Ref*.

`at_end_of_line`
`at_end_of_line(Stream)`
The end of stream or end of line has been reached for *Stream* or from the current input stream.

`at_end_of_stream` *ISO*
`at_end_of_stream(Stream)` *ISO*
The end of stream has been reached for *Stream* or from the current input stream.

`atom(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*
*X* is currently instantiated to an atom.

`atom_chars(+Atom,?CharList)` *ISO only*
`atom_chars(?Atom,+CharList)` *ISO only*
The name of the atom *Atom* is the char-list *CharList*.

`atom_chars(+Atom,?CodeList)` *SICStus only*
`atom_chars(?Atom,+CodeList)` *SICStus only*
The name of the atom *Atom* is the code-list *CodeList*.

`atom_codes(+Atom,?CodeList)` *ISO*
`atom_codes(?Atom,+CodeList)` *ISO*
The name of the atom *Atom* is the code-list *CodeList*.

`atom_concat(+Atom1,+Atom2,?Atom12)` *ISO*
`atom_concat(?Atom1,?Atom2,+Atom12)` *ISO*
Atom *Atom1* concatenated with *Atom2* gives *Atom12*.

`atom_length(+Atom,?Length)` *ISO*
*Length* is the number of characters of the atom *Atom*.

`atomic(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*
*X* is currently instantiated to an atom or a number.

`bagof(?Template,:Goal,?Bag)` *ISO*
*Bag* is the bag of instances of *Template* such that *Goal* is satisfied (not just provable).

`block Specs` *declaration*
Not a built-in predicate; block declaration.

`bb_delete(+Key,?Term)`
Delete from the blackboard *Term* stored under *Key*.

`bb_get(+Key,?Term)`
Get from the blackboard *Term* stored under *Key*.

`bb_put(+Key,+Term)`
Store *Term* under *Key* on the blackboard.

`bb_update(:Key, ?OldTerm, ?NewTerm)`
Replace *OldTerm* by *NewTerm* under *Key* on the blackboard.

`break` *development*
Invokes a recursive top-level.

`breakpoint_expansion(+Macro, -Body)` *hook,development*
`user:breakpoint_expansion(+Macro, -Body)`
Defines debugger condition macros.

`byte_count(+Stream,?N)`
*N* is the number of bytes read/written on stream *Stream*.

`'C'(?S1,?Terminal,?S2)` **obsolescent**
*Grammar rules. S1* is connected by the terminal *Terminal* to *S2*.

`call(:Term)` *ISO*
`(Module::Term)`
Executes the procedure call *Term* in *Module*.

`call_cleanup(:Goal,:Cleanup)`
Executes the procedure call *Goal*. When *Goal* succeeds determinately, is cut, fails, or raises an exception, *Cleanup* is executed.

`call_residue(:Goal,?Residue)` **obsolescent**
Executes the procedure call *Goal*. Any floundered goals and the variables they are blocked on occur as *VarSet-Goal* pairs in *Residue*.

`callable(?X)` *meta-logical*
*X* is currently instantiated to a compound term or an atom.

`character_count(+Stream,?Count)`
*Count* characters have been read from or written to the stream *Stream*.

`catch(:ProtectedGoal,?Pattern,:Handler)` *ISO*
Executes the procedure call *ProtectedGoal*. If during the execution `throw(Exception)` or `raise_exception(Exception)` is called, and *Exception* matches *Pattern*, the execution of *ProtectedGoal* aborts, *Pattern* is unified with a copy of *Exception* and *Handler* is called.

`char_code(+Char,?Code)` *ISO*
`char_code(?Char,+Code)` *ISO*
*Code* is the character code of the one-char atom *Char*.

`char_conversion(+InChar, +OutChar)` *ISO*
The mapping of *InChar* to *OutChar* is added to the character-conversion mapping.

`clause(:Head,?Body)` *ISO*
`clause(:Head,?Body,?Ref)`
`clause(?Head,?Body,+Ref)`
There is an interpreted clause whose head is *Head*, whose body is *Body*, and whose unique identifier is *Ref*.

`close(+Stream)` *ISO*
`close(+Stream, +Options)` *ISO*
Closes stream *Stream*, with options *Options*.

`compare(?Op,?Term1,?Term2)`
*Op* is the result of comparing *Term1* and *Term2*.

`compile(:Files)`
Compiles in-core the clauses in text file(s) *Files*.

`compound(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*
*X* is currently instantiated to a term of arity > 0.

`consult(:Files)`
Updates the program with interpreted clauses from file(s) *Files*.

`copy_term(?Term,?CopyOfTerm)` *ISO,meta-logical*
*CopyOfTerm* is an independent copy of *Term*.

`create_mutable(+Datum,-Mutable)`
*Mutable* is a new mutable term with current value *Datum*.

`current_atom(?Atom)` *meta-logical*
One of the currently defined atoms is *Atom*.

`current_breakpoint(:Conditions, ?BID, ?Status, ?Kind, ?Type)` *development*
There is a breakpoint with conditions *Conditions*, identifier *BID*, enabledness *Status*, kind *Kind*, and type *Type*.

`current_char_conversion(?InChar, ?OutChar)` *ISO*
*InChar* is mapped to *OutChar* in the current character-conversion mapping.

`current_input(?Stream)` *ISO*
*Stream* is the current input stream.

`current_key(?KeyName,?KeyTerm)` **obsolescent**
There is a recorded item in the database whose key is *KeyTerm*, the name of which is *KeyName*.

`current_module(?Module)`
*Module* is a module currently in the system.

`current_module(?Module,?File)`
*Module* is a module currently in the system, loaded from *File*.

`current_op(?Precedence,?Type,?Op)` *ISO*
Atom *Op* is an operator type *Type* precedence *Precedence*.

`current_output(?Stream)` *ISO*
*Stream* is the current output stream.

`current_predicate(?Name/?Arity)` *ISO*
A user defined or library predicate is named *Name*, arity *Arity*.

`current_predicate(?Name,:Head)`
`current_predicate(?Name,-Head)`
A user defined or library predicate is named *Name*, most general goal *Head*.

`current_prolog_flag(?FlagName,?Value)` *ISO*
: *Value* is the current value of the Prolog flag *FlagName*.

`current_stream(?AbsFileName,?Mode,?Stream)`
: There is a stream *Stream* associated with the file *AbsFileName* and opened in mode *Mode*.

`debug` *development*
: Switches on debugging in *debug* mode.

`debugger_command_hook(+DCommand,?Actions)` *hook,development*
`user:debugger_command_hook(+DCommand,?Actions)`
: Allows the interactive debugger to be extended with user-defined commands.

`debugging` *development*
: Displays debugging status information

`dif(?X,?Y)`
: *X* and *Y* are different.

`disable_breakpoints(+BIDs)` *development*
: Disables the breakpoints specified by *BIDs*.

`discontiguous Specs` *declaration,ISO*
: Not a built-in predicate; discontiguous declaration.

`display(?Term)`
: Displays *Term* on the standard output stream.

`dynamic Specs` *declaration,ISO*
: Not a built-in predicate; dynamic declaration.

`enable_breakpoints(+BIDs)` *development*
: Enables the breakpoints specified by *BIDs*.

`ensure_loaded(:Files)` *ISO*
: Compiles or loads the file(s) *Files* if need be.

`erase(+Ref)`
: Erases the clause or record whose unique identifier is *Ref*.

`error_exception(+Exception)` *hook*
`user:error_exception(+Exception)`
: *Exception* is an exception that traps to the debugger if it is switched on.

`execution_state(:Tests)` *development*
: *Tests* are satisfied in the current state of the execution.

`execution_state(+FocusConditions, :Tests)` *development*
: *Tests* are satisfied in the state of the execution pointed to by *FocusConditions*.

`expand_term(+Term1,?Term2)`
: *Term1* is a shorthand expanding to *Term2*.

`fail` *ISO*
`false` False.

`fcompile(:Files)` *development*, **obsolescent**
Compiles file-to-file the clauses in text file(s) *Files*.

`file_search_path(Path,?Expansion)` *hook*
`user:file_search_path(Path,?Expansion)`
Tells how to expand `Path(File)` file names.

`fileerrors` **obsolescent**
Enables reporting of file errors.

`findall(?Template,:Goal,?Bag)` *ISO*
`findall(?Template,:Goal,?Bag,?Remainder)`
A prefix of *Bag* is the list of instances of *Template* such that *Goal* is provable. The rest of *Bag* is *Remainder* or the empty list.

`float(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*
*X* is currently instantiated to a float.

`flush_output` *ISO*
`flush_output(+Stream)` *ISO*
Flushes the buffers associated with *Stream*.

`foreign(+CFunctionName,+Predicate)` *hook*
`foreign(+CFunctionName,+Language,+Predicate)` *hook*
Tell Prolog how to define *Predicate* to invoke *CFunctionName*.

`foreign_file(+ObjectFile,+Functions)` *hook*, **obsolescent**
Tells Prolog that foreign functions *Functions* are in file *ObjectFile*. Use `foreign_resource/2` instead.

`foreign_resource(+ResourceName,+Functions)` *hook*
Tells Prolog that foreign functions *Functions* are in foreign resource *ResourceName*.

`format(+Format,:Arguments)`
`format(+Stream,+Format,:Arguments)`
Writes *Arguments* according to *Format* on the stream *Stream* or on the current output stream.

`freeze(?Var,:Goal)`
Blocks *Goal* until `nonvar(Var)` holds.

`frozen(-Var,?Goal)`
The goal *Goal* is blocked on the variable *Var*.

`functor(+Term,?Name,?Arity)` *ISO,meta-logical*
`functor(?Term,+Name,+Arity)` *ISO,meta-logical*
The principal functor of *Term* has name *Name* and arity *Arity*.

`garbage_collect`
Performs a garbage collection of the global stack.

`garbage_collect_atoms`
Performs a garbage collection of the atoms.

`gc` **obsolescent**

Enables garbage collection of the global stack.

`generate_message_hook(+Message, -L0, -L)` *hook*
`user:generate_message_hook(+Message, -L0, -L)`

A way for the user to override the call to `'SU_messages':generate_message/3` in the message generation phase in `print_message/2`.

`get(?C)` **obsolescent**
`get(+Stream,?C)` **obsolescent**

The next printing character from the stream *Stream* or from the current input stream is *C*.

`get0(?C)` **obsolescent**
`get0(+Stream,?C)` **obsolescent**

The next character from the stream *Stream* or from the current input stream is *C*.

`get_byte(?Byte)` *ISO*
`get_byte(+Stream,?Byte)` *ISO*

*Byte* is the next byte read from the binary stream *Stream*.

`get_char(?Char)` *ISO*
`get_char(+Stream,?Char)` *ISO*

*Char* is the one-char atom naming the next character read from text stream *Stream*.

`get_code(?Code)` *ISO*
`get_code(+Stream,?Code)` *ISO*

*Code* is the character code of the next character read from text stream *Stream*.

`get_mutable(?Datum,+Mutable)`

The current value of the mutable term *Mutable* is *Datum*.

`goal_expansion(+Goal,+Module,-NewGoal)` *hook*
`user:goal_expansion(+Goal,+Module,-NewGoal)`

Defines a transformation from *Goal* in module *Module* to *NewGoal*.

`goal_source_info(+AGoal, ?Goal, ?SourceInfo)`

Decomposes the annotated goal *AGoal* into a *Goal* proper and the *SourceInfo* descriptor term, indicating the source position of the goal.

`ground(?X)` *meta-logical*

*X* is currently free of unbound variables.

`halt` *ISO* Halts Prolog. (returns to C in recursive calls to Prolog from C).

`halt(Code)` *ISO*

Halts Prolog immediately, returning *Code*.

`help` *hookable,development,***obsolescent**

Prints a help message.

`if(+P,+Q,+R)`

If *P* then *Q* else *R*, exploring all solutions of *P*.

`include Specs` *declaration,ISO*

Not a built-in predicate; include declaration.

`incore(+Term)` **obsolescent**

Executes the procedure call *Term*.

`initialization :Goal` *ISO*

Includes *Goal* to the set of goals that shall be executed after the file that is being loaded has been completely loaded.

`instance(+Ref,?Term)`

*Term* is a most general instance of the record or clause uniquely identified by *Ref*.

`integer(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*

*X* is currently instantiated to an integer.

`?Y is +X` *ISO*

*Y* is the value of the arithmetic expression *X*.

`is_mutable(?X)` *meta-logical*

*X* is currently instantiated to a mutable term.

`keysort(+List1,?List2)`

The list *List1* sorted by key yields *List2*.

`leash(+Mode)` *development*

Sets leashing mode to *Mode*.

`length(?List,?Length)`

The length of list *List* is *Length*.

`library_directory(?Directory)` *hook*
`user:library_directory(?Directory)`

Tells how to expand `library(File)` file names.

`line_count(+Stream,?N)`

*N* is the number of lines read/written on stream *Stream*.

`line_position(+Stream,?N)`

*N* is the number of characters read/written on the current line of *Stream*.

`listing`
`listing(:Specs)`

Lists the interpreted predicate(s) specified by *Specs* or all interpreted predicates in the type-in module. Any variables in the listed clauses are internally bound to ground terms before printing. Any attributes or blocked goals attached to such variables will be ignored.

`load(:Files)` **obsolescent**

Loads '`.ql`' file(s) *Files*.

`load_files(:Files)`
`load_files(:Files, +Options)`

Loads source, '`.po`' or '`.ql`' file(s) *Files* obeying *Options*.

`load_foreign_files(:ObjectFiles,+Libraries)` *development,hookable,***obsolescent**
Links object files *ObjectFiles* into Prolog. Use `splfr` and `load_foreign_resource/1` instead.

`load_foreign_resource(:Resource)`
Loads foreign resource *Resource* into Prolog.

`message_hook(+Severity, +Message, +Lines)` *hook*
`user:message_hook(+Severity, +Message, +Lines)`
Overrides the call to `print_message_lines/3` in `print_message/2`. A way for the user to intercept the abstract message term *Message* of type *Severity*, whose translation is *Lines*, before it is actually printed.

`meta_predicate Specs` *declaration*
Not a built-in predicate; meta-predicate declaration.

`mode Specs` *declaration*
Not a built-in predicate; mode declaration.

`module(+Module)`
Sets the type-in module to *Module*.

`module(+Module, +ExportList)` *declaration*
`module(+Module, +ExportList, +Options)` *declaration*
Not a built-in predicate; module declaration.

`multifile Specs` *declaration,ISO*
Not a built-in predicate; multifile declaration.

`name(+Const,?CharList)` **obsolescent**
`name(?Const,+CharList)`
The name of atom or number *Const* is the string *CharList*. Subsumed by `atom_chars/2` and `number_chars/2`.

`nl` *ISO*
`nl(+Stream)` *ISO*
Outputs a new line on stream *Stream* or on the current output stream.

`nodebug` *development*
Switches off debugging.

`nofileerrors` **obsolescent**
Disables reporting of file errors.

`nogc` **obsolescent**
Disables garbage collection of the global stack.

`nonvar(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*
*X* is a non-variable.

`nospy :Spec` *development*
Removes spypoints from the predicate(s) specified by *Spec*.

`nospyall` *development*
Removes all spypoints.

`notrace` *development*
`nozip` *development*

Switches off debugging.

`number(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*

*X* is currently instantiated to a number.

`number_chars(+Number,?CodeList)` *SICStus only*
`number_chars(?Number,+CodeList)` *SICStus only*

The name of the number *Number* is the code-list *CodeList*.

`number_chars(+Number,?CharList)` *ISO only*
`number_chars(?Number,+CharList)` *ISO only*

The name of the number *Number* is the char-list *CharList*.

`number_codes(+Number,?CodeList)` *ISO*
`number_codes(?Number,+CodeList)` *ISO*

The name of the number *Number* is the code-list *CodeList*.

`numbervars(?Term,+N,?M)` *meta-logical*

Number the variables in *Term* from *N* to *M*-1.

`once(+P)` *ISO*

Finds the first solution, if any, of goal *P*.

`on_exception(?Pattern,:ProtectedGoal,:Handler)`

Executes the procedure call *ProtectedGoal*. If during the execution `throw(Exception)` or `raise_exception(Exception)` is called, and *Exception* matches *Pattern*, the execution of *ProtectedGoal* aborts, *Pattern* is unified with a copy of *Exception* and *Handler* is called.

`op(+Precedence,+Type,+Name)` *ISO*

Makes atom(s) *Name* an operator of type *Type* precedence *Precedence*.

`open(+FileName,+Mode,-Stream)` *ISO*
`open(+FileName,+Mode,-Stream,+Options)` *ISO*

Opens file *FileName* in mode *Mode* with options *Options* as stream *Stream*.

`open_null_stream(-Stream)`

Opens an output stream to the null device.

`otherwise`

True.

`peek_byte(?N)` *ISO*
`peek_byte(+Stream,?N)` *ISO*

*N* is the next byte peeked at from the binary stream *Stream* or from the current input stream.

`peek_char(?N)` *SICStus only*
`peek_char(+Stream,?N)` *SICStus only*

*N* is the character code of the next character peeked at from *Stream* or from the current input stream.

`peek_char(?N)` *ISO only*
`peek_char(+Stream,?N)` *ISO only*

*N* is the one-char atom of the next character peeked at from the text stream *Stream* or from the current input stream.

`peek_code(?N)` *ISO*
`peek_code(+Stream,?N)` *ISO*

*N* is the character code of the next character peeked at from *Stream* or from the current input stream.

`phrase(:Phrase,?List)`
`phrase(:Phrase,?List,?Remainder)`

*Grammar rules.* The list *List* can be parsed as a phrase of type *Phrase*. The rest of the list is *Remainder* or empty.

`portray(+Term)` *hook*
`user:portray(+Term)`

Tells `print/1` what to do.

`portray_clause(?Clause)`
`portray_clause(+Stream,?Clause)`

Pretty prints *Clause* on the stream *Stream* or on the current output stream.

`portray_message(+Severity,+Message)` *hook*
`user:portray_message(+Severity,+Message)`

Tells `print_message/2` what to do.

`predicate_property(:Head,?Prop)`
`predicate_property(-Head,?Prop)`

*Head* is the most general goal of a currently defined predicate that has the property *Prop*.

`print(?Term)` *hookable*
`print(+Stream,?Term)` *hookable*

Portrays or else writes *Term* on the stream *Stream* or on the current output stream.

`print_message(+Severity,+Message)` *hookable*

Portrays or else writes *Message* of a given *Severity* on the standard error stream.

`print_message_lines(+Stream, +Severity, +Lines)`

Print the *Lines* to *Stream*, preceding each line with a prefix defined by *Severity*.

`profile_data(:Spec,?Selection,?Resolution,-Data)` *development*

*Data* is the profiling data collected from the instrumented predicates covered by *Spec* with selection and resolution *Selection* and *Resolution* respectively.

`profile_reset(:Spec)` *development*

The profiling counters for the instrumented predicates covered by *Spec* are zeroed.

`prolog_flag(?FlagName,?Value)`

*Value* is the current value of *FlagName*.

`prolog_flag(+FlagName,?OldValue,?NewValue)`
: *OldValue* and *NewValue* are the old and new values of *FlagName*.

`prolog_load_context(?Key,?Value)`
: *Value* is the value of the compilation/loading context variable identified by *Key*.

`prompt(?Old,?New)`
: Changes the prompt from *Old* to *New*.

`public Specs` *declaration*, **obsolescent**
: Not a built-in predicate; public declaration.

`put(+C)` **obsolescent**
`put(+Stream,+C)` **obsolescent**
: The next character code sent to the stream *Stream* or to the current output stream is *C*.

`put_byte(+B)` *ISO*
`put(+Stream,+B)` *ISO*
: The next byte sent to the binary stream *Stream* or to the current output stream is *B*.

`put_char(+C)` *ISO*
`put_char(+Stream,+C)` *ISO*
: The next one-char atom sent to the text stream *Stream* or to the current output stream is *C*.

`put_code(+C)` *ISO*
`put_code(+Stream,+C)` *ISO*
: The next character code sent to the text stream *Stream* or to the current output stream is *C*.

`query_hook(+QueryClass, +Query, +QueryLines, +Help, +HelpLines, -Answer)` *hook*
`user:query_hook(+QueryClass, +Query, +QueryLines, +Help, +HelpLines, -Answer)`
: Called by `ask_query/4` before processing the query. If this predicate succeeds, it is assumed that the query has been processed and nothing further is done.

`query_class_hook(+QueryClass, -Prompt, -InputMethod, -MapMethod, -FailureMode)` *hook*
`user:query_class_hook(+QueryClass, -Prompt, -InputMethod, -MapMethod, -FailureMode)`
: Provides the user with a method of overriding the call to `'SU_messages':query_class/5` in the preparation phase of query processing. This way the default query class characteristics can be changed.

`query_input_hook(+InputMethod, +Prompt, -RawInput)` *hook*
`user:query_input_hook(+InputMethod, +Prompt, -RawInput)`
: Provides the user with a method of overriding the call to `'SU_messages':query_input/3` in the input phase of query processing. This way the implementation of the default input methods can be changed.

`query_map_hook(+MapMethod, +RawInput, -Result, -Answer)` *hook*
`user:query_map_hook(+MapMethod, +RawInput, -Result, -Answer)`
Provides the user with a method of overriding the call to `'SU_messages':query_map/4` in the mapping phase of query processing. This way the implementation of the default map methods can be changed.

`raise_exception(+Exception)`
Causes the abortion of a part of the execution tree scoped by the closest enclosing `catch/3` or `on_exception/3` invocation with its first argument matching *Exception*.

`read(?Term)` *ISO*
`read(+Stream,?Term)` *ISO*
Reads *Term* from the stream *Stream* or from the current input stream.

`read_term(?Term,+Options)` *ISO*
`read_term(+Stream,?Term,+Options)` *ISO*
Reads *Term* from the stream *Stream* or from the current input stream with extra *Options*.

`reconsult(:Files)` **obsolescent**
Updates the program with interpreted clauses from file(s) *Files*.

`recorda(+Key,?Term,-Ref)` **obsolescent**
Makes *Term* the first record under key *Key* with unique identifier *Ref*.

`recorded(?Key,?Term,?Ref)` **obsolescent**
*Term* is currently recorded under key *Key* with unique identifier *Ref*.

`recordz(+Key,?Term,-Ref)` **obsolescent**
Makes *Term* the last record under key *Key* with unique identifier *Ref*.

`remove_breakpoints(+BIDs)` *development*
Removes the breakpoints specified by *BIDs*.

`repeat` *ISO*
Succeeds repeatedly.

`require(:PredSpecs)` *development*,**obsolescent**
Tries to locate and load library files that export the specified predicates. Creates index files if necessary.

`restore(+File)`
Restores the state saved in file *File*.

`retract(:Clause)` *ISO*
Erases repeatedly the next interpreted clause of form *Clause*.

`retractall(:Head)`
Erases all clauses whose head matches *Head*.

`runtime_entry(+Message)` *hook*
`user:runtime_entry(+Message)`
The entry point of most runtime systems. Will be called with `Message = start`.

`save_program(+File)`
`save_program(+File, :Goal)`
Saves the current state of the Prolog database in file *File*. Upon restore, *Goal* is executed.

`save_modules(+Modules, +File)`
Saves the current contents of the given *Modules* in the file *File*.

`save_predicates(:Preds, +File)`
Saves the current definitions of the given *Preds* in the file *File*.

`save_files(+SourceFiles, +File)`
Saves the modules, predicates and clauses and directives in the given *SourceFiles* in the file *File*.

`see(+File)`
Makes file *File* the current input stream.

`seeing(?File)`
The current input stream is named *File*.

`seek(+Stream,+Offset,+Method,-NewLocation)`
Sets the stream *Stream* to the byte offset *Offset* relative to *Method*, and *NewLocation* is the new byte offset from the beginning of the file after the operation.

`seen` Closes the current input stream.

`set_input(+Stream)` *ISO*
Sets the current input stream to *Stream*.

`set_output(+Stream)` *ISO*
Sets the current output stream to *Stream*.

`set_prolog_flag(+FlagName,?NewValue)` *ISO*
*NewValue* becomes the new value of *FlagName*.

`set_stream_position(+Stream,+Position)` *ISO*
*Position* is a new stream position of *Stream*, which is then set to the new position.

`setof(?Template,:Goal,?Set)` *ISO*
*Set* is the set of instances of *Template* such that *Goal* is satisfied (not just provable).

`simple(?X)` *meta-logical*
*X* is currently uninstantiated or atomic.

`skip(+C)` **obsolescent**
`skip(+Stream,+C)` **obsolescent**
Skips characters from *Stream* or from the current input stream until after character *C*.

`skip_line`
`skip_line(+Stream)`
Skips characters from *Stream* or from the current input stream until the next ⟨LFD⟩.

`sort(+List1,?List2)`
The list *List1* sorted into order yields *List2*.

`source_file(?File)`
`source_file(:Pred,?File)`
`source_file(-Pred,?File)`
The predicate *Pred* is defined in the file *File*.

`spy :Spec` *development*
Sets spypoints on the predicate(s) specified by *Spec*.

`spy(:Spec, :Conditions)` *development*
Sets spypoints with condition *Conditions* on the predicates specified by *Spec*.

`statistics`
Outputs various execution statistics.

`statistics(?Key,?Value)`
The execution statistics key *Key* has value *Value*.

`stream_code(+Stream,?StreamCode)`
`stream_code(?Stream,+StreamCode)`
*StreamCode* is an integer representing a pointer to the internal representation of *Stream*.

`stream_position(+Stream,?Position)`
*Position* is the current stream position of *Stream*.

`stream_position_data(?Field,?Position,?Data)`
The *Field* field of the stream position term *Position* is *Data*.

`stream_property(?Stream, ?Property))` *ISO*
Stream *Stream* has property *Property*.

`sub_atom(+Atom,?Before,?Length,?After,?SubAtom)` *ISO*
The characters of *SubAtom* form a sublist of the characters of *Atom*, such that the number of characters preceding *SubAtom* is *Before*, the number of characters after *SubAtom* is *After*, and the length of *SubAtom* is *Length*.

`tab(+N)` **obsolescent**
`tab(+Stream,+N)` **obsolescent**
Outputs *N* spaces to the stream *Stream* or to the current output stream.

`tell(+File)`
Makes file *File* the current output stream.

`telling(?File)`
The current output stream is named *File*.

`term_expansion(+Term1,?TermOrTerms)` *hook*
`term_expansion(+Term1,+Layout1,?TermOrTerms,?Layout2)` *hook*
`user:term_expansion(+Term1,?TermOrTerms)`
`user:term_expansion(+Term1,+Layout1,?TermOrTerms,?Layout2)`
Tell `expand_term/2` what to do.

`throw(+Exception)` *ISO*
Causes the abortion of a part of the execution tree scoped by the closest enclosing `catch/3` or `on_exception/3` invocation with its first argument matching *Exception*.

`told` Closes the current output stream.

`trace` *development*
Switches on debugging in trace mode.

`trimcore` Reclaims and defragmentizes unused memory.

`true` *ISO* Succeeds.

`ttyflush` **obsolescent**
Flushes the standard output stream buffer.

`ttyget(?C)` **obsolescent**
The next printing character input from the standard input stream is *C*.

`ttyget0(?C)` **obsolescent**
The next character input from the standard input stream is *C*.

`ttynl` **obsolescent**
Outputs a new line on the standard output stream.

`ttyput(+C)` **obsolescent**
The next character output to the standard output stream is *C*.

`ttyskip(+C)` **obsolescent**
Skips characters from the standard input stream until after character *C*.

`ttytab(+N)` **obsolescent**
Outputs *N* spaces to the standard output stream.

`undo(:Goal)`
*Goal* is called on backtracking.

`unify_with_occurs_check(?X, ?Y)` *ISO*
True if *X* and *Y* unify to a finite (acyclic) term.

`unknown(?OldState,?NewState)` *development*
Changes action on undefined predicates from *OldState* to *NewState*.

`unknown_predicate_handler(+Goal,+Module,-NewGoal)` *hook*
`user:unknown_predicate_handler(+Goal,+Module,-NewGoal)`
Defines an alternative goal to be called in place of a call to an unknown predicate.

`unload_foreign_resource(:Resource)`
Unloads foreign resource *Resource* from Prolog.

`update_mutable(+Datum,+Mutable)`
Updates the current value of the mutable term *Mutable* to become *Datum*.

`use_module(:Files)`
Loads the module-file(s) *Files* if necessary and imports all public predicates.

`use_module(:File,+Imports)`
Loads the module-file *File* if necessary and imports the predicates in *Imports*.

`use_module(+Module,?File,+Imports)`
`use_module(?Module,:File,+Imports)`
Imports *Imports* from an existing *Module*, or else the same as `use_module/2` unifying *Module* to the module defined in *File*.

`user_help` *hook*, **obsolescent**
`user:user_help`
Tells `help/0` what to do.

`var(?X)` *ISO,meta-logical*
*X* is currently uninstantiated.

`version` *development*, **obsolescent**
Displays introductory and/or system identification messages.

`version(+Message)` *development*, **obsolescent**
Adds the atom *Message* to the list of introductory messages.

`volatile Specs` *declaration*
Not a built-in predicate; volatile declaration.

`when(+Condition,:Goal)`
Blocks *Goal* until the *Condition* is true.

`write(+Term)` *ISO*
`write(+Stream,+Term)` *ISO*
Writes *Term* on the stream *Stream* or on the current output stream.

`write_canonical(+Term)` *ISO*
`write_canonical(+Stream,+Term)` *ISO*
Writes *Term* on the stream *Stream* or on the current output stream so that it may be read back.

`write_term(+Term,+Options)` *ISO*
`write_term(+Stream,+Term,+Options)` *ISO*
Writes *Term* on the stream *Stream* or on the current output stream with extra *Options*.

`writeq(+Term)` *ISO*
`writeq(+Stream,+Term)` *ISO*
Writes *Term* on the stream *Stream* or on the current output stream, quoting names where necessary.

`zip` *development*
Switches on debugging in *zip* mode.

# 50 Full Prolog Syntax

A Prolog program consists of a sequence of *sentences* or lists of sentences. Each sentence is a Prolog term. How terms are interpreted as sentences is defined below (see Section 50.2 [Sentence], page 788). Note that a term representing a sentence may be written in any of its equivalent syntactic forms. For example, the compound term `Head :- Body` could be written in standard prefix notation instead of as the usual infix operator.

Terms are written as sequences of *tokens*. Tokens are sequences of characters, which are treated as separate symbols. Tokens include the symbols for variables, constants and functors, as well as punctuation characters such as brackets and commas.

We define below how lists of tokens are interpreted as terms (see Section 50.3 [Term Token], page 789). Each list of tokens that is read in (for interpretation as a term or sentence) has to be terminated by a full-stop token. Two tokens must be separated by a layout-text token if they could otherwise be interpreted as a single token. Layout-text tokens are ignored when interpreting the token list as a term, and may appear at any point in the token list.

We define below defines how tokens are represented as strings of characters (see Section 50.4 [Token String], page 790). But we start by describing the notation used in the formal definition of Prolog syntax (see Section 50.1 [Syntax Notation], page 787).

## 50.1 Notation

1. Syntactic categories (or *non-terminals*) are written thus: *item*. Depending on the section, a category may represent a class of either terms, token lists, or character strings.
2. A syntactic rule takes the general form

   ```
   C ::= F1 | F2 | F3 | ...
   ```

   which states that an entity of category *C* may take any of the alternative forms *F1*, *F2*, *F3*, etc.
3. Certain definitions and restrictions are given in ordinary English, enclosed in `{ }` brackets.
4. A category written as *C*. . . denotes a sequence of one or more *C*s.
5. A category written as *?C* denotes an optional *C*. Therefore *?C*. . . denotes a sequence of zero or more *C*s.
6. A few syntactic categories have names with arguments, and rules in which they appear may contain meta-variables looking thus: *X*. The meaning of such rules should be clear from analogy with the definite clause grammars (see Section 8.1.2 [Term and Goal Expansion], page 137).
7. In the section describing the syntax of terms and tokens (see Section 50.3 [Term Token], page 789) particular tokens of the category name are written thus: *name*, while tokens that are individual punctuation characters are written literally.

## 50.2 Syntax of Sentences as Terms

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *sentence* | ::= *module* `:` *sentence* | |
| | \| *list* | { where *list* is a list of *sentence* } |
| | \| *clause* | |
| | \| *directive* | |
| | \| *query* | |
| | \| *grammar-rule* | |
| *clause* | ::= *rule* \| *unit-clause* | |
| *rule* | ::= *head* `:-` *body* | |
| *unit-clause* | ::= *head* | { where *head* is not otherwise a *sentence* } |
| *directive* | ::= `:-` *body* | |
| *query* | ::= `?-` *body* | |
| *head* | ::= *module* `:` *head* | |
| | \| *goal* | { where *goal* is not a *variable* } |
| *body* | ::= *module* `:` *body* | |
| | \| *body* `->` *body* `;` *body* | |
| | \| *body* `->` *body* | |
| | \| `\+` *body* | |
| | \| *body* `;` *body* | |
| | \| *body* `,` *body* | |
| | \| *goal* | |
| *goal* | ::= *term* | { where *term* is not otherwise a *body* } |
| *grammar-rule* | ::= *gr-head* `-->` *gr-body* | |
| *gr-head* | ::= *module* `:` *gr-head* | |
| | \| *gr-head* `,` *terminals* | |
| | \| *non-terminal* | { where *non-terminal* is not a *variable* } |
| *gr-body* | ::= *module* `:` *gr-body* | |
| | \| *gr-body* `->` *gr-body* `;` *gr-body* | |
| | \| *gr-body* `->` *gr-body* | |
| | \| `\+` *gr-body* | |
| | \| *gr-body* `;` *gr-body* | |
| | \| *gr-body* `,` *gr-body* | |
| | \| *non-terminal* | |
| | \| *terminals* | |
| | \| *gr-condition* | |
| *non-terminal* | ::= *term* | { where *term* is not otherwise a *gr-body* } |
| *terminals* | ::= *list* \| *string* | |
| *gr-condition* | ::= `!` \| `{`*body*`}` | |
| *module* | ::= *atom* | |

## 50.3 Syntax of Terms as Tokens

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *term-read-in* | ::= *subterm(1200) full-stop* | |
| *subterm(N)* | ::= *term(M)* | { where *M* is less than or equal to *N* } |
| *term(N)* | ::= *op(N,fx) subterm(N-1)* | { except in the case of a *number* if *subterm* starts with a '(', *op* must be followed by *layout-text* } |
| | \| *op(N,fy) subterm(N)* | { if *subterm* starts with a '(', *op* must be followed by *layout-text* } |
| | \| *subterm(N-1) op(N,xfx) subterm(N-1)* | |
| | \| *subterm(N-1) op(N,xfy) subterm(N)* | |
| | \| *subterm(N) op(N,yfx) subterm(N-1)* | |
| | \| *subterm(N-1) op(N,xf)* | |
| | \| *subterm(N) op(N,yf)* | |
| *term(1000)* | ::= *subterm(999)* , *subterm(1000)* | |
| *term(0)* | ::= *functor* ( *arguments* ) | { provided there is no *layout-text* between the *functor* and the '(' } |
| | \| ( *subterm(1200)* ) | |
| | \| { *subterm(1200)* } | |
| | \| *list* | |
| | \| *string* | |
| | \| *constant* | |
| | \| *variable* | |
| *op(N,T)* | ::= *name* | { where *name* has been declared as an operator of type *T* and precedence *N* } |
| *arguments* | ::= *subterm(999)* | |
| | \| *subterm(999)* , *arguments* | |
| *list* | ::= [] | |
| | \| [ *listexpr* ] | |
| *listexpr* | ::= *subterm(999)* | |
| | \| *subterm(999)* , *listexpr* | |
| | \| *subterm(999)* \| *subterm(999)* | |
| *constant* | ::= *atom* \| *number* | |
| *number* | ::= *unsigned-number* | |
| | \| *sign unsigned-number* | |
| | \| *sign* inf | |
| | \| *sign* nan | |
| *unsigned-number* | ::= *natural-number* \| *unsigned-float* | |
| *atom* | ::= *name* | |
| *functor* | ::= *name* | |

## 50.4 Syntax of Tokens as Character Strings

SICStus Prolog supports wide characters (up to 31 bits wide). It is assumed that the character code set is an extension of (7 bit) ASCII, i.e. that it includes the codes 0..127 and these codes are interpreted as ASCII characters.

Each character in the code set has to be classified as belonging to one of the character categories, such as *small-letter*, *digit*, etc. This classification is called the character-type mapping, and it is used for defining the syntax of tokens.

The user can select one of the three predefined wide character modes through the environment variable `SP_CTYPE`. These modes are `iso_8859_1`, `utf8`, and `euc`. The user can also define other wide character modes by plugging in appropriate hook functions; see Chapter 12 [Handling Wide Characters], page 301. In this case the user has to supply a character-type mapping for the codes greater than 127.

We first describe the character-type mapping for the fixed part of the code set, the 7 bit ASCII.

*layout-char*
: These are character codes 0..32 and 127. This includes characters such as ⟨TAB⟩, ⟨LFD⟩, and ⟨SPC⟩.

*small-letter*
: These are character codes 97..122, i.e. the letters '`a`' through '`z`'.

*capital-letter*
: These are character codes 65..90, i.e. the letters '`A`' through '`Z`'.

*digit*
: These are character codes 48..57, i.e. the digits '`0`' through '`9`'.

*symbol-char*
: These are character codes 35, 36, 38, 42, 43, 45..47, 58, 60..64, 92, 94, and 126, i.e. the characters:

```
+ - * / \ ^ < > = ~ : . ? @ # $ &
```

In `sicstus` execution mode, character code 96 ('`` ` ``') is also a *symbol-char*.

*solo-char*
: These are character codes 33 and 59 i.e. the characters '`!`' and '`;`'.

*punctuation-char*
: These are character codes 37, 40, 41, 44, 91, 93, and 123..125, i.e. the characters:

```
% ( ) , [ ] { | }
```

*quote-char*
: These are character codes 34 and 39 i.e. the characters '`"`' and '`'`'. In `iso` execution mode character code 96 ('`` ` ``') is also a *quote-char*.

*underline*
: This is character code 95 i.e. the character '`_`'.

We now provide the character-type mapping for the characters above the 7 bit ASCII range, for each of the built-in wide character modes.

The `iso_8859_1` mode has the character set 0..255 and the following character-type mapping for the codes 128..255:

*layout-char*
: the codes 128..160.

*small-letter*
: the codes 223..246, and 248..255.

*capital-letter*
: the codes 192..214, and 216..222.

*symbol-char*
: the codes 161..191, 215, and 247.

The `utf8` mode has the character set 0..(2^31-1). The character-type mapping for the codes 128..255 is the same as for the `iso_8859_1` mode. All character codes above 255 are classified as *small-letter*s.

The `euc` mode character set is described in Section 12.9 [Representation of EUC Wide Characters], page 315. All character codes above 127 are classified as *small-letter*s.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *token* | ::= *name* | |
| | \| *natural-number* | |
| | \| *unsigned-float* | |
| | \| *variable* | |
| | \| *string* | |
| | \| *punctuation-char* | |
| | \| *layout-text* | |
| | \| *full-stop* | |
| *name* | ::= *quoted-name* | |
| | \| *word* | |
| | \| *symbol* | |
| | \| *solo-char* | |
| | \| `[` *?layout-text* `]` | |
| | \| `{` *?layout-text* `}` | |
| *word* | ::= *small-letter ?alpha*. . . | |
| *symbol* | ::= *symbol-char*. . . | { except in the case of a *full-stop* or where the first 2 chars are '`/*`' } |
| *natural-number* | ::= *digit*. . . | |
| | \| *base-prefix alpha*. . . | { where each *alpha* must be digits of the base indicated by *base-prefix*, treating a,b,. . . and A,B,. . . as 10,11,. . . } |
| | \| `0 '` *char-item* | { yielding the character code for *char* } |
| *unsigned-float* | ::= *simple-float* | |
| | \| *simple-float exp exponent* | |
| *simple-float* | ::= *digit*. . . `.` *digit*. . . | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *exp* | ::= `e` \| `E` | |
| *exponent* | ::= *digit*... \| *sign digit*... | |
| *sign* | ::= `-` \| `+` | |
| *variable* | ::= *underline ?alpha*... | |
| | \| *capital-letter ?alpha*... | |
| *string* | ::= `"` *?string-item*... `"` | |
| *string-item* | ::= *quoted-char* | { other than '`"`' or '`\`' } |
| | \| `""` | |
| | \| `\` *escape-sequence* | {unless character escapes have been switched off } |
| *quoted-atom* | ::= `'` *?quoted-item*... `'` | |
| *quoted-item* | ::= *quoted-char* | { other than '`'`' or '`\`' } |
| | \| `''` | |
| | \| `\` *escape-sequence* | {unless character escapes have been switched off } |
| *backquoted-atom* | ::= `` ` `` *?backquoted-item*... `` ` `` | |
| *backquoted-item* | ::= *quoted-char* | { other than '`` ` ``' or '`\`' } |
| | \| `` `` | |
| | \| `\` *escape-sequence* | {unless character escapes have been switched off } |
| *layout-text* | ::= *layout-text-item*... | |
| *layout-text-item* | ::= *layout-char* \| *comment* | |
| *comment* | ::= `/*` *?char*... `*/` | { where *?char*... must not contain '`*/`' } |
| | \| `%` *?char*... ⟨LFD⟩ | { where *?char*... must not contain ⟨LFD⟩ } |
| *full-stop* | ::= `.` | { the following token, if any, must be *layout-text*} |
| *char* | ::= *layout-char* | |
| | \| *printing-char* | |
| *printing-char* | ::= *alpha* | |
| | \| *symbol-char* | |
| | \| *solo-char* | |
| | \| *punctuation-char* | |
| | \| *quote-char* | |
| *alpha* | ::= *capital-letter* \| *small-letter* \| *digit* \| *underline* | |
| *escape-sequence* | ::= `b` | { backspace, character code 8 } |
| | \| `t` | { horizontal tab, character code 9 } |
| | \| `n` | { newline, character code 10 } |
| | \| `v` | { vertical tab, character code 11 } |
| | \| `f` | { form feed, character code 12 } |
| | \| `r` | { carriage return, character code 13 } |
| | \| `e` | { escape, character code 27 } |
| | \| `d` | { delete, character code 127 } |
| | \| `a` | { alarm, character code 7 } |
| | \| *other-escape-sequence* | |

There are differences between the syntax used in `iso` mode and in `sicstus` mode. The differences are described by providing different syntax rules for certain syntactic categories.

### 50.4.1 `iso` Execution Mode Rules

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *quoted-name* | ::= *quoted-atom* | |
| | \| *backquoted-atom* | |
| *base-prefix* | ::= `0b` | { indicates base 2 } |
| | \| `0o` | { indicates base 8 } |
| | \| `0x` | { indicates base 16 } |
| *char-item* | ::= *quoted-item* | |
| *other-escape-sequence* | ::= `x` *alpha*... \ | {treating a,b,... and A,B,... as 10,11,... } in the range [0..15], hex character code } |
| | \| `o` *digit*... \ | { in the range [0..7], octal character code } |
| | \| ⟨LFD⟩ | { ignored } |
| | \| \ | { stands for itself } |
| | \| ' | { stands for itself } |
| | \| " | { stands for itself } |
| | \| ` | { stands for itself } |
| *quoted-char* | ::= ⟨SPC⟩ | |
| | \| *printing-char* | |

### 50.4.2 `sicstus` Execution Mode Rules

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *quoted-name* | ::= *quoted-atom* | |
| *base-prefix* | ::= *base* ' | {indicates base *base* } |
| *base* | ::= *digit*... | { in the range [2..36] } |
| *char-item* | ::= *char* | { other than '\' } |
| | \| \ *escape-sequence* | { unless character escapes have been switched off } |
| *other-escape-sequence* | ::= `x` *alpha alpha* | {treating a,b,... and A,B,... as 10,11,... in the range [0..15], hex character code } |
| | \| *digit ?digit ?digit* | { in the range [0..7], octal character code } |
| | \| ^ ? | { delete, character code 127 } |
| | \| ^ *alpha* | { where *alpha* must be a letter, stands for the control character *alpha* mod 32 } |
| | \| `c` *?layout-char*... | { ignored } |
| | \| *layout-char* | { ignored } |
| | \| *char* | { other than the above, stands for itself } |
| *quoted-char* | ::= *layout-char* | |

| *printing-char*

## 50.5 Escape Sequences

A backslash occurring inside integers in '`0`' notation or inside quoted atoms or strings has special meaning, and indicates the start of an escape sequence. Character escaping can be turned off for compatibility with old code. The following escape sequences exist:

`\b` backspace (character code 8)

`\t` horizontal tab (character code 9)

`\n` newline (character code 10)

`\v` vertical tab (character code 11)

`\f` form feed (character code 12)

`\r` carriage return (character code 13)

`\e` escape (character code 27)

`\d`
`\^?` *SICStus only*
delete (character code 127)

`\a` alarm (character code 7)

`\xhex-digit...\` *ISO only*
`\xhex-digithex-digit` *SICStus only*
the character code represented by the hexadecimal digits

`\octal-digit...\` *ISO only*
`\octal-digit?octal-digit?octal-digit` *SICStus only*
the character code represented by the octal digits.

`\^char` *SICStus only*
the character code *`char`* `mod 32`, where *char* is a letter.

`\`⟨LFD⟩ A single newline character is ignored. The purpose of this is to allow a *string* or *quoted-name* to be spread over multiple lines.

`\layout-char` *SICstus only*
A single *layout-char*, for example a newline, is ignored.

`\c` *SICStus only*
All characters up to, but not including, the next non-layout character are ignored.

`\\, \', \", \‘`
Stand for the character following the '`\`'.

`\other` *SICStus only*
A character not mentioned in this table stands for itself.

## 50.6 Notes

1. The expression of precedence 1000 (i.e. belonging to syntactic category *term(1000)*), which is written

   `X,Y`

   denotes the term `','(X,Y)` in standard syntax.
2. The parenthesized expression (belonging to syntactic category *term(0)*)

   `(X)`

   denotes simply the term `X`.
3. The curly-bracketed expression (belonging to syntactic category *term(0)*)

   `{X}`

   denotes the term `{}(X)` in standard syntax.
4. Note that, for example, `-3` denotes a number whereas `-(3)` denotes a compound term that has `- /1` as its principal functor.
5. The character '`"`' within a string must be written duplicated. Similarly for the character '`'`' within a quoted atom and for the character '`` ` ``' in backquoted atom (`iso` execution mode only).
6. Unless character escapes have been switched off, backslashes in strings, quoted atoms, and integers written in '`0'`' notation denote escape sequences.
7. A name token declared to be a prefix operator will be treated as an atom only if no *term-read-in* can be read by treating it as a prefix operator.
8. A name token declared to be both an infix and a postfix operator will be treated as a postfix operator only if no *term-read-in* can be read by treating it as an infix operator.
9. The layout following the full stop is considered part of it, and so it is consumed by e.g. `read/[1,2]`) in `sicstus` execution mode, while in `iso` execution mode the layout remains in the input stream.

# Standard Operators

The following are the standard operators in `iso` execution mode.

```
:- op( 1200, xfx, [ :-, --> ]).
:- op( 1200,  fx, [ :-, ?- ]).
:- op( 1150,  fx, [ mode, public, dynamic, volatile, discontiguous,
                    multifile, block, meta_predicate,
                    initialization ]).
:- op( 1100, xfy, [ ; ]).
:- op( 1050, xfy, [ -> ]).
:- op( 1000, xfy, [ ',' ]).
:- op(  900,  fy, [ \+, spy, nospy ]).
:- op(  700, xfx, [ =, \=, is, =.., ==, \==, @<, @>, @=<, @>=,
                                =:=, =\=, <, >, =<, >= ]).
:- op(  550, xfy, [ : ]).
:- op(  500, yfx, [ +, -, #, /\, \/ ]).
:- op(  400, yfx, [ *, /, //, mod, rem, <<, >> ]).
:- op(  200, xfx, [ ** ]).
:- op(  200, xfy, [ ^ ]).
:- op(  200,  fy, [ +, -, \ ]).
```

The following operators differ in `sicstus` execution mode.

```
:- op(  500,  fx, [ +, - ]).
:- op(  300, xfx, [ mod ]).
```

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