

COMP254 Project 2

This project consists of three parts: (A) a 150-300 word review of the version of project 1 submitted by one of your classmates, worth 10 points; (B) a revised version of your own project 1, worth 70 points; and (C) a response to an interview with Chuck Thacker, worth 20 points. Details of each part of the project are given below.

(A) Peer review of project 1 (10 points)

You will be notified in class of whose project 1 you are required to review. Please write a 150-300 word review of that person's project, with the main goal being to assist the author in improving the project. Your review must mention at least two positive points about the project, and suggest at least two ways in which it could be improved. Email your review to the author, and submit it to Moodle at least one week before the due date for the remainder of this assignment.

(B) Comparing Vectors and Linked Lists, again (70 points)

The goal of this part of the project is to revise your attempt at Project 1 and resubmit an improved version. You may need to rerun your experiments, or run some additional experiments, but the main emphasis of this project will be on improving your writing. You should take into account the feedback you receive from your classmate in the peer review, and the grading and comments from the instructor. Optionally, you may choose to visit the Dickinson [Writing Center](#). If you do visit the writing center, make sure to make an appointment in advance, and prepare a list of questions on which you would like specific help. It would also be useful to request a tutor who has a background in the sciences.

The grading of Project 2 will strongly emphasize technical clarity and correctness of the writing, including spelling, punctuation and grammar. It will be possible to receive an excellent grade on this project by only improving the writing, and without doing further research on the content. However, especially if you received a good grade on Project 1, you may wish to extend your document to cover one or more of the following issues, each of which will be worth a small amount of extra credit:

- Are your results consistent across varying hardware and software platforms? (e.g. PC vs Mac, various operating systems, various CPUs and memory configurations)
- What is the error or uncertainty in your results, even when restricted to a single platform? Use clear and correct statistical terminology to phrase your response, most likely using the concepts of *standard error* and *standard deviation*.
- In addition to the performance considerations addressed in Project 1, discuss the various other advantages and disadvantages of the two possible Crowd implementations (LinkedList and Vector). For example, are there any features of the Vector API that are not available in the LinkedList API? What are some possible examples of some future scenarios in which the differences in the two APIs would have a practical impact?
- Give a detailed mathematical explanation of the shape of the graphs you made in Project 1. Estimate the slope and intercept of any lines and give an approximate functional form for the processing time for a Crowd, as a function of its size.

Clarification on page limits: the limit of 3–5 pages for Project 1 includes any figures and tables, and excludes the appendix containing your source code. The same page limit applies to Project 2B, except that if you choose to do one or more of the extra credit options, you may use up to two additional pages.

(C) Response to Chuck Thacker interview (20 points)

Listen to the instructor's interview of Chuck Thacker, which is provided on the assignment webpage, then write answers to the following questions. The total length of your answers should be between half a page and one page.

1. Do some quick research about Chuck Thacker. Name three of his important contributions to computer science. State your sources (websites are fine for this question).
2. The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) publishes a recommended undergraduate computer science curriculum that includes computer architecture. In the interview, however, Chuck Thacker appears to suggest that undergraduates should not study computer architecture. How do you explain this apparent contradiction? Who do you think is right?
3. Having listened to this interview, might you consider taking some different courses at Dickinson, compared to what you had previously planned? If so, which courses and why? If not, why not?

Submission

Submit your answer for part (A) to Moodle at least one week before the due date for the remainder of this assignment. Submit your answer for parts (B) and (C) in a single document to Moodle by the due date. Any reasonable format and file type is fine.