CSSE 220 Day 13

Sierpiński, Recursion and Efficiency, Mutual Recursion

Checkout *Recursion2* project from SVN

Questions?


Bizarro
I have this recurring dream that I'm lying here telling you about a recurring dream about lying here telling you about a recurring dream about...
zzzz
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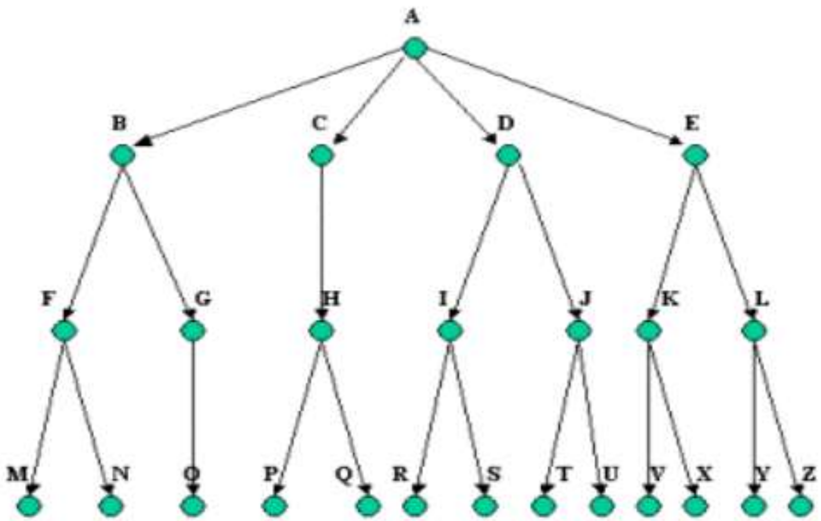
3-6-02

What are recursive methods?

- Any method that calls itself
  - On a simpler problem
  - So that it makes progress toward completion

When should recursive methods be used?

- When implementing a recursive definition
- When implementing methods on recursive data structures



- Where parts of the whole look like smaller versions of the whole

Q1

The pros and cons of recursive methods

- The pros
  - easy to implement,
  - easy to understand code,
  - easy to prove code correct

- The cons
  - takes more space and time than equivalent iteration
  - Why?
    - because of function calls

Q2

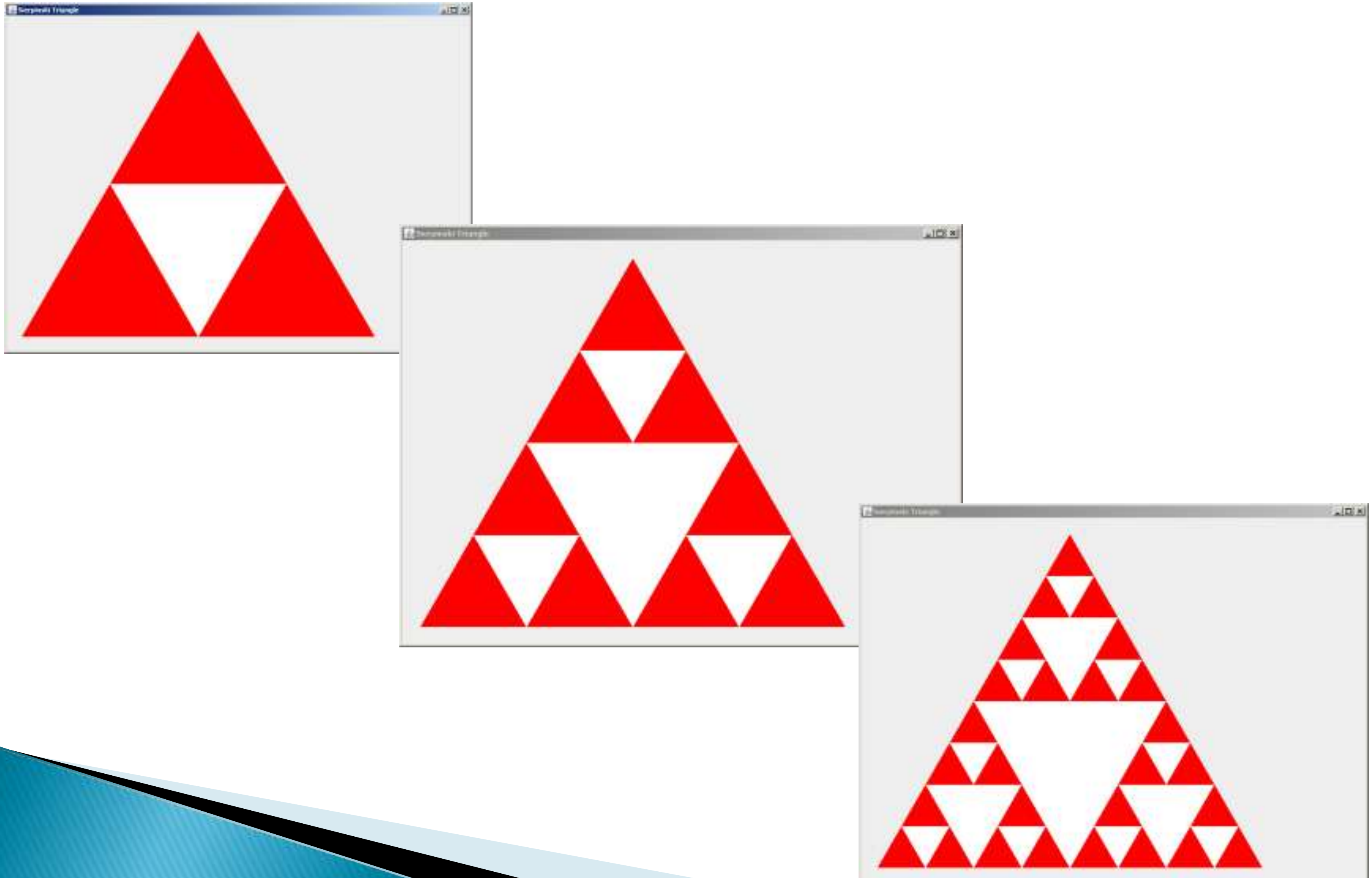
Recap: Key Rules to Using Recursion

- Always have a **base case** that **doesn't recurse**

- Make sure recursive case always makes **progress**, by **solving a smaller problem**

- **You gotta believe**
  - Trust in the recursive solution
  - Just consider one step at a time

HW: Sierpinski



Work Time

- HW 12 & 13: Sierpinski Triangle

Two Mirrors

If you actually do this, what really happens is Douglas Hofstadter appears and talks to you for eight hours about strange loops.

What the Fib?

- Why does recursive Fibonacci take so long?!?

- Can we fix it?

Q3

Memoization

- Save every solution we find to sub-problems
- Before recursively computing a solution:
  - Look it up
  - If found, use it
  - Otherwise do the recursive computation

Q4

Classic Time-Space Trade Off

- A deep discovery of computer science
- In a wide variety of problems we can tune the solution by varying the amount of storage space used and the amount of computation performed
- Studied by "Complexity Theorists"
- Used everyday by software engineers

Q5

Mutual Recursion

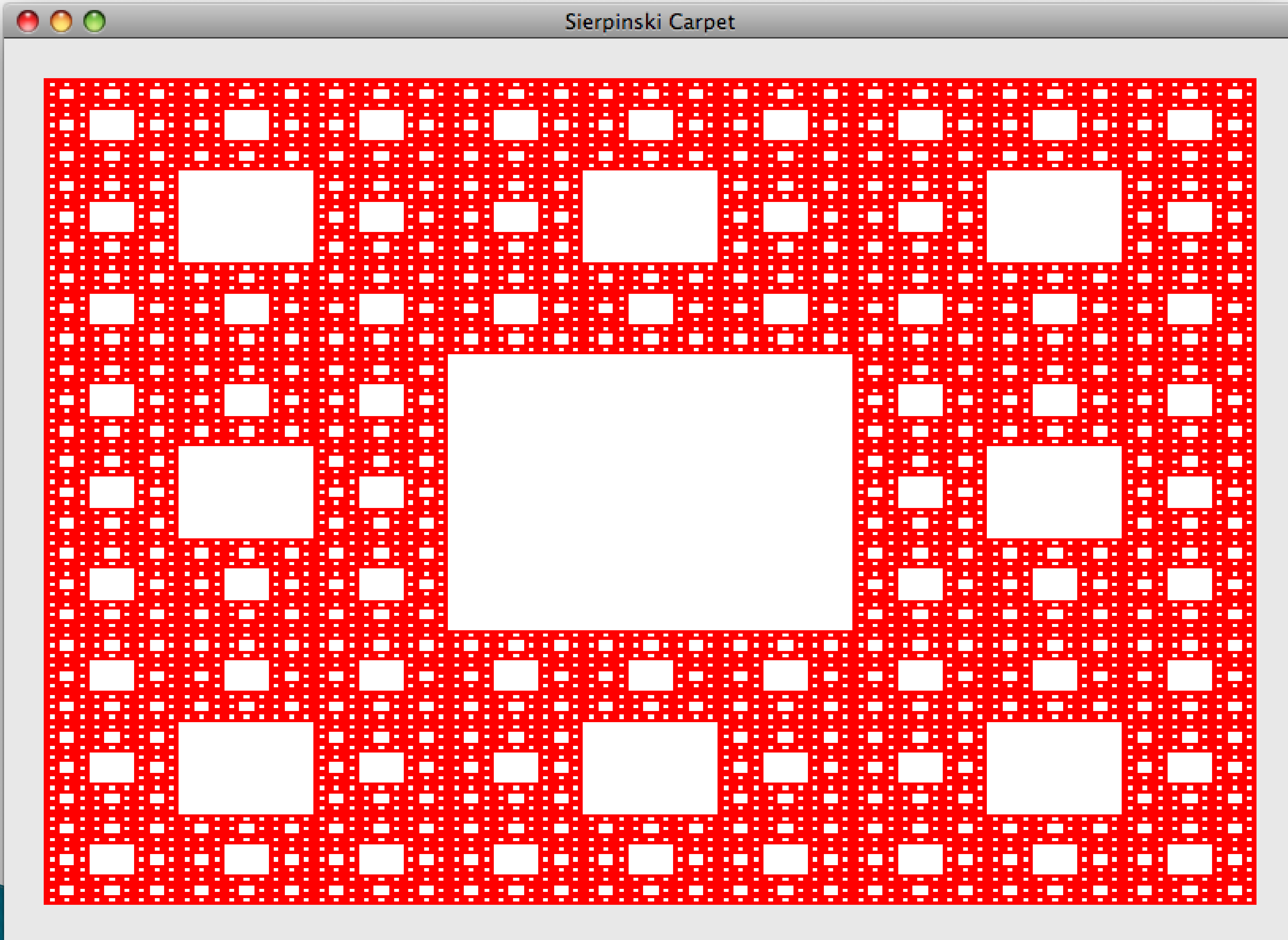
- 2 or more methods call each other repeatedly
  - E.g., Hofstadter Female and Male Sequences

$$F(n) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } n = 0 \\ n - M(F(n-1)) & \text{if } n > 0 \end{cases}$$

$$M(n) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } n = 0 \\ n - F(M(n-1)) & \text{if } n > 0 \end{cases}$$

  - How often are the sequences different in the first 50 positions? first 500? first 5,000? first 5,000,000?

Q6


Sierpinski Carpet

Work Time

- HW 13: Sierpinski Carpet

Q7-8