

Coding a Procrastinated APT

It's 11:30PM and I finally sit down to do my APTs. I looked at them before and they seemed straightforward, so I'm not expecting to have to spend too much time on them. I open up the problem statement and figure out how I'm going to attack this one.

It starts off pretty easy; there's a few cases where there's no change so I code those first, and then start to dig into the meat of the problem. It doesn't take long to realize that this APT won't be as easy as I thought. There's so many different situations to account for, I'm going to have to be really careful to make sure that each one is handled the right way. Or at least that's what I should do. Instead, I hastily submit my first iteration of code, not even bothering to check if it handles any of the examples correctly. After a few seconds of intense anxiety, the results screen is staring back at me:

of correct: 2 out of 13

Great. So, what went wrong? Armed with the experience of one submission and a 15% success rate, I go back to PyCharm. It turns out I misread a bullet from the problem statement, and I'm actually going to have to rewrite almost two third of my code. Fantastic. By the time I finish that, it's close to 11PM, and I still have homework to do for other classes.

This time before submitting, I say a silent prayer to the APT gods. Please, let this one work. I close my eyes as I submit and peek through them to see my nightmare:

of correct: 9 out of 13

That's progress, but I still have no idea what went wrong. I copy and paste my code into Python Tutor, hoping it's an easy fix. Turns out, I had forgotten to put quotes around the string 'a' in an if statement, so it was referencing a dummy variable, a, I used earlier in my code. A smart student would've taken that as a sign to start using variables that actually mean something; unfortunately, I am

not that smart student. I added the quotes and resubmitted, confident I'd be done before long. Sadly, my confidence evaporated when I saw how I'd done:

of correct: 9 out of 13

Well, clearly that wasn't the problem. I spend another 20 minutes debugging my code. Finally, it hits me; I was handling the capitalization wrong in the string I wanted to return, and that's why those 4 cases just refused to work. Rather than figuring out an elegant solution, I decided to 'Frankenstein' my code. I checked if there were any capital letters in the inputs and if there weren't it'd run through my old code. If there were, it'd go through a different set of code (mostly copy-pasted from the other one, but with a few changes, because I was in way too deep to fully rewrite all that code). I scroll through my 80-line monstrosity and decide, eh, good enough. I submit and finally, get the green rush I had been craving for hours now:

of correct: 13 out of 13

Hallelujah. I had finished this APT and I was ready to never think about it again. I glance at the clock. It's 2:13AM at this point, and I refuse to believe I had spent that long on an APT. Just as I'm opening up another class's Sakai page to start working on a problem set I have due in two days, I have a horrifying realization.

I still have four APTs left.