

Introduction

The *cdata* module and its partner *arch-info* provide a way to work with data originating from C libraries. We hope module is reasonably easy to understand and use. Size and alignment is tracked for all types. Types are classified into the following kinds: base, struct, union, array, pointer, enum and function. The procedures **cbase**, **cstruct**, **cunion**, **cpointer**, **carray**, **cenum** and **cfunction** generate *ctype* objects, and the procedure **make-cdata** will generate data objects based on these. The underlying bits of data are stored in Scheme bytevectors. Access to component data is provided by the **cdata-ref** procedure and mutation is accomplished via the **cdata-set!** procedure. The modules support non-native machine architectures via a global parameter called ***arch***.

Beyond size and alignment, base type objects carry a symbolic tag to determine the appropriate low level machine type. The low level machine types map directly to bytevector setters and getters. Support for C base types is handled by the **cbase** procedure which converts them to underlying types. For example, on a 64 bit little endian architecture, (**cbase** 'uintptr_t) would generate a type with underlying symbol **u64le**.

Here is a simple example of using *cdata* for structures:

```
(use-modules (system foreign))
(use-modules (system foreign-library))
(use-modules (nyacc foreign cdata))

(define timeval_t (cstruct '((tv_sec long) (tv_usec long))))

(define gettimeofday
  (foreign-library-function
   #f "gettimeofday"
   #:return-type (ctype->ffi (cbase 'int))
   #:arg-types (map ctype->ffi
                     (list (cpointer timeval_t)
                           (cpointer 'void)))))

(define d1 (make-cdata timeval_t))
(gettimeofday (cdata-ref (cdata& d1)) %null-pointer)
(format #t "time: ~s ~s\n"
        (cdata-ref d1 'tv_sec) (cdata-ref d1 'tv_usec))
time: 1719062561 676365
```

In the above **cdata&** generates a cdata pointer to d1 and **cdata-ref** extracts the Guile value.

Basic Usage

This section provides an introduction to procedures you are likely to want on your first approach.

cbase *name* [Procedure]
Given symbolic *name* generate a base ctype. The name can be a symbol like `unsigned-int`, `double`, or can be a *arch-info* machine type symbol like `u64le`.

cpointer *type* => <ctype> [Procedure]
Generate a C pointer type for *type*. To reference or de-reference cdata object see `cdata&` and `cdata*`. *type* can be the symbol `void` or a symbolic name used as argument to **cbase**.
note: Should we allow *type* to be a promise?

```
(define foo_t (cbase 'int))  
(cpointer (delay foo_t))
```

cstruct *fields* [*packed*] => *ctype* [Procedure]
Construct a struct ctype with given *fields*. If *packed*, `#f` by default, is `#t`, create a packed structure. *fields* is a list with entries of the form `(name type)` or `(name type length)` where *name* is a symbol or `#f` (for anonymous structs and unions), *type* is a <ctype> object or a symbol for a base type and *length* is the length of the associated bitfield.

cunion *fields* => <ctype> [Procedure]
Construct a ctype union type with given *fields*. See *cstruct* for a description of the *fields* argument.

carray *type* *n* => <ctype> [Procedure]
Create an array of *type* with *length*. If *length* is zero, the array length is unbounded: it's length can be specified as argument to `make-cdata`.

cenum *enum-list* [*packed*] => <ctype> [Procedure]
enum-list is a list of name or name-value pairs

```
(cenum '((a 1) b (c 4)))
```

If *packed* is `#t` the size will be smallest that can hold it.

cfunction *proc*->*ptr* *ptr*->*proc* [*variadic?*] => <ctype> [Procedure]
Generate a C function type to be used with **cpointer**. You must pass the *wrapper* and *unwrapper* procedures that convert a procedure to a pointer, and pointer to procedure, respectively. The optional argument `#:variadic`, if `#t`, indicates the function uses variadic arguments. For this case (I need to add documentation). Here is an example:

```
(define (f-proc->ptr proc)  
  (ffi:procedure->pointer ffi:void proc (list)))  
(define (f-ptr->proc fptr)  
  (ffi:pointer->procedure ffi:void fptr (list)))  
(define ftype (cpointer (cfunction f-proc->ptr f-ptr->proc)))
```

make-cdata *type* [*value*] => <*cdata*> [Procedure]

Generate a *cdata* object of type *type* with optional *value*. As a special case, an integer arg to a zero-sized array type will allocate storage for that many items, associating it with an array type of that size.

cdata-ref *data* [*tag* ...] => *value* [Procedure]

Return the Scheme (scalar) slot value for selected *tag* ... with respect to the *cdata* object *data*.

```
(cdata-ref my-struct-value 'a 'b 'c))
```

This procedure returns Guile values for *cdata* kinds *base*, *pointer* and *procedure*. For other cases, a *cdata* object is returned. If you always want a *cdata* object, use **cdata-sel**.

cdata-set! *data* *value* [*tag* ...] [Procedure]

Set slot for selected *tag* ... with respect to *cdata* *data* to *value*. Example:

```
(cdata-set! my-struct-data 42 'a 'b 'c))
```

If *value* is a <*cdata*> object copy that, if types match.

If *value* can be a procedure used to set a cfunction pointer value.

cdata& *data* => *cdata* [Procedure]

Generate a reference (i.e., cpointer) to the contents in the underlying bytevector.

cdata* *data* => *cdata* [Procedure]

De-reference a pointer. Returns a *cdata* object representing the contents at the address in the underlying bytevector.

Going Further

cdata-sel *data* *tag* ... => *cdata* [Procedure]

Return a new *cdata* object representing the associated selection. Note this is different from **cdata-ref**: it always returns a *cdata* object. For example,

```
> (define t1 (cstruct '((a int) (b double))))
> (define d1 (make-cdata t1))
> (cdata-set! d1 42 'a)
> (cdata-sel d1 'a)
$1 = #<cdata s32le 0x77bbf8e52260>
> (cdata-ref $1)
$2 = 42
```

cdata&-ref *data* [*tag* ...] => *value* [Procedure]

Shortcut for (cdata-ref (cdata& *data* *tag* ...)) This always returns a Guile *pointer*.

cdata*-ref *data* [*tag* ...] => *value* [Procedure]

Shortcut for (cdata-ref (cdata* *data* *tag* ...))

Xcdata-ref *bv* *ix* *ct* -> *value* [Procedure]

Reference a deconstructed *cdata* object. See *cdata-ref*.

Xcdata-set! *bv ix ct value*

[Procedure]

Set the value of a deconstructed cdata object. See *cddata-set!*.

Working with Types

name-ctype *name type => <ctype>*

[Procedure]

Create a new named version of the type. The name is useful when the type is printed. This procedure does not mutate: a new type object is created. If a specific type is used by multiple names the names can share the underlying type guts. The following generates two named types.

```
(define raw (cstruct '((a 'int) (b 'double))))
(define foo_t (name-ctype 'foo_t raw))
(define struct-foo (name-ctype 'struct-foo raw))
```

These types are equal:

```
(ctype-equal? foo_t struct-foo) => #t
```

ctype-equal? *a b*

[Procedure]

This predicate assesses equality of it's arguments. Two types are considered equal if they have the same size, alignment, kind, and equivalent kind-specific properties. For base types, the symbolic mtype must be equal; this includes size, integer versus float, and signed versus unsigned. For struct and union kinds, the names and types of all fields must be equal.

TODO: algorithm to prevent infinite search for recursive structs

ctype-sel *type ix [tag ...] => ((ix . ct) (ix . ct) ...)*

[Procedure]

This generate a list of (offset, type) pairs for a type. The result is used to create getters and setter for foreign machine architectures. See *make-cdata-getter* and *make-cdata-setter*.

make-cdata-getter *sel [offset] => lambda*

[Procedure]

Generate a procedure that given a cdata object will fetch the value at indicated by the *sel*, generated by **ctype-sel**. The procedure takes one argument: (**proc data** [*tag ...*]). Pointer dereference tags ('*') are not allowed. The optional *offset* argument (default 0), is used for cross target use: it is the offset of the address in the host context.

make-cdata-setter *sel [offset] => lambda*

[Procedure]

Generate a procedure that given a cdata object will set the value at the offset given the selector, generated by **ctype-sel**. The procedure takes two arguments: (**proc data value** [*tag ...*]). Pointer dereference tags ('*') are not allowed. The optional *offset* argument (default 0), is used for cross target use: it is the offset of the address in the host context.

Working with C Function Calls

The procedure **ctype->ffi** is a helper for using Guile's *pointer->procedure*.

`ccast type data [do-check] => <cdata>` [Procedure]
 need to be able to cast array to pointer
 (`ccast Target* val`)

`unwrap-number arg => number` [Procedure]
 Convert an argument to numeric form for a ffi procedure call. This will reference a cdata object or pass a number through.

`unwrap-pointer arg [hint] => pointer` [Procedure]
 Convert an argument to a Guile pointer for a ffi procedure call. This will reference a cdata object or pass a number through. If the argument is a function, it will attempt to convert that to a pointer via `procedure->pointer` if given the function pointer type *hint*.

`unwrap-array arg => pointer` [Procedure]
 This will convert an array to a form suitable to pass to a Guile ffi procedure.

`ctype->ffi ctype => ffi type` [Procedure]
 Generate a argument spec for Guile's ffi interface. Example:
 (`ctype->ffi (cpointer (cbase int))) => '*`

Operations on CType Kinds

The `ctype kind` field indicates which kind a type is and the `info` field provide kind-specific information for a `ctype`. The `name` field provides the type name, if provided, or `#f` if not.

Note that the kind procedures, `cstruct`, `cpointer`, ..., create *ctype* objects of different *kinds*. To operate on kind-specific attributes of types, requires one to fetch the `info` field from the `ctype`. From the `info` field, one can then operate using the fields specific to the kind info.

```
> (define float* (cpointer (cbase 'float)))
> double*
$1 = #<ctype pointer 0x75f3212cbcd0>
> (ctype-kind float*)
$2 = pointer
> (define float*-info (ctype-info float*))
> (cpointer-type float*-info)
$3 = #<ctype f32le 0x75f323f8ec90>
> (cpointer-mtype float*-info)
$4 = u64le
```

The `cpointer-mtype` procedure lets us know that pointers are stored as unsigned 64 bit (little endian) integers.

The `info` field for base types is special. Since the only kind-specific type information for a base type is the machine type the `info` field provides that. Consider the following example.

```
> (define foo-t (name-ctype 'foo-t (cbase 'int)))
> (ctype-name foo-t)
$1 = foo-t
```

```

> (ctype-kind foo-t)
$2 = base
> (ctype-info foo-t)
$3 = s32le

```

Structs are more involved.

```

> (define bar-s
  (cstruct `((a int) (b float) (#f ,(cstruct '(x int) (y int))))))
> (define bar-s-info (ctype-info bar-s))
> (cstruct-fields bar-s-info)
$4 = (#<<cfield> name: a type: #<ctype s32le 0x75f323f8ecf0> offset: 0>
      #<<cfield> name: b type: #<ctype f32le 0x75f323f8ec90> offset: 4>
      #<<cfield> name: #f type: #<ctype struct 0x75f32181a570> offset: 8>))
> (define x-fld ((cstruct-select bar-s-info) 'x))
> x-fld
$5 = #<<cfield> name: x type: #<ctype s32le 0x75f323f8ecf0> offset: 8>
> (cfield-offset x-fld)
$6 = 8

```

Note that the selection of the `x` component deals with a field which is an anonymous struct. The struct `bar-s` would look like the following in C:

```

struct bar_s {
    int a;
    float b;
    struct {
        int x;
        int y;
    };
};

```

And just for kicks

```

> (define sa
  (cstruct `((a int) (b double) (#f ,(cstruct '((x short) (y int))))))
> (define sp
  (cstruct `((a int) (b double) (#f ,(cstruct '((x short) (y int)))) #t)))

> (pretty-print-ctype sa)
(cstruct
  ((a s32le #:offset 0)
   (b f64le #:offset 8)
   (#f
    (cstruct
      ((x s16le #:offset 0) (y s32le #:offset 4)))
     #:offset
     16)))
> (pretty-print-ctype sp)
(cstruct
  ((a s32le #:offset 0)

```

```

(b f64le #:offset 4)
(#f
 (cstruct
  ((x s16le #:offset 0) (y s32le #:offset 4)))
 #:offset
 12)))

```

Note the difference in offsets: `sa` is aligned and `sp` is packed. The offsets reported for anonymous structs can be misleading. To get the right offsets use `select`:

```

> (define tia (ctype-info sa))
> (define tip (ctype-info sp))
> ((cstruct-select tia) 'y)
$8 = 20
> ((cstruct-select tip) 'y)
$9 = 16

```

Enum Conversions

The enum `ctype` provides procedures to convert between the numeric and symbolic parts of each enum entry. Currently, the `cdata` module does not provide enum wrapper and unwrapper routines. However, the FFI Helper will create these. The wrapper, converting a number to a symbol, and unwrapper, converting a symbol to a number, can be generated as the following example demonstrates.

```

> (define color_t (cenum '((RED #xf00) (GREEN #x0f0) (BLUE #x00f))))
> (define color_t-info (ctype-info color_t))
> (define wrap-color_t (cenum-symf color_t-info))
> (define unwrap-color_t (cenum-numf color_t-info))
> (wrap-color_t #xf00)
$1 = RED
> (unwrap-color_t 'GREEN)
$2 = 240

```

Handling Machine Architectures

One of the author's main motivations for writing `CData` was to be able to work with cross-target machine architectures. This is pretty cool. Just to let you know what's going on, consider the following:

```

> (use-modules (nyacc foreign arch-info))
> (define tx64 (with-arch "x86_64" (cstruct '((a int) (b long)))))
> (define tr64 (with-arch "riscv64" (cstruct '((a int) (b long)))))
> (define tr32 (with-arch "riscv32" (cstruct '((a int) (b long)))))
> (define sp32 (with-arch "sparc" (cstruct '((a int) (b long)))))
> (ctype-equal? tx64 tr64)
$1 = #t
> (ctype-equal? tr64 tr32)
$1 = #f
> (ctype-equal? tr32 ts32)

```

```

$1 = #f
> (pretty-print-ctype tx64)
(cstruct ((a s32le #:offset 0) (b s64le #:offset 8)))
> (pretty-print-ctype tr64)
(cstruct ((a s32le #:offset 0) (b s64le #:offset 8)))
> (pretty-print-ctype tr32)
(cstruct ((a s32le #:offset 0) (b s32le #:offset 4)))
> (pretty-print-ctype ts32)
(cstruct ((a s32be #:offset 0) (b s32be #:offset 4)))

```

Rocks, right?

arch-info maps base C types to machine types (e.g., i32le) and alignment for the given machine architecture. To get sizes, it's a simple matter of mapping machine types to sizes.

The arch-info module currently has size and alignment information for the following: aarch64, avr, i386, i686, powerpc32, powerpc64, ppc32, ppc64, riscv32, riscv64, sparc32, sparc64, x86_64.

CData Utilities

pretty-print-ctype *type* [*port*] [Procedure]

Converts type to a literal tree and uses Guile's pretty-print function to display it.
The default port is the current output port.

cdata-kind *data* [Procedure]

Return the kind of *data*: pointer, base, struct, ...

Miscellaneous

More to come.

Base Types

```

void*
char short int long float double unsigned-short unsigned unsigned-long
size_t ssize_t ptrdiff_t int8_t uint8_t int16_t uint16_t int32_t
uint32_t int64_t uint64_t signed-char unsigned-char short-int
signed-short signed-short-int signed signed-int long-int signed-long
signed-long-int unsigned-short-int unsigned-int unsigned-long-int
_Bool bool intptr_t uintptr_t wchar_t char16_t char32_t long-double
long-long long-long-int signed-long-long signed-long-long-int
unsigned-long-long unsigned-long-long-int

```

Other Procedures

More to come.

Guile FFI Support

More to come.

`c-type->ffi-type type`

[Procedure]

Convert a *c-type* to the (integer) code for the associated FFI type.

Copyright

Copyright (C) 2024 – Matthew Wette.

Permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify this document under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.3 or any later version published by the Free Software Foundation; with no Invariant Sections, no Front-Cover Texts, and no Back-Cover Texts. A copy of the license is included with the distribution as COPYING.DOC.

References

1. Guile Manual: <https://www.gnu.org/software/guile/manual>
2. Scheme Bytestructures: <https://github.com/TaylanUB/scheme-bytestructures>