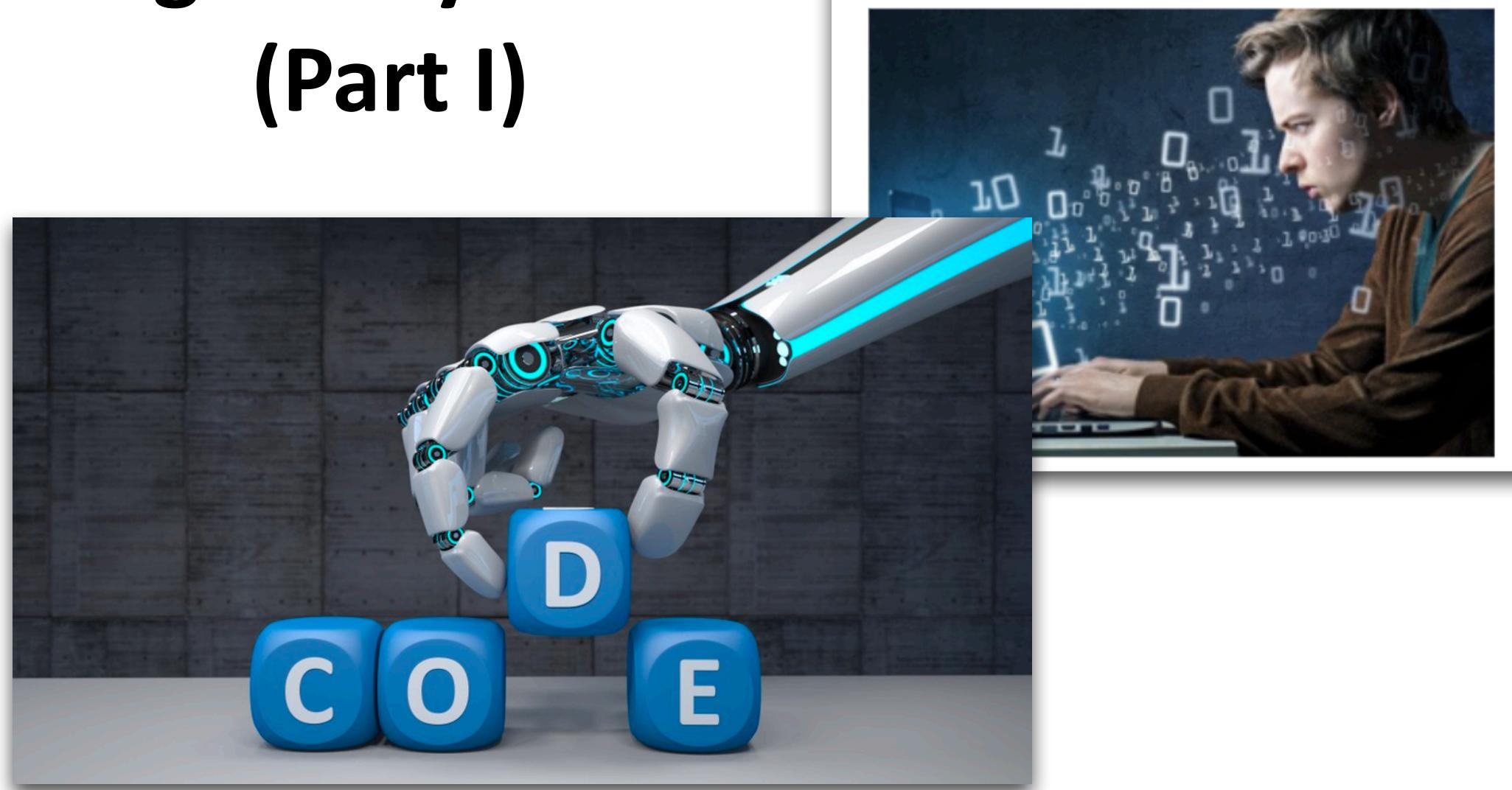
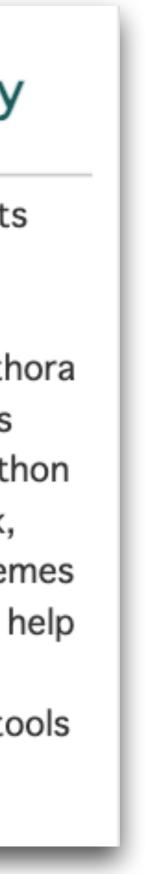
Program Synthesis (Part I)



July 8, 2019 Program Synthesis Moves a Step Closer to Reality George Leopold

As data scientists and software developers sort through the plethora of tools and APIs ranging from Python to Apache Spark, automation schemes are emerging to help programmers navigate those tools and the accompanying



Agenda

- A gentle introduction to program synthesis
 - Mostly using examples/demos/figures
 - But also some formalisms/algorithms (Part 1 and Part 2)
- Goals
 - Get exposed to "program synthesis"
 - Appreciate this research topic
 - Learn a little bit about how synthesis works

FILE	HOME INSERT PAGE LAVOUT	FORMULAS DATA
82	* <i>✓ ≸</i> NL	
	A	В
1	Names	Initials
2	Neil Lieber	
3	Mathew Prisco	
4	Althea Bertin	
5	Kelly Gamblin	
6	Chandra Valenzula	
7	Cody Castillon	
8	Tyrone Brazier	
9	Althea Buhl	
10	Dollie Munsey	
11	Allyson Phou	

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7	Cody Castillon	
8	Tyrone Brazier	
9	Althea Buhl	
10	Dollie Munsey	
11	Allyson Phou	

What are we doing here? Filling in Initials for Names

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9	Althea Buhl		
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- 'hat are we doing here?
- Filling in Initials for Names
- ow would you do it?
- Idea 1: manually
- Idea 2: automatically (Excel macro?)
- Idea 3: hire someone to do it for you?
- Idea 4: StackOverflow?

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10	Dollie Munsey		69
11	Allyson Phou		

- 'hat are we doing here?
- Filling in Initials for Names
- ow would you do it?
- dea 1: manually
- dea 2: automatically (Excel macro?)
- dea 3: hire someone to do it for you?
- dea 4: StackOverflow?
- hat are some problems with ach idea?

- No (very little) manual work
- No need to write Excel macros
- Highly automated
- People love it

Excel Flash Fill Is A Brilliant Time Saver

Share 🕜 У 🕁

Angus Kidman



Rebecca Jackson 🥶 レベッカ Rebeccal

Flashfill in The New Office Excel = witchcraft. It "knows" what you want to do. Love it! - Paul Dolley #AUSPC

FlashFill



...

#FlashFill in #Excel2013 can be so helpful. Love it :-)



Andrew Kemp @andrew_kemp

Gotta love the flashfill feature in excel 2013 for when I'm working with **#PowerShell** and **#csv** for **#exchange** and #activedirectory



Dr.B 📒 Learned Hand @sundarb

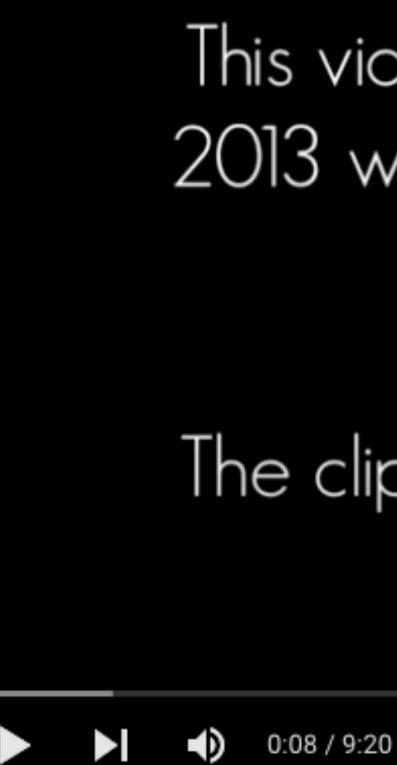
Love this back story on the invention of **#FlashFill**. Well done @SumitGulwani for a really useful tool & to @shobanab Ph.D who was the program manager" why @microsoftexcell is indispensable in B-Schools. **#Customer pain points for #Innovation #Marketing**



...

FlashFill Demo

Watch video demo..



9 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbK-FfCEBOw&t=20s

This video is part of a Microsoft Office 2013 webinar delivered in August 2012 for The Training Show.

The clip demonstrates a new feature in Excel called Flash Fill.



• FlashFill is _____

FlashFill is <u>an Excel feature that automatically transforms</u> <u>strings using examples</u>.

• FlashFill is <u>an Excel feature that automatically transforms</u> <u>strings using examples</u>.

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7	Cody Castillon	
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9	Althea Buhl	
10	Dollie Munsey	
11	Allyson Phou	

What does a desired program do in this case?

• FlashFill is an Excel feature that automatically transforms <u>strings using examples</u>.

FILE	HOME INSERT PAGE LAYOUT	FORMULAS DATA F
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	A	В
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6	Chandra Valenzula	
7	Cody Castillon	
8	Tyrone Brazier	
9	Althea Buhl	
10	Dollie Munsey	
11	Allyson Phou	

13

- What does a desired program do in this case?
- FlashFill synthesizes a program:
- (1) Take the first char. of first name
- (2) Concatenate it with space
- (3) Concatenate it with the first char. of last name







Vince Baumel aguantum relic

One of my favorite features of **#Excel** is flash-fill. I can't think of another shortcut that has saved me as much time, and it's surprisingly intuitive. In this example, my string column is actually 3 fields delimited by /. Fill one example row out, and CTRL+E under to flash-fill.

A	B	c	D
	NUMBER	NAME	FAVORITE ANIMAL
81264/Jessica/Lory, rainbow	81264	Jessica	Lory, rainbow
59343/Henryetta/Blue crane	1		
29877/Dacie/Cape raven			
30293/Hernando/Macaw, green-winged			
78202/Lorenza/Rat, white-faced tree			
69532/Laurel/Swan, black			
33316/Angelica/Lion, south american sea			
23325/Ash/Legaan, ground			
76449/Carolyne/Yellow-headed caracara			
73305/Urban/Western spotted skunk			
45093/Fabian/Shark, blue			
26767/Gwenora/Olive baboon			
34147/Danna/Boar, wild			
57139/Ranee/Violet-crested turaco			
31142/Valera/White-tailed deer			
72558/Mia/Ibex			
59246/Deva/Rhinoceros, white			
15973/Lorelei/Slender loris			
77652/Salomo/Eurasian beaver			
67964/Andreas/Argalis			
22983/Sherill/Lion, asian			
69133/Jordana/European beaver			
21496/Averyl/Blue-breasted cordon bleu			
46911/Cam/Silver-backed jackal			
36133/Bron/Currasow (unidentified)			
51294/Candace/Possum, western pygmy			
28118/Huntlee/Flightless cormorant			
45094/Aguste/Swan, black			
27206/Randie/Crowned eagle			
79343/Florida/Black-winged stilt			
47094/Weston/Leadbeateri's ground hornbill			
67805/Lionello/Small Indian mongoose			
69732/Angelico/Rhinoceros, white			
73914/Ker/Blackbird, red-winged			
24641/Phaidra/Genet, common			
GIF /Amber/Western bearded dragon			
27345/Ally/Parrot, hawk-headed			

https://twitter.com/i/status/1462868647815397377

•••

What (kind of) program do you think FlashFill would synthesize?

(next)



Vince Baumel @quantum_relic

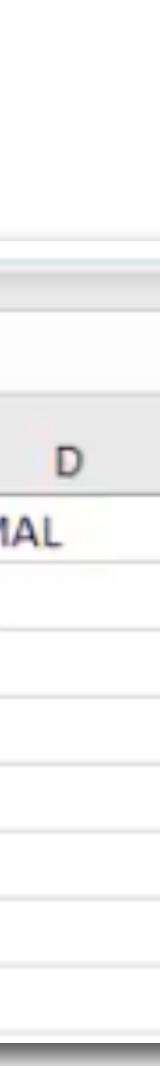
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16 https://twitter.com/i/status/1462868647815397377

What (kind of) program do you think FlashFill would synthesize?

B	C	
NUMBER	NAME	FAVORITE ANIN
81264	Jessica	Lory, rainbow
12		



...



kurtsh ∂kurtsh

I've been working here for more than 2 decades & didn't know this. Damn. #excel #powertips

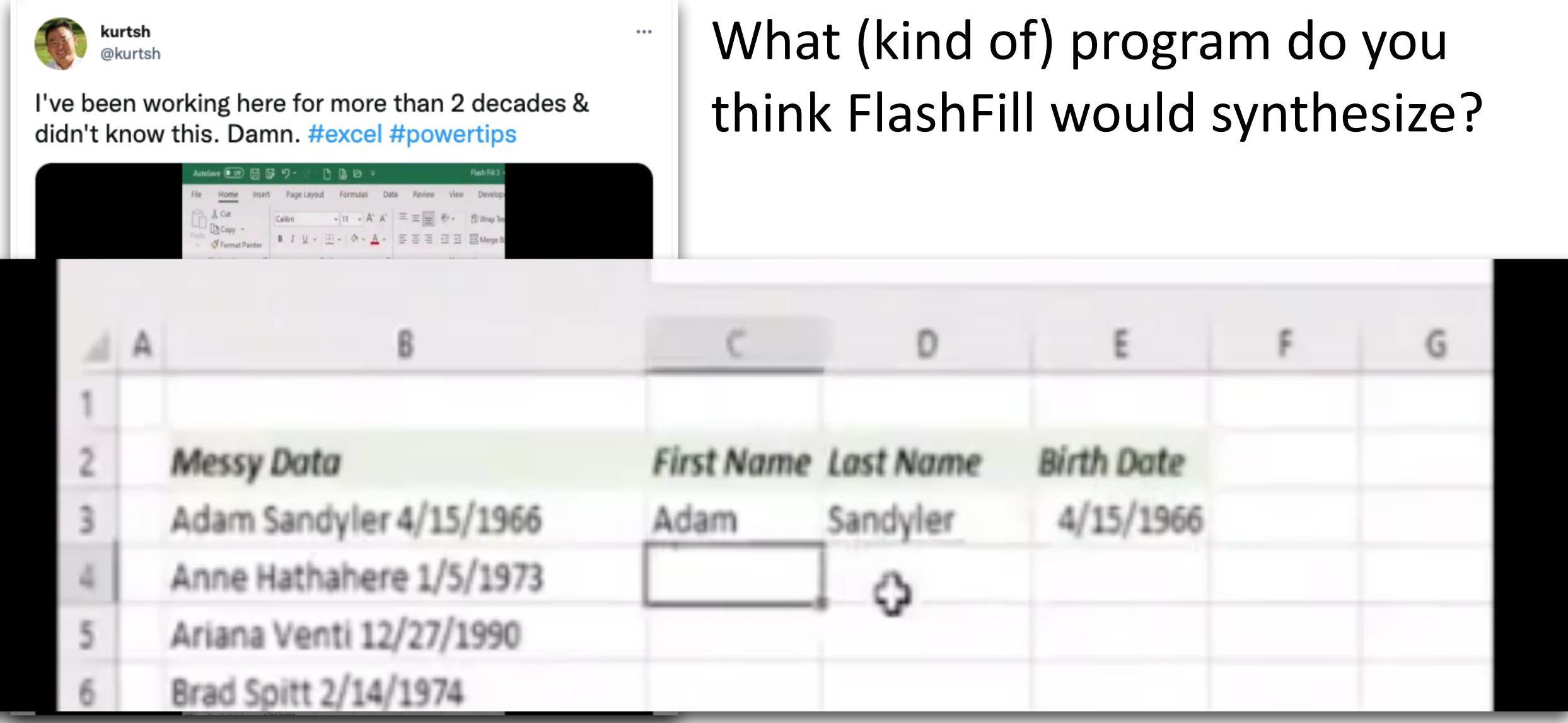
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18	Johnny Deep	p 6/21/1978					
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20	Katy Berry 4	/14/1974					
21	Keanu Leave	15 2/19/1976					
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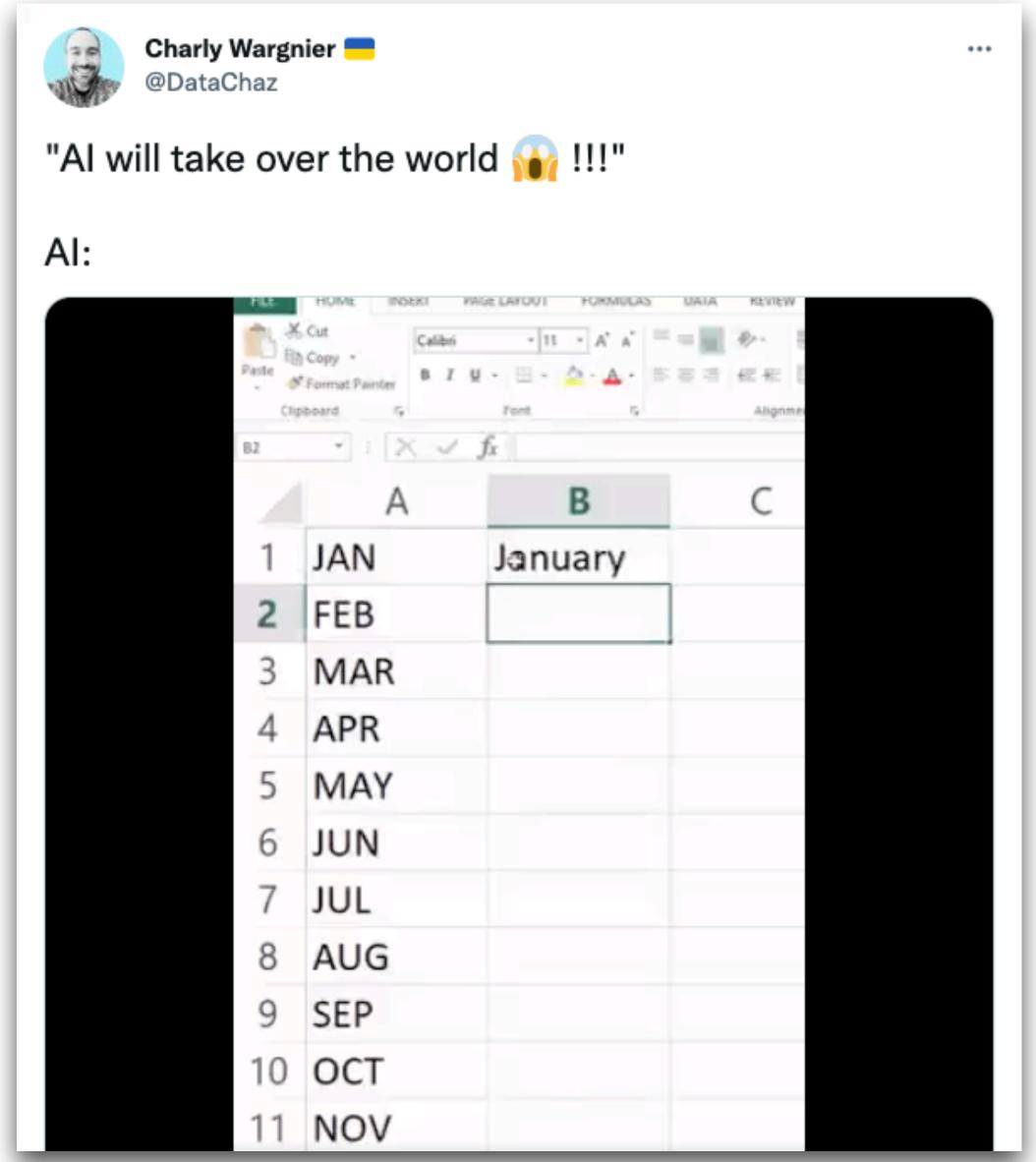
What (kind of) program do you think FlashFill would synthesize?



(next)



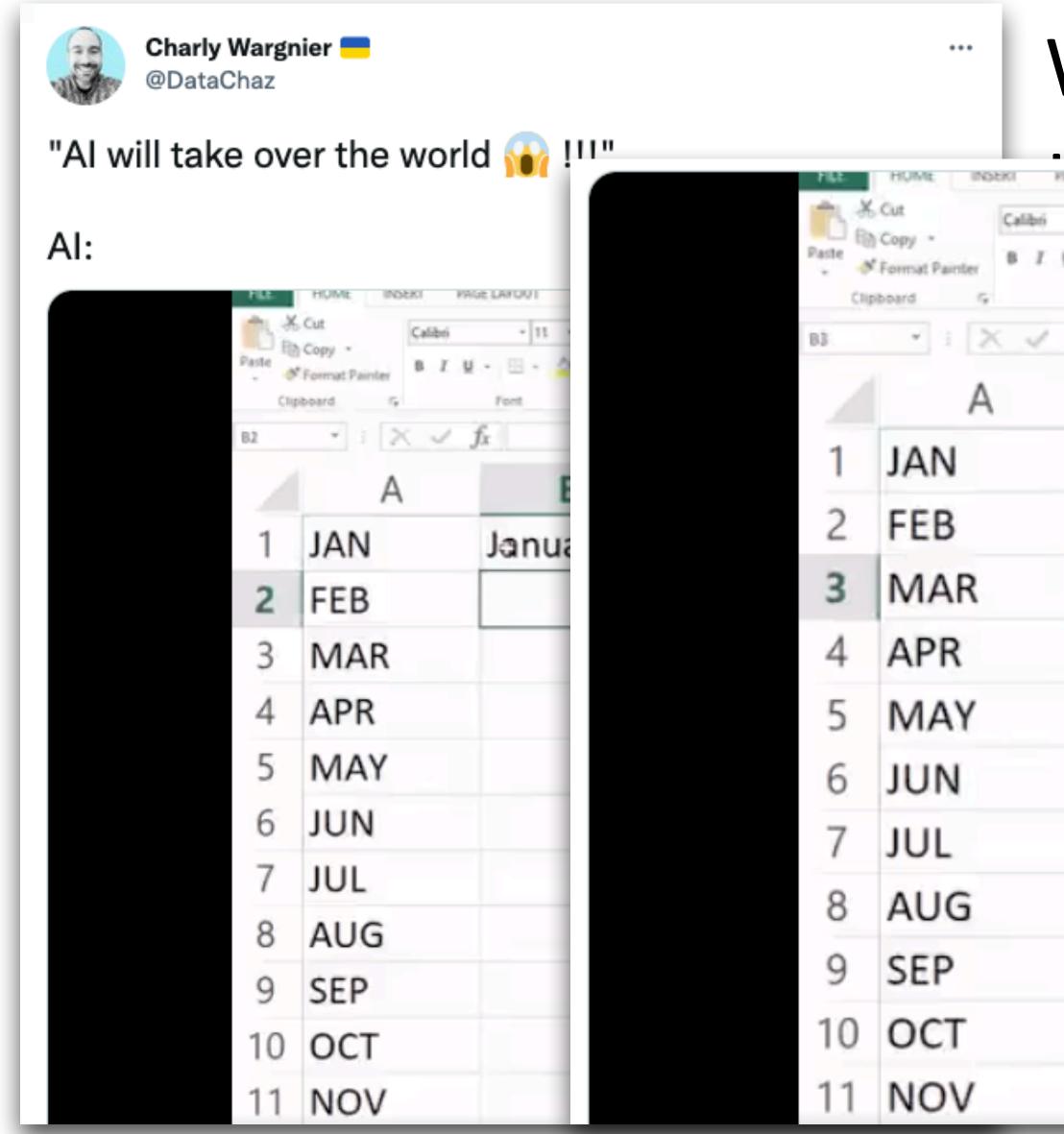
18 https://twitter.com/kurtsh/status/1462999130960064515?s=20&t=RRDbl1bBg0CTapPZielzhg



19 https://twitter.com/DataChaz/status/1454954213302312962?s=20&t=RRDbl1bBg0CTapPZielzhg

What (kind of) program do you think FlashFill would synthesize?

(no next!)



20 https://twitter.com/DataChaz/status/1454954213302312962?s=20&t=RRDbl1bBg0CTapPZielzhg

What (kind of) program do you

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Octuary	
Novuary	

Why?



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Austin	TX	Texas	2
Salt Lake City	UT	Utah	1
Durham	NC	North Carolina	3
Columbus	OH		35
Baton Rouge	LA		11
Omaha	NE		27
New Orleans	LA		39
Des Moines	IA		16
Seattle	WA		42
Oklahoma City	OK		14
Houston	TX		620
Charleston	SC		印
Washington	DC		225
Milwaukee	WI		528
Columbia	SC		56
San, Diego	CA		329
Orlando	FL		190
Boston	MA		489
Dallas	TX		489
Minneapolis	MN		396
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What (kind of) program do you think FlashFill would synthesize?

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(no next!)

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Salt Lake City	UT	Utah	1	Salt Lake City	UT	Utah	1			
Durham	NC	North Carolina	3	Durham	NC	North Carolina	3			
Columbus	OH		35	Columbus	OH	Oorth Carolina	35			
Baton Rouge	LA		11	Baton Rouge	LA	Lorth Carolina	11			
Omaha	NE		27	Omaha	NE	North Carolina	27			
New Orleans	LA		39	New Orleans	LA	Lorth Carolina	39			
Des Moines	IA		16	Des Moines	IA	Iorth Carolina	16			
Seattle	WA		42	Seattle	WA	Worth Carolina	42			
Oklahoma City	OK		14;	Oklahoma City	OK	Oorth Carolina	14:			
Houston	TX		620	Houston	TX	Torth Carolina	620			
Charleston	SC		羽	Charleston	SC	Sorth Carolina	羽			
Washington	DC		225	Washington	DC	Dorth Carolina	225			
Milwaukee	WI		528	Milwaukee	WI	Worth Carolina	528			
Columbia	SC		56	Columbia	SC	Sorth Carolina	56			
San, Diego	CA		329	San, Diego	CA	Corth Carolina	329			
Orlando	FL		190	Orlando	FL	Forth Carolina	190			
Boston	MA		489	Boston	MA	Morth Carolina	489			
Dallas	TX		489	Dallas	TX	Torth Carolina	489			
Minneapolis	MN		396	Minneapolis	MN	Morth Carolina	396			

https://twitter.com/Standplaats_KRK/status/1465722790481432576?s=20&t=RRDbl1bBg0CTapPZielzhg 22







FlashFill Doesn't Always Work As Expected...

- FlashFill has an underlying programming language
 - Domain-specific language (DSL) for string transformation

FlashFill Doesn't Always Work As Expected...

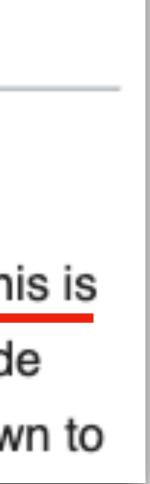
- FlashFill has an underlying programming language
 - Domain-specific language (DSL) for string transformation

Domain-specific language

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Some examples: SQL, MATLAB, HTML, etc.

- A domain-specific language (DSL) is a computer language specialized to a particular application domain. This is
- in contrast to a general-purpose language (GPL), which is broadly applicable across domains. There are a wide
- variety of DSLs, ranging from widely used languages for common domains, such as HTML for web pages, down to



FlashFill Doesn't Always Work As Expected...

- FlashFill has an underlying programming language
 - Domain-specific language (DSL) for string transformation
 - which means, fundamentally, it can only perform computations expressible in this language
 - In other words, FlashFill cannot synthesize programs that are not expressible in its underlying programming language
 - E.g., transforming dates is not supported, since FlashFill does not recognize dates. Same for US states.



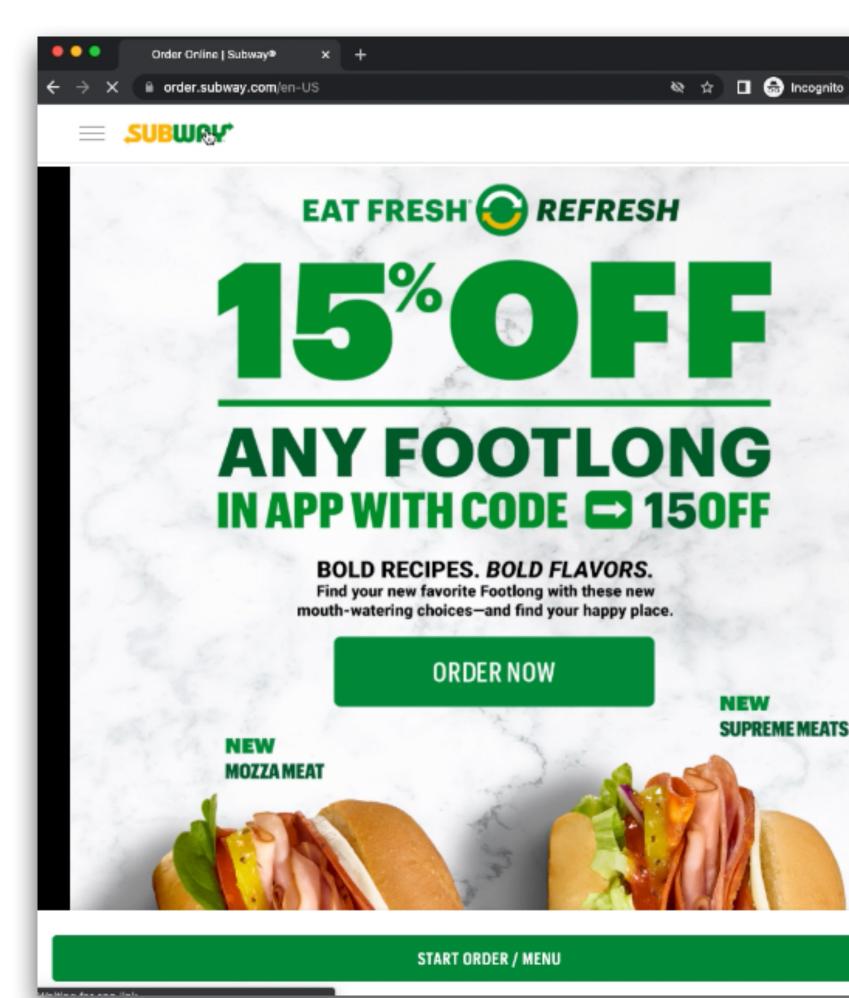
FlashFill T-Shirt!

FlashFill author: Sumit Gulwani (Microsoft)

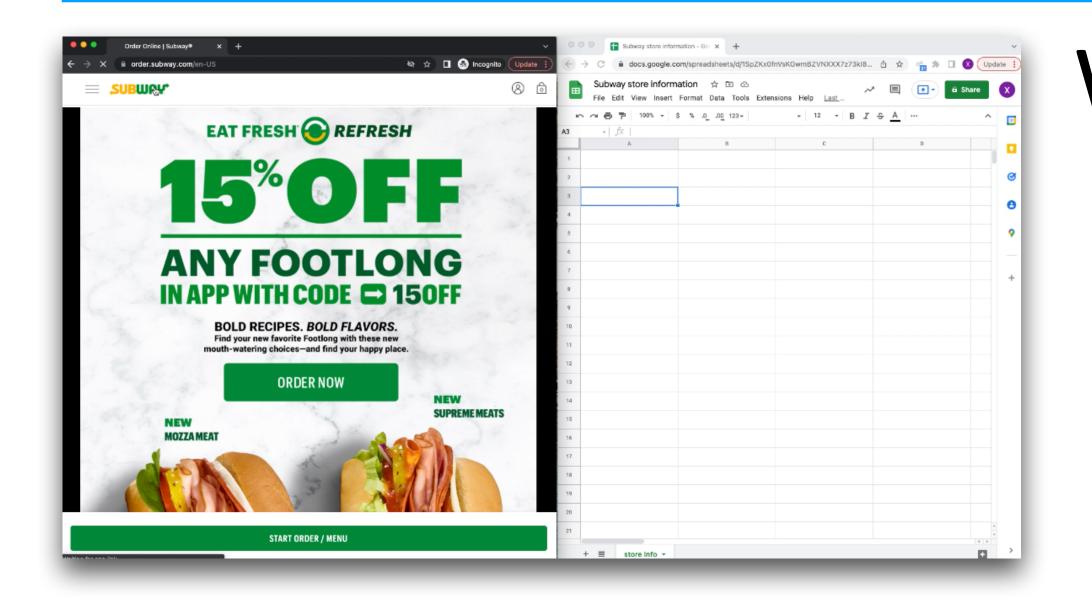
A	В	С
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NOV	November	
OCT	Octember	
APR	Aprember	
AUG	Augember	
FEB	Febember	
JAN	Janember	
JUL	Julember	
JUN	Junember	
MAR	Marember	
MAY	Mayember	
SEP	Sepember	
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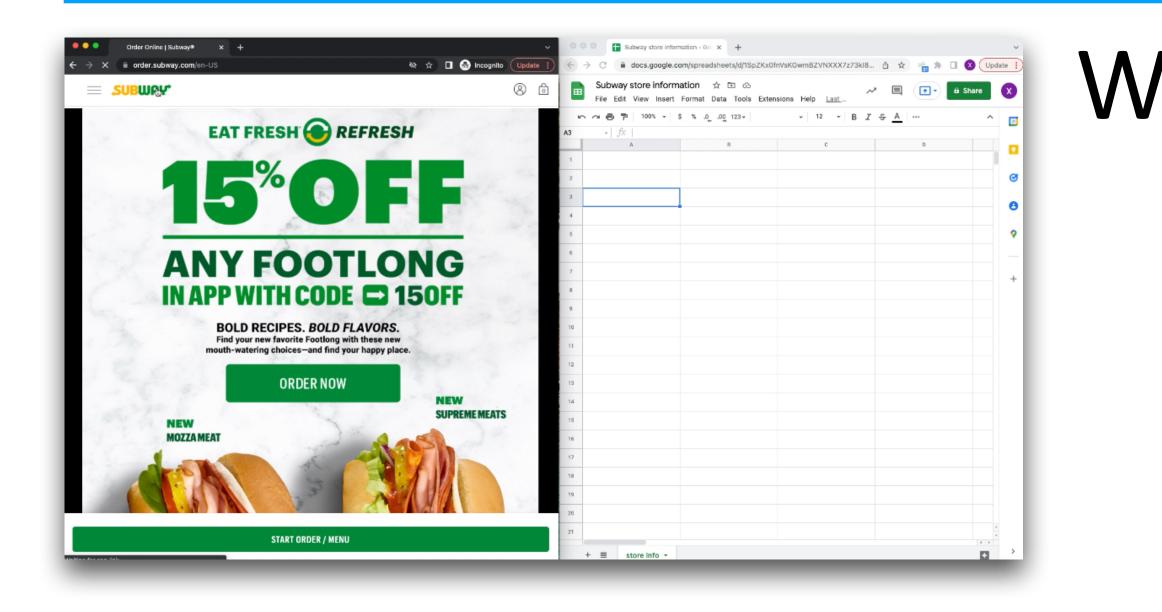
Watch video..



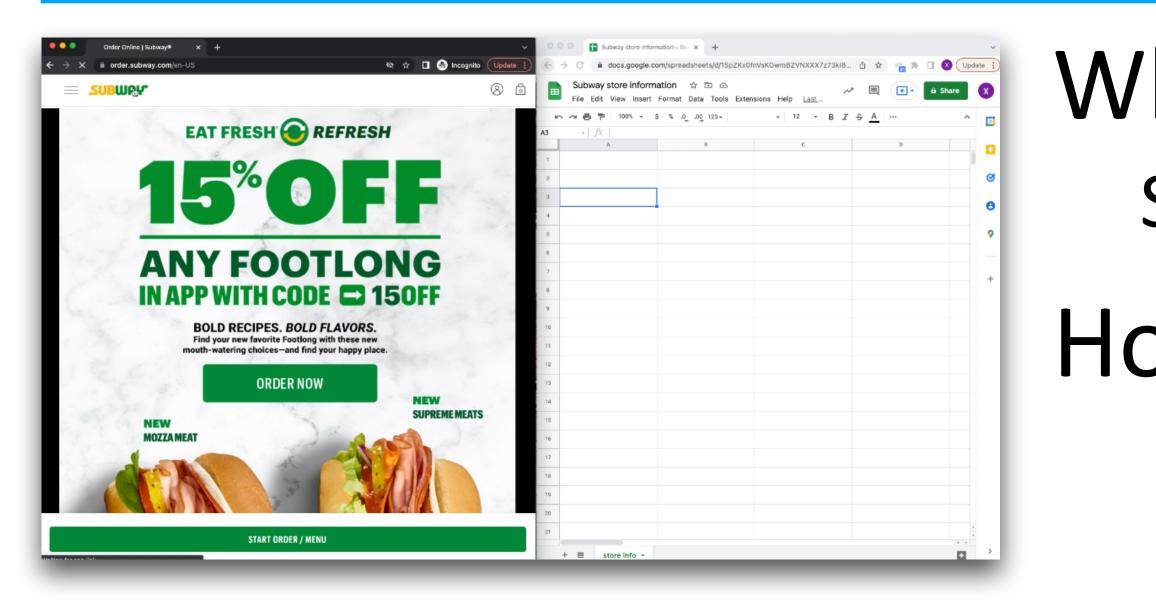
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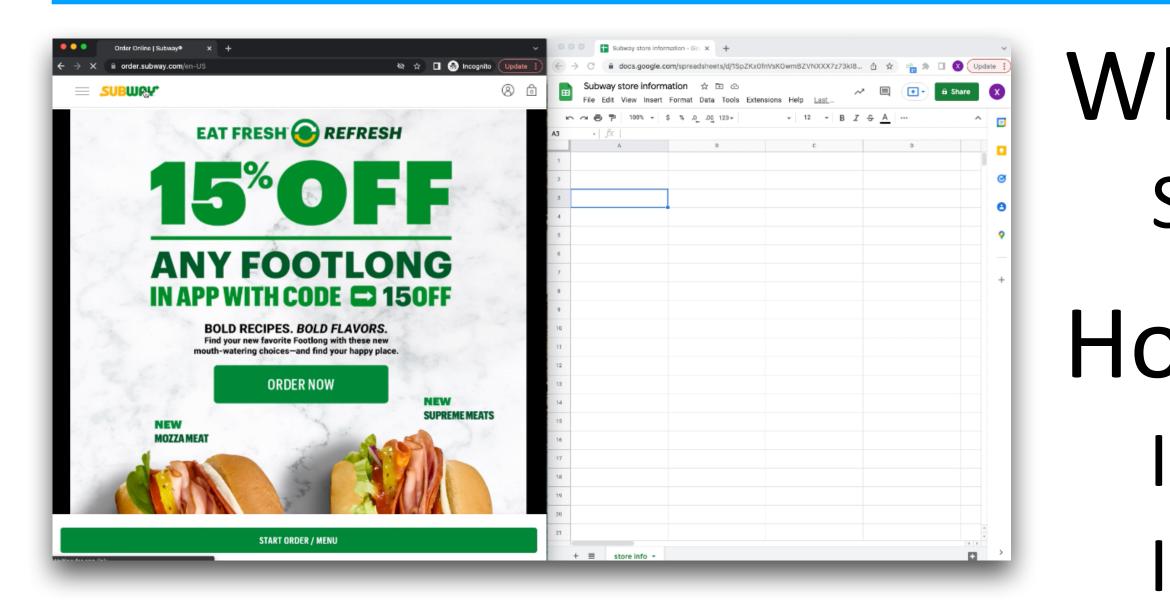
What are we doing here?



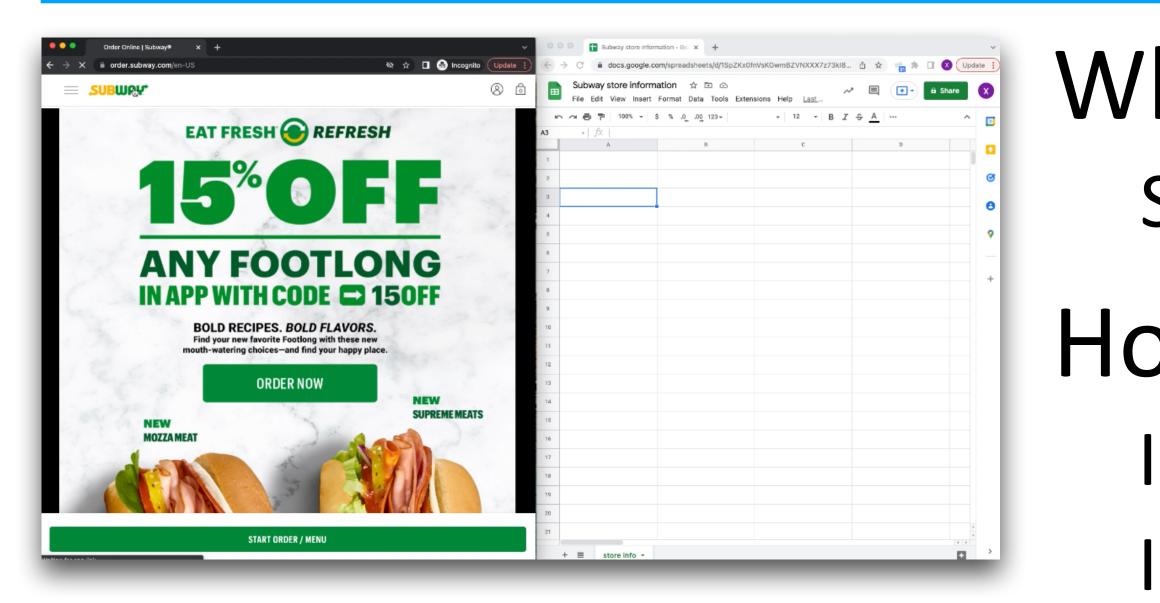
What are we doing here? Scraping Subway store information



- What are we doing here? Scraping Subway store information
- How would you do it?



- What are we doing here? Scraping Subway store information
- How would you do it?
 - Idea 1: manually
 - Idea 2: automatically (Selenium?)
 - Idea 3: hire someone to do it for you?
 - Idea 4: StackOverflow?



- What are we doing here? Scraping Subway store information
- How would you do it?
 - Idea 1: manually
 - Idea 2: automatically (Selenium?)
 - Idea 3: hire someone to do it for you?
 - Idea 4: StackOverflow?
- What are some problems with each idea?

WebRobot

- No (very little) manual work
- No need to write Selenium programs
- Highly automated

WebRobot: Web Robotic Process Automation using **Interactive Programming-by-Demonstration**

Rui Dong University of Michigan, USA

Zhicheng Huang University of Michigan, USA

Yan Chen University of Toronto, Canada

Xinyu Wang University of Michigan, USA

People love it We love it (this is still a research prototype)

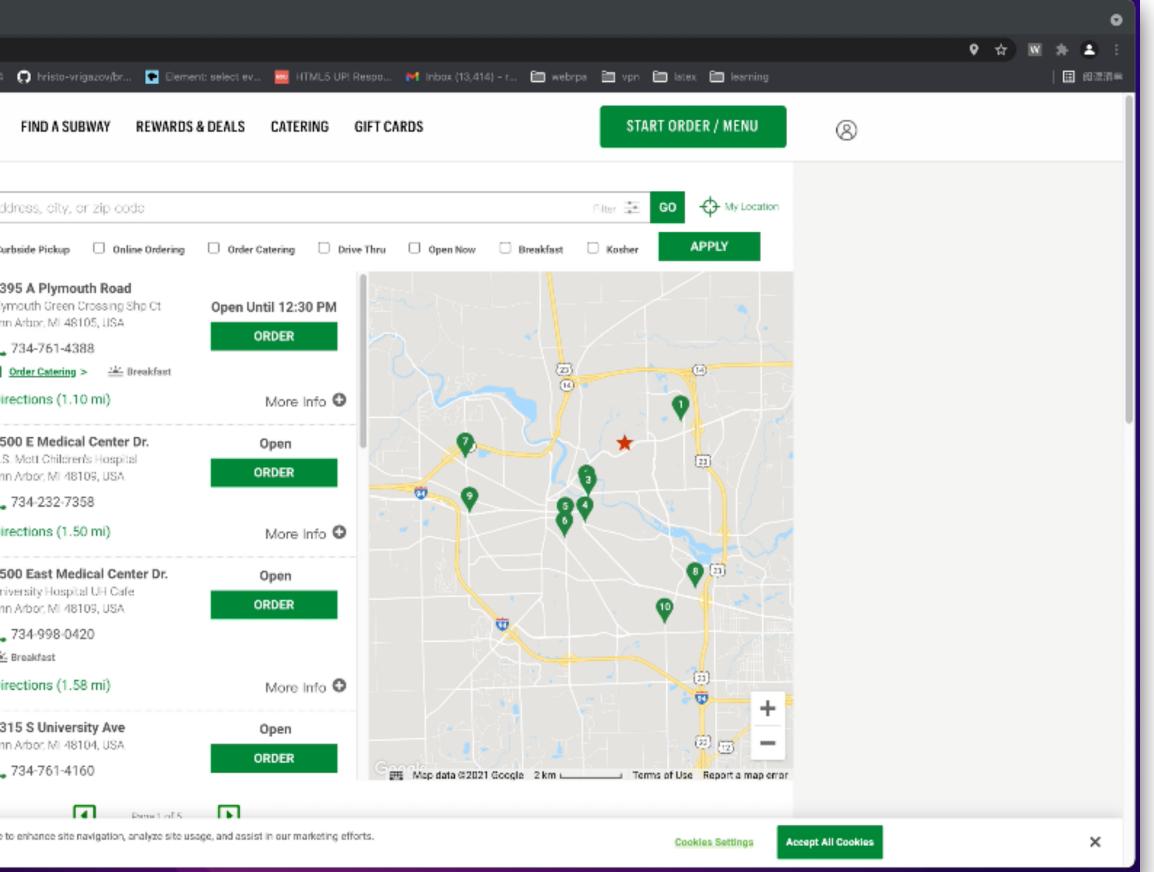
Ian Iong Lam University of Michigan, USA



WebRobot Demo

Watch video demo..

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How Does WebRobot Work?

- Idea: Programming-by-Demonstration (PBD)
- Record a trace of user-performed actions, then synthesize a program with loops that generalizes the trace

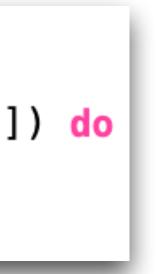
Trace

- EnterData /../input x[zips][1]
- Click /../button
- ScrapeText /../div[1]/div[2]/div[1]/div[1]/div/h3 3
- ScrapeText /../div[1]/div[2]/div[1]/div[2]/div[1]/div[4]/a/div
- ScrapeText /../div[2]/div[2]/div[1]/div[1]/div/h3
- 6 ScrapeText /../div[2]/div[2]/div[1]/div[2]/div[1]/div[4]/a/div
- ScrapeText /../div[3]/div[2]/div[1]/div[1]/div/h3 7
- ScrapeText /../div[3]/div[2]/div[1]/div[2]/div[1]/div[4]/a/div 8

PBD

Program

EnterData /../input x[zips][1] Click /.../button foreach q in Dscts(e, div[@class='rightContainer']) do ScrapeText *Q*//h3 ScrapeText *Q*//div[@class='locatorPhone']



Recap.. FlashFill vs. WebRobot

- FlashFill
- String editing in Excel Problem
 - Programming-by-Example
 - For string editing

Idea

DSL

WebRobot

Web automation

Programming-by-Demonstration

For web automation



FlashFill vs. WebRobot: What's In Common?

WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON?





FlashFill vs. WebRobot: What's In Common?

• Share same "interface".

"Program"



FlashFill vs. WebRobot: What's In Common?

Share same "interface".

"Specification"

• Differ in:

- Application domains / use cases.
- Definitions of "specification".
- Programming languages.





→ "Program"

"Specification"

"Program"

"Specification"

New terminology, but not totally unfamiliar.

"Program"

New terminology, but not totally unfamiliar. What do I want to do? ——— Human ——— Program

"Program"

New terminology, but not totally unfamiliar.

What do I want to do?

C program

→ "Program"

Human ---- Program Assembly

New terminology, but not totally unfamiliar.

What do I want to do?

C program

→ "Program"

Human ----- Program GCC ----- Assembly

"Specification"

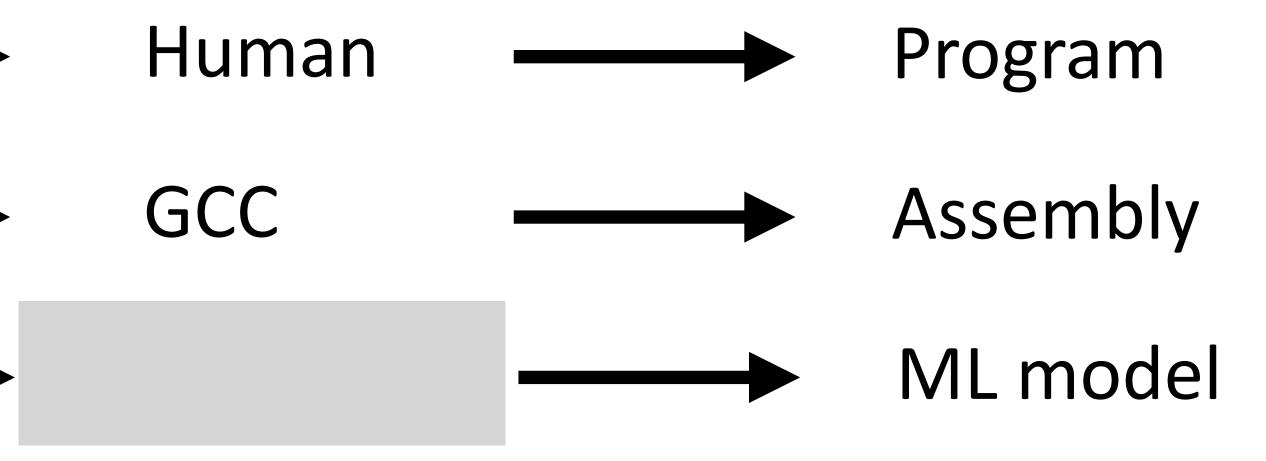
New terminology, but not totally unfamiliar.

What do I want to do?

C program

Data

→ "Program"



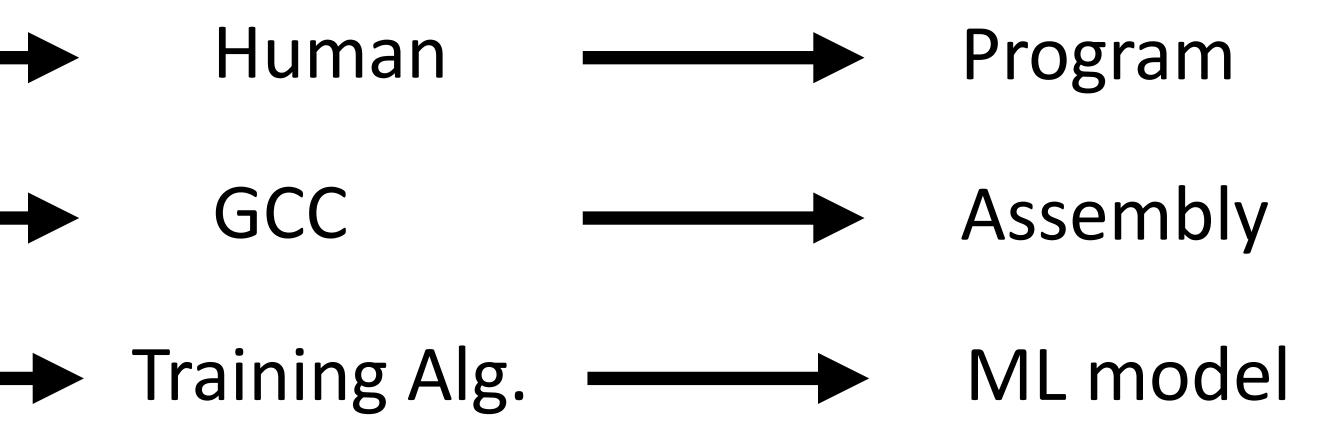
New terminology, but not totally unfamiliar.

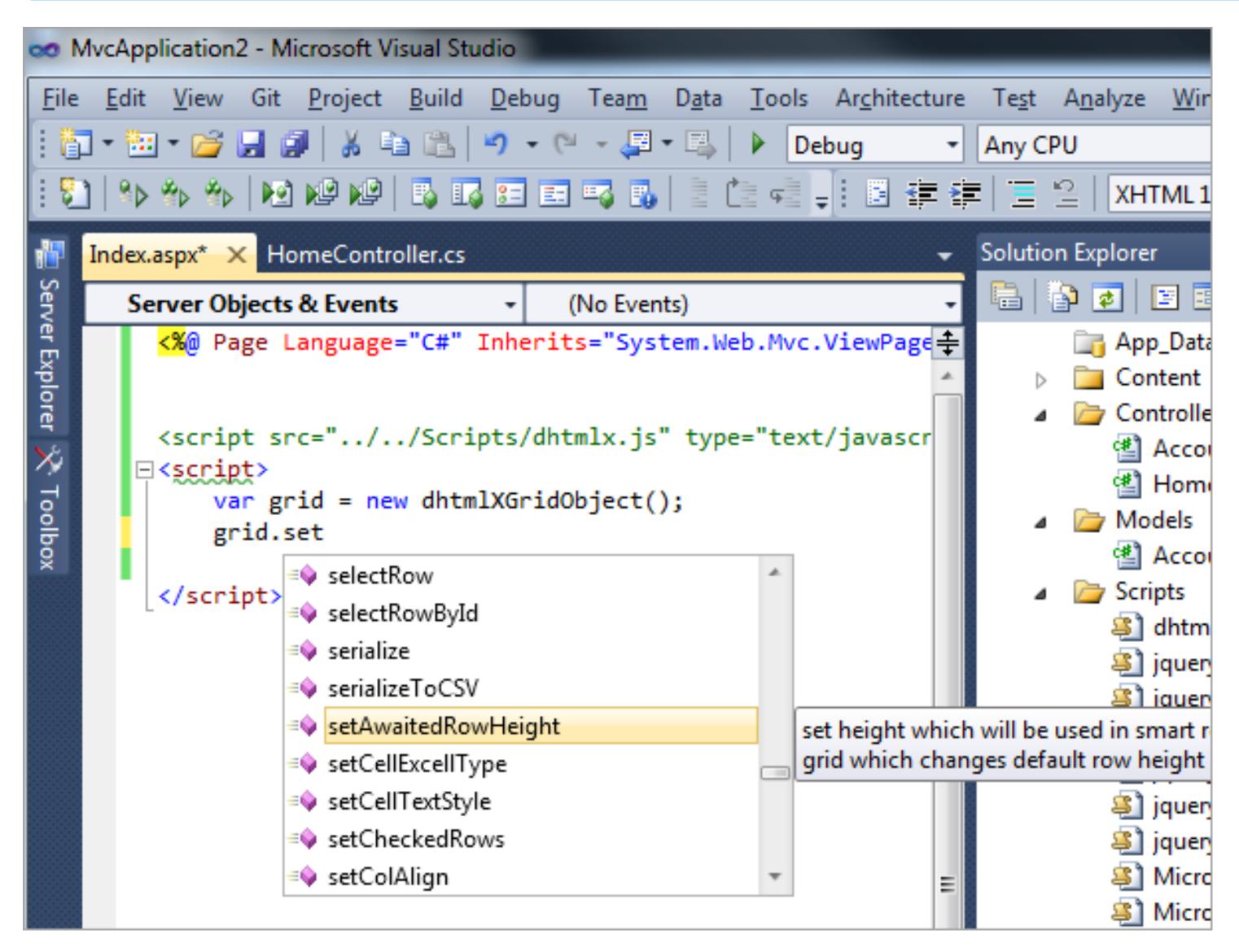
What do I want to do?

C program

Data

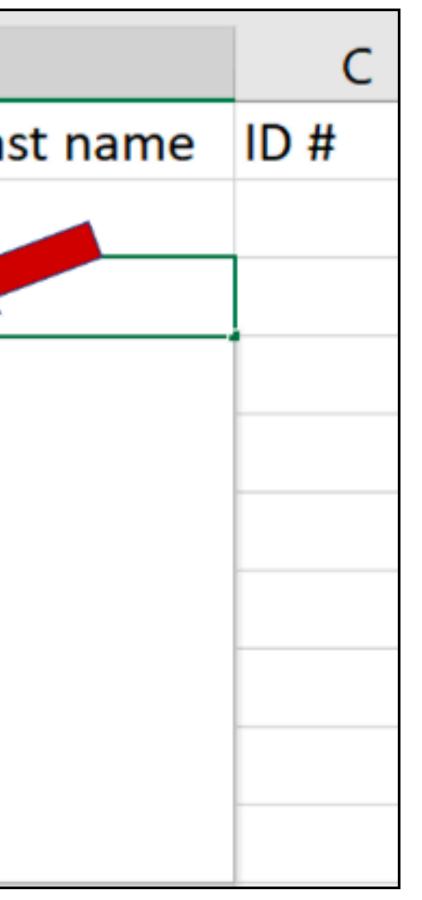
→ "Program"





How about this?

	Α	В
1	Name and ID	First name and las
2	Thomas, Rhonda 82132	Rhonda Thomas
3	Emmett, Keara 34231	Keara Emmett 🧲
4	Vogel, James 32493	James Vogel
5	Jelen, Bill 23911	Bill Jelen
6	Miller, Sylvia 78356	Sylvia Miller
7	Lambert, Bobby 25900	Bobby Lambert
8	Sweet, Julie 65477	Julie Sweet
9	Williams, Don 43920	Don Williams
10	Spake, Deborah 33488	Deborah Spake

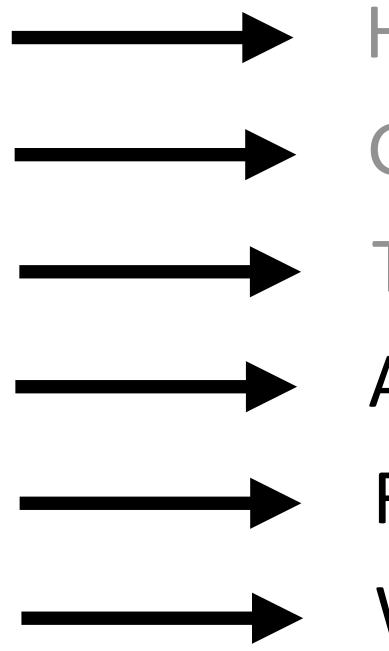


How about this?



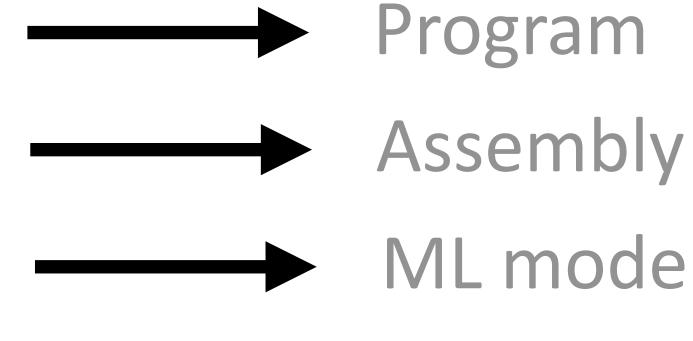
"Specification"

What do I want to do? — Human C program Data Partial prog. Examples Demonstrations 49





- GCC
- Training Alg.
 ML model
 - Autocomplete Complete prog.
 - FlashFill
 - WebRobot





- FlashFill prog.
- Selenium prog.



Working Definition of Program Synthesis

High-level intent Specification

Typically involves search

I/O examples, demonstrations, natural language, reference implementation, etc.

Program synthesis

Lower-level code

Program

In some programming language (grammar + semantics)



Program Synthesis vs. Machine Learning/Deep Learning

• Is ML/DL also program synthesis?



Program Synthesis vs. Machine Learning/Deep Learning

- Is ML/DL also program synthesis?

 - At a high-level, yes

• ML/DL: data is spec, model is program, try to learn a model that matches data





Program Synthesis vs. Machine Learning/Deep Learning

- Is ML/DL also program synthesis?
 - ML/DL: data is spec, model is program, try to learn a model that matches data
 - At a high-level, yes
 - But not really..
 - Definitions of "programs" are very different (e.g., grammar vs. neural nets) • Data is noisy but spec is less noisy (but there is a trend in program synthesis to tolerate noise in spec)

 - Typically continuous in ML/DL vs. discrete search space in program synthesis
 - The line is getting blurry









• Are program synthesizers compilers? Are compilers synthesizers?



- - Compilers also convert high-level intent (code) to lower-level code
- At a high-level, yes

• Are program synthesizers compilers? Are compilers synthesizers?



- Are program synthesizers compilers? Are compilers synthesizers? • Compilers also convert high-level intent (code) to lower-level code
- - At a high-level, yes
 - But not really..
 - nowadays) whereas synthesizers perform search
 - Compilers translate (not really true anymore) but synthesizers discover Compilers apply predefined transformations (again, not really true)
 - The line is getting blurry



Are program synthesizers compilers? Are compilers synthesizers?



Sam Tobin-Hochstadt @samth

Replying to @notypes

I was once at a synthesis talk in which David Grove quoted Eran Yahav(?) as saying that a synthesizer is just a compiler that doesn't work. I found that definition really helpful, even if it was sort of a joke.

3:20 PM · May 6, 2020 · Twitter for Android



Switch Gears..

What is **Synthesis**?

How to synthesize?



Math!

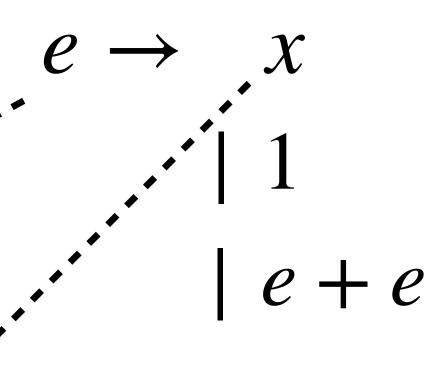
Synthesis algorithms will NOT be covered in Exam 2

Systematically Search Programs in Grammar

• Context-Free Grammar (CFG):

Non-terminal symbol

Terminal symbol



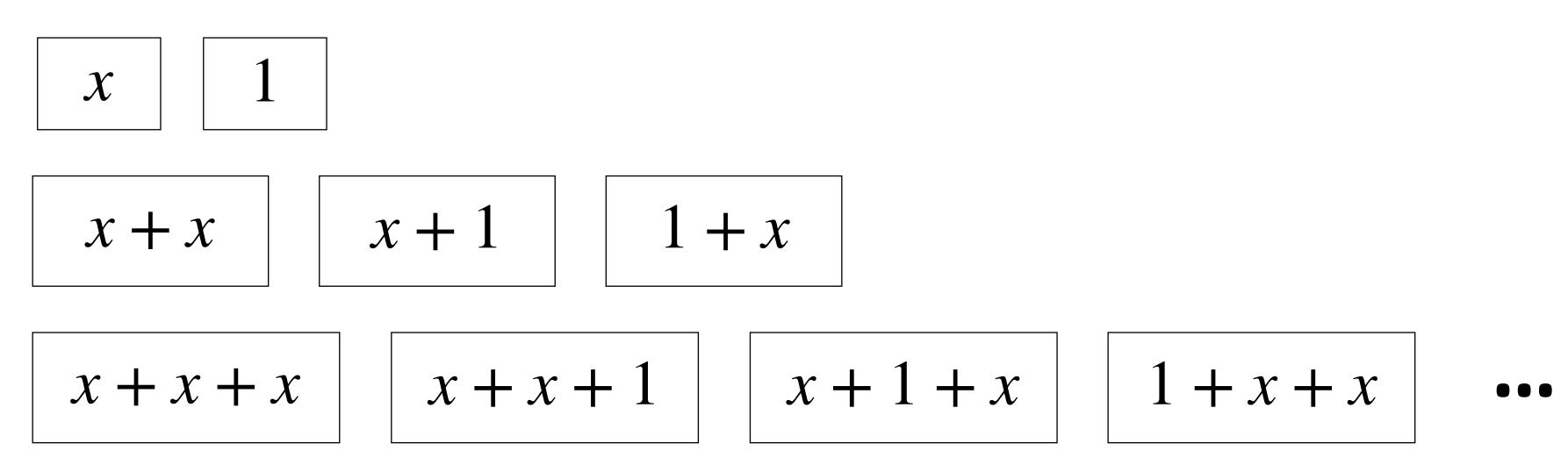
"All programs that can use x, 1 and +."



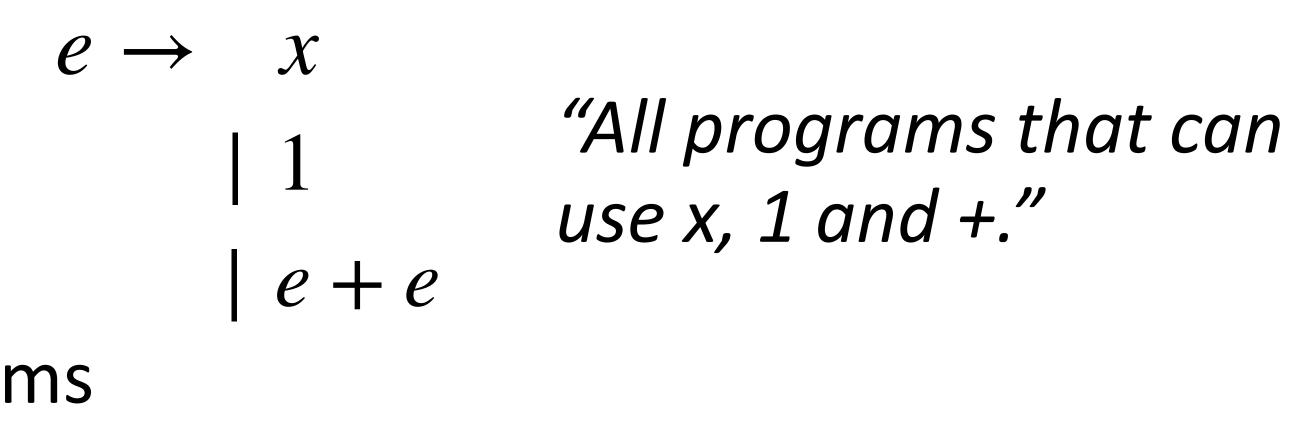
Systematically Search Programs in Grammar

• Context-Free Grammar (CFG):

• This CFG defines a set of programs



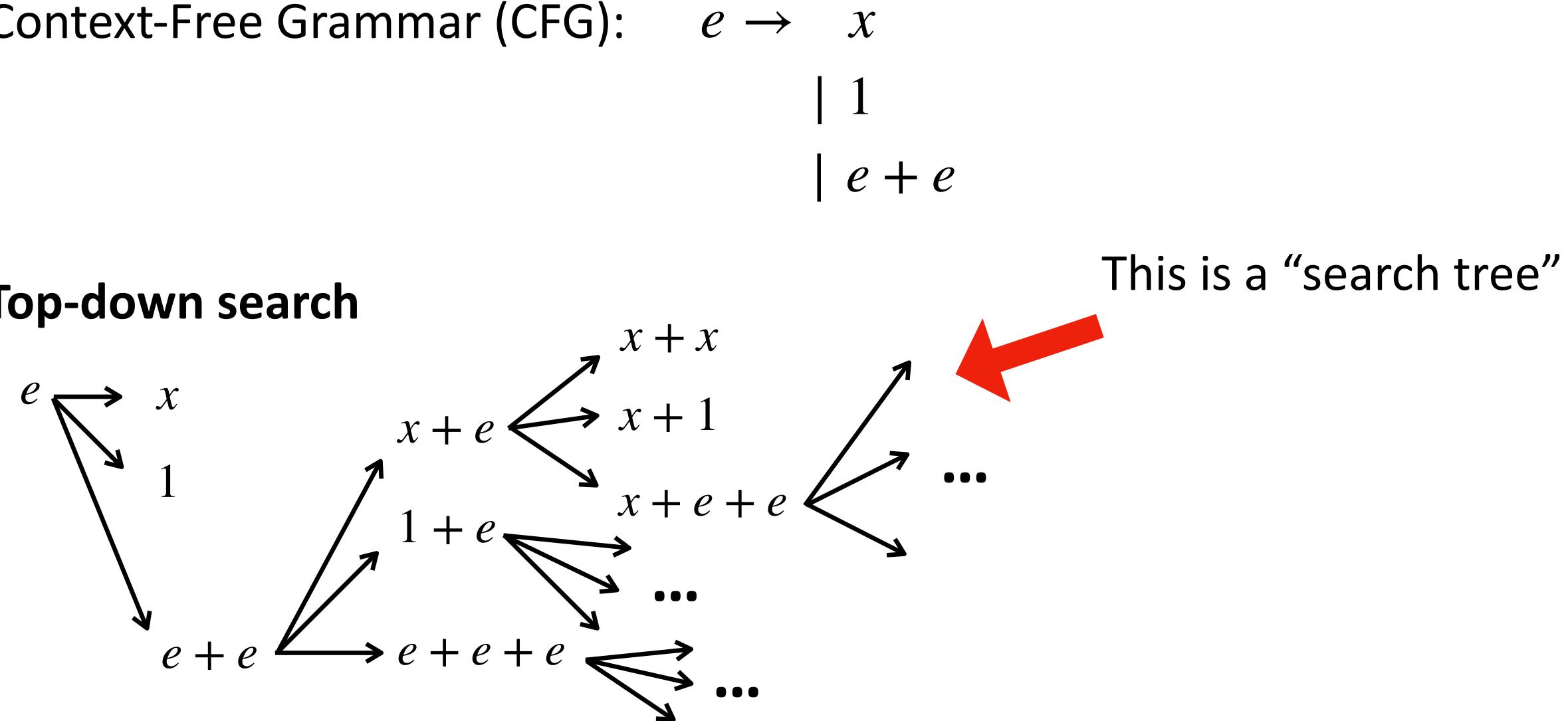
• Goal: find a program in this set that satisfies a given example



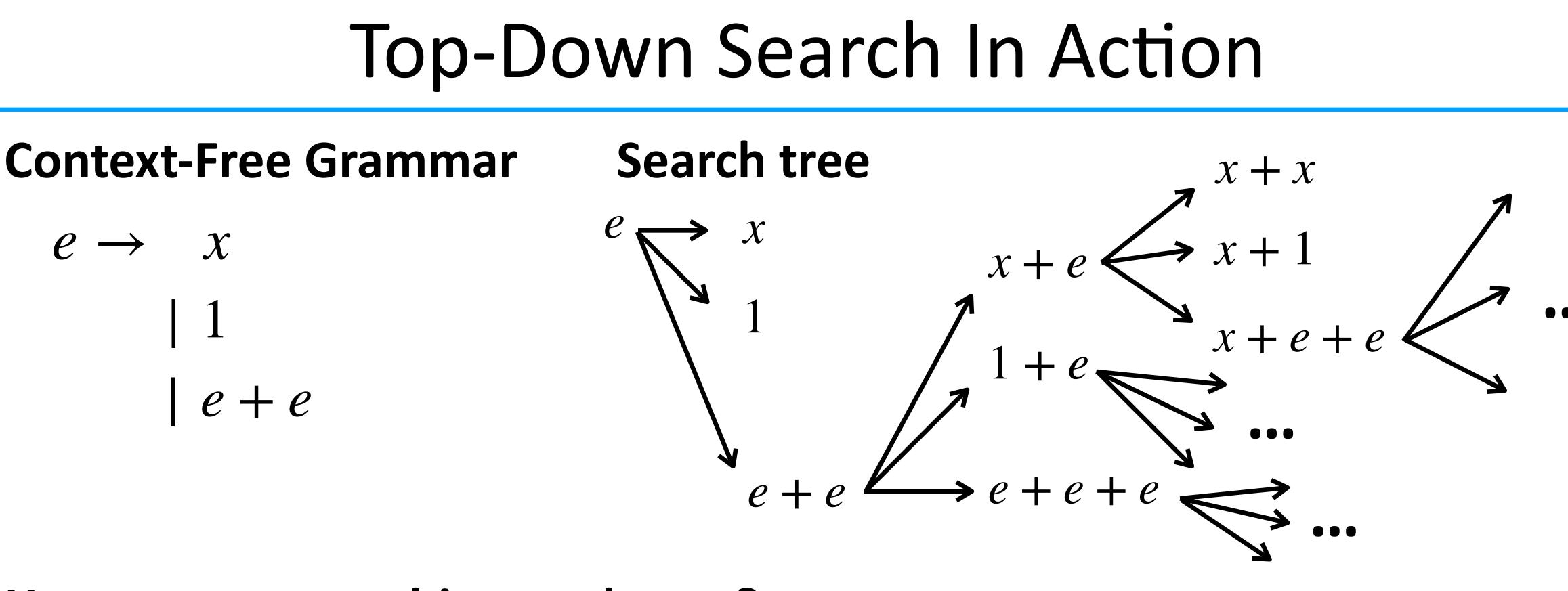
How to Search Systematically?

• Context-Free Grammar (CFG):

• Top-down search



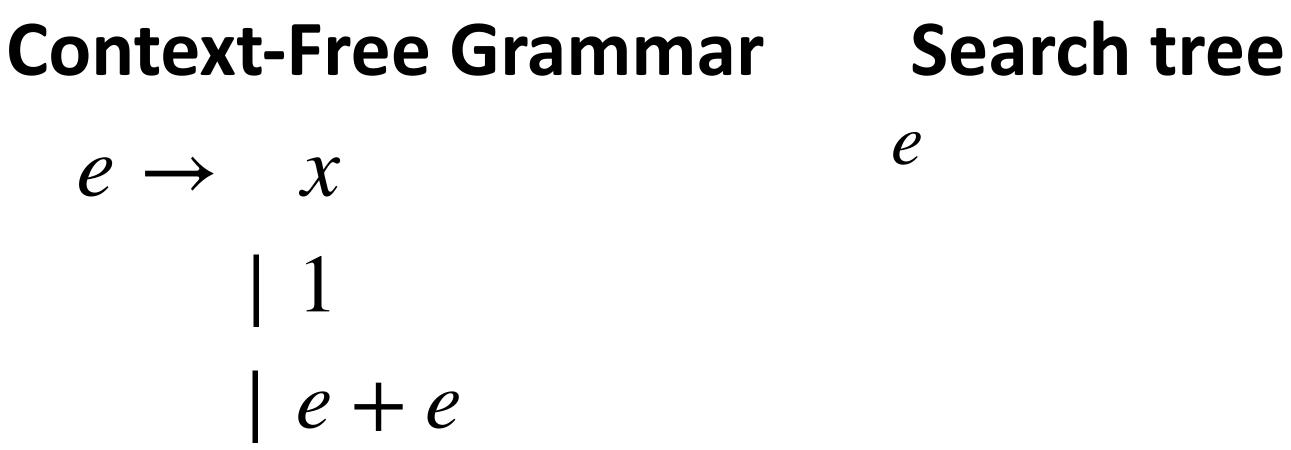




- Step 1: begin with the start symbol
- Step 2: pick a non-terminal in current result and replace it with one of its productions • Step 3: continue step 2 until no more non-terminal remains (i.e., only terminals)



Top-Down Search In Action

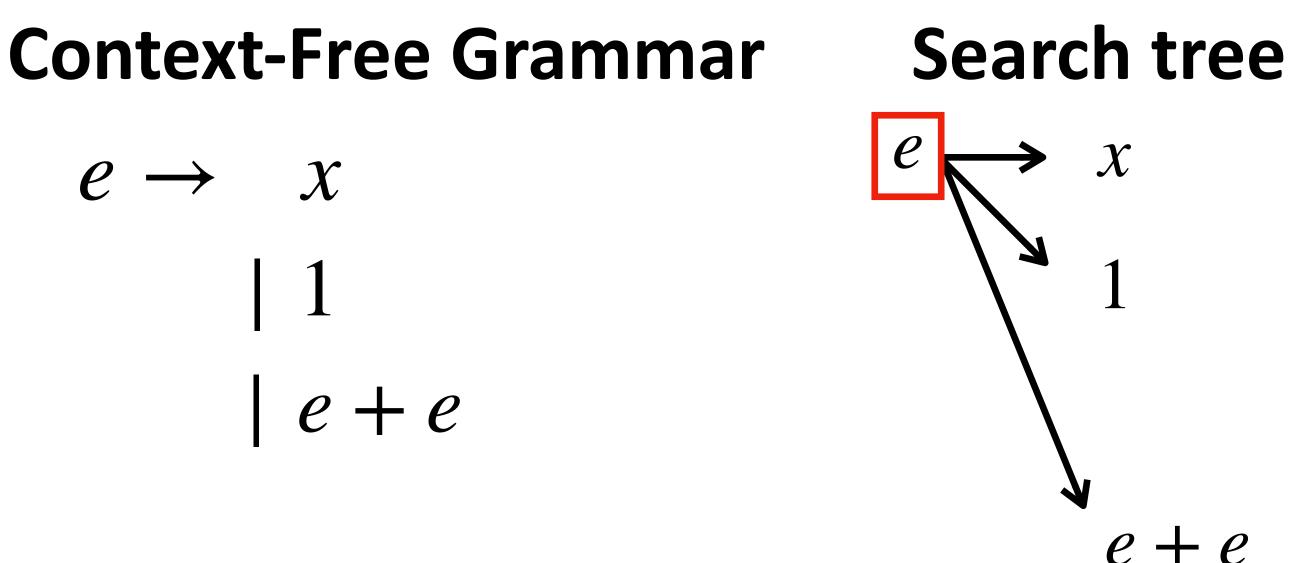


How to generate this search tree?

- Step 1: begin with the start symbol
- Step 2: pick a non-terminal in current result and replace it with one of its productions • Step 3: continue step 2 until no more non-terminal remains (i.e., only terminals)



Top-Down Search In Action



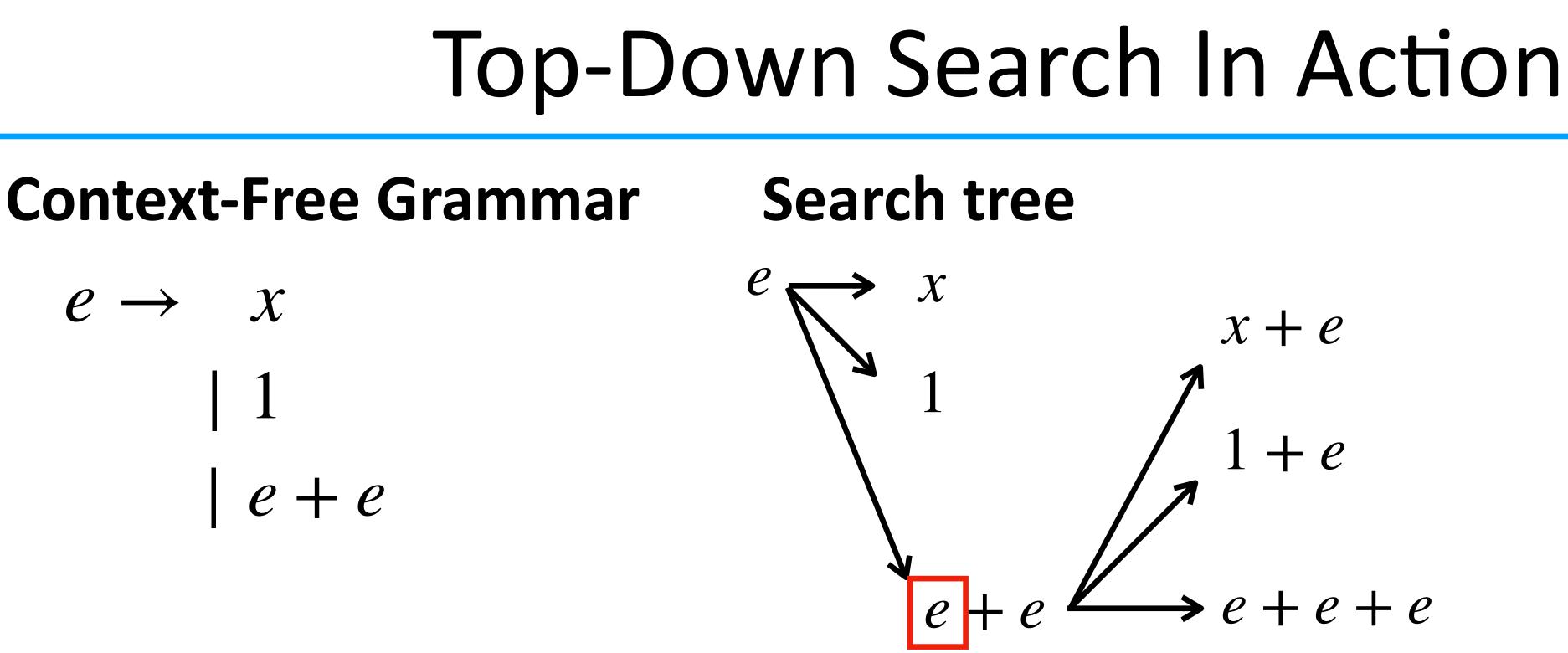
How to generate this search tree?

- Step 1: begin with the start symbol

e + e

• Step 2: pick a non-terminal in current result and replace it with one of its productions • Step 3: continue step 2 until no more non-terminal remains (i.e., only terminals)

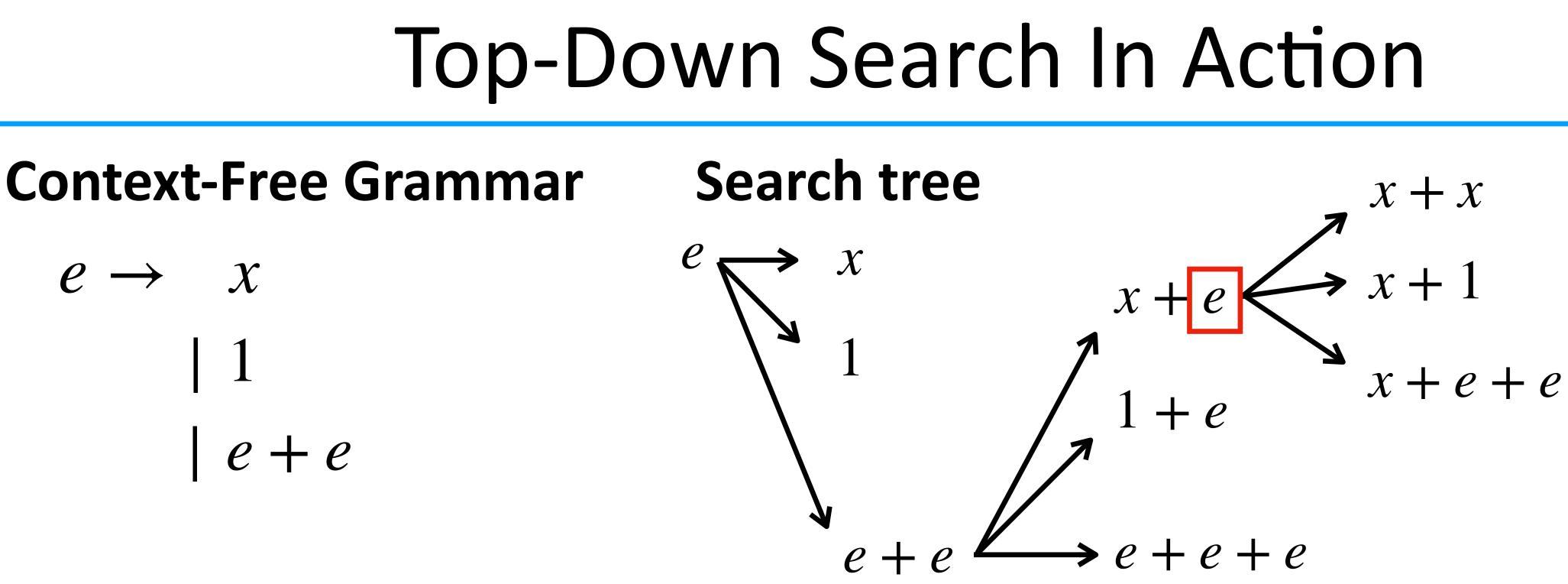




- Step 1: begin with the start symbol

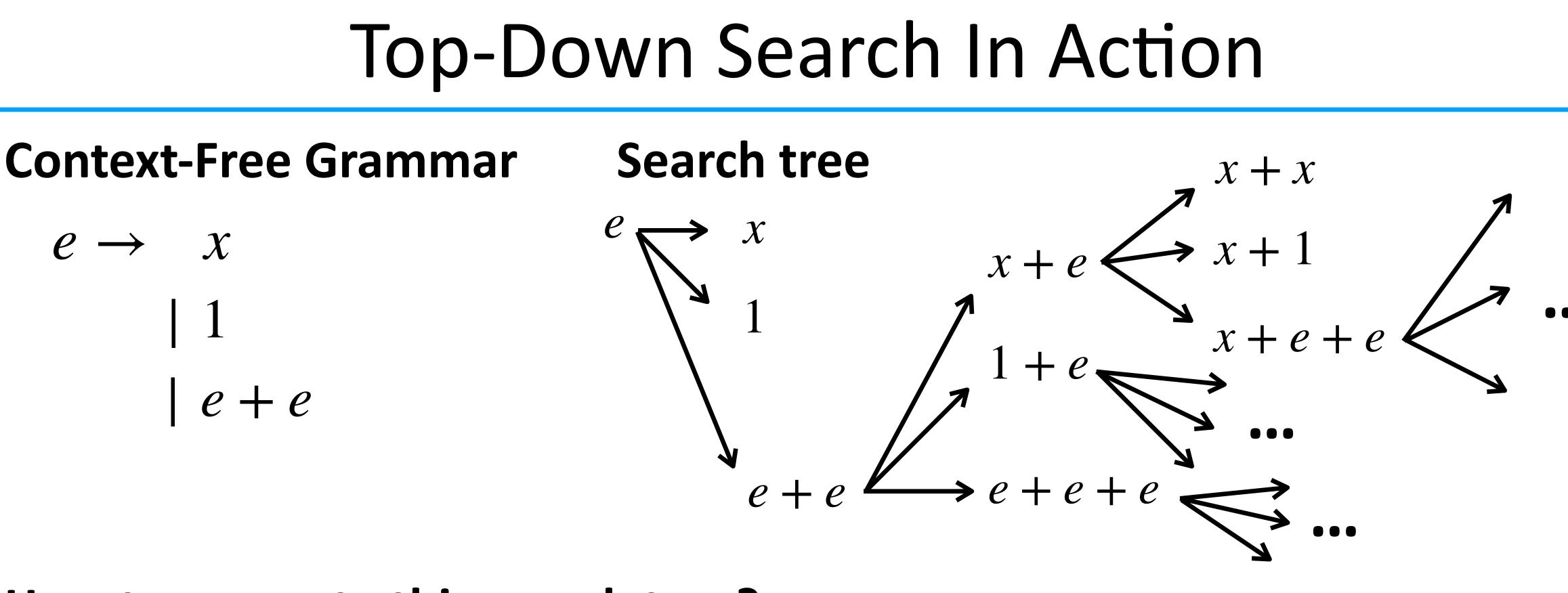
• Step 2: pick a non-terminal in current result and replace it with one of its productions • Step 3: continue step 2 until no more non-terminal remains (i.e., only terminals)





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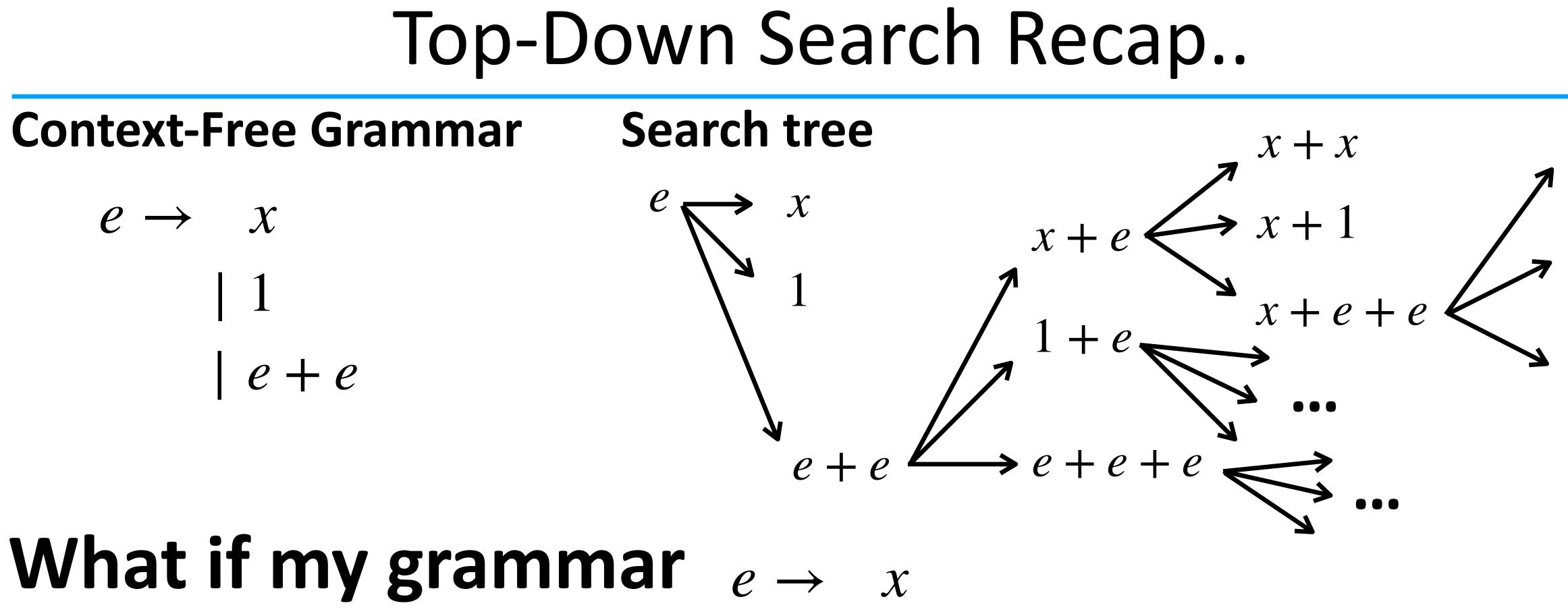




- Step 1: begin with the start symbol

• Step 2: pick a non-terminal in current result and replace it with one of its productions • Step 3: continue step 2 until no more non-terminal remains (i.e., only terminals)





gets bigger?

e + ee - e

Synthesis Seems Computationally Expensive?!



- Top-down search has exponential time complexity (to program size)
- In general, program synthesis is computationally intractable, if not undecidable

.. which means synthesis in theory does not scale to complex problems..

But, recent advances lead to <u>empirically</u> efficient synthesis!

State-of-the-Art

- How many lines of code can be automatically synthesized within a reasonable amount of time?
 - This depends on the domain, but in general, a few dozens in minutes
 - This might sound too few / too slow?

The Mythical Man-Month

 1200 lines / year = 3 lines of code per day What?



State-of-the-Art

To give you a concrete idea

What WebRobot synthesized in a few seconds

	<pre>from traceCollector.traceCollector import TraceCollector from selenium.common.exceptions import NoSuchElementException, StaleElementReferenceException, TimeoutException</pre>	
	from selenium.webdriver.common.by import By import traceback	
	import os import time	
	driver_path = "./chromedriver"	
	trace_name = "W90T1"	
	<pre>starting_website = "https://lrv.nassaucountyny.gov/" description = """ Given a list of tuples (section, block, lot), for each, enter them in the search, then in the search result, extract "Address", "Vilage", "School", "Town")</pre>	
• •		
	<pre># init the trace collector and name it trace_collector = TraceCollector(driver_path=driver_path,</pre>	
	<pre>trace_name=trace_name, starting_websitestarting_website,</pre>	
	<pre>description=description, script_file=file,</pre>	
	<pre>input_file=os.path.dirname(</pre>	
)	
	<pre>driver = trace_collector.get_driver()</pre>	
	# Sleeps for 20 seconds so that users can log in.	
	time.sleep(20)	
	# WARNING: This script requires that the user has signed up for and logged into an account (free).	
	for i in range(7):	
	def data_path(identifier):	
	return "tuples[{}].()".format(i, identifier)	
	<pre># Sends section to appropriate box trace_collector.perform_send_data(</pre>	
	<pre>trace_collector.get_full_xpath from_element(</pre>	
	<pre>data_path("section"))</pre>	
	# Sends block to appropriate box	
	<pre>trace_collector.perform_send_data(trace_collector.get_full_xpath_from_element(</pre>	
	driver.find_element_by_id("blk")	
	data_path("block")	
	<pre># Sends lot to appropriate box trace_collector.perform_send_data(</pre>	
	<pre>trace_collector.get_full_xpath_from_element(driver.find_element_by_id("lot")</pre>	
), data_path("lot")	
)	
	# Press "Search"	
	<pre>trace_collector.perform_click(trace_collector.get_full_xpath_from_element(</pre>	
	driver.find_element_by_id("singlebuttonsrh")	
	# Scrape address, village, school, town	
	<pre>trace_collector.perform_scrape_text(trace_collector.get_full_xpath_from_element(</pre>	
	<pre>driver.find_element_by_xpath(</pre>	
	/ trace_collector.perform_scrape_text(
	<pre>trace_collector.get_full_xpath_from_element(driver.find_element_by_xpath(</pre>	
	<pre>"//*[@id='right']/section[1]/div[2]/div"))</pre>	
) trace_collector.perform_scrape_text(
	<pre>trace_collector.get_full_xpath_from_element(</pre>	
	"//*[@id='right']/section[1]/div[3]/div")	
	<pre>trace_collector.perform_scrape_text(trace_collector.get_full_xpath_from_element(</pre>	
	driver.find_element_by_xpath(
)	
	,	
	<pre># Go back and initiate another search trace_collector.perform_go_back()</pre>	
	<pre>trace_collector.output()</pre>	

(This is an equivalent Selenium program.)



Looking into the Future

- Synthesis as a part of software development process
 - Already come true in Excel (also "software dev"?)
 - Will come true in more and more domains
- Scalability (e.g., LoC that can be synthesized) will improve
- But scalability, arguably, is no longer the primary concern
 - Identify new domains that may benefit from program synthesis?
 - How can end-users better "communicate" with synthesizers?
 - How to make synthesizers usable?
 - Etc.