

Why Julia?

There are traditionally two categories of computer languages:

Compiled - script file translated to machine code and linked to libraries once

- the executable program file is static, data types static
- examples: C/C++, Fortran
- fast, suitable for demanding high-performance computing
- not user-friendly handling of external packages, e.g., graphics

Interpreted - the script file is translated line-by-line at run time

- there is no static executable, allows more flexible functionality
- examples: Python, Perl, R
- slow; most time is spent translating the script over and over again
- more flexible handling of data (dynamic, automatic data typing)
- friendly integration of packages, graphics, notebooks,...
- not user-friendly for improving efficiency (e.g., precompiled parts)

Julia: first successful “best of both worlds” language

- v0 launched in 2012, v1.0 in 2018, now v1.9.3

Key: Just-in-time (just-ahead-of-time) compilation

- goes through the script line-by-line, but saves compiled machine code for efficiency-critical parts (loops, entire functions)

Almost as fast as C/C++ and Fortran (within ~10%)

- designed specifically for high-performance scientific computing

As dynamic as Python

- data types can change dynamically, but can also be declared

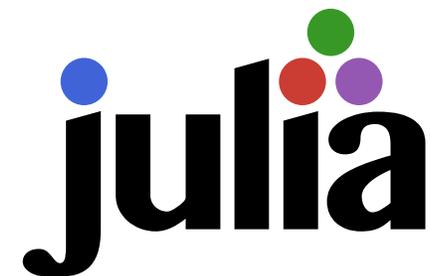
Good mechanism for incorporating external packages/libraries

- C/C++ and Fortran codes can also be incorporated easily

Library module “Base” is automatically included, extensive functionality

Other modules can easily be imported and used

- growing user community, many packages available in different fields



<https://julialang.org>

Introduction to Julia

The language has many features; here we just cover the basics

- PY502 is not a software engineering course
- We will not cover advanced programming
- We will (later) pay attention to code performance (execution speed)

Teaching method: brief general principles + code examples

- commented codes available on the course web site

<http://physics.bu.edu/py502/lect1/examples/>

Variable types and elements to get started

[\[int1.jl\]](#) Integer declaration and wrap-around (mod) behavior

[\[int2.jl\]](#) Integer declarations; modified version of int1, run-time error due to type mismatch

[\[randomarray.jl\]](#) Function with two methods; generates array of Float32 or Float64 random numbers

[\[matrix.jl\]](#) Matrices and matrix operations

There are not yet any good Julia books (?)

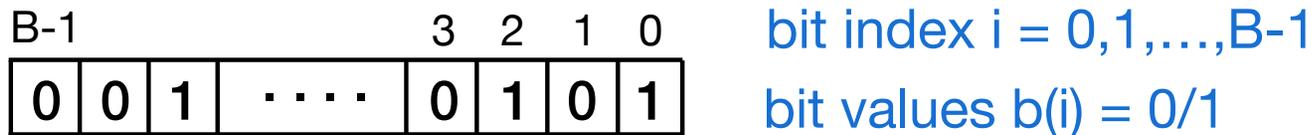
Documentation on the Julia site is quite good <https://julialang.org>

- please read and practice elements we do not cover here!

Bit representation of integers

A “word” representing a number in a computer consists of B bits

- normally B=32 or 64, also in some cases 16 or 128
- a group of 8 bits is called a “byte” (normally a word is 4 or 8 bytes)



For signed integers, the last bit (B-1) is called the “sign bit”

- $b_{B-1} = 0$ for positive (or zero) values, $b_{B-1} = 1$ for negative values

For positive (or 0) integer I, the value corresponding to the bits is

$$I = \sum_{i=0}^{B-1} b(i)2^i$$

00 ... 0000 = 0
00 ... 0001 = 1
00 ... 0010 = 2,....

For $I < 0$, “two’s complement” representation:

$$I = \sum_{i=0}^{B-2} b(i)2^i - b(B-1)2^{B-1}$$

Positive to negative:	11 ... 1111 = -1
- reverse all bits	11 ... 1110 = -2
- add 1 (ignore overflow)	11 ... 1101 = -3,....

- most practical way for computer algebra

- integer operations have “wrap around” behavior (mod 2^B for unsigned)