

SANDBOX GAMES

ÓLAFUR WAAGE

Ólafur Waage

Senior Software Developer - TurtleSec AS **@olafurw** on Twitter



I must go forward where I have never been instead of backwards where I have.

66

I must go forward where I have never been instead of backwards where I have.

- Winnie the Pooh

66



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WHAT THIS TALK IS AND ISN'T

This is not a game development or game design talk. A while ago I was making a game using WebAssembly and these are the walls I encountered along the way

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This is not a comprehensive talk about WebAssembly.

The idea here is to be pragmatic and learn what this tool has to offer and what problems it can solve.

What is WebAssembly?

What is WebAssembly?

How can something be neither Web nor Assembly?



• Announced 2015

- Announced 2015
- Working Drafts in 2018

- Announced 2015
- Working Drafts in 2018
- W3C recommendation in 2019

- Announced 2015
- Working Drafts in 2018
- W3C recommendation in 2019

WebAssembly can be thought of as the target output of any language and in recent times can be executed outside of the web.

(func \$getBoardSize (;29;) (export "getBoardSize") (result i32) (local \$var0 i32) i32.const 4 local.set \$var0 local.get \$var0 return)

WEBASSEMBLY EXAMPLES?

Many of you might associate WebAssembly with games only, and even though this talk is also doing that, WebAssembly has so much more to offer.

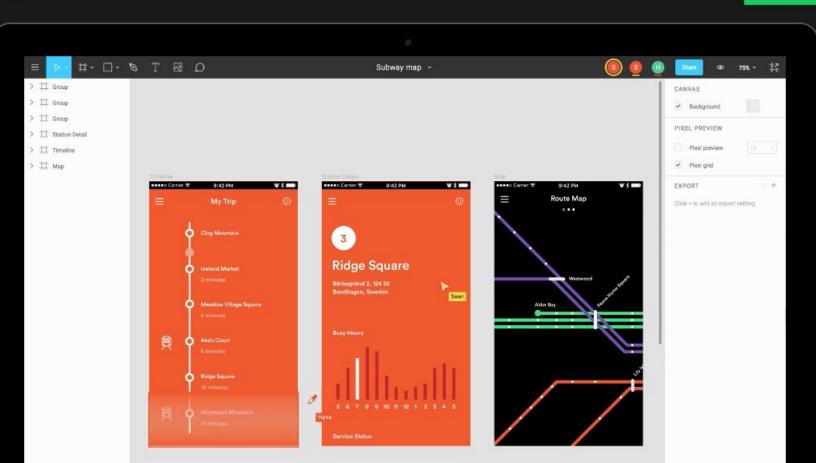
WEBASSEMBLY EXAMPLES?

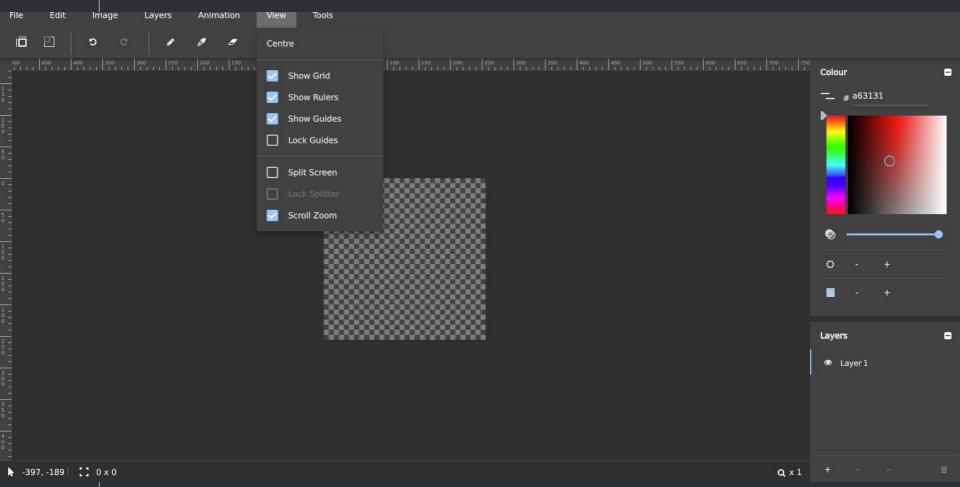
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Here are some examples of things you might not have thought are written with WebAssembly.

Uno Calculator	× +						0	-	
\leftrightarrow \rightarrow C \cong calculate	pr.platform.uno				⊉ ☆	2		* ⊒	: 💿 :
Windo Mixed	ows Calculator by Uno Plat)	form With Uno you	The Windows Calculator is developed with Uno Platform (Apache With Uno you can create single-codebase apps for Mobile, Desktop and WebAssembly <u>Try Uno Platform</u>			and XAML.		i (ע ה
≡ Standard					History	Memory			
				0	There's no	history yet			
MC MR	M+ M- MS								
%	CE	с	R	÷					
✓	7	8	9	×					
x ²	4	5	6	I					
x ³	1	2	3	+					
Уx	±	0	•	=					

Figma







[Blogged] You can now run #tensorflowjs on a #webassembly backend

yashints.dev/blog/2019/12/1...

TensorFlow.js running on WebAssembly backend

STATUS

Done in 239 ms (not including preprocessing: 198 ms)

PREDICTION





Robert Aboukhalil / APR 5, 2019 / 7 comments

How We Used WebAssembly To Speed Up Our Web App By 20X (Case Study)

🗰 10 min read 🛛 👂 JavaScript, Browsers, WebAssembly, Apps

🎔 Share on <u>Twitter, LinkedIn</u>

QUICK SUMMARY •• In this article, we explore how we can speed up web applications by replacing slow JavaScript calculations with compiled WebAssembly.

If you haven't heard, here's the TL;DR: WebAssembly is a new language that runs in the browser alongside JavaScript. Yes, that's right. JavaScript is no longer the only language that runs in the browser!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert is the author of the book "Level Up With WebAssembly" and is a Bioinformatics Software Engineer at Invitae, where he develops web applications for the ... <u>More about</u> <u>Robert \hookrightarrow </u>

What is Emscripten?

What is Emscripten?

WebAssembly before WebAssembly



We originally had asm.js from Mozilla which had similar goals to WebAssembly, to run efficient code on the web.



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asm.js is a subset of JavaScript and your lower level code would then be transpiled into it.



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asm.js is a subset of JavaScript and your lower level code would then be transpiled into it.

This is where Emscripten came into play.



Emscripten is based on the LLVM/Clang toolchains which allows you target WebAssembly as the binary output.



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This allows you to get many different types of outputs, not only WASM files but .js and .html

Let's go over the installation process and setup a simple development environment.

- Text editor is VSCode
- WSL2 running Ubuntu 20.04
- https://github.com/olafurw/talk-accu-webassembly

🙏 olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:- × + ×

olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ sudo your-favorite-package-manager install python3 cmake git

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olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ sudo your-favorite-package-manager install python3 cmake git olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ git clone https://github.com/emscripten-core/emsdk.git

```
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```

olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ sudo your-favorite-package-manager install python3 cmake git olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ git clone https://github.com/emscripten-core/emsdk.git olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ cd emsdk/

```
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olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ sudo your-favorite-package-manager install python3 cmake git olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ git clone https://github.com/emscripten-core/emsdk.git olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ cd emsdk/ olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~/emsdk\$ git pull olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~/emsdk\$./emsdk install latest

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olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ sudo your-favorite-package-manager install python3 cmake git olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ git clone https://github.com/emscripten-core/emsdk.git olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~\$ cd emsdk/ olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~/emsdk\$ git pull olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~/emsdk\$./emsdk install latest olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~/emsdk\$./emsdk activate latest

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olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~/emsdk\$ emcc --version

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olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~/emsdk\$ emcc --version

emcc (Emscripten gcc/clang-like replacement + linker emulating GNU ld) 2.0.32 (2213884b85ae8803f4a420349d55e44587364606) Copyright (C) 2014 the Emscripten authors (see AUTHORS.txt)

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There is NO warranty; not even for MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.

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emcc (Emscripten gcc/clang-like replacement + linker emulating GNU ld) 2.0.32 (2213884b85ae8803f4a420349d55e44587364606) Copyright (C) 2014 the Emscripten authors (see AUTHORS.txt) This is free and open source software under the MIT license.

There is NO warranty; not even for MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.

olafurw@DESKTOP-NNTUFAV:~/emsdk\$ which emcc

/home/olafurw/emsdk/upstream/emscripten/emcc



Now we have the Emscripten compiler installed in our system.

HEY, WORLD, WHAT IS UP?

Now we have the Emscripten compiler installed in our system.

Time for the time honored tradition of the hello world example.

HEY, WORLD, WHAT IS UP?

Now we have the Emscripten compiler installed in our system.

Time for the time honored tradition of the hello world example.

But there are a few more steps in this one than you'd normally expect.

C hello_world.c M ★

```
wasm-helloworld > C hello_world.c >...
1 #include <stdio.h>
2
3 int main()
4 {
5 printf("hello, world!\n");
6 return 0;
7 }
```

C hello_world.c M ★

```
wasm-helloworld > C hello_world.c > ...
    1
       #include <stdio.h>
    2
    3
       int main()
    4
       {
         printf("hello, world!\n");
    5
    6
         return 0;
   7 }
 build.sh M X
$
wasm-helloworld > $ build.sh
          emcc hello_world.c;
     1
```

```
C hello_world.c M X
```

Ś.

```
wasm-helloworld > C hello_world.c > ...
    1
       #include <stdio.h>
    2
    3
       int main()
    4
       ł
          printf("hello, world!\n");
    5
    6
          return 0;
   7 }
 build.sh M X
wasm-helloworld > $ build.sh
          emcc hello_world.c;
     1
      wasm-helloworld
       JS a.out.is
                                  U
       🔛 a.out.wasm
                                  U
```

\$ build-html.sh M ×

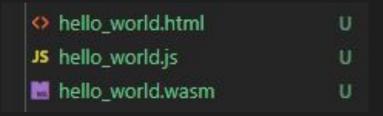
wasm-helloworld > \$ build-html.sh

1 emcc hello_world.c -o hello_world.html;

\$ build-html.sh M ×

wasm-helloworld > \$ build-html.sh

1 emcc hello_world.c -o hello_world.html;



<pre>\$ build-html.sh M × wasm-helloworld > \$ build-html.sh</pre>	<pre>-o hello_world.html;</pre>
 hello_world.html JS hello_world.js hello_world.wasm 	U U U
♦ hello_world.html 1, U × wasm-helloworld > ♦ hello_world.html >	JS hello_world.js U × wasm-helloworld > JS hello_world.js >
1298 1299 1300 1301	2403 2404 run(); 2405 2406 2407 2408



Yes, with nodejs we can run the .js files just fine.

JUST RUN IT ALREADY!

Yes, with nodejs we can run the .js files just fine.

But let's start by opening the HTML file directly. Should be no problem, right?

WALL NUMBER 1

1

Of CORS there's a problem here



Browsers don't like opening random files from whatever location you decide.



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There's a thing called "Cross-origin resource sharing (CORS)". By default browsers don't like loading external files from disk using file:// Browsers don't like opening random files from whatever location you decide.

There's a thing called "Cross-origin resource sharing (CORS)". By default browsers don't like loading external files from disk using file://

The browser will load the html file fine but any external dependency will probably be blocked.



Best way to solve this is to run a webserver that is going to host the files.



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What I use while developing is emrun, a tool that comes with emscripten.



Best way to solve this is to run a webserver that is going to host the files.

What I use while developing is emrun, a tool that comes with emscripten.

emrun is a simple webserver but for our development purposes it is good enough.

\$ run-html.sh A ×

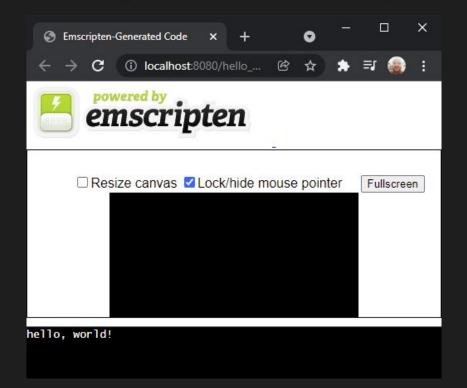
wasm-helloworld > \$ run-html.sh

1 emrun --port 8080 hello_world.html;

\$ run-html.sh A 🗙

wasm-helloworld > \$ run-html.sh

1 emrun --port 8080 hello_world.html;





Now let's look at the game we will be "making".



Now let's look at the game we will be "making".

We are going to make a simple sliding puzzle game, similar to games like "Threes" and "2048"





There are two ways to do this.



There are two ways to do this.

- Keep the drawing in JS and game logic in C++



There are two ways to do this.

- Keep the drawing in JS and game logic in C++
- Do everything in C++



There are two ways to do this.

- Keep the drawing in JS and game logic in C++
- Do everything in C++

We will look at both, and the walls we hit along the way.



So let's take some of the functions we have in the JS version and convert them over to C++



So let's take some of the functions we have in the JS version and convert them over to C++

Some of them don't even need to know about game state, so let's start with them.

```
16
17
     function getRandomCoordinate()
18
     {
         return Math.floor(Math.random() * 4);
19
20
     }
21
     function isOutbounds(x, y)
22
23
     {
         return x >= board.length || x < 0 || y >= board.length || y < 0;
24
25
     }
26
```

#include <emscripten.h>

}

```
static constexpr int boardSize = 4;
extern "C" {
```

```
EMSCRIPTEN_KEEPALIVE
bool isOutbounds(int x, int y)
{
    return x >= boardSize || x < 0 || y >= boardSize || y < 0;
}</pre>
```

```
#include <emscripten.h>
```

}

```
static constexpr int boardSize = 4;
extern "C" {
EMSCRIPTEN KEEPALIVE
bool isOutbounds(int x, int y)
{
    return x >= boardSize || x < 0 || y >= boardSize || y < 0;
}
```

emcc -g -gsource-map --no-entry -s STANDALONE_WASM game_logic.cpp -o game_logic.html;

```
var importObject = {};
WebAssembly.instantiateStreaming(fetch('game_logic.wasm'), importObject)
.then((results) =>
{
    var isOutbounds = results.instance.exports.isOutbounds;
});
```

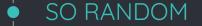
Great, onto the next function.

```
16
    function getRandomCoordinate()
17
18
    {
         return Math.floor(Math.random() * 4);
19
20
    }
21
    function isOutbounds(x, y)
22
23
     {
         return x >= board.length || x < 0 || y >= board.length || y < 0;
24
25
    }
26
```

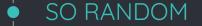


WALL NUMBER 2

Where we're going, there is no OS

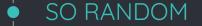


With this standalone WASM file, there is no operating system level functionality.



With this standalone WASM file, there is no operating system level functionality.

You're all on your own*



With this standalone WASM file, there is no operating system level functionality.

You're all on your own*

So how do we solve this problem?



Using random, calling timer functions and many other OS level functionality has to come from somewhere.

EMSCRIPTEN SAVIORS

Using random, calling timer functions and many other OS level functionality has to come from somewhere.

Thankfully there is a solution to this, where if you build a .js file in addition to your .wasm file, you will get many of these functionalities from the javascript side. Using random, calling timer functions and many other OS level functionality has to come from somewhere.

Thankfully there is a solution to this, where if you build a .js file in addition to your .wasm file, you will get many of these functionalities from the javascript side.

But how does it work? Can we do it ourselves?

EMSCRIPTEN RANDOM

float emscripten_random (void)

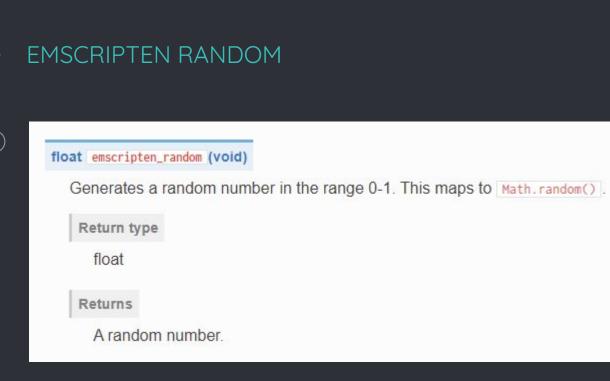
Generates a random number in the range 0-1. This maps to Math.random().

Return type

float

Returns

A random number.



Looks great, but how do we use it?

```
#include <emscripten.h>
```

```
extern "C" {
```

}

```
EMSCRIPTEN_KEEPALIVE
int getRandomCoordinate()
{
```

```
return emscripten_random();
```

```
#include <emscripten.h>
extern "C" {
EMSCRIPTEN_KEEPALIVE
int getRandomCoordinate()
{
    return emscripten_random();
}
```

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
    <head>
       <meta charset="utf-8"/>
   </head>
    <script type="text/javascript">
       var importObject = {};
        WebAssembly.instantiateStreaming(fetch('functions.wasm'), importObject)
        .then((results) =>
            var getRandomCoordinate = results.instance.exports.getRandomCoordinate;
            console.log(getRandomCoordinate());
       });
   </script>
   </body>
</html>
```

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
#include <emscripten.h>
                                                   <head>
                                                       <meta charset="utf-8"/>
extern "C" {
                                                   </head>
EMSCRIPTEN KEEPALIVE
                                                   <script type="text/javascript">
                                                       var importObject = {};
int getRandomCoordinate()
                                                       WebAssembly.instantiateStreaming(fetch('functions.wasm'), importObject)
                                                       .then((results) =>
{
     return emscripten random();
                                                          var getRandomCoordinate = results.instance.exports.getRandomCoordinate;
                                                          console.log(getRandomCoordinate());
                                                       });
                                                   </script>
                                                   </body>
                                                </html>
```

Uncaught (in promise) TypeError: WebAssembly.instantiate(): Import #0 <u>index.html:1</u> module="env" error: module is not an object or function

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
    <head>
        <meta charset="utf-8"/>
    </head>
    <body>
    <script type="text/javascript">
        var importObject = {
            env: {}
        };
        WebAssembly.instantiateStreaming(fetch('functions.wasm'), importObject)
        .then((results) =>
            var getRandomCoordinate = results.instance.exports.getRandomCoordinate;
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```

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<html>
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            console.log(getRandomCoordinate());
        });
    </script>
    </body>
</html>
```

Uncaught (in promise) LinkError: WebAssembly.instantiate(): Import #0 <u>index.html:1</u> module="env" function="emscripten_random" error: function import requires a callable

functions.wasm ×

0x0000	(module
	(elem \$elem@ (i32.const 1) funcref (ref.func \$_initialize))
0x00f3	
	nop
0x00f4	
0x00f5	<pre>(func \$getRandomCoordinate (;2;) (export "getRandomCoordinate") (result i32)</pre>
0x00f5	(local \$var0 f32)
0x00f9	
0x00fb	local.tee \$var0
0x00fd	f32.abs
0x00fe	f32.const 2147483648
0x0103	f32.1t
0x0104	if
0x0106	local.get \$van0
0x0108	
0x0109	return
0x010a	end
0x010b	i32.const -2147483648
	152.00150 -2147405040
0x0111	

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
    <head>
        <meta charset="utf-8"/>
    </head>
    <body>
    <script type="text/javascript">
        var importObject = {
            env: {
                emscripten_random: function()
                ł
                    return Math.random();
                },
            },
        };
        WebAssembly.instantiateStreaming(fetch('functions.wasm'), importObject)
        .then((results) =>
            var getRandomCoordinate = results.instance.exports.getRandomCoordinate;
            console.log(getRandomCoordinate());
        });
    </script>
    </body>
</html>
```



Great, so now we can move over the rest of the game logic.



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The board is an array of arrays of `Box` and the rest of the game logic is basically identical.



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The board is an array of arrays of `Box` and the rest of the game logic is basically identical.

So now the gameplay can be simulated and called from JS, now we need to draw that data.



WALL NUMBER 3

Where's the data?



We can communicate between C++ and JS using primitive types as you saw before, but as soon as things get a bit more complicated, we are in trouble.



We can communicate between C++ and JS using primitive types as you saw before, but as soon as things get a bit more complicated, we are in trouble.

We could view the raw data of a std::vector within the memory of WebAssembly, but converting between a vector and a javascript list is not automatic

WE'RE IN A BIND

There is something called Embind that can help with passing more complex objects over to JS

```
// Binding code
EMSCRIPTEN_BINDINGS(my_class_example) {
    class_<MyClass>("MyClass")
    .constructor<int, std::string>()
    .function("incrementX", &MyClass::incrementX)
    .property("x", &MyClass::getX, &MyClass::setX)
    .class_function("getStringFromInstance", &MyClass::getStringFromInstance)
    ;
```



Embind even has helpers to bind common objects, like std::vector

Vectors

class_<std::vector<T>> register_vector (const char*name)

	÷			2			
10	(D1	50	τ		r_{1}	/n	ρ.
1.1	100	-	-	×.	- 1	1	-

template<typename T>

class_<std::vector<T>> register_vector(const char* name)

A function to register a std::vector<T>.

:param const char* name



You can even define a shared block of memory that can then be used by either JS or C++



You can even define a shared block of memory that can then be used by either JS or C++

Also there is the option to return a pointer to JS



You can even define a shared block of memory that can then be used by either JS or C++

Also there is the option to return a pointer to JS

But this is in the territory where you need to be a bit more careful with how each byte is used and represented.

WE DON'T NEED IT

Thankfully, I wrote the game logic to only use simple primitives, so we can finish converting all of the functions over to C++ and expose them to JS to use as needed.

WE DON'T NEED IT

Thankfully, I wrote the game logic to only use simple primitives, so we can finish converting all of the functions over to C++ and expose them to JS to use as needed.

Let's look at this version of the implementation.



Now we have basically everything except the rendering in the C++ version.



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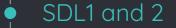
So let's move that over as well.



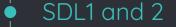
Now we have basically everything except the rendering in the C++ version.

So let's move that over as well.

Thankfully Emscripten has great support for exactly what we need.



Emscripten has built in support for SDL which is a cross platform library that provides among many things graphical rendering support.



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There is also support for SDL2 but it needs to be downloaded (which happens on first compile)



Emscripten has built in support for SDL which is a cross platform library that provides among many things graphical rendering support.

There is also support for SDL2 but it needs to be downloaded (which happens on first compile)

-s USE_SDL=2 -s USE_SDL_TTF=2

GLUE THAT CODE

Also since we will use SDL2 and other built in functionality, we will use the generated JS glue code.

GLUE THAT CODE

Also since we will use SDL2 and other built in functionality, we will use the generated JS glue code.

So instead of creating the importObject ourselves and implementing the functions that are needed, Emscripten has does this for us.

```
int main()
{
    createBox(0, 0, 2);
```

```
SDL_Init(SDL_INIT_VIDEO);
SDL_CreateWindowAndRenderer(400, 400, 0, &window, &renderer);
```

```
TTF_Init();
font = TTF_OpenFont("/assets/arial-bold.ttf", 30);
```

```
generateCache();
```

}

```
startTime = SDL_GetTicks();
delta = 0;
```

emscripten_set_main_loop(game_loop, 0, 1);

RENDERING FUN

Now I port over the rendering code, which thankfully for this example is just a simple colored rectangle. (I wait with displaying the text for now)

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I run the code, I see the box and then...

Uncaught RuntimeError: Aborted(Cannot enlarge memory arrays to size <u>game.js:1229</u> 42995712 bytes (OOM). Either (1) compile with -s INITIAL_MEMORY=X with X higher than the current value 42532864, (2) compile with -s ALLOW_MEMORY_GROWTH=1 which allows increasing the size at runtime, or (3) if you want malloc to return NULL (0) instead of this abort, compile with -s ABORTING_MALLOC=0)

```
at abort (game.js:1229)
```

- at abortOnCannotGrowMemory (game.js:8202)
- at _emscripten_resize_heap (game.js:8208)
- at sbrk (sbrk.c:78)
- at dlmalloc (dlmalloc.c:4173)
- at internal_memalign (dlmalloc.c:4976)
- at dlmemalign (dlmalloc.c:5343)
- at game.js:1255
- at mmapAlloc (game.js:2393)
- at syscallMmap2 (game.js:6141)



WALL NUMBER 4

The sandbox isn't infinite

Up to this point I have been using the default memory size and it has just happened to fit.

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But we need more memory now since SDL is involved.



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But we need more memory now since SDL is involved.

-s INITIAL_MEMORY=256MB -s TOTAL_MEMORY=256MB -s ALLOW_MEMORY_GROWTH=1

TEXT ADVENTURE

Great, this compiles and we see the box drawn in the canvas as before.

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Great, this compiles and we see the box drawn in the canvas as before.

So let's draw the text that should appear within the box.



WALL NUMBER 5

File not found



The environment we are in does not have much else outside of what we have given it.



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emmake make clean && emcmake cmake .. && emmake make

```
set(EM_FLAGS "")
set(EM_FLAGS "${EM_FLAGS} -fsanitize=address --profiling")
set(EM_FLAGS "${EM_FLAGS} --shell-file ../index.html --preload-file ../assets@/assets/")
set(EM_FLAGS "${EM_FLAGS} -O2 -g -gsource-map --source-map-base <u>http://localhost:8080/</u>")
set(EM_FLAGS "${EM_FLAGS} -s USE_SDL=2 -s USE_SDL_TTF=2")
set(EM_FLAGS "${EM_FLAGS} -s INITIAL_MEMORY=256MB -s TOTAL_MEMORY=256MB -s ALLOW_MEMORY_GROWTH=1")
set target properties(game PROPERTIES LINK FLAGS ${EM_FLAGS})
```

```
add_executable(game box.cpp game_logic.cpp)
```

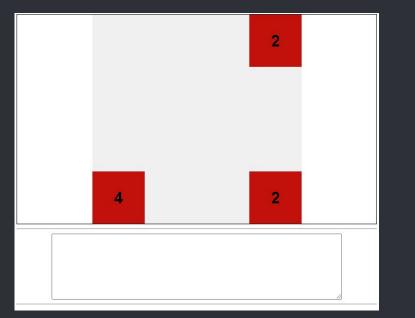
```
set(CMAKE_EXECUTABLE_SUFFIX ".html")
```

```
cmake_minimum_required(VERSION 3.2)
project(game)
```



Great! So now we have everything running.

Let's look at it in action!







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- Data needs to be primitives or converted in some way before sending to JS
- Memory size and growth needs to be thought about
- Required files need to be embedded or preloaded with the output



Just one more thing...

Ólafur Waage

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