

## Daikon: Dynamic Analysis for Inferring Likely Invariants

Reading: ***Dynamically Discovering Likely Program Invariants to Support Program Evolution***

17-654/17-754  
Analysis of Software Artifacts  
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## The Challenge



- Invariants are useful, but a pain to write down
- What if analysis could do it for us?
  - Problem: guessing invariants with static analysis is hard
  - Solution: guessing invariants by watching actual program behavior is easy!
    - But of course the guesses might be wrong...

## Inferring $i \leq n$ in Loop Invariant



```

void sum(int *b,int n) {
  pre:  $n \geq 0$ 
  i, s := 0, 0;
  inv:  $0 \leq i \leq n \wedge s = \sum_{0 \leq j < i} b[j]$ 
  do i  $\neq$  n  $\rightarrow$ 
    i, s := i+1, s+b[i]
  post:  $s = \text{sum}(b[j], 0 \leq j < n)$ 
}
    
```

- Possible relationships:

~~$i > n$~~     $i \leq n$     $i = n$     ~~$i < n$~~     $i \geq n$

- Cull relationships with traces

Trace:  $n=0$

$n$	$i$
0	0

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- Possible relationships:

~~$i > n$~~     $i \leq n$     ~~$i < n$~~     ~~$i = n$~~     ~~$i \geq n$~~

- Cull relationships with traces

Trace:  $n=1$

$n$	$i$
1	0
1	1

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## Inferring $i \leq n$ in Loop Invariant



```
void sum(int *b,int n) {
```

```
  pre:  $n \geq 0$ 
```

```
  i, s := 0, 0;
```

```
  inv:  $0 \leq i \leq n \wedge s = \sum_{0 \leq j < i}$ 
```

```
   $b[j]$ 
```

```
  do i  $\neq$  n  $\rightarrow$ 
```

```
    i, s := i+1, s+b[i]
```

```
  post:  $s = \text{sum}(b[j], 0 \leq j < n)$ 
```

```
}
```

- Possible relationships:

~~$i > n$~~     $i \leq n$     ~~$i < n$~~     ~~$i = n$~~     ~~$i <= n$~~

- Cull relationships with traces

Trace:  $n=2$

$n$	$i$
2	0
2	1
2	2

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## Results



- Inferred all invariants in Gries' *The Science of Programming*
- Shocking to research community
  - Many people have applied static analysis to the problem
  - Static analysis is unsuccessful by comparison

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## Invariants Daikon can Infer



- $x=c, x=a \parallel x=b \parallel x=c$
- $a \leq x \leq b$
- $x = a \pmod{b}, x \neq a \pmod{b}$
- $x = a*y + b*z + c$
- $x = \text{abs}(y), x = \text{min}(y,z)$
- $x = y, x < y, x \geq y$
- Invariants involving  $x+y$  or  $x-y$
- Sequences
  - Sorted, invariants over elements, membership, subsequence
- Derived variables
  - first/last element, or sum/min/max of array
  - element at an array index  $a[i]$ ;  $a[0..i]$  and  $a[i..n]$
- $x,y,z$  are variables;  $a,b,c$  are constants
- All are easy to falsify with test cases

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## Drawbacks



- Requires a reasonable test suite
- Invariants may not be true
  - May only be true for this test suite, but falsified by another program execution
- May detect uninteresting invariants
  - Some may actually tell you about the test suite, not the program (still useful)
- May miss some invariants
  - Detects all invariants in a class, but not all interesting invariants are in that class
  - Only reports invariants that are statistically unlikely to be coincidental
- **Note: easier to reject false or uninteresting invariants than to guess true ones!**

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## Invariants in SW Evolution



```
void stclose(pat, j, lastj)
char *pat;
int *j;
int lastj;
{
    int jt;
    int jp;
    bool junk;

    for (jp = *j - 1; jp >= lastj; jp--)
    {
        jt = jp + CLOSIZE;
        junk = addstr(pat[jp], pat, &jt, MAXPAT);
    }
    *j = *j + CLOSIZE;
    pat[lastj] = CLOSURE;
}
```

- Guess: loop adds chars to pat on all executions of stclose
- Inferred invariant
  - $lastj \leq *j$
  - Thus  $jp = *j - 1$  could be less than lastj and the loop may not execute!
- Queried for examples where  $lastj = *j$ 
  - When  $*j > 100$
  - pat holds only 100 elements—this is an array bounds error

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## Invariants in SW Evolution



```
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    *j = *j + CLOSIZE;
    pat[lastj] = CLOSURE;
}
```

- Task
  - Add + operator to regular expression language
- Goal
  - Don't violate existing program invariants
- Check
  - Inferred invariants for + code same as for \* code
  - Except for invariants reflecting different semantics

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## Benefits Observed



- Invariants describe properties of code that should be maintained
- Invariants contradict expectations of programmer, avoiding errors due to incorrect expectations
- Simple inferred invariants allow programmer to validate more complex ones

## Costs



- Scalability
  - Instrumentation slowdown ~10x
    - unoptimized; later on-line work improves this
  - Invariant inference
    - Scales quadratically in # vars, linearly in trace size

## Invariant Uses: Test Coverage



- Problem: When generating test cases, how do you know if your test suite is comprehensive enough?
- Generate test cases
- Observe whether inferred invariants change
- Stop when invariants don't change any more
- Captures *semantic coverage* instead of *code coverage*

*Harder, Mellen, and Ernst. Improving test suites via operational abstraction. ICSE '03.*

## Invariant Uses: Test Selection



- Problem: When generating test cases, how do you know which ones might trigger a fault?
- Construct invariants based on “normal” execution
- Generate many random test cases
- Select tests that violate invariants from normal execution

*Pacheco and Ernst. Eclat: Automatic generation and classification of test inputs. ECOOP '05.*

## Invariant Uses: Component Upgrades



- You're given a new version of a component—should you trust it in your system?
- Generate invariants characterizing component's behavior in your system
- Generate invariants for new component
  - If they don't match the invariants of old component, you may not want to use it!

*McCamant and Ernst. Predicting problems caused by component upgrades. FSE '03.*

## Invariant Uses: Proofs of Programs



- Problem: theorem-prover tools need help guessing invariants to prove a program correct
- Solution: construct invariants with Daikon, use as lemmas in the proof
- Results [1]
  - Found 4 of 6 necessary invariants
  - But they were the easy ones ☹
- Results [2]
  - Programmers found it easier to remove incorrect invariants than to generate correct ones
  - Suggests that an unsound tool that produces many invariants may be more useful than a sound tool that produces few

*[1] Win et al. Using simulated execution in verifying distributed algorithms. Software Tools for Technology Transfer, vol. 6, no. 1, July 2004, pp. 67-76.*

*[2] Nimmer and Ernst. Invariant inference for static checking: An empirical evaluation. FSE '02.*