

Debugging

SWE 795, Fall 2019

Software Engineering Environments

Today

- Part 1 (Lecture)(~80 mins)
 - Debugging
- Break!
- Part 3 (Discussion)(45 mins)
 - Discussion of readings



Package Explorer

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```
XMLRetriever.java

public void retrieveWithSchema(File file, String schema) {
    SchemaQueries sQueries = queries.get(schema);

    if (sQueries != null) {
        RelationshipDelta result = sQueries.runQueries(file, types);
        delta = RelationshipDelta.join(delta, result);
        topLabels.addAll(sQueries.findTopObjects(file, types));
    }
}

public RelationshipContext getStartContext(Variable thisVar, AliasContext aliases) {
    RelationshipContext start = new RelationshipContext(false);
    RelationshipDelta converted = new RelationshipDelta();
    Map<ObjectLabel, ObjectLabel> bindings = new HashMap<ObjectLabel, ObjectLabel>();

    for (ObjectLabel possibleTop : topLabels) {
        String thisType = thisVar.resolveType().getQualifiedName();
        String possibleTopType = possibleTop.getType().getQualifiedName();
        if (types.isSubtypeCompatible(thisType, possibleTopType)) {
            Set<ObjectLabel> thisAliases = aliases.getAliases(thisVar);
            assert (thisAliases.size() == 1);
            bindings.put(possibleTop, thisAliases.iterator().next());
        }
    }

    for (Entry<Relationship, ThreeValue> entry : delta) {
        Relationship convDelta = convertRelationship(entry.getKey(), bindings);
        converted.setRelationship(convDelta, FourPointLattice.convert(entry.getValue()));
    }

    return start.applyChangesFromDelta(converted);
}
```

getStartContext(Variable, AliasCon
convertRelationship(Relationship, I

Problems @ Javadoc Declaration Call Hierarchy

Members calling 'getStartContext(Variable, AliasContext)' - in workspace

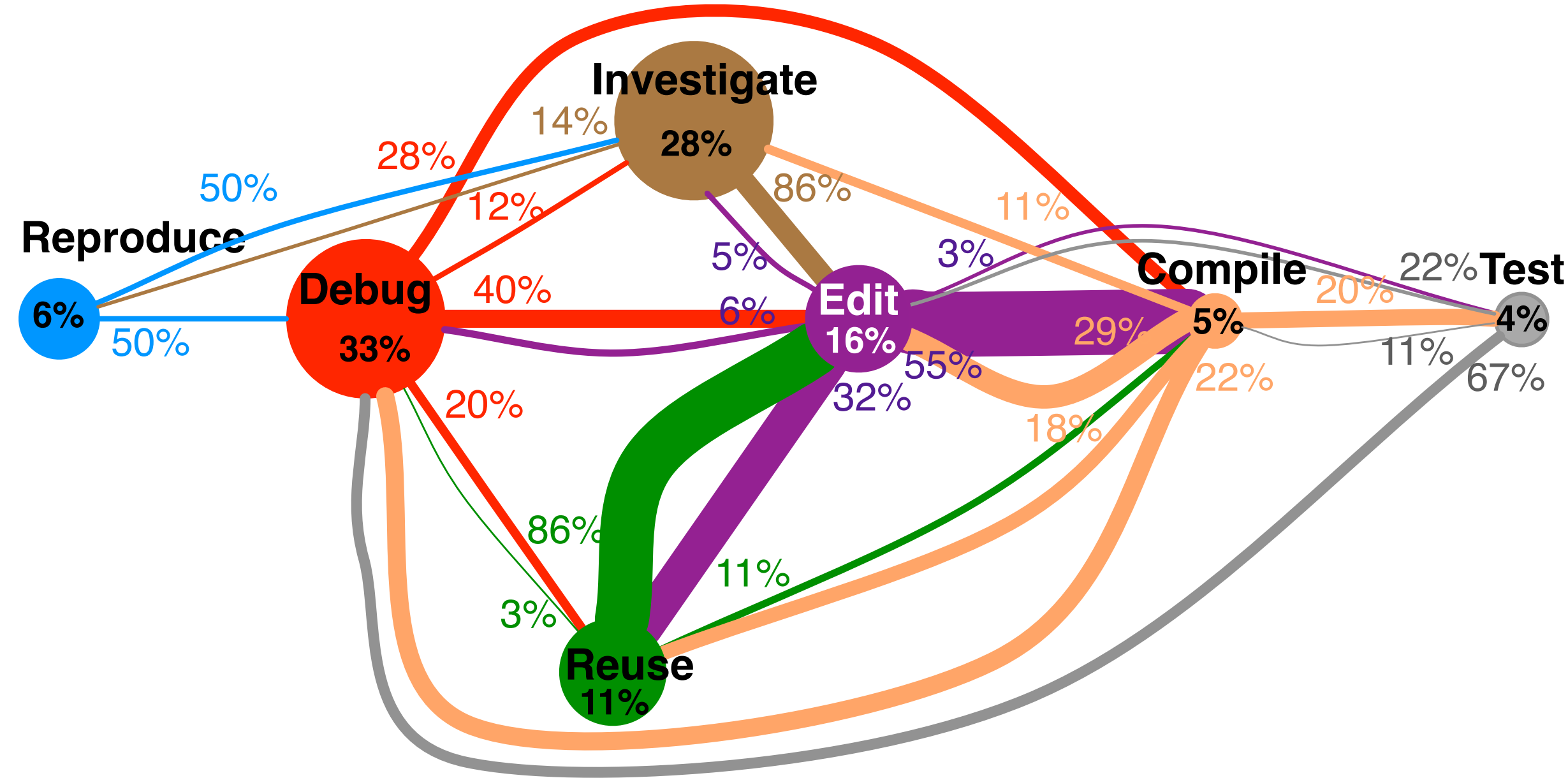
- performAnalysis(): AnalysisResult<LE, N, OP> - edu.cmu.cs.crystal.flow.workl
 - performAnalysis(MethodDeclaration): void - edu.cmu.cs.crystal.flow.Mothe
 - switchToMethod(MethodDeclaration): void - edu.cmu.cs.crystal.flow.Mc
 - performAnalysisOnSurroundingMethodIfNeeded(ASTNode): void - ed
 - getEndResults(MethodDeclaration): LE - edu.cmu.cs.crystal.flow.M
 - analyzeMethod(MethodDeclaration): void - edu.cmu.cs.fusion.I
 - runAnalysis(IAnalysisReporter, IAnalysisInput, ICompilationL
 - run(AnnotationDatabase): void - edu.cmu.cs.crystal.inter
 - getLabeledEndResult(MethodDeclaration): IResult<LE> - edu.cmu
 - getLabeledResultAfter(ICFGNode<ASTNode>): IResult<LE> - edu
 - getLabeledResultBefore(ICFGNode<ASTNode>): IResult<LE> - ed
 - getLabeledResultsAfter(ASTNode): IResult<LE> - edu.cmu.cs.crys
 - deriveResult(EclipseInstructionSequence, LE, TACInstruction, bc
 - getLabeledResultsAfter(ASTNode): IResult<LE> - edu.cmu.cs.c
 - getLabeledResultsAfter(ASTNode): IResult<LE> - edu.cmu.c
 - getLabeledResultsAfter(TACInstruction): IResult<LE> - edu.cm
 - getLabeledResultsBefore(ASTNode): IResult<LE> - edu.cmu.cs.cry
 - getLabeledStartResult(MethodDeclaration): IResult<LE> - edu.cm
 - getResultsOrNullAfter(ASTNode): LE - edu.cmu.cs.crystal.flow.Mo
 - getResultsOrNullBefore(ASTNode): LE - edu.cmu.cs.crystal.flow.M
 - getStartResults(MethodDeclaration): LE - edu.cmu.cs.crystal.flow.
 - getEntryValue(): LE - edu.cmu.cs.crystal.flow.worklist.BranchSensitiveWorklist

| Line | Call |
|------|---|
| 203 | performAnalysisOnSurroundingMethodIfNeeded(d) |

Steps in fixing bugs

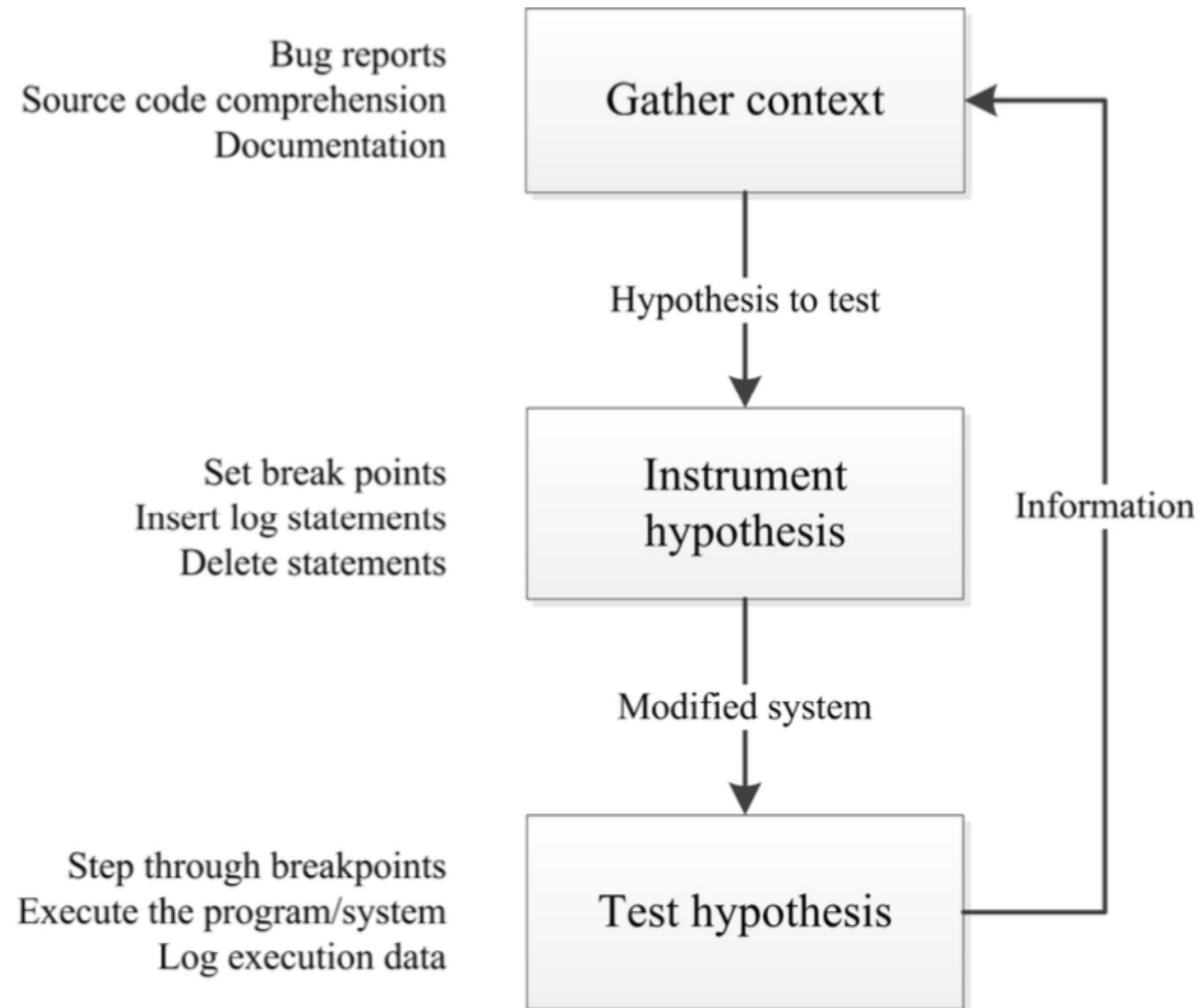
- Reproduce the problem
 - Find cause of defect
 - Investigate fix
 - Implement fix
 - Test fix
-
- Will focus on **finding cause of defect** today

Edit / Debug Cycle



Circle size: % of time
Edge thickness: % of transitions observed
For tasks in code in your own codebase that you haven't seen recently

Debugging process model



Formulate & test hypotheses

- Use knowledge & data so far to formulate hypothesis about why bug happened
cogitation, meditation, observation, inspection, contemplation, hand-simulation, gestation, rumination, dedication, inspiration, articulation
- Recognize cliché
seen a similar bug before
- Controlled experiments - test hypotheses by gathering data

Eisenstadt, M. [Tales of Debugging from the Front Lines](#). Proc. Empirical Studies of Programmers, Ablex Publishing, Norwood, NJ, 1993, 86-112.

Resources for testing hypotheses

| # subjects | Hypothesis instrumentation methods |
|------------|---|
| 7 | Inserting breakpoints and watch variables |
| 4 | Inserting log statements |
| 2 | Removing irrelevant code |
| 2 | Tweaking - modifying existing code |

| # subjects | Hypothesis testing and comparison methods |
|------------|---|
| 7 | Stepping in the debugger |
| 4 | Comparing against examples |
| 2 | Comparing against an oracle |
| 1 | Analyzing network packets |
| 1 | Backtracking |
| 1 | Printing out hard copies of code |

L. Layman, M. Diep, M. Nagappan, J. Singer, R. Deline and G. Venolia, "Debugging Revisited: Toward Understanding the Debugging Needs of Contemporary Software Developers," *2013 ACM / IEEE International Symposium on Empirical Software Engineering and Measurement*, Baltimore, MD, 2013, pp. 383-392.

Definitions

- Error - discrepancy between actual behavior of system and intended behavior
- Failure - incorrect output value, exception, etc.; an error that has become observable
- Fault - lines in code which are incorrect
- Debugging: determining the cause of a failure
 - May involve finding location (fault localization) as well as explanation.

Resources used in debugging

| # subjects | Resources used in debugging |
|------------|---|
| 15 | Debugger tools |
| 14 | Bug information |
| 12 | Communication with others |
| 9 | Internet resources |
| 7 | Custom code/manual debugging data |
| 6 | System state information (variables, packets) |
| 5 | Searching the source repository |
| 4 | Code browsers |
| 3 | Printed publications |
| 2 | Production health/status/monitoring systems |
| 2 | Build information |
| 1 | Personal library of technical tidbits |
| 1 | Shared internal development team resources |
| 1 | Product documentation |

L. Layman, M. Diep, M. Nagappan, J. Singer, R. Deline and G. Venolia, "Debugging Revisited: Toward Understanding the Debugging Needs of Contemporary Software Developers," *2013 ACM / IEEE International Symposium on Empirical Software Engineering and Measurement*, Baltimore, MD, 2013, pp. 383-392.

Information needs in debugging

✱ How did this *runtime state* occur? (12)

data, memory corruption, race conditions, hangs, crashes, failed API calls, test failures, null pointers

✱ Where was this *variable* last changed? (1)

✱ Why *didn't* this happen? (3)

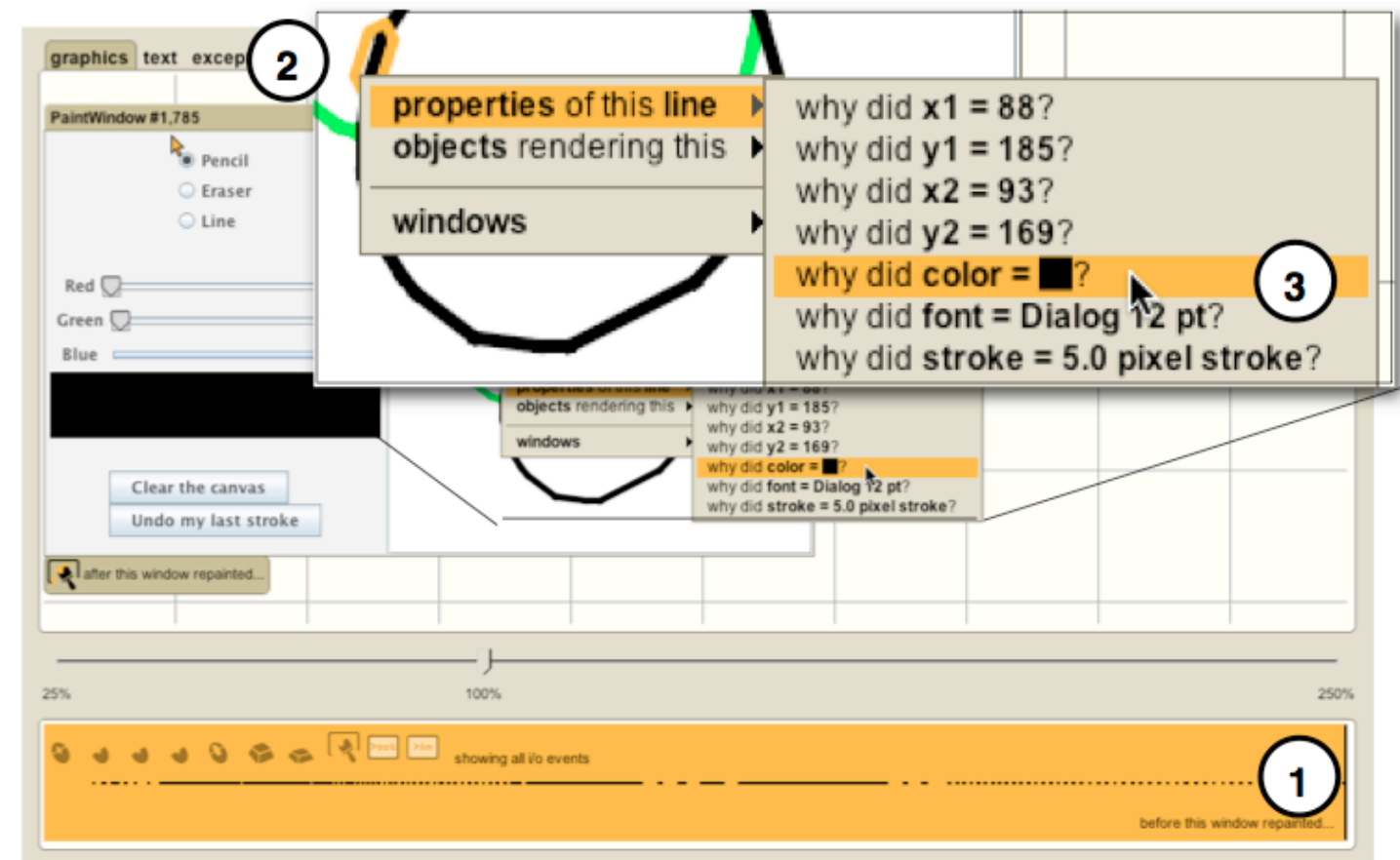
omniscient debuggers

Record execution history

Provide interactions for browsing or searching

WhyLine

directly supports all 3 questions in some situations



LaToza and Myers. Hard-to-answer questions about code. PLATEAU 2010.

* *How do I debug
this bug in this
environment? (3)*

* *In what
circumstances
does this bug
occur? (3)*

statistical debugging [1]

*-Sample execution traces
on **user** computers
-Find **correlations** between
crashes and predicates*

No need to
reproduce
environment on
developer
computer

Examine
correlations
between crashes
and predicates

[1] Liblit, B., Aiken, A., Zheng, A. X., and Jordan, M. I. 2003. Bug isolation via remote program sampling. In *Proceedings of the ACM SIGPLAN 2003 Conference on Programming Language Design and Implementation*.

✗ *How is this object **different** from that object? (1)*

✗ *What runtime state **changed** when this executed? (2)*

✗ *Which **team's** component caused this bug? (1)*

Which team should I assign this bug to?

Information needs in debugging

- What code could have caused this behavior?
- What's statically related to this code?
- What code cause this program state?

A: Why did I get gibberish? Storing field, given PPack, what is an MPField? I have no idea what this data structure contains. SPSField? I suspect SPS is just busted.

Activity

- What's the hardest debugging bug you've ever debugged?
- What made it hard?

What makes debugging hard?

| # subjects | Debugging challenges |
|------------|---|
| 11 | Environmental challenges |
| 7 | Multithreaded/multicore |
| 6 | Information quality |
| 6 | Communication challenges |
| 6 | Unable to reproduce failures consistently |
| 4 | Debugging process challenges |

| # subjects | Debugging challenges |
|------------|--|
| 6 | Capture and replay of production events |
| 3 | More contextual information in runtime logs/stack traces |
| 3 | Integrating data from different sources |
| 3 | Bi-directional debugger |
| 3 | Debugging tool training |
| 3 | Multithreaded support |
| 2 | Automatic breakpoints upon entry into a class |
| 2 | Automated log analysis |
| 2 | Program context |
| 2 | Visually showing the execution trace |

L. Layman, M. Diep, M. Nagappan, J. Singer, R. Deline and G. Venolia, "Debugging Revisited: Toward Understanding the Debugging Needs of Contemporary Software Developers," *2013 ACM / IEEE International Symposium on Empirical Software Engineering and Measurement*, Baltimore, MD, 2013, pp. 383-392.

What makes hard bugs hard to debug?

- Cause / effect chasm - symptom far removed from the root cause (15 instances)
 - timing / synchronization problems
 - intermittent / inconsistent / infrequent bugs
 - materialize many iterations after root cause
 - uncertain connection to hardware / compiler / configuration
- Inapplicable tools (12 instances)
 - Heisenbugs - bug disappears when using debugging tool
 - long run to replicate - debugging tool slows down long run even more
 - stealth bug - bug consumes evidence to detect bug
 - context - configuration / memory makes it impossible to use tool
- What you see is probably illusory (7 instances)
 - misreads something in code or in runtime observations
- Faulty assumption (6)
- Spaghetti code (3)

Eisenstadt, M. [Tales of Debugging from the Front Lines](#). Proc. Empirical Studies of Programmers, Ablex Publishing, Norwood, NJ, 1993, 86-112.

What makes hard bugs hard to debug?

Table 6 Root cause of the hardest bug (number of answers given).

| | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|--------|---------|-------|----------|
| memory | parallel | vendor | design | init | variable |
| 42 | 53 | 41 | 82 | 9 | 3 |
| lexical | ambiguous | user | unknown | other | |
| 1 | 6 | 5 | 29 | 32 | |

Table 7 Most useful technique to find the hardest bug (number of answers given).

| | | | | | |
|----------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------|
| stepping | wrapper | printf | log diff | breakpoints | tool |
| 54 | 5 | 33 | 12 | 38 | 15 |
| reading | expert | experiments | not fixed | other | |
| 41 | 4 | 58 | 31 | 12 | |

Table 8 Main difficulty source for hardest bug (number of answers given).

| | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|--------|------------|----------|---------|-------|
| distance | tools | output | assumption | bad code | unknown | other |
| 87 | 47 | 1 | 33 | 38 | 35 | 62 |

Activity

- What is a strategy you've used to debug a defect?

Some debugging strategies

- Backwards: Find statement that generated incorrect output, follow data and control dependencies backwards to find incorrect line of code
- Forwards: Find event that triggered incorrect behavior, follow control flow forward until incorrect state reached
- Input manipulation: Edit inputs, observe differences in output
- Blackbox debugging: Find documentation, code examples to understand correct use of API

Traditional debugging techniques

- Stepping in debugger
- Logging - insert print statements or wrap particular suspect functions
- Dump & diff - use diff tool to compare logging data between executions
- Conditional breakpoints
- Profiling tool - detect memory leaks, illegal memory references

Eisenstadt, M. [Tales of Debugging from the Front Lines](#). Proc. Empirical Studies of Programmers, Ablex Publishing, Norwood, NJ, 1993, 86-112.

Debugging tools

- Make breakpoint debuggers **better**
 - Support stepping backwards (omniscient debuggers)
 - Support finding statement that generated incorrect output
- Find **part** of program that generated incorrect output (slicing)
 - Output: subset of program
- Help developers **follow** data and control dependencies backwards
 - Support for navigating control and data dependencies (WhyLine)
- **Compare** execution across different runs to guess locations that might be related (automatic debugging)
 - Output: list of potential fault locations
- **Simplify** input to find a simpler input that still generates failure (delta debugging)
 - Output: simplified input
- Enable developers to directly answer questions about **causality**
 - Support searching across control and data flow (Reacher)
- Help developers understand execution **state**
 - Show visualizations which depict the current contents of memory
- Let developers **experiment**, editing program till they find the right one (live programming)[editing code]

Program analysis building blocks

- Many tools rely on gathering an execution trace
 - Record the value of every expression as it executes (or sometimes at function boundaries)
 - Challenge: scalability
- Other tools use log data
 - Gives developer control over what is being logged
 - More easily scalable, requires developer to control what is logged
- Other tools use test coverage data
 - Which statement executes on each test, test passing or succeeding

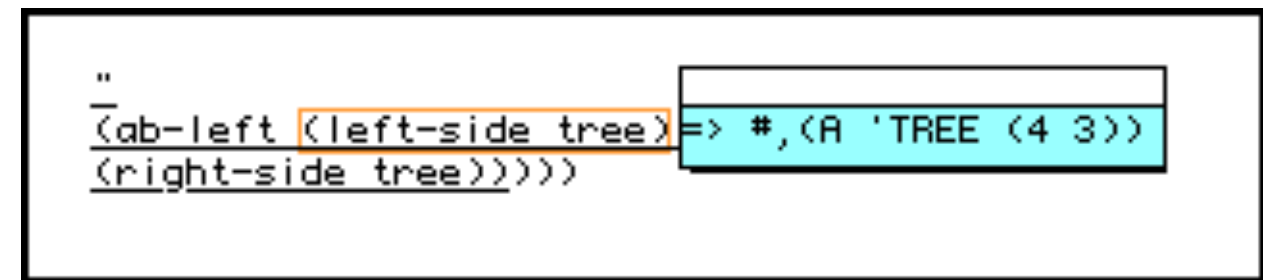
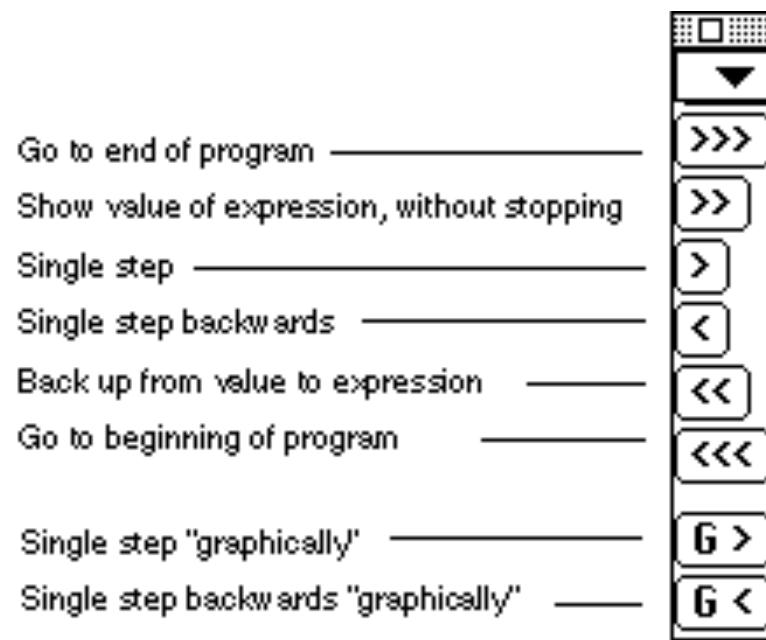
Make breakpoint debugging better

- Debugging in a debugger is hard
 - Forces developer to guess which methods to step into
 - Forces developers to guess which values to instrument
 - Changing guess requires reproing failure again
 - Can be time consuming
- What if developers could debug forwards **and** backwards?

ZStep94

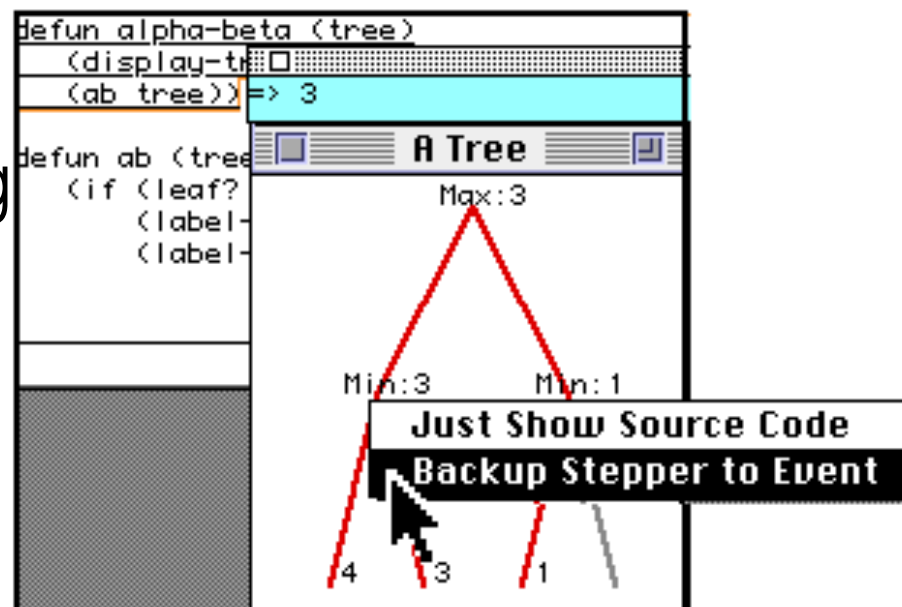
- Forwards / backwards stepping through execution events

See value of selected variables



- Select g

-

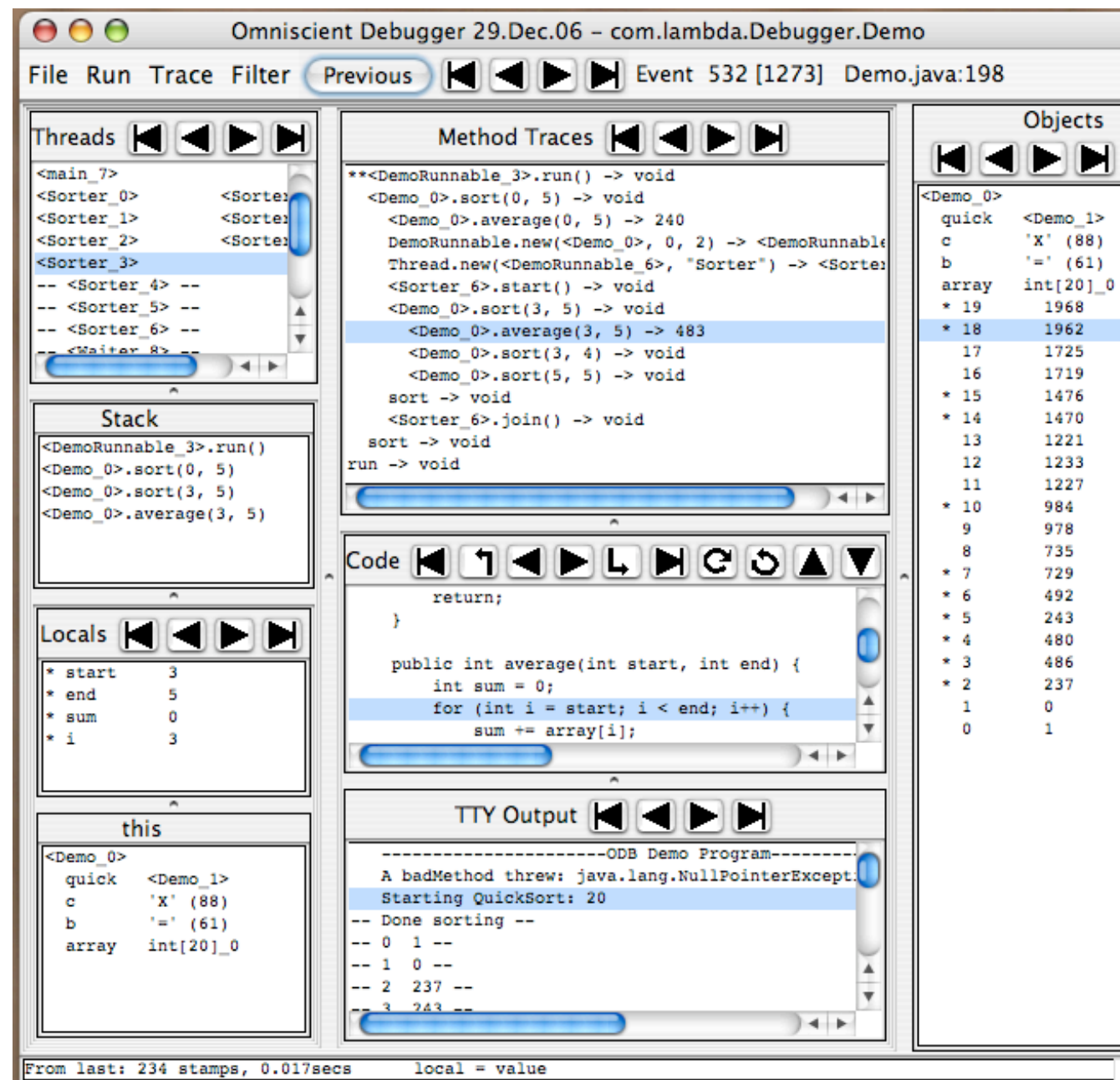


that drew it

Demo: <http://web.media.mit.edu/~lieber/Lieberary/ZStep/ZStep.mov>

Henry Lieberman and Christopher Fry. 1995. [Bridging the gulf between code and behavior in programming](#). In Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human factors in computing systems (CHI '95), 480-486.

Omniscient debugger



Demo / talk: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3897010229726822034#>

Bill Lewis. [Debugging backwards in time](#). In Proceedings of the Fifth International Workshop on Automated Debugging (AADEBUG 2003), October 2003.

Associating incorrect output with responsible code

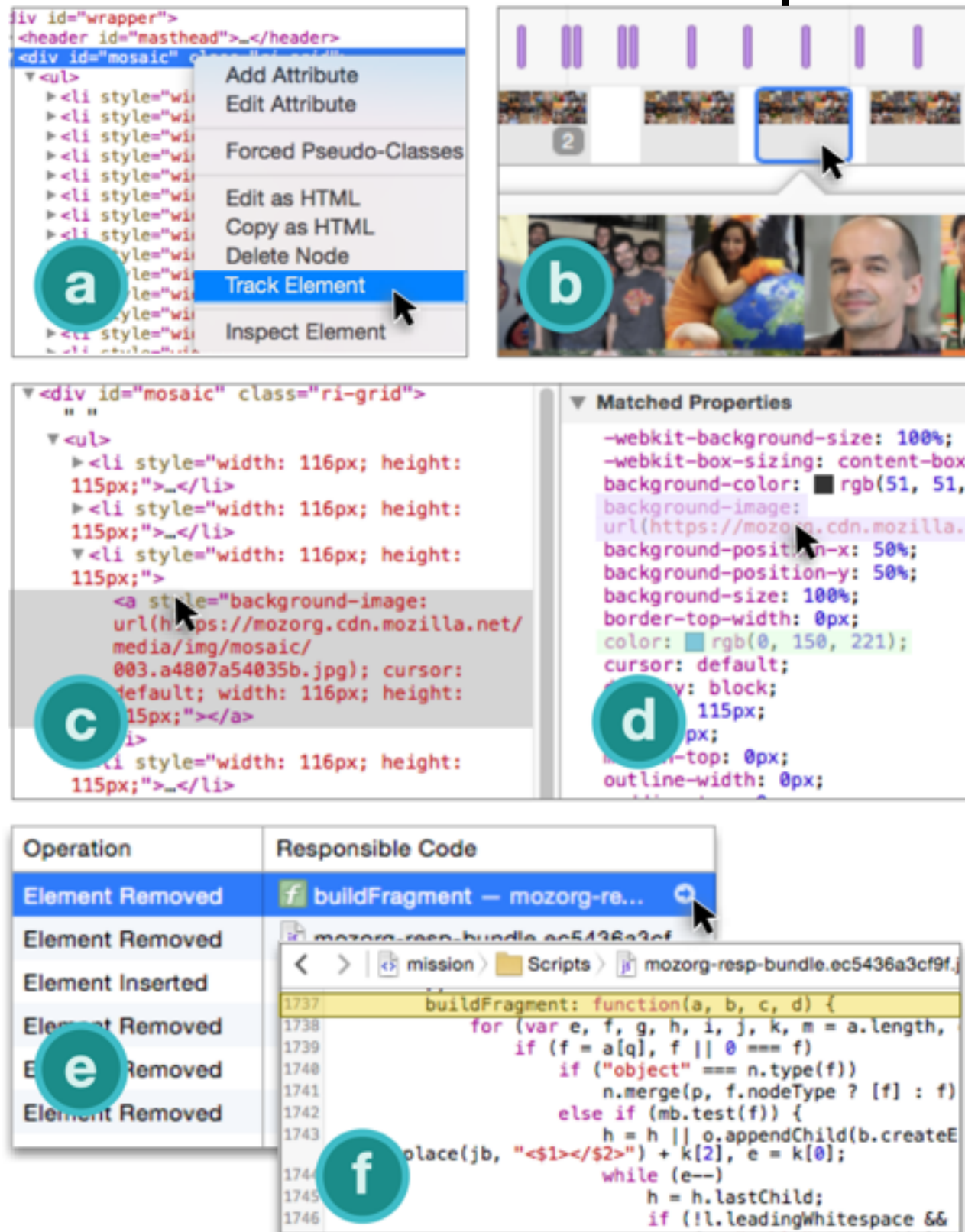


Figure 2. Susan first uses the Web Inspector to go from the mosaic's visual output to its DOM elements. Then, she uses Scry to track changes to the mosaic element (a), select different visual states to inspect (b), and see the DOM tree (c) and CSS styles (d) that produced each visual state. To jump to the code that implements interactive behaviors, Susan uses Scry to compare two states and then selects a single style property difference (d). Scry shows the mutation operations indirectly responsible for causing the property difference (e), and Susan can jump to JavaScript code (f) that performed each mutation operation.

Find part of the program that caused incorrect output

- Slice
 - Subset of the program that is responsible for computing the value of a variable at a program point
- Backwards slice
 - Transitive closure of all statements that have a control or data dependency
- Originally formulated as **subset** of program

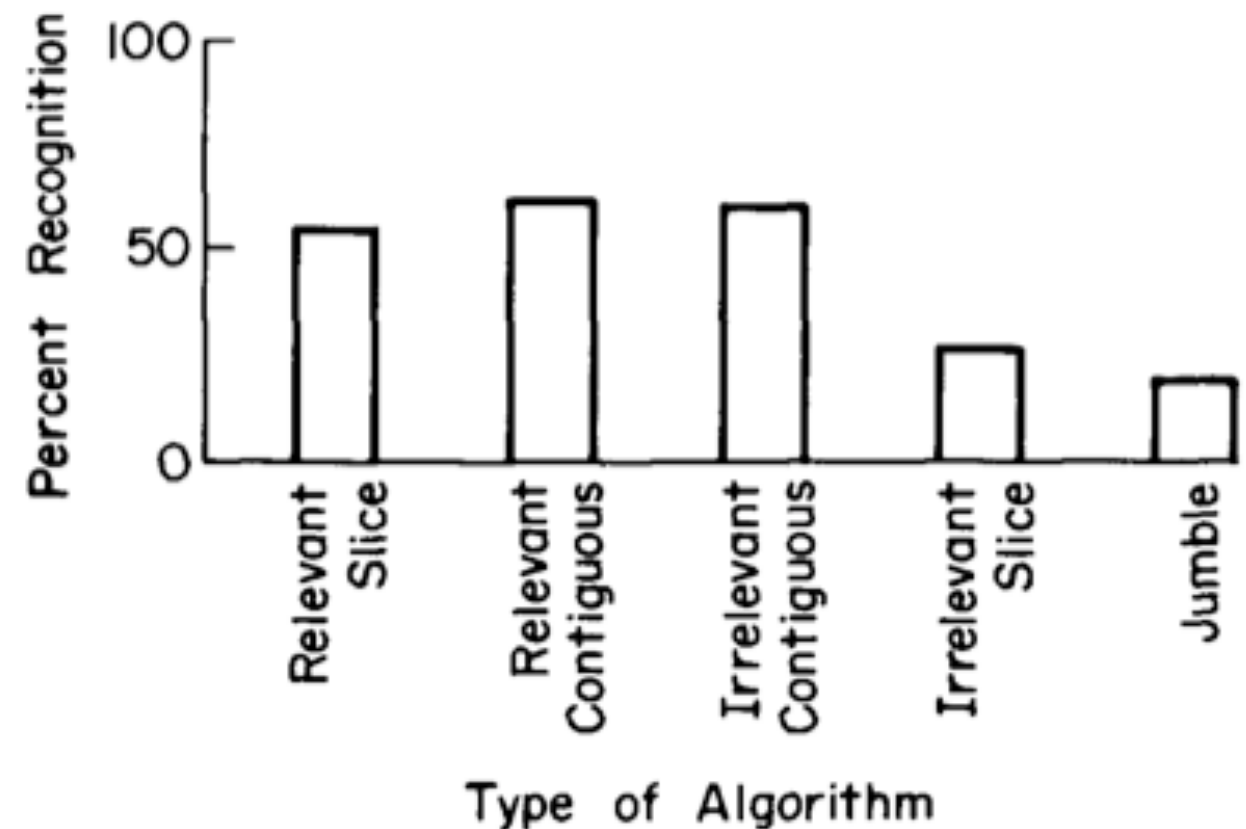
Early evidence for slicing

- ```
BEGIN
READ(X, Y)
TOTAL := 0.0
SUM := 0.0
IF X <= 1
 THEN SUM := Y
 ELSE BEGIN
 READ(Z)
 TOTAL := X * Y
 END
WRITE(TOTAL, SUM)
END
```

- (Static) slice - subset of the program values at a program point
- Slice on variable Z at 12

Participants performed 3 debugging tasks on short code snippets

Asked to recognize code snippets afterwards



# Slicers debug faster

- Students debugging 100 LOC C++ programs
- Students given
  - Programming environment
  - Hardcopy input, wrong output, correct output
  - Files with program & input
- Compared students instructed to slice against everyone else
  - Excluding students who naturally use slicing strategy
- Slicers debug significantly faster (65.29 minutes vs. 30.16 minutes)

Francel M. A. and S. Rugaber (2001). [The Value of Slicing While Debugging](#). *Science of Computer Programming*, 40(2-3), 151-169.



# Dynamic slicing

/u17/ha/v2/demo/example.bug.c

```

1 /* Find the sum of areas of given triangles. */
2 #define MAX 100
3 typedef enum {isosceles, equilateral, right, scalene} class_type;
4 typedef struct {int a, b, c;} triangle_type;
5
6 main()
7 {
8 triangle_type sides[MAX];
9 class_type class;
10 int a_sqr, b_sqr, c_sqr, N, i;
11 double area, sum, s, sqrt();
12
13 printf("Enter number of triangles:\n");
14 scanf("%d", &N);
15 for (i = 0; i < N; i++) {
16 printf("Enter three sides of triangle %d in ascending order:\n", i+1);
17 scanf("%d %d %d", &sides[i].a, &sides[i].b, &sides[i].c);
18 }
19
20 sum = 0;
21 i = 0;
22 while (i < N) {
23 a_sqr = sides[i].a * sides[i].a;
24 b_sqr = sides[i].b * sides[i].b;
25 c_sqr = sides[i].c * sides[i].c;
26 if ((sides[i].a == sides[i].b) && (sides[i].b == sides[i].c))
27 class = equilateral;
28 else if ((sides[i].a == sides[i].b) || (sides[i].b == sides[i].c))
29 class = isosceles;
30 else if (a_sqr == b_sqr + c_sqr)
31 class = right;
32 else class = scalene;
33
34 if (class == right)
35 area = sides[i].b * sides[i].c / 2.0;
36 else if (class == equilateral)
37 area = sides[i].a * sides[i].a * sqrt(3.0) / 4.0;
38 else {
39 s = (sides[i].a + sides[i].b + sides[i].c) / 2.0;
40 area = sqrt(s * (s - sides[i].a) * (s - sides[i].b) *
41 (s - sides[i].c));
42 }
43 sum += area;
44 i += 1;
45 }
46 printf("Sum of areas of the %d triangles is %.2f.\n", N, sum);
47 }

```

static analysis

approx. dynamic analysis

exact dynamic analysis

program slice

data slice

control slice

reaching defs

new testcase

clear

run

stop

continue

print

backup

step

stepback

delete

quit

stopped at line 47.  
 > stop at line 46  
 > backup  
 stopped at line 46.  
 > select exact dynamic analysis  
 > dynamic data slice on "sum" at line 46  
 >

Current Testcase #: 1

Hiralal Agrawal, Richard A. Demillo, and Eugene H. Spafford. 1993. [Debugging with dynamic slicing and backtracking](#). *Softw. Pract. Exper.* 23, 6 (June 1993), 589-616.

# Compare faulty & unfaulty execution traces

User hits bug and program crashes

Program (e.g. Microsoft Watson) logs stack trace

Stack trace sent to developers

Tool classifies trace into bug buckets

## Problems

WAY too many bug reports => way too many open bugs

=> can't spend a lot of time examining all of them

Mozilla has 35,622 open bugs plus 81,168 duplicates (in 2004)

Stack trace not good bug predictor for some systems (e.g. event based systems)

=> bugs may be in multiple buckets or multiple bugs in single bucket

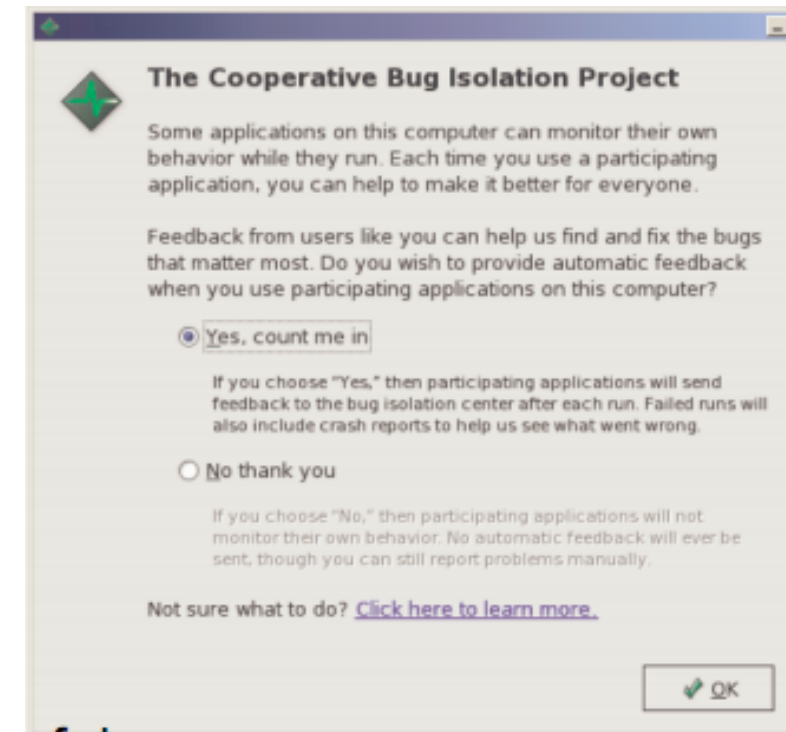
Stack trace may not have enough information to debug

=> hard to find the problem to fix



# Compare faulty & unfaulty execution traces

- Program runs on user computer
  - Crashes or exhibits bug (failure)
  - Exits without exhibiting bug (success)
- Counters count # times predicates hit
  - Counters sent back to developer for failing and successful runs
- Statistical debugging finds predicates that predict bugs
  - 100,000s to millions of predicates for small applications
  - Finds the best bug predicting predicates amongst these
- Problems to solve
  - Reports shouldn't overuse network bandwidth (esp ~2003)
  - Logging shouldn't kill performance
  - Interesting predicates need to be logged (fair sampling)
  - Find good bug predictors from runs
  - Handle multiple bugs in failure runs



Ben Liblit. (2005). Cooperative bug isolation. Dissertation, UC Berkeley.

# Compare faulty & unfaulty execution traces

- Predictor of what statements are related to a bug:  
$$\frac{\text{Fail}(P)}{\text{Pr}(\text{Crash} \mid P \text{ observed to be true})} - \frac{\text{Context}(P)}{\text{Pr}(\text{Crash} \mid P \text{ observed at all})}$$
- Example of a “likelihood ratio test”
- Comparing two hypotheses
- 1. Null Hypothesis:  $\text{Fail}(P) \leq \text{Context}(P)$   
 $\text{Alpha} \leq \text{Beta}$
- 2. Alternative Hypothesis:  $\text{Fail}(P) > \text{Context}(P)$   
 $\text{Alpha} > \text{Beta}$

# Simplify failure inducing input

- Long sequence of steps uncovered by tester triggers a bug.
- Which of these steps are causing the bug
- Complex input - which part of input is responsible for bug?
- Example - 10,700 Mozilla bugs (11/20/2000)

```
<td align=left valign=top>
<SELECT NAME="op_sys" MULTIPLE SIZE=7>
<OPTION VALUE="All">All<OPTION VALUE="Windows 3.1">Windows 3.1<OPTION VALUE="Windows 95">Windows 95<OPTION VALUE="Windows
98">Windows 98<OPTION VALUE="Windows ME">Windows ME<OPTION VALUE="Windows 2000">Windows 2000<OPTION VALUE="Windows
NT">Windows NT<OPTION VALUE="Mac System 7">Mac System 7<OPTION VALUE="Mac System 7.5">Mac System 7.5<OPTION VALUE="Mac
System 7.6.1">Mac System 7.6.1<OPTION VALUE="Mac System 8.0">Mac System 8.0<OPTION VALUE="Mac System 8.5">Mac System
8.5<OPTION VALUE="Mac System 8.6">Mac System 8.6<OPTION VALUE="Mac System 9.x">Mac System 9.x<OPTION VALUE="MacOS X">MacOS
X<OPTION VALUE="Linux">Linux<OPTION VALUE="BSDI">BSDI<OPTION VALUE="FreeBSD">FreeBSD<OPTION VALUE="NetBSD">NetBSD<OPTION
VALUE="OpenBSD">OpenBSD<OPTION VALUE="AIX">AIX<OPTION VALUE="BeOS">BeOS<OPTION VALUE="HP-UX">HP-UX<OPTION
VALUE="IRIX">IRIX<OPTION VALUE="Neutrino">Neutrino<OPTION VALUE="OpenVMS">OpenVMS<OPTION VALUE="OS/2">OS/2<OPTION
VALUE="OSF/1">OSF/1<OPTION VALUE="Solaris">Solaris<OPTION VALUE="SunOS">SunOS<OPTION VALUE="other">other</SELECT>
</td>
<td align=left valign=top>
<SELECT NAME="priority" MULTIPLE SIZE=7>
<OPTION VALUE="--">--<OPTION VALUE="P1">P1<OPTION VALUE="P2">P2<OPTION VALUE="P3">P3<OPTION VALUE="P4">P4<OPTION
VALUE="P5">P5</SELECT>
</td>
<td align=left valign=top>
<SELECT NAME="bug-severity" MULTIPLE SIZE=7>
<OPTION VALUE="blocker">blocker<OPTION VALUE="critical">critical<OPTION VALUE="major">major<OPTION
VALUE="normal">normal<OPTION VALUE="minor">minor<OPTION VALUE="trivial">trivial<OPTION VALUE="enhancement">enhancement</SELECT>
</tr>
</table>
```

Fig. 1. Printing this HTML page makes Mozilla crash (excerpt)

# Find shortest repro steps

- ddmin algorithm sketch:
    1. Decompose input into pieces
    2. Run tests on pieces
    3. If there's a piece that still fails, go back to 1 on piece
- Otherwise, found locally minimal smallest input

- | Step   | Test case  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | test |
|--------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1      | $\Delta_1$ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | . | . | . | . | ?    |
| 2      | $\Delta_2$ | . | . | . | . | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | X    |
| 3      | $\Delta_1$ | . | . | . | . | 5 | 6 | . | . | ✓    |
| 4      | $\Delta_2$ | . | . | . | . | . | . | 7 | 8 | X    |
| 5      | $\Delta_1$ | . | . | . | . | . | . | 7 | . | X    |
| Result |            | . | . | . | . | . | . | 7 | . |      |

 Done

Andreas Zeller and Ralf Hildebrandt. [Simplifying and Isolating Failure-Inducing Input](#). [IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering](#) 28(2), February 2002, pp. 183-200.