Debugging & Profiling with Open Source SW Tools

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What is Debugging ?!

• Identifying the cause of an error and correcting it
• Once you have identified defects, you need to:
  – find and understand the cause
  – remove the defect from your code
• In a large number of cases bug fixes are wrong:
  – they remove the symptom, but not the cause
• Improve productivity by getting it right the first time
• A lot of programmers don't know how to debug!
  – Doesn't add functionality & doesn't improve the science
• Debugging needs practice and experience:
  – understand the science and the tools
Lot of time debugging. We did learn also from it, but I have the feeling we could have learnt more things about Quantum Espresso if we hadn't had to be debugging for so long (some of the bugs we had were due to our lack of excellence in programming skills and were not specific to QE issues) (Cit. from ICTP Activity evaluation)
Errors are Opportunities

- Learn from the program you're working on:
  - Errors mean you didn't understand the program. If you knew it better, it wouldn't have an error. You would have fixed it already.

- Learn about the kinds of mistakes you make:
  - If you wrote the program, you inserted the error.
  - Once you find a mistake, ask yourself:
    - Why did you make it?
    - How could you have found it more quickly?
    - How could you have prevented it?
    - Are there other similar mistakes in the code?
The Nature of Bugs

• Straightforward bug to intercept and solve

• The program crashes unexpectedly
  – the problem can be easily reproduced (lucky)
  – bug whose causes are too complex to be reliably reproduced; it thus defies repair
  – bug disappears when debugging a problem (compiling with -g or adding prints)

• The produced numbers differ from what we expected
  – bug generated by an invalid operations
  – bug disappears when debugging a problem (compiling with -g or adding prints)
Main Reasons of Debugging

• Floating Point Exceptions (FPE)
  – Overflow
  – Invalid Number
  – Division by Zero

• Out of bound

• Segmentation Fault

• Not expected execution flow

• The Program Hangs
Purpose of a Debugger

• More information than print statements
• Allows to stop/start/single step execution
• Look at data and modify it
• ‘Post mortem’ analysis from core dumps
• Prove / disprove hypotheses
• No substitute for good thinking
• But, sometimes good thinking is not a substitute for effectively using a debugger!
• Easier to use with modular code
Approaches

• Print Messages and Variables 😊
• Compiler Debug Options
• Core analysis
• Run the Program with a Debugger
• Attach Debugger to a running process
• Ask for help!
Using a Debugger

• When compiling use -g option to include debug info in object (.o) and executable (and possibly -O0)
• 1:1 mapping of execution and source code only when optimization is turned off
  – problem when optimization uncovers bug
• GNU compilers allow -g with optimization
  – not always correct line numbers
  – variables/code can be 'optimized away'
  – progress confusing with loop unrolling
Using **gdb** as a Debugger

- **gdb ex01-c** launches debugger, loads binary, stops with **(gdb)** prompt waiting for input:
- **run** starts executable, arguments are passed Running program can be interrupted (ctrl-c)
- **gdb ./prog --args arg1 -flag** passes all arguments to the run command inside **gdb**
- **continue** continues stopped program
- **finish** continues until the end of a subroutine
- **step** single steps through program line by line
- **next** single steps but doesn't step into subroutines
More Basic `gdb` Commands

• **print** displays contents of a known data object
• **display** is like print but shows updates every step
• **where** shows stack trace (of function calls)
• **up/down** allows to move up/down on the stack
• **break** sets break point (unconditional stop), location indicated by file name+line no. or function
• **watch** sets a conditional break point (breaks when an expression changes, e.g. a variable)
• **delete** removes display or break points
Post Mortem Analysis

• Enable core dumps: ulimit -c unlimited
• Run executable until it crashes; will generate a file core or core.<pid> with memory image
• Load executable and core dump into debugger gdb myexe core.<pid>
• Inspect location of crash through commands: where, up, down, list
• Use directory to point to location of sources
Using valgrind

- Run `valgrind -v ./exe` to instrument and run
- `--leak-check=full --track-origins=yes`
- Output will list individual errors and summary
- With debug info present can resolve problems to line of code, otherwise to name of function
- Also monitors memory allocation / deallocation to flag memory leaks ("forgotten" allocations)
- Instrumentation slows down execution
- Can produce "false positives" (flag non-errors)
How to NOT do Debugging

• Find the error by guessing
• Change things randomly until it works (again)
• Don't keep track of what you changed
• Don't make a backup of the original
• Fix the error with the most obvious fix
• If wrong code gives the correct result, and changing it doesn't work, don't correct it.
• If the error is gone, the problem is solved. Trying to understand the problem, is a waste of time
Debugging Tools

• Source code comparison and management tools: diff, vimdiff, emacs/ediff, cvs/svn/git
  – Help you to find differences, origins of changes
• Source code analysis tools: compiler warnings, ftnchek, lint
  – Help you to find problematic code
    • Always enable warnings when programming
    • Always take warnings seriously (but not all)
    • Always compile/test on multiple platforms
• Bounds checking allows checking of (static) memory allocation violations (no malloc)
More Debugging Tools

• Using different compilers (Intel, GCC, Clang, ...)
• Debuggers and debugger frontends: 
  - **gdb** (GNU compilers), **idb** (Intel compilers), **ddd** (GUI), **eclipse** (IDE), and many more...
• **gprof** (profiler) as it can generate call graphs
• **valgrind**, an instrumentation framework
  - Memcheck: detects memory management problems
  - Cachegrind: cache profiler, detects cache misses
  - Callgrind: call graph creation tool
How to Report a Bug(?) to Others

• Research whether bug is known/fixed
  – web search, mailing list archive, bugzilla
• Provide description on how to reproduce the problem. Find a minimal input to show bug.
• Always state hardware/software you are using (distribution, compilers, code version)
• Demonstrate, that you have invested effort
• Make it easy for others to help you!

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Debugging & Profiling with Open Source SW Tools
Profiling

• Essential operation for code optimization
• Profiling usually means:
  – Instrumentation of code (e.g. during compilation)
  – Automated collection of timing data during execution
  – Analysis of collected data, breakdown by function
• Example: gcc -o some_exe.x -pg some_code.c
  – ./some_exe.x
  – gprof some_exe.x gmon.out
• Profiling is often incompatible with code optimization or can be misleading (inlining)
Parallel Transport Programming Exercise

A taball for the files needed for this exercise are available at transport-source.tgz

save_data done

IO time in seconds 1.49

Transport problem

Temperature values are calculated over a grid and initialized with a gaussian distribution. The points of the grid represent temperature values. The domain is shown in orange in the picture below. Boundaries are represented in white. Data are exported to the coordinate system...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>time</th>
<th>seconds</th>
<th>seconds</th>
<th>calls</th>
<th>ms/call</th>
<th>ms/call</th>
<th>name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93.69</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>15000</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>evolve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>__intel_sse3_rep_mempcy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>30000</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>ix2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>15001</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>update_boundaries_PBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>_intel_fast_mempcy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>iy2y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>save_gnuplot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>init_transport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERF – Hardware Assisted Profiling

- Modern x86 CPUs contain performance monitor tools included in their hardware.
- Linux kernel versions support this feature which allows for very low overhead profiling without instrumentation of binaries.

- `perf stat ./a.out` -> profile summary
- `perf record ./a.out; perf report -i perf.data`
- gprof like function level profiling (with coverage report and disassembly, if debug info present)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Samples: 3K of event 'cycles', Event count (approx.): 1847839734</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>evolve</td>
<td>__intel_ssse3_rep_memcpy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__printf_fp</td>
<td>0xffffffff8103ba6a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__intel_fast_memcpy</td>
<td>update_boundaries_PBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__mpn_mul_1</td>
<td>hack_digit.15673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vfprintf</td>
<td>__isinf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__intel_fast_memcpy.P</td>
<td>__mpn_rshift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__mcount_internal</td>
<td>__strlen_sse2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exp.L</td>
<td>__strchrnull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__mpn_divrem</td>
<td>ix2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__mcount</td>
<td>__mpn_lshift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__mpn_extract_double</td>
<td>__IO_file_xsputh.@@GLIBC_2.2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Function for Internal Profiling

```c
#include <time.h>
#include <ctype.h>
#include <sys/types.h>
#include <sys/time.h>

double seconds()
/* Returns elapsed seconds past from the last call to timer rest */
{
    struct timeval tmp;
    double sec;
    gettimeofday( &tmp, (struct timezone *)0 );
    sec = tmp.tv_sec + ((double)tmp.tv_usec)/1000000.0;
    return sec;
}
```
Debugging & Profiling with Open Source SW Tools

This run was terminated on: 12:25:36 12Oct2012
Profiling in Python

• individual functions:
  – import cProfile
  – cProfile.run('some_func()', 'profile.tmp')

• whole script:
  – python -m cProfile [-o output_file] [-s sort_order] myscript.py

• Analyze profile file:
  – import pstats
  – p = pstats.Stats('profile.tmp')
  – p.strip_dirs().sort_stats(-1).print_stats()

• More info at http://docs.python.org/2/library/profile.html
Debugging Python

• typically very easy to do interactively with "print()" and "exit()" statements in the code

• More featureful debugger available in module "pdb", see:
  – http://docs.python.org/2.7/library/pdb.html
References

• **PERF wiki**