C++ debugging

Bruce Merr

The GNU

Debugge Introduction Setup Demo Configuration

Catching

Assertions
Debug Container
Sanitizers

C++ debugging

Bruce Merry

IOI Training Feb 2020

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Valgrind

1 The GNU Debugger

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What is GDB?

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- Tool that peeks inside your program
- Helps examine what is happening
- Helps trace crashes
- Integrated into a number of IDEs

GDB vs debug printing

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Debug prints are good for:

Dumping large amounts of data, when you know what you want to see

A debugger is better for:

- Following the flow of execution
- Determining the cause of a crash
- Testing hypotheses as execution proceeds

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Compiler Options

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- Do not compile with -02
- Install C++ library symbols (libstdc++6-5-dbg)

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Behaviour can be adjusted via ~/.gdbinit

set history filename ~/.gdb_history
set history save on
set env ASAN_OPTIONS=detect_leaks=0
set print array on
set print pretty on

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Assertions

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Assertions

assert (condition_that_should_be_true); Use GDB to debug the failure.

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Unsafe Containers

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Debug Containers

STL containers do not check for errors:

```
vector<int> v(4);
v[4] = 123; // ANYTHING can happen!
```

This is good for performance, bad for debugging.

GCC Debug Containers

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Compile with -D_GLIBCXX_DEBUG.

- Out-of-bounds accesses
- Pop from an empty container
- Incrementing/decrementing terminal iterators
- Undefined iterator comparisons
- And more...

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Address Sanitizer

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Compile with -fsanitize=address

- Compiler flag that inserts checks into your code (about 2x slower!)
- Not specific to STL, so can catch array errors
- Also catches other errors like use-after-free

Undefined Behaviour Sanitizer

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Compile with -fsanitize=undefined

- Signed integer overflow
- Invalid bit shifts
- Falling off end of function without returning
- Some out-of-bounds array accesses (not all)
- Misc other checks

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- Separate program; no recompilation necessary
- More robust and powerful than ASAN
- Also catches uninitialized data
- Slower and more memory-hungry