

Static and Dynamic Analysis

17-313, Foundations of Software Engineering, Fall 2023

Learning Goals

- Gain an understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of static and dynamic analysis
- Examine several popular analysis tools and understand their use cases
- Understand how analysis tools are used in large open source software

Outline

- `goto fail;` and similar unfamous bugs
- Static analysis vs dynamic analysis
- Static analysis tools
 - Linters for maintainability
 - Pattern-based static analyzers
- Challenges of static analysis

```
1. static OSStatus
2. SSLVerifySignedServerKeyExchange(SSLContext *ctx, bool isRsa,
3.                                 SSLBuffer signedParams,
4.                                 uint8_t *signature,
5.                                 UInt16 signatureLen) {
6.     OSStatus err;
7.     ....
8.     if ((err = SSLHashSHA1.update(&hashCtx, &serverRandom)) != 0)
9.         goto fail;
10.    if ((err = SSLHashSHA1.update(&hashCtx, &signedParams)) != 0)
11.        goto fail;
12.        goto fail;
13.    if ((err = SSLHashSHA1.final(&hashCtx, &hashOut)) != 0)
14.        goto fail;
15.    ...
16. fail:
17.     SSLFreeBuffer(&signedHashes);
18.     SSLFreeBuffer(&hashCtx);
19.     return err;
20. }
```

goto fail;

Analysis

Apple's SSL iPhone vulnerability: how did it happen, and what next?

Charles Arthur

SSL vulnerability in iPhone, iPad and on Mac OS X appeared in September 2012 - but cause remains mysterious as former staffer calls lack of testing 'shameful'

goto fail; // [Apple SSL bug test site](#)

This site will help you determine whether your computer is vulnerable

YOUR BROWSER IS VULNERABLE

We have examined your OS and browser version information and determined that your system is vulnerable. **Other applications on your system** such as mail, contacts, and calendars (and other applications on **networks**) can freely **snoop on you**, for example when you log into them right away.

Apple's SSL vulnerability is still active on Safari on Mac OS X as shown at the [gotofail.com](#) site. Photograph: Public domain Photograph: Public domain

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When will Apple get serious about security?

The tech community (and beyond) is an uproar over the recently revealed iOS and OS X SSL/TLS code flaw. Apple developers have questions about Apple's commitment to quality and the flaw itself.



Written by David Morgenstern, Contributor on Feb. 23, 2014

```
1. /* from Linux 2.3.99 drivers/block/raid5.c */
2. static struct buffer_head *
3. get_free_buffer(struct stripe_head * sh,
4.                 int b_size) {
5.     struct buffer_head *bh;
6.     unsigned long flags;
7.     save_flags(flags);
8.     cli(); // disables interrupts
9.     if ((bh = sh->buffer_pool) == NULL)
10.        return NULL;
11.     sh->buffer_pool = bh -> b_next;
12.     bh->b_size = b_size;
13.     restore_flags(flags); // re-enables interrupts
14.     return bh;
15. }
```

ERROR: function returns with
interrupts disabled!

Twitter's week year bug

ISO 8601 rule: *The first week of the year is the week containing the first Thursday.*

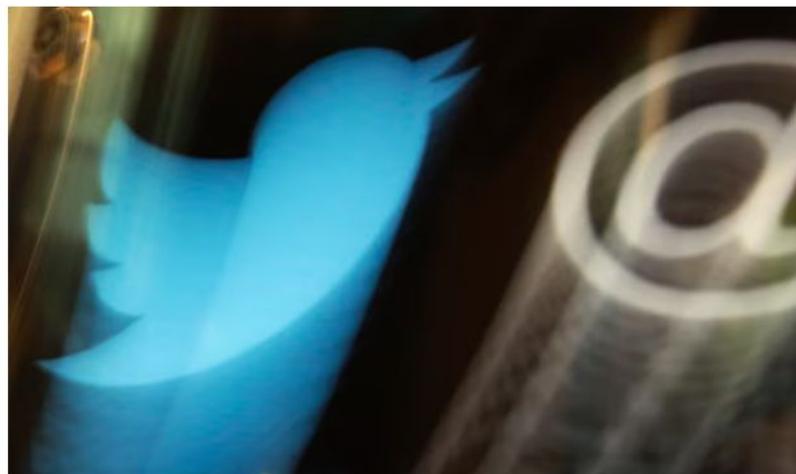
"So if January 1 falls on a Friday, it belongs to the last week of the previous year. If December 31 falls on a Wednesday, it belongs to week 01 of the following year."

```
DateTimeFormatter.ofPattern("dd MMM YYYY").format(zonedDateTime)
```

Use yyyy instead of YYYY

Twitter kicks Android app users out for five hours due to 2015 date bug

The social network celebrated 2015 in style, by breaking its Android app and mobile website - and all, it seems, because of one misplaced letter



📷 Crashy bird: Twitter was down for five hours overnight. Photograph: Richard Drew/AP

If you're worried about how your New Year's Eve will go, don't. It's not even 2015 yet, and Twitter's already had a worse one than you.

The service was down for many users over five and a half hours on Monday morning UK time, between midnight and 5am (7pm to midnight ET, and 4pm to 9pm PT), after a bug in a line of code caused the service to think that it was 29 December, 2015.

Could you have found them?

- How often would those bugs trigger?
- Driver bug:
 - o What happens if you return from a driver with interrupts disabled?
 - o Consider: that's one function
 - ...in a 2000 LOC file
 - ...in a module with 60,000 LOC
 - ...IN THE LINUX KERNEL

Some defects are very difficult to find via testing, inspection.

Defects of interest...

- Are on uncommon or difficult-to-force execution paths. (vs testing)
- Executing (or interpreting/otherwise analyzing) all paths concretely to find such defects is infeasible.
- What we really want to do is check the **entire possible state space** of the program for particular properties.
- What we **CAN** do is check an **abstract state space** of the program for particular properties.

Activity: Analyze the Python program statically

```
def n2s(n: int, b: int):
    if n <= 0: return '0'
    r = ''
    while n > 0:
        u = n % b
        if u >= 10:
            u = chr(ord('A') + u - 10)
        n = n // b
        r = str(u) + r
    return r
```

1. What are the set of data types taken by variable `u` at any point in the program?
2. Can the variable u be a negative number?
3. Will this function always return a value?
4. Can there ever be a division by zero?
5. Will the returned value ever contain a minus sign '-'?

What is Static Analysis?

- **Systematic** examination of an **abstraction** of program **state space**.
 - Does not execute code! (like code review)
- **Abstraction:** produce a representation of a program that is simpler to analyze.
 - Results in fewer states to explore; makes difficult problems tractable.
- Check if a **particular property** holds over the entire state space:
- Liveness: “something good eventually happens.”
 - Safety: “this bad thing can’t ever happen.”
 - Compliance with mechanical design rules.

What static analysis can and cannot do

- **Type-checking** is well established
 - Set of data types taken by variables at any point
 - Can be used to prevent type errors (e.g. Java) or warn about potential type errors (e.g. Python)
- Checking for **problematic patterns** in syntax is easy and fast
 - Is there a comparison of two Java strings using `==`?
 - Is there an array access `a[i]` without an enclosing bounds check for `i`?
- Reasoning about **termination is impossible** in general
 - Halting problem
- Reasoning about **exact values is hard**, but conservative analysis via abstraction is possible
 - Is the bounds check before `a[i]` guaranteeing that `i` is within bounds?
 - Can the divisor ever take on a zero value?
 - Could the result of a function call be `42`?
 - Will this multi-threaded program give me a deterministic result?
 - Be prepared for **"MAYBE"**
- Verifying some advanced properties is possible but expensive
 - CI-based static analysis usually over-approximates conservatively

The Bad News: Rice's Theorem

Every static analysis is necessarily incomplete, unsound, undecidable, or a combination thereof

“Any nontrivial property about the language recognized by a Turing machine is undecidable.”

Henry Gordon Rice, 1953

Static Analysis is well suited to detecting certain defects

- **Security:** Buffer overruns, improperly validated input...
- **Memory safety:** Null dereference, uninitialized data...
- **Resource leaks:** Memory, OS resources...
- **API Protocols:** Device drivers; real time libraries; GUI frameworks
- **Exceptions:** Arithmetic/library/user-defined
- **Encapsulation:**
 - Accessing internal data, calling private functions...
- **Data races:**
 - Two threads access the same data without synchronization

Activity: Analyze the Python program dynamically

```
def n2s(n: int, b: int):
    if n <= 0: return '0'
    r = ''
    while n > 0:
        u = n % b
        if u >= 10:
            u = chr(ord('A') + u-10)
        n = n // b
        r = str(u) + r
    return r
```

```
print(n2s(12, 10))
```

1. What are the set of data types taken by variable `u` at any point in the program?
2. Did the variable `u` ever contain a negative number?
3. For how many iterations did the while loop execute?
4. Was there ever be a division by zero?
5. Did the returned value ever contain a minus sign '-'?

Dynamic analysis reasons about program executions

- Tells you properties of the program that were definitely observed
 - Code coverage
 - Performance profiling
 - Type profiling
 - Testing
- In practice, implemented by program *instrumentation*
 - Think “Automated logging”
 - Slows down execution speed by a small amount

Static Analysis

- Requires only source code
- Conservatively reasons about all possible inputs and program paths
- Reported warnings may contain false positives
- Can report all warnings of a particular class of problems
- Advanced techniques like verification can prove certain complex properties, but rarely run in CI due to cost

Dynamic Analysis

- Requires successful build + test inputs
- Observes individual executions
- Reported problems are real, as observed by a witness input
- Can only report problems that are seen. Highly dependent on test inputs. Subject to false negatives
- Advanced techniques like symbolic execution can prove certain complex properties, but rarely run in CI due to cost

Static Analysis Tools

Tools for Static Analysis



Static analysis can be applied to all attributes

- Find bugs
- Refactor code
- Keep your code stylish!
- Identify code smells
- Measure quality
- Find usability and accessibility issues
- Identify bottlenecks and improve performance

CNET › News › Security & Privacy › Klocwork: Our source code analyzer caught Apple's !...

Klocwork: Our source code analyzer caught Apple's 'gotofail' bug

If Apple had used a third-party source code analyzer on its encryption library, it could have avoided the "gotofail" bug.

The screenshot shows a news article snippet and a code editor. The article is by Declan McCullagh, dated February 28, 2014. The code editor displays a snippet from 'sskKeyExchange.c' with the following code:

```
622 if ((err = ReadyHash(KSSLSHashSHA1, &hashCtx)) != 0)
623     goto fail;
624
625 if ((err = SSLHashSHA1_update(&hashCtx, &clientRandom)) != 0)
626     goto fail;
627 if ((err = SSLHashSHA1_update(&hashCtx, &serverRandom)) != 0)
628     goto fail;
629 if ((err = SSLHashSHA1_update(&hashCtx, &signedParams)) != 0)
630     goto fail;
631
632 Code unreachable: SSLHashSHA1_Final(&hashCtx, &hashOut) != 0
        goto fail;
        err = sslRawVerify(&ctx,
        ctx->peerPubKey,
```

Annotations in the image include:

- Two arrows pointing to the repeated `goto fail;` lines with the text "Static code analysis wins!".
- A red arrow pointing to the `Code unreachable` warning with the text "Apple, we need to talk".

Below the code is a table of Klocwork issues:

Description	Severity	Resource	Location	Severity
UNREACHABLE: Code is unreachable.	Warning (E)	sskKeyExchange.c	632	Warning (E)

Klocwork's Larry Edelstein sent us this screen snapshot, complete with the arrows, showing how the company's product would have nabbed the "gotofail" bug. (Credit: Klocwork)

It was a single repeated line of code -- "goto fail" -- that left millions of Apple users vulnerable to Internet attacks until the company finally fixed it Tuesday.

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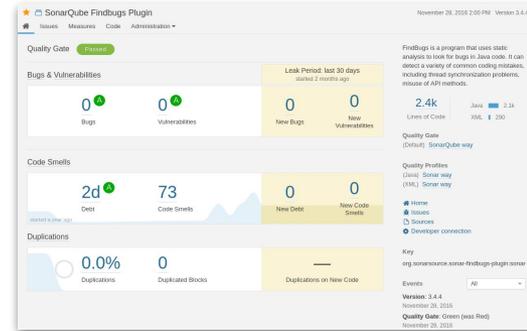
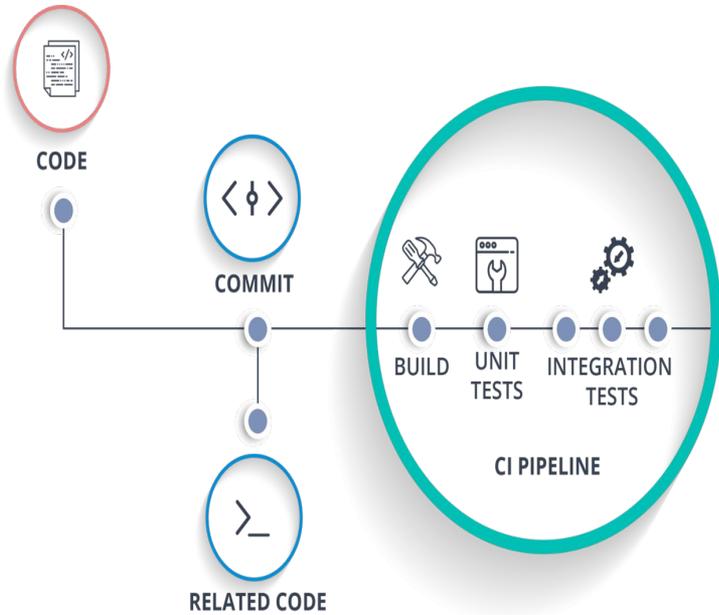
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Static analysis is a key part of continuous integration

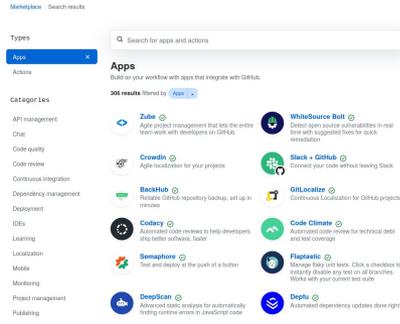


GitHub Actions



Static analysis is a growing industry

GitHub acquires code analysis tool Semmle



News

Snyk Secures \$150M, Snags \$1B Valuation

Sydney Sawaya | Associate Editor
January 21, 2020 1:12 PM



Snyk, a developer-focused security startup that identifies vulnerabilities in open source applications, announced a \$150 million Series C funding round today. This brings the company's total investment to \$250 million alongside reports that put the company's valuation at more than \$1 billion.



<https://www.sdxcentral.com/articles/news/snyk-secures-150m-snags-1b-valuation/2020/01/>

<https://techcrunch.com/2019/09/18/github-acquires-code-analysis-tool-semmle/>

<https://github.com/marketplace>

Static analysis is also integrated into IDEs



```
cppcoreguidelines.cpp
1 // To enable only C++ Core Guidelines checks
2 // go to Settings/Preferences | Editor | Inspections | C/C++ | Clang-Tidy
3 // and provide: -*,cppcoreguidelines* in options
4
5 void fill_pointer(int* arr, const int num) {
6     for(int i = 0; i < num; ++i) {
7         arr[i] = 0;
8     }
9 }
10
11 void fill_array(int ind) {
12     int arr[3] = {1,2,3};
13     arr[ind] = 0;
14 }
15
16 void cast_away_const(const int& magic_num)
17 {
18     const_cast<int&>(magic_num) = 42;
19 }
20
```

Do not use pointer arithmetic

```
Example.m
10 }
11
12 void foo(int x, int y) {
13     id obj = [[NSString alloc] init];
14     switch (x) {
15         case 0:
16             [obj release];
17             break;
18         case 1:
19             // [obj autorelease];
20             break;
21         default:
22             break;
23     }
24 }
```

2. Object allocated on line 13 is no longer referenced after this point and has a ...

Method returns an Objective-C object with a +1 retain count (owning reference)

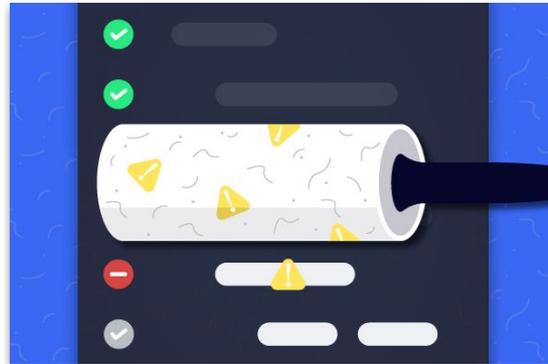
Object allocated on line 13 is no longer referenced after this point and has a retain count of +1 (object leaked)

What makes a good static analysis tool?

- Static analysis should be **fast**
 - Don't hold up development velocity
 - This becomes more important as code scales
- Static analysis should report **few false positives**
 - Otherwise developers will start to ignore warnings and alerts, and quality will decline
- Static analysis should be **continuous**
 - Should be part of your continuous integration pipeline
 - Diff-based analysis is even better -- don't analyse the entire codebase; just the changes
- Static analysis should be **informative**
 - Messages that help the developer to quickly locate and address the issue
 - Ideally, it should suggest or automatically apply fixes

Linters

Cheap, fast, and lightweight static source analysis



Linters for Maintainability

Use linters to improve maintainability

Why? We spend more time reading code than writing it.

- Developers spend most of their time maintaining code
 - Various estimates of the exact %, some as high as 80%
- Code ownership is usually shared
- The original owner of some code may move on
- Code conventions make it easier for other developers to quickly understand your code

Use Style Guidelines to facilitate communication

- Indentation
- Comments
- Line length
- Naming
- Directory structure
- ...



Guidelines are inherently opinionated, but **consistency** is the important point. Agree to a set of conventions and stick to them.

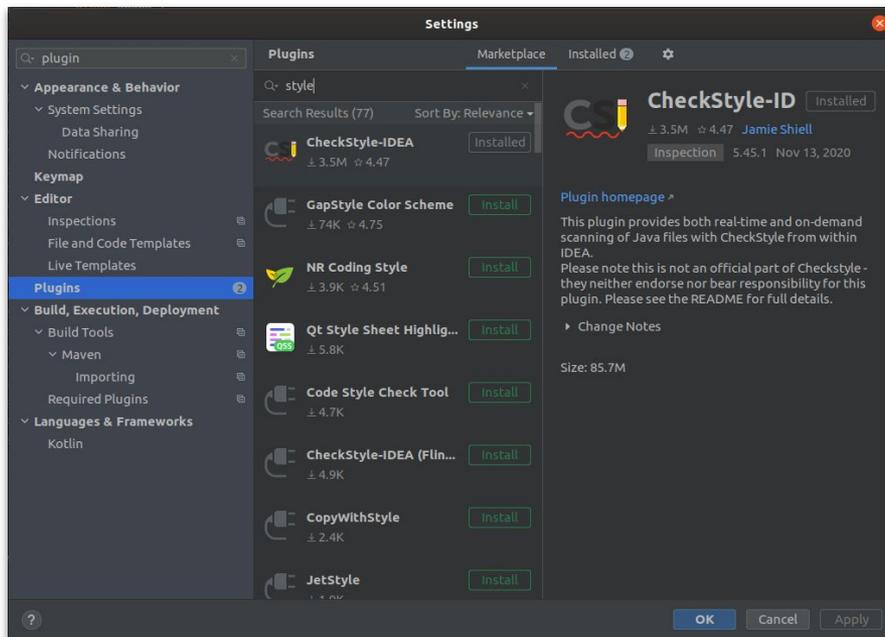


Use linters to enforce style guidelines
Don't rely on manual inspection during code review!



Automatically reformat your existing code

Developer time is valuable!



Take Home Message:

Style is an easy way to improve readability

- Everyone has their own opinion (e.g., tabs vs. spaces)
- Agree to a convention and stick to it
 - Use continuous integration to enforce it
- Use automated tools to fix issues in existing code

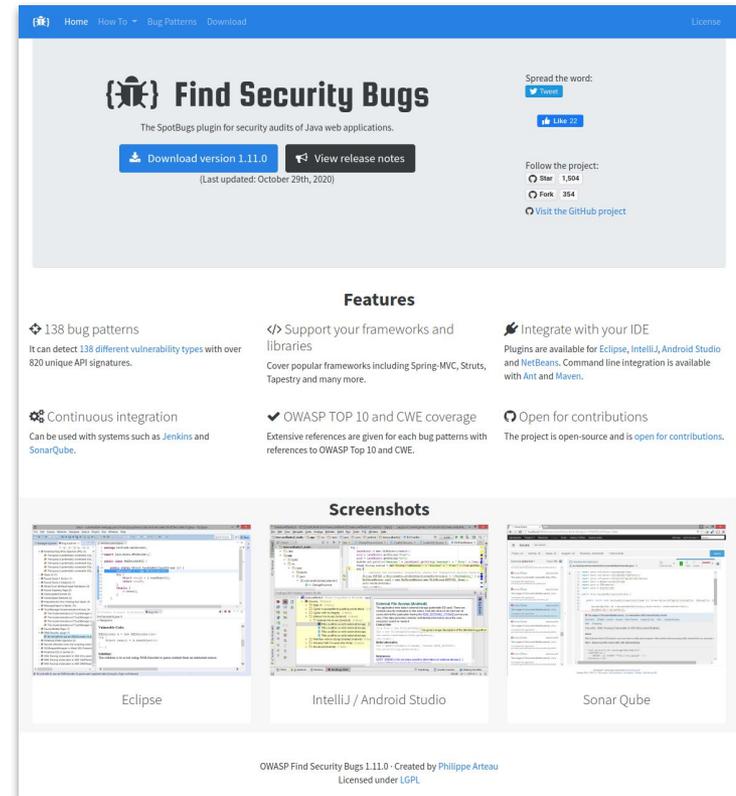
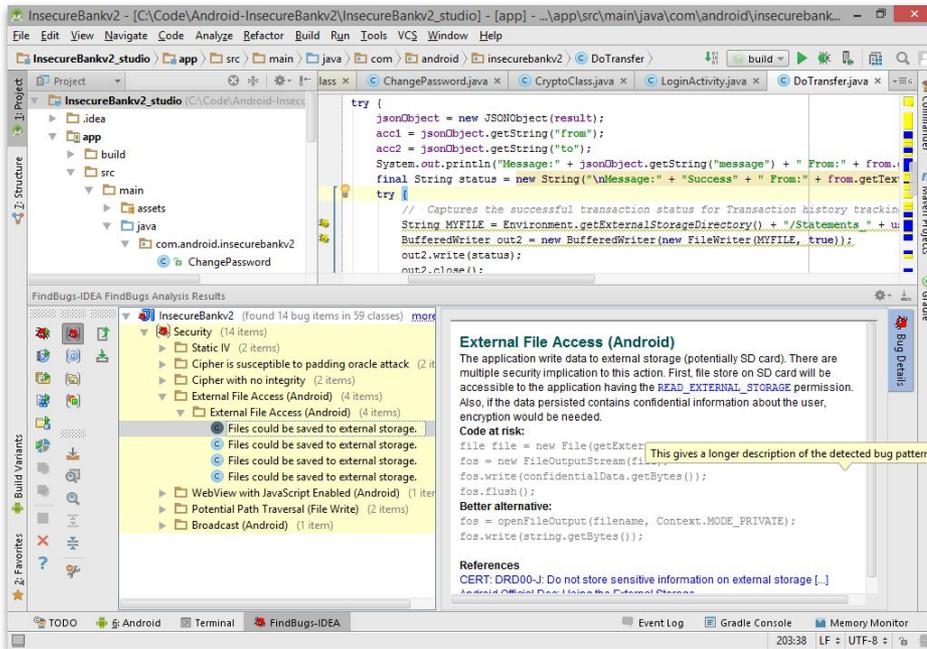
Pattern-Based Static Analyzers

Cheap and fast tools that scan Abstract Syntax Trees for common developer mistakes known as **patterns**

<https://github.com/analysis-tools-dev/static-analysis>



SpotBugs can be extended with plugins



Bad Practice:

```
String x = new String("Foo");  
String y = new String("Foo");
```

```
if (x == y) {  
    System.out.println("x and y are the same!");  
} else {  
    System.out.println("x and y are different!");  
}
```

Bad Practice: ES_COMPARING_STRINGS_WITH_EQ

Comparing strings with ==

```
String x = new String("Foo");  
String y = new String("Foo");
```

```
if (x == y) {  
if (x.equals(y)) {  
    System.out.println("x and y are the same!");  
} else {  
    System.out.println("x and y are different!");  
}
```

Performance:

```
public static String repeat(String string, int times)
{
    String output = string;
    for (int i = 1; i < times; ++i) {
        output = output + string;
    }
    return output;
}
```

Performance: SBSC_USE_STRINGBUFFER_CONCATENATION Method concatenates strings using + in a loop

```
public static String repeat(String string, int times)
{
    String output = string;
    for (int i = 1; i < times; ++i) {
        output = output + string;
    }
    return output;
}
```

The method seems to be building a String using concatenation in a loop. In each iteration, the String is converted to a StringBuffer/StringBuilder, appended to, and converted back to a String. **This can lead to a cost quadratic in the number of iterations, as the growing string is recopied in each iteration.**

Performance: SBSC_USE_STRINGBUFFER_CONCATENATION
Method concatenates strings using + in a loop

```
public static String repeat(String string, int times)
{
    StringBuffer output = new StringBuffer(string);
    for (int i = 1; i < times; ++i) {
        output.append(string);
    }
    return output.toString();
}
```

Performance: SBSC_USE_STRINGBUFFER_CONCATENATION
Method concatenates strings using + in a loop

```
public static String repeat(String string, int times)
{
    int length = string.length() * times;
    StringBuffer output = new StringBuffer(length);
    for (int i = 0; i < times; ++i) {
        output.append(string);
    }
    return output.toString();
}
```

Challenges of Static Analysis

Reasons engineers do not always use static analysis tools or ignore their warnings

- Not integrated.
 - The tool is not integrated into the developer's workflow or takes too long to run
- Not actionable
 - Whenever possible, the error should include a suggested fix that can be applied mechanically
- Not trustworthy
 - Users do not trust the results
- Not manifest in practice.
 - The reported bug is theoretically possible, but the problem does not actually manifest in practice
- Too expensive to fix.
 - Fixing the detected bug is too expensive or risky
- Warnings not understood

What are some of the problems with SpotBugs?

Google: Move static checks to the compiler

Developers can ignore warnings, but they can't ignore build errors

clang-tidy

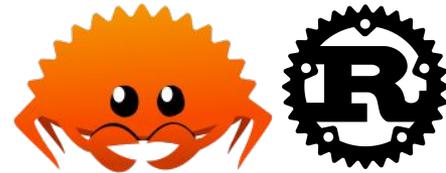


Error Prone



New languages have embraced the same idea

Code smells will cause the build to fail (e.g., dead code)



Challenges

- The analysis must produce **zero false positives**
 - Otherwise developers won't be able to build the code!
- The analysis needs to be **really fast**
 - Ideally < 100 ms
 - If it takes longer, developers will become irritated and lose productivity
- You can't just "turn on" a particular check
 - Every instance where that check fails will prevent existing code from building
 - There could be thousands of violations for a single check across large codebases

Challenges

- The analysis must produce zero false positives
 - Otherwise developers won't be able to build the code!
- The analysis needs to be really fast
 - Ideally < 100 ms
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- **You can't just "turn on" a particular check**
 - Every instance where that check fails will prevent existing code from building
 - There could be thousands of violations for a single check across large codebases

Solution: Automatically patch existing bugs

```
public class StringIsEmpty {  
  @BeforeTemplate  
  boolean equalsEmptyString(String string) {  
    return string.equals("");  
  }  
  
  @BeforeTemplate  
  boolean lengthEquals0(String string) {  
    return string.length() == 0;  
  }  
  
  @AfterTemplate  
  @AlsoNegation  
  boolean optimizedMethod(String string) {  
    return string.isEmpty();  
  }  
}
```

@BeforeTemplate finds String expressions that match the body of the method.

@AfterTemplate rewrites matching String expressions to match the body of the method.

Solution: Automatically patch existing bugs

```
boolean b = someChained().methodCall().returningAString().length() == 0;
```

```
boolean b = someChained().methodCall().returningAString().isEmpty();
```

Outline

- `goto fail;` and similar unfamous bugs
- Static analysis vs dynamic analysis
- Static analysis tools
 - Linters for maintainability
 - Pattern-based static analyzers
- Challenges of static analysis

Summary

- Linters are cheap and fast static analysis tools!
- Style checkers can improve readability of code
- Pattern-based bug detectors catch common developer mistakes
 - Code smells, performance issues, correctness, ...
 - They don't know the intent of the program, leading to occasional false positives
 - They reveal issues that are genuine, but which we don't sufficiently care about
 - The best tools automatically fix detected issues
 - Each developer mistake needs its own analyzer / AST checker
 - They *complement* but don't *replace* testing