# Improving the Quality of Static Analysis Bug Reports

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Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Informatics, Department of Compilers Bolyai Collage, 2024. March. 20., Budapest, Hungary

### Static Analysis is hard...

- Static analysis is a great tool for early feedback on software quality
- Detecting complex, deep-rooted problems requires complex analysis

```
void isThisCorrect() {
   *NULL = 5;
   10 / 0;
   int *notMyProblem = malloc(4);
}
```

```
int handle(struct A *a) {
   struct Obj o = conjure(a);
   int i = extract(o);
   return 10 / i;
```

#### ... great bug report generation is harder!

• Simple analyses require simple bug reporting techniques

example1.cpp: In function 'void isThisCorrect()': example1.cpp:2:6: warning: division by zero [-Wdiv-by-zero] 10 / 0: 2 NNN ANN



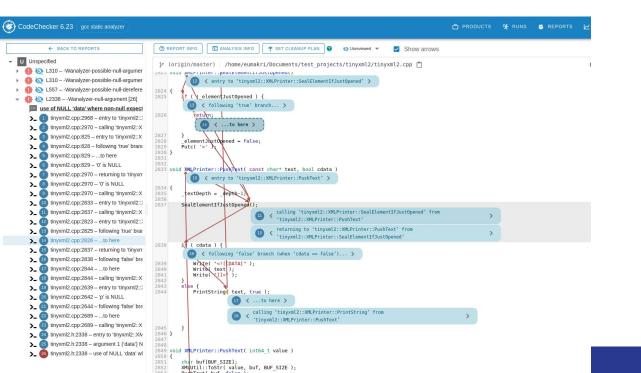
### ... great bug report generation is harder!

• Complex analyses require complex bug reporting techniques



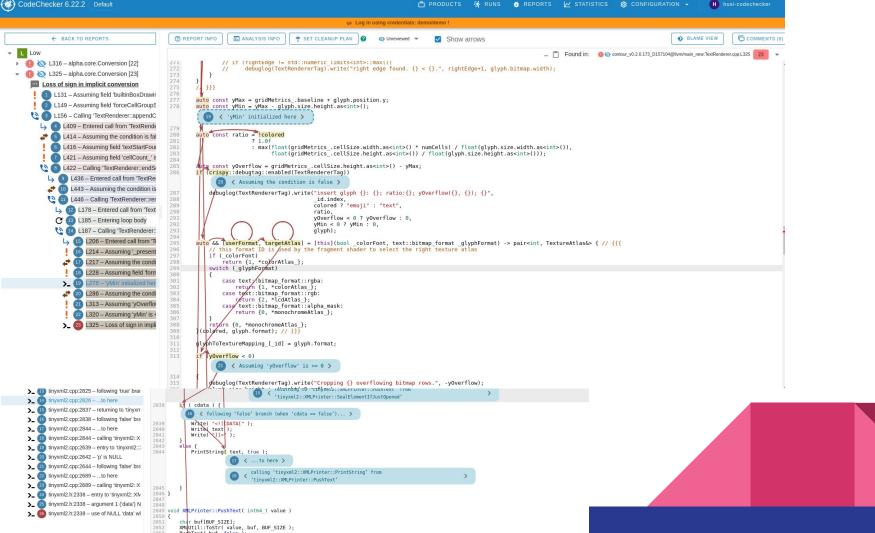
#### ...great bug report generation is harder!

• Complex analyses require complex bug reporting techniques





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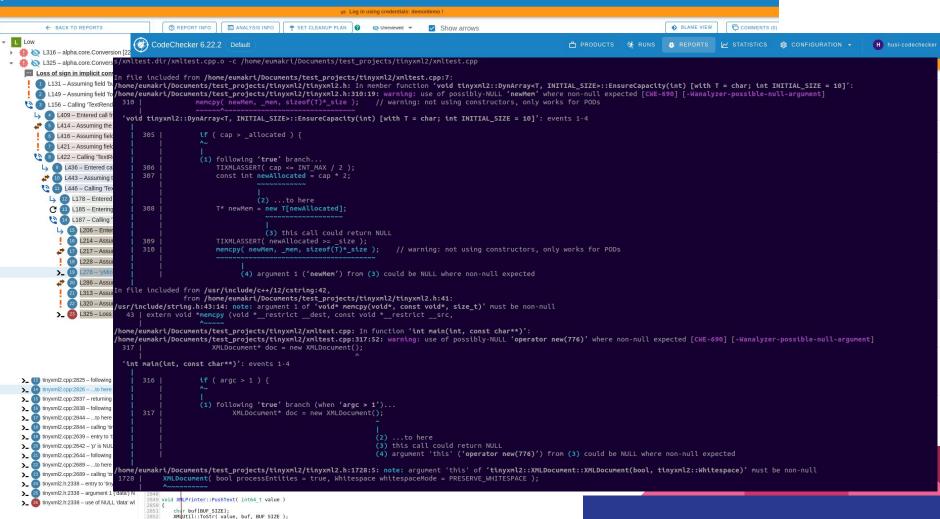


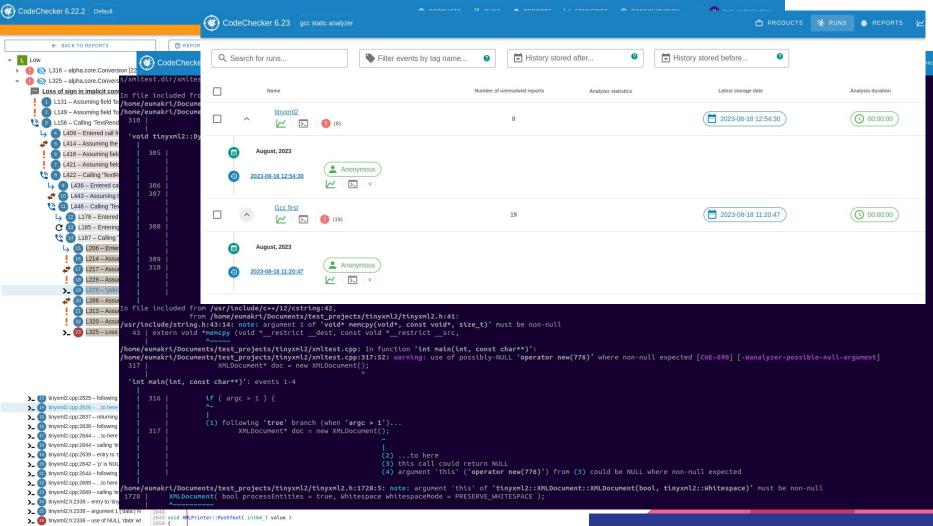
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	2851 char buf[BUF_SIZE]; 2852 XMLUtil::ToStr( value, buf, BU	JF_SIZE );											



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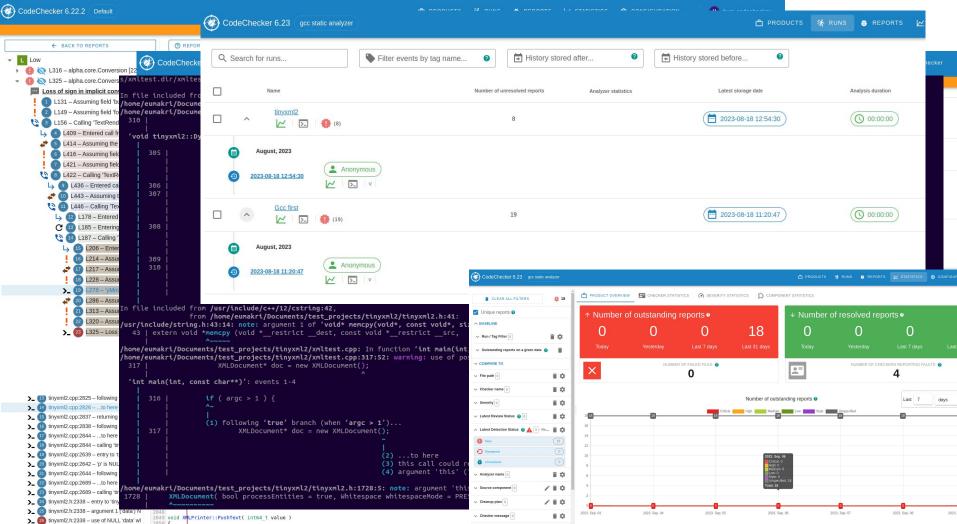
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2851 char buf[BUF\_SIZE]; 2852 XMLUtil::ToStr( value, buf, BUF SIZE );

BuckTout / buf false )



tad Wi 2850 {
 2851 char buf[BUF\_SIZE];
 2852 XMUUtit::ToStr( value, buf, BUF SIZE );

✓ Pates

/home/eumakri/Documents/llvm-project/clang/test/Analysis/iterator-range.cpp:915:12: warning: Iterator incremented behind the past-the-end iterator .cplusplus.IteratorRange]

(void)(i + 2); // expected-warning{{Iterator incremented behind the past-the-end iterator}}

/home/eumakri/Documents/llvm-project/clang/test/Analysis/iterator-range.cpp:915:12: note: Iterator incremented behind the past-the-end iterator
 (void)(i + 2); // expected-warning{{Iterator incremented behind the past-the-end iterator}}
 ~~~~~~

/home/eumakri/Documents/llvm-project/clang/test/Analysis/iterator-range.cpp:921:5: warning: Iterator incremented behind the past-the-end iterator [ cplusplus.IteratorRange]

i += 2; // expected-warning{{Iterator incremented behind the past-the-end iterator}}

#### ~~^~~~

#### ~~^~~~

/home/eumakri/Documents/llvm-project/clang/test/Analysis/iterator-range.cpp:927:12: warning: Iterator decremented ahead of its valid range [alpha.cq us.IteratorRange]

/home/eumakri/Documents/llvm-project/clang/test/Analysis/iterator-range.cpp:927:12: note: Iterator decremented ahead of its valid range

(void)(i - 2); // expected-warning{{Iterator decremented ahead of its valid range}}

~~^~

/home/eumakri/Documents/llvm-project/clang/test/Analysis/iterator-range.cpp:934:5: warning: Iterator decremented ahead of its valid range [alpha.cp s.IteratorRange]

i -= 2; // expected-warning{{Iterator decremented ahead of its valid range}}

#### ~~^~~~

/home/eumakri/Documents/llvm-project/clang/test/Analysis/iterator-range.cpp:934:5: note: Iterator decremented ahead of its valid range

i -= 2; // expected-warning{{Iterator decremented ahead of its valid range}}

#### ~~^~~~

/home/eumakri/Documents/llvm-project/clang/test/Analysis/iterator-range.cpp:945:12: warning: The right operand of '-' is a garbage value [core.Under inaryOperatorResult]

return n - uninit; // no-crash

^ ~~~~~

/home/eumakri/Documents/llvm-project/clang/test/Analysis/iterator-range.cpp:944:3: note: 'uninit' declared without an initial value int uninit; // expected-note{{'uninit' declared without an initial value}}

^~~~~~~~~

/home/eumakri/Documents/llvm-project/clang/test/Analysis/iterator-range.cpp:945:12: note: The right operand of '-' is a garbage value

#### How do we measure this stuff?



### How do we measure this stuff?

- Whether something is explained well is inherently subjective
- We have great intuition on what's good
- Intuition is hard to define in concrete terms



# Agenda

- Symbolic execution and the Clang Static Analyzer
  - How the analysis works
  - How bug report generation works
- Problem examples
- Previous (failed) survey
- Manual survey
- Latest survey

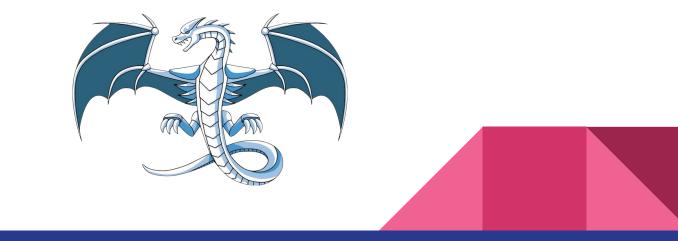


#### Symbolic execution and the Clang Static Analyzer



# The Clang Static Analyzer

- Arguably the most popular and powerful C++ compiler today
- Part of LLVM
- The Clang Static Analyzer of a component of Clang
- Based on symbolic execution



# Symbolic execution

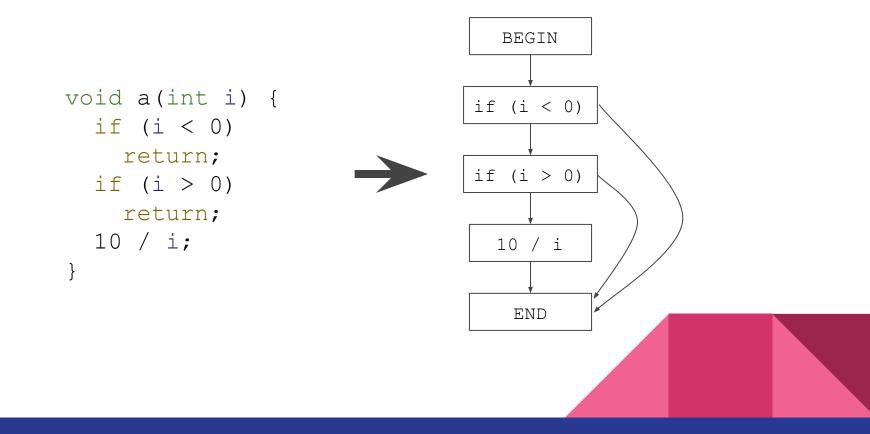
- Traverse the control flow graph (CFG) of a function
- Explored multiple path of execution
- On branches, explore a path on which the condition is true, and one on which its false

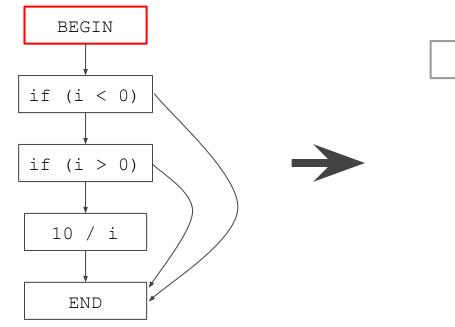


void a(int i) {
 if (i < 0)
 return;
 if (i > 0)
 return;
 10 / i;
}



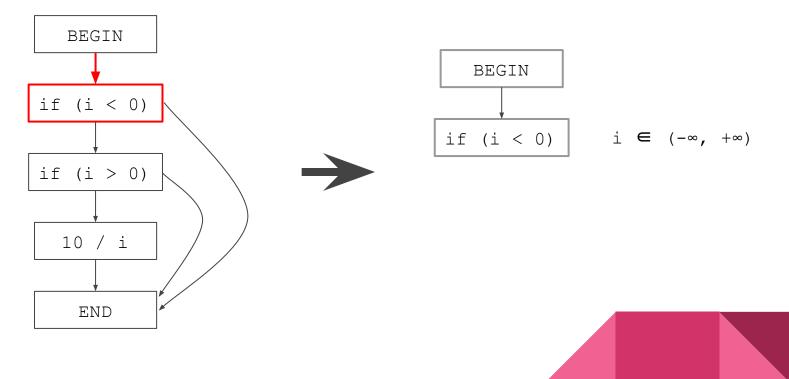
### **Control Flow Graphs**

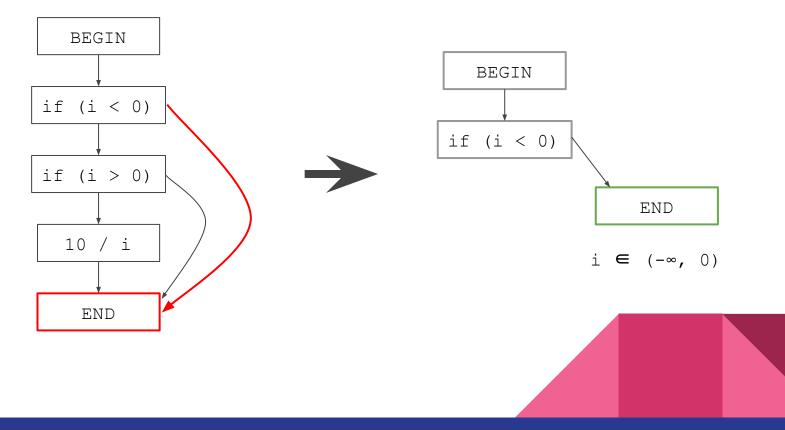


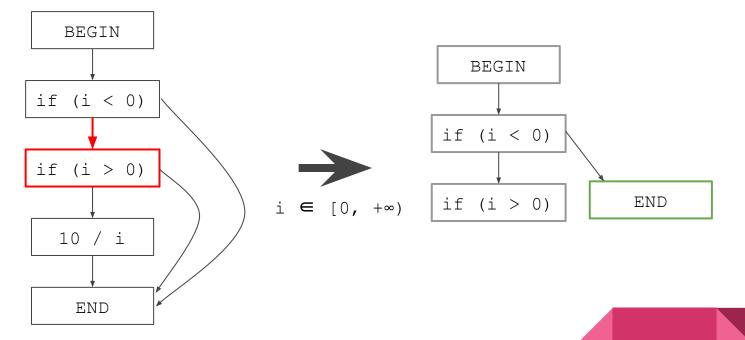


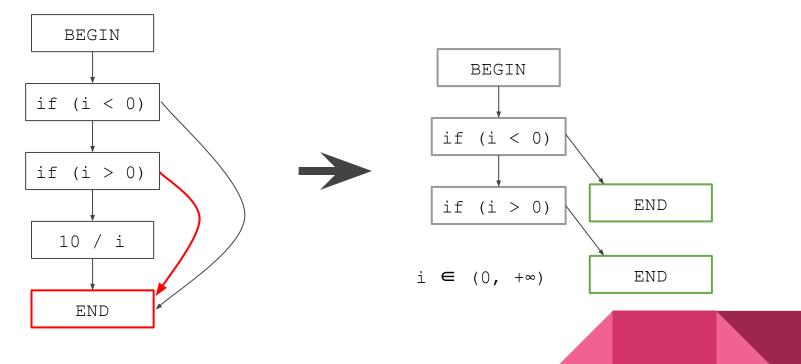
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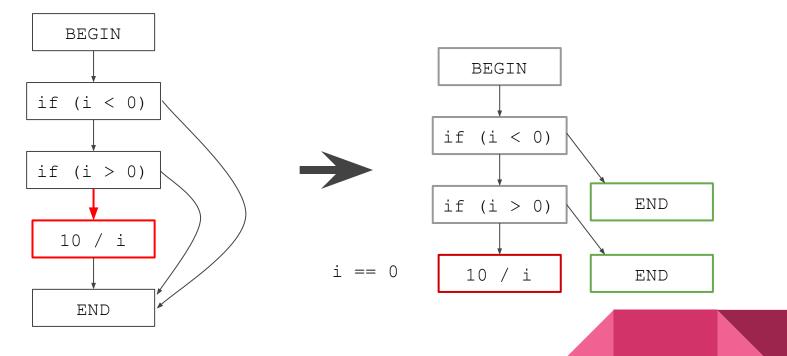




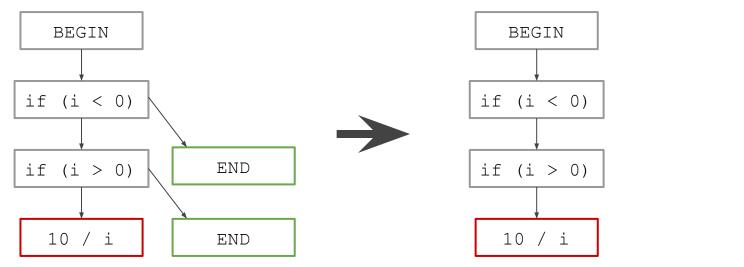






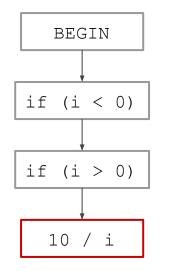


#### **Report generation**





#### **Report generation**



Assuming 'i' is >= 0

Assuming 'i' is <= 0

#### **Division by zero**

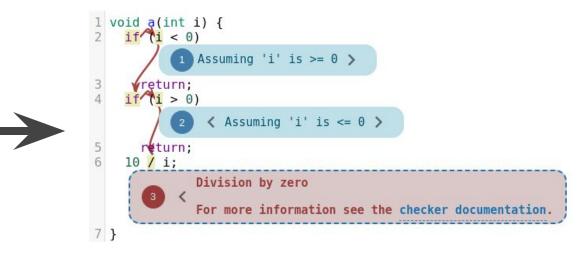


### **Report generation**

Assuming 'i' is >= 0

Assuming 'i' is <= 0

**Division by zero** 



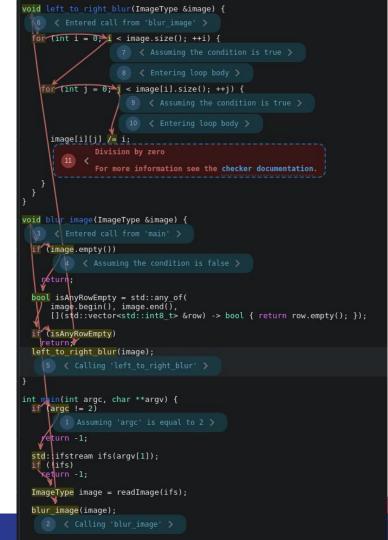


### Problem example 1

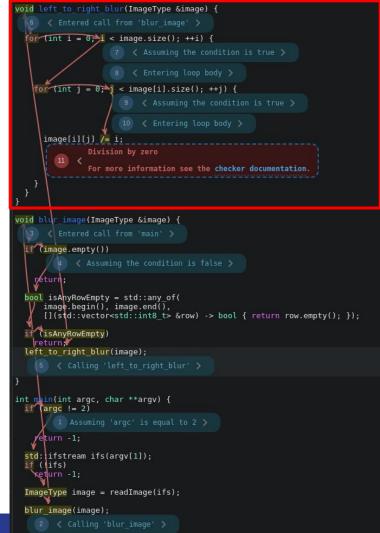


```
using ImageType = std::vector<std::vector<std::int8_t>>;
ImageType readImage(std::istream &input);
void writeImage(std::ostream &input, const ImageType &image);
void left_to_right_blur(ImageType &image) {
 for (int i = 0; i < image.size(); ++i) {</pre>
   for (int j = 0; j < image[i].size(); ++j) {</pre>
      image[i][j] /= i;
Π }
void blur_image(ImageType &image) {
  if (image.empty())
  bool isAnyRowEmpty = std::any of(
      image.begin(), image.end(),
      [](std::vector<std::int8 t> &row) -> bool { return row.empty(); });
  if (isAnyRowEmpty)
  left_to_right_blur(image);
int main(int argc, char **argv) {
 if (argc != 2)
  std::ifstream ifs(argv[1]);
 if (!ifs)
  ImageType image = readImage(ifs);
  blur_image(image);
  std::ofstream ofs("output.jpg");
  if (!ofs)
  writeImage(ofs, image);
```









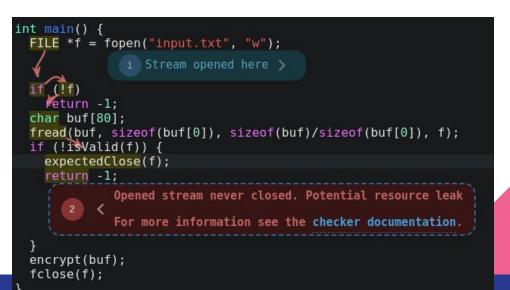


# Problem example 2

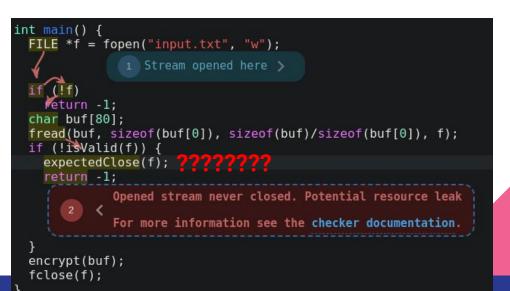


```
char *logDump();
void expectedClose(FILE *f) {
 if (char *log = logDump()) {
    printf("%s", log);
   fclose(f);
void encrypt(std::string input) {
 std::string from = "aeiou";
 std::string to = "eioua";
  for (char &c : input)
   for (int i = 0; i < from.size(); ++i)</pre>
     if (c == from[i])
        c = to[i];
bool isValid(FILE *F) {
  return !feof(F) && !ferror(F);
int main() {
 FILE *f = fopen("input.txt", "w");
 if (!f)
  char buf[80];
  fread(buf, sizeof(buf[0]), sizeof(buf)/sizeof(buf[0]), f);
  if (!isValid(f)) {
    expectedClose(f);
  encrypt(buf);
  fclose(f);
```











#### Bug reports have much to improve on

- Static analyzers are invaluable for detecting bugs early
- Experts need to evaluate the results manually
- Trust in the tool drops if the reports are poor



#### ...but what to improve on?

- Whether a bug report is good is inherently subjective.
- We need a mathematical model to measure bug report quality on
- That should be based on empirical data



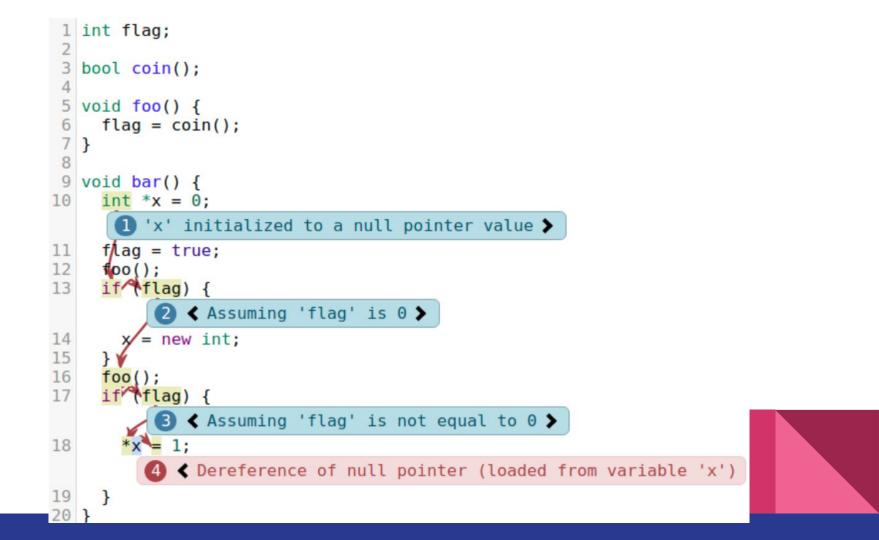
## Previous (failed) survey

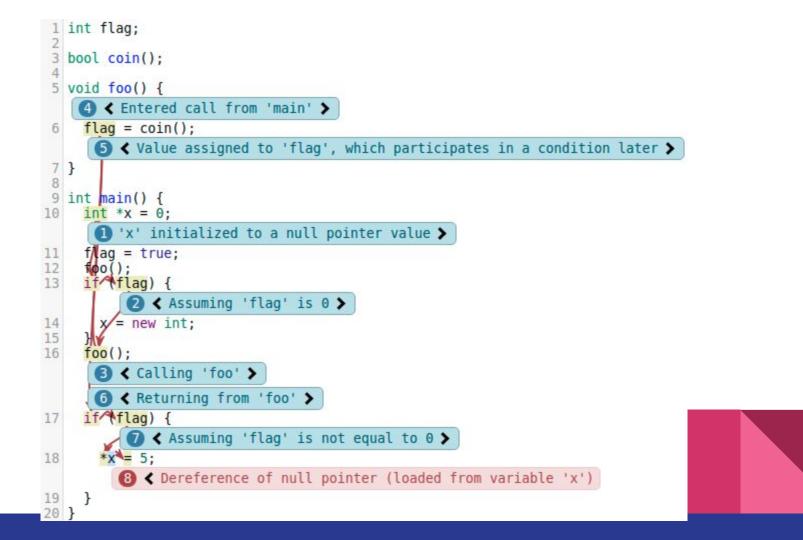


## Addition of Control Dependency Analysis

- CSA used to explain data dependency well
- Lack of understanding for control dependency
- Contribution as a part of GSoC'19







## Survey

- 11 participants of the CodeChecker team
- Real bug reports on large, open source software
- Required domain specific knowledge
- No statistically relevant results



## Manual survey



#### Measurement methodology

- Analyses on large, open source C/C++ projects
- Only results by core.DivByZero
- Manual inspection of all reports, up to 30 minutes on each



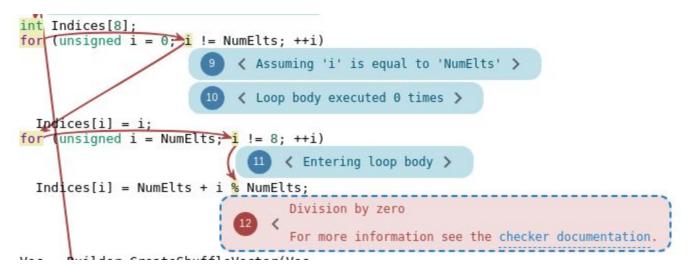
## Categorization

- Acceptable: It is possible to understand the report, and whether it stands, even if it could be improved.
- Not enough info: It is not possible understand the report, but it is possible to say which function calls / value changes the analyzer neglected to explain, and a domain expert may possess the missing information and judge whether the report stands.
- **Incomprehensible**: The entire bug report is incomprehensible, and its doubtful that even a domain expert can judge the report.



|              | Total reports | Acceptable | Not enough info | Incomprehensible |
|--------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Acid         | 1             | 1          | 0               | 0                |
| ffmpeg       | 6             | 5          | 1               | 0                |
| LLVM + Clang | 11            | 8          | 2               | 1                |
| OpenSSL      | 1             | 1          | 0               | 0                |
| postgres     | 2             | 1          | 0               | 1                |
| QTBase       | 7             | 2          | 1               | 4                |
| Vim          | 2             | 2          | 0               | 0                |
| Xerces       | 1             | 0          | 1               | 0                |
| Total        | 31            | 20         | 5               | 6                |
|              |               |            |                 |                  |

# Acceptable (LLVM)





# Not enough info (ffmpeg)

```
static AVFrame *get palette frame(AVFilterContext *ctx)
   AVFrame *out;
                                                                  static uint32 t get avg color(struct color ref * const *refs,
    PaletteGenContext *s = ctx->priv;
    AVFilterLink *outlink = ctx->outputs[0];
                                                                        < Entered call from 'get palette frame' >
    double ratio;
                                                                                              const struct range box *box)
    inf box id = 0;
    struct range box *box;
                                                                     int i:
                                                                      const int n = box->len:
      reference only the used colors from histogram */
                                                                     uint64 t r = 0, q = 0, b = 0 div = 0;
    s+>refs = load color refs(s->histogram, s->nb refs);
                                                                                                         < 'div' initialized to 0 >
    if (!s->refs) {
           1 Assuming field 'refs' is non-null >
                                                                      for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
        av_log(ctx, AV LOG ERROR, "Unable to allocate referen
                                                                                       < Assuming 'i' is >= 'n' >
        return NULL;
    }
                                                                                         Loop body executed 0 times >
                                                                         const struct color ref *ref = refs[box->start + i];
    / create the palette frame */
                                                                         r += (ref->color >> 16 & 0xff) * ref->count;
    out = ff get video buffer(outlink, outlink->w, outlink->h
                                                                         q +=/(ref->color >> 8 & 0xff) * ref->count;
    if (lout)
                                                                         b += (ref->color
                                                                                              & 0xff) * ref->count:
                                                                         div += ref->count:
               < Assuming 'out' is non-null >
       return NULL;
                                                                      r = r / div;
    out->pts = 0;
                                                                                  Division by zero
       set first box for 0..nb refs */
                                                                                  For more information see the checker documentation
    box = &s->boxes[box id];
    box->len = s->nb refs;
    box->sorted by = -1
    box->color and get avg color(s->refs, box);
                         Calling 'get avg color' >
```

{

```
static AVFrame *get palette frame(AVFilterContext *ctx)
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                                                                                        〈 Assuming 'i' is >= 'n' 〉
        return NULL;
    }

    Loop body executed 0 times >

                                                                         const struct color ref *ref = refs[box->start + i];
    / create the palette frame */
                                                                          r += (ref->color >> 16 & 0xff) * ref->count;
    out = ff get video buffer(outlink, outlink->w, outlink->h
                                                                          g += (ref->color >> 8 & 0xff) * ref->count;
    if (lout)
                                                                          b += (ref->color
                                                                                              & 0xff) * ref->count:
                                                                         div += ref->count:
               < Assuming 'out' is non-null >
       return NULL;
                                                                      r = r / div;
    out->pts = 0;
                                                                                  Division by zero
       set first box for 0..nb refs */
                                                                                  For more information see the checker documentation
    box = &s->boxes[box id];
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                                                                         < Entered call from 'get palette frame' >
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    struct range box *box;
                                                                      int i:
                                                                      const int n = box->len;
      reference only the used colors from histogram */
                                                                      uint64 t r = 0, d = 0, b = 0, div = 0;
    s+>refs = load color refs(s->histogram, s->nb refs);
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                                                                                              & 0xff) * ref->count:
                                                                          div += ref->count:
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    PaletteGenContext *s = ctx->priv;
    AVFilterLink *outlink = ctx->outputs[0];
                                                                         < Entered call from 'get palette frame' >
    double ratio;
                                                                                               const struct range box *box)
    inf box id = 0;
    struct range box *box;
                                                                      int i:
                                                                      const int n = box->len:
      reference only the used colors from histogram */
                                                                      uint64 t r = 0, d = 0, b = 0, div = 0;
    s+>refs = load color refs(s->histogram, s->nb refs);
                                                                                                           'div' initialized to 0 >
    if (!s->refs) {
           1 Assuming field 'refs' is non-null >
                                                                      for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
        av_log(ctx, AV LOG ERROR, "Unable to allocate referen
                                                                                        〈 Assuming 'i' is >= 'n' 〉
        return NULL;
    }

    Loop body executed 0 times >

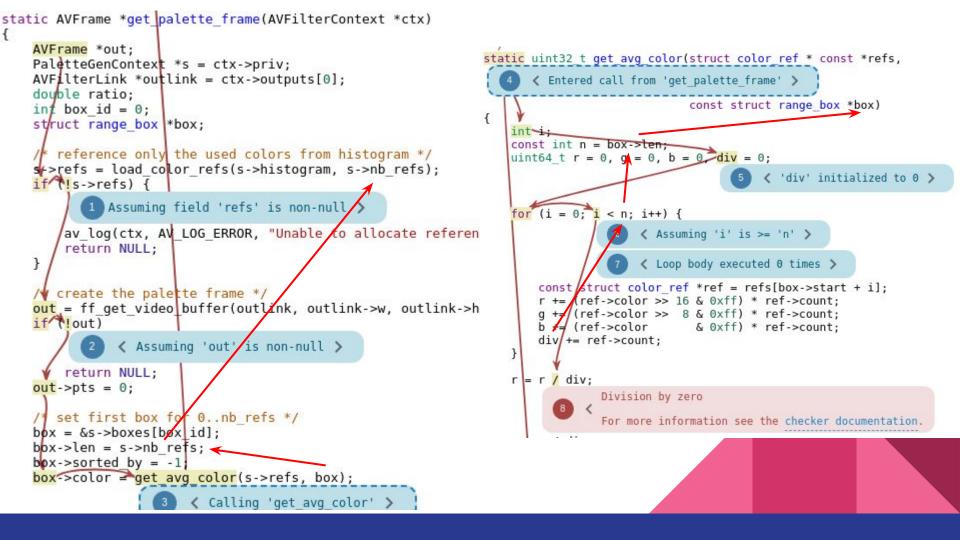
                                                                          const struct color ref *ref = refs[box->start + i];
    / create the palette frame */
                                                                          r += (ref->color >> 16 & 0xff) * ref->count;
    out = ff get video buffer(outlink, outlink->w, outlink->h
                                                                          q += (ref->color >> 8 & 0xff) * ref->count;
    if (lout)
                                                                          b += (ref->color
                                                                                               & 0xff) * ref->count;
                                                                          div += ref->count:
                < Assuming 'out' is non-null >
       return NULL;
                                                                      r = r / div;
    out->pts = 0;
                                                                                  Division by zero
       set first box for 0..nb refs */
                                                                                   For more information see the checker documentation
    box = &s->boxes[box id];
    box->len = s->nb refs;
    box->sorted by = -1
    box->color and get avg color(s->refs, box);
                         Calling 'get avg color' >
```

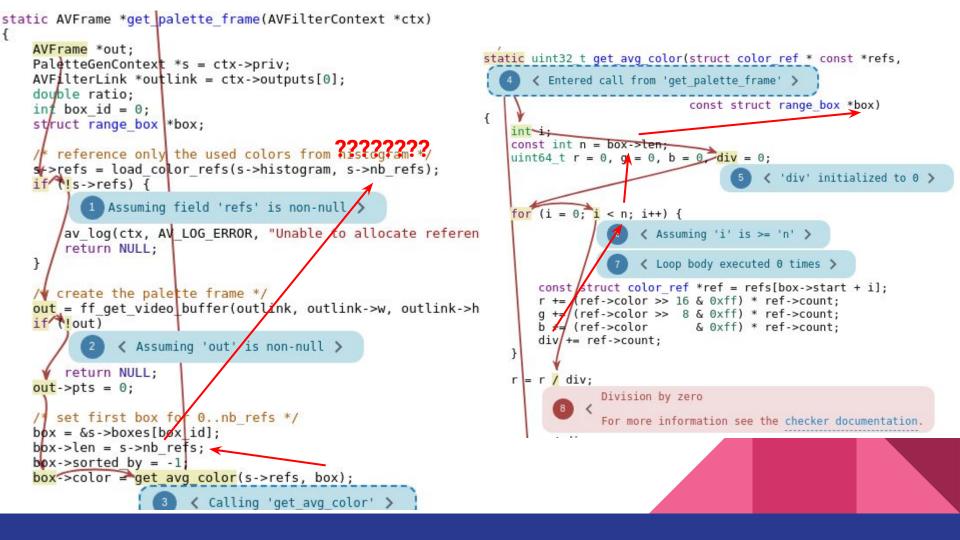
{

```
static AVFrame *get palette frame(AVFilterContext *ctx)
{
    AVFrame *out;
                                                                  static uint32 t get avg color(struct color ref * const *refs,
    PaletteGenContext *s = ctx->priv;
    AVFilterLink *outlink = ctx->outputs[0];
                                                                         < Entered call from 'get palette frame' >
    double ratio;
                                                                                              const struct range box *box)
    inf box id = 0;
    struct range box *box;
                                                                      int i:
                                                                      const int n = box->len:
      reference only the used colors from histogram */
                                                                      uint64 t r = 0, d = 0, b = 0, div = 0;
    s+>refs = load color refs(s->histogram, s->nb refs);
                                                                                                           'div' initialized to 0 >
    if (!s->refs) {
           1 Assuming field 'refs' is non-null >
                                                                      for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
        av_log(ctx, AV LOG ERROR, "Unable to allocate referen
                                                                                        〈 Assuming 'i' is >= 'n' 〉
        return NULL;
    }

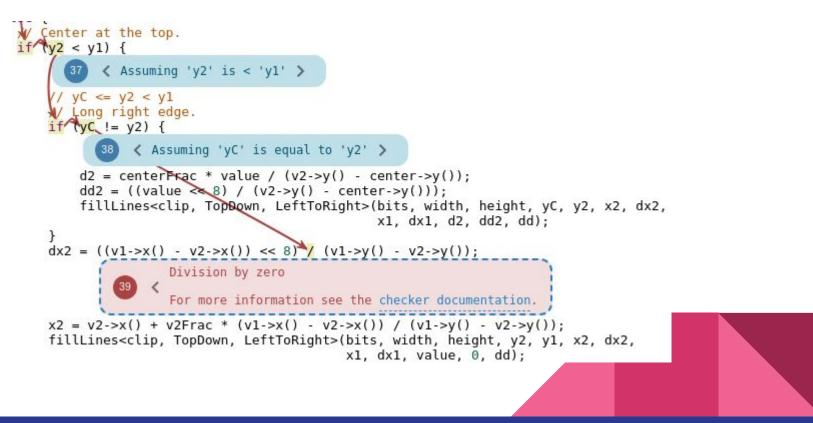
    Loop body executed 0 times >

                                                                          const struct color ref *ref = refs[box->start + i];
    / create the palette frame */
                                                                          r += (ref->color >> 16 & 0xff) * ref->count;
    out = ff get video buffer(outlink, outlink->w, outlink->h
                                                                          q += (ref->color >> 8 & 0xff) * ref->count;
    if (lout)
                                                                          b += (ref->color
                                                                                              & 0xff) * ref->count;
                                                                          div += ref->count:
                < Assuming 'out' is non-null >
       return NULL;
                                                                      r = r / div;
    out->pts = 0;
                                                                                  Division by zero
       set first box for 0..nb refs */
                                                                                  For more information see the checker documentation
    box = &s->boxes[box id];
    bbx->len = s->nb refs;
    box->sorted by = -1
    box->color and get avg color(s->refs, box);
                         Calling 'get avg color' >
```





# Incomprehensible (QTBase)



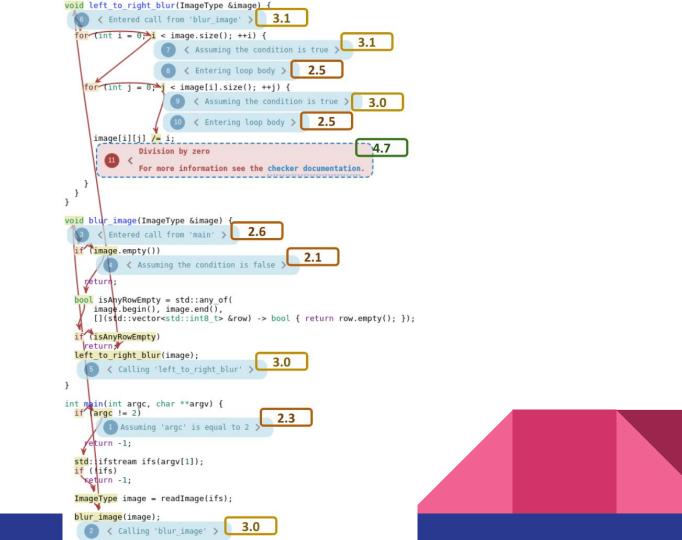
#### Latest survey

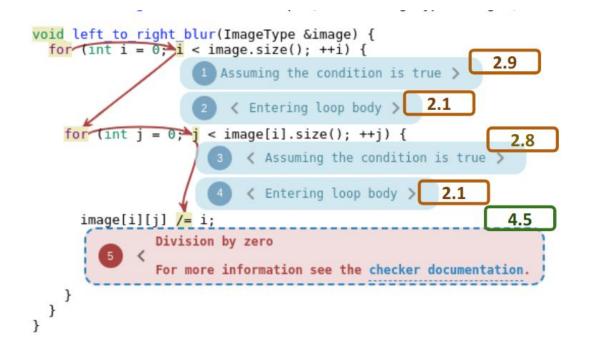


## Measurement methodology

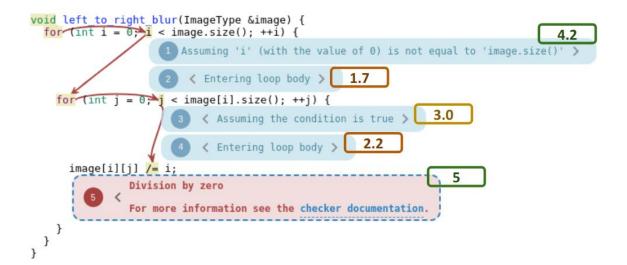
- 10 participants from the CodeChecker team
- 7 different bugs on synthetized examples
- For each bug, we generated 2-3 bug reports
  - Default
  - Verbose
  - "Ideal"
- Much less time spent untangling the source code
- Each note of the bug report needed to be ranked on a 1-5 scale





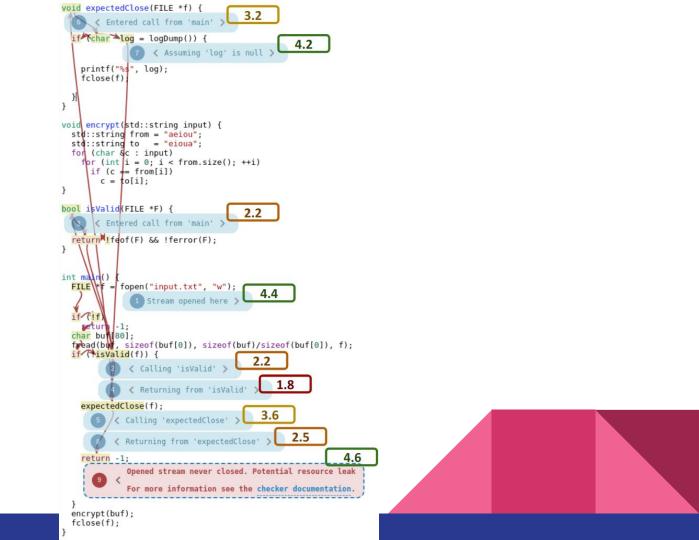








```
int main() {
  FILE *f = fopen("input.txt", "w");
                                         4.3
               Stream opened here >
  if (!f)
    peturn -1;
  char buf[80];
  fread(buf, sizeof(buf[0]), sizeof(buf)/sizeof(buf[0]), f);
  if (!isValid(f)) {
    expectedClose(f);
    return -1;
                                                       4.4
             Opened stream never closed. Potential resource leak
             For more information see the checker documentation.
  encrypt(buf);
  fclose(f);
```



```
void expectedClose(FILE *f) {
 /if (char log = logDump()) {
                                                 3.9
                  < Assuming 'log' is null >
   printf("%s", log);
    felose(f);
                                                                        4.1
      Keturning without changing stream states or storing the stream object >
void encrypt(std::string input) {
  std::string from = "aeiou";
  std:string to = "eioua";
  for (char &c : input)
   for (int i = 0; i < from.size(); ++i)</pre>
      if (c == from[i])
        c = to[i];
}
bool isValid(FILE *F) {
  return !feof(F) && !ferror(F);
int main() {
  FILE *f = fopen("input.txt", "w");
                                         4.4

    Stream opened here >

  if (!f)
    peturn -1;
  char buf[80];
  fread(buf, sizeof(buf[0]), sizeof(buf)/sizeof(buf[0]), f);
  if (!isValid(f)) {
    expectedClose(f);
                                                                 4.8
    return -1;
             Opened stream never closed. Potential resource leak
       4
           <
             For more information see the checker documentation.
  encrypt(buf);
  fclose(f);
```

|                           | Min score | Max score | Mean score |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Leak "verbose" (Fig 1)    | 1.8       | 4.6       | 3.2        |
| Leak "default" (Fig 2)    | 4.4       | 4.3       | 4.35       |
| Leak "ideal" (Fig 3)      | 3.9       | 4.8       | 4.25       |
| Map "verbose" (Fig 4)     | 1.8       | 5.0       | 3.2        |
| Map "ideal" (Fig 5)       | 2.1       | 5.0       | 3.5        |
| Blur "verbose" (Fig 6)    | 2.1       | 4.7       | 3.0        |
| Blur "shortened" (Fig 7)  | 2.1       | 4.5       | 2.8        |
| Blur "ideal" (Fig 8)      | 1.7       | 5.1       | 3.0        |
| Complex "verbose" (Fig 9) | 1.2       | 4.9       | 3.1        |
| Complex "ideal" (Fig 10)  | 2.5       | 4.8       | 3.45       |

**Table 1.** A summary of the scores from our survey.

## Conclusion

- Complex bugs -> complex analyses
- Complex analyses -> complex bug report generation
- Bug reports are the main interface in between the user and the analyzer
- In order to measurably improve bug reports, we need to measure quality
- 3 surveys:
  - Human experiments won't work unless the survey is very well thought out
  - Manual inspection can be a good basis for creating a well thought out survey
  - Make simple, targeted questions, ask for simple responses

