Software Engineering

Lecture 15: Testing and Debugging — Debugging

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Motivation

Debugging is unavoidable and a major economical factor

- Software bugs cost the US economy ca. 60 billion US$/y (2002)

  In general estimated 0.6% of the GDP of industrial countries
- Ca. 80 percent of software development costs spent on identifying and correcting defects
- Software re-use is increasing and tends to introduce bugs due to changed specifications in new context (Ariane 5)

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Debugging needs to be systematic

- Bug reports may involve large inputs
- Programs may have thousands of memory locations
- Programs may pass through millions of states before failure occurs

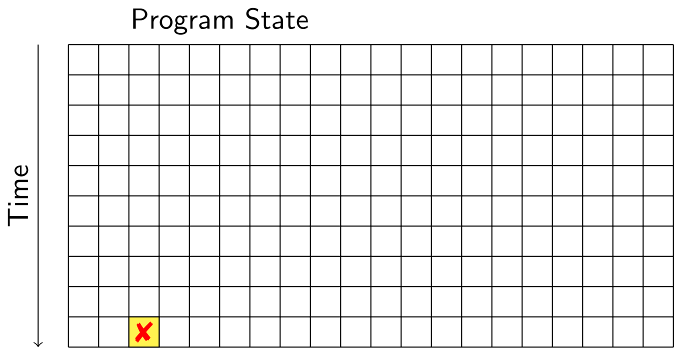
Terminology

Bug-Related Terminology

1. Defect (aka bug, fault) introduced to the code by programmer
   Not always programmer's fault: changing/unforeseen requirements
2. Defect may cause infection of the program state during execution
   Not all defects cause an infection: e.g., Pentium bug
3. An infected state propagates during execution
   Infected parts of states may be overwritten, corrected, unused
4. Infection may cause a failure: externally observable error
   May include non-termination

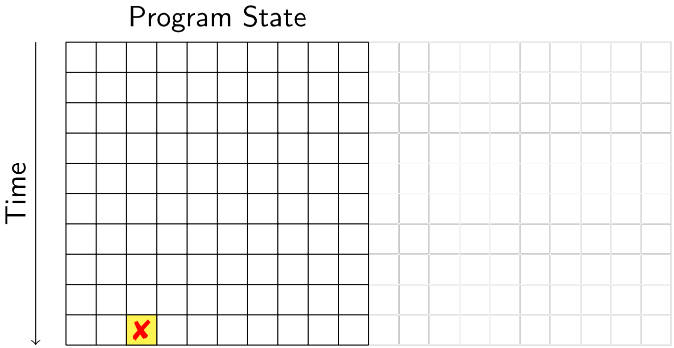
Defect — Infection — Propagation — Failure

Main Steps in Systematic Debugging



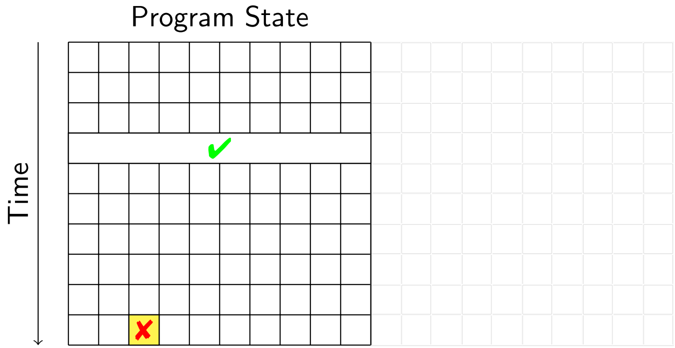
Failure discovered — reproduce with test input

Main Steps in Systematic Debugging



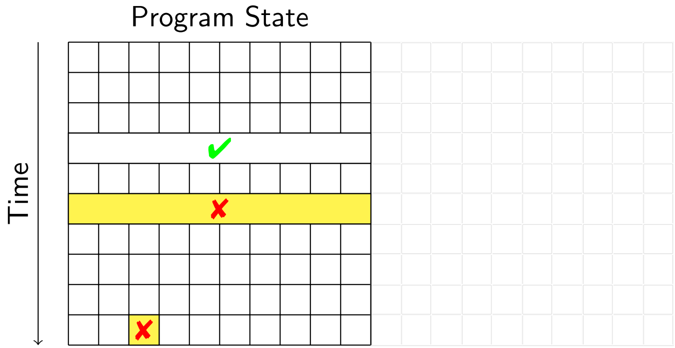
Reduction of failure-inducing problem

Main Steps in Systematic Debugging



State known to be healthy

Main Steps in Systematic Debugging



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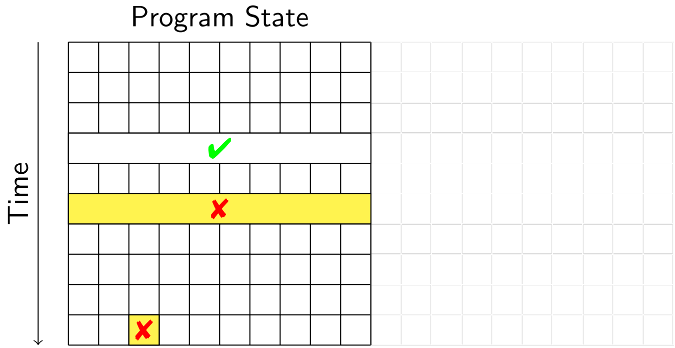
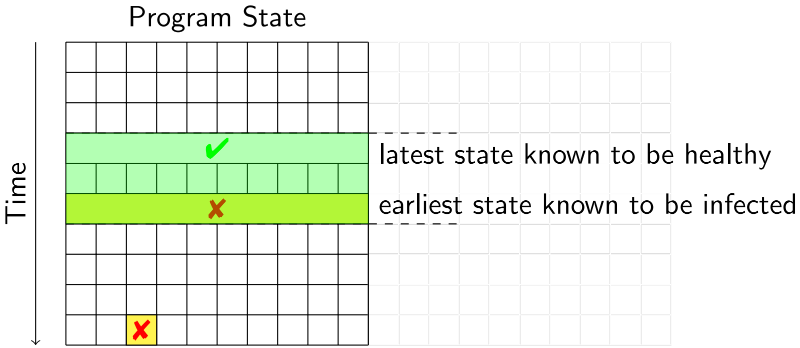


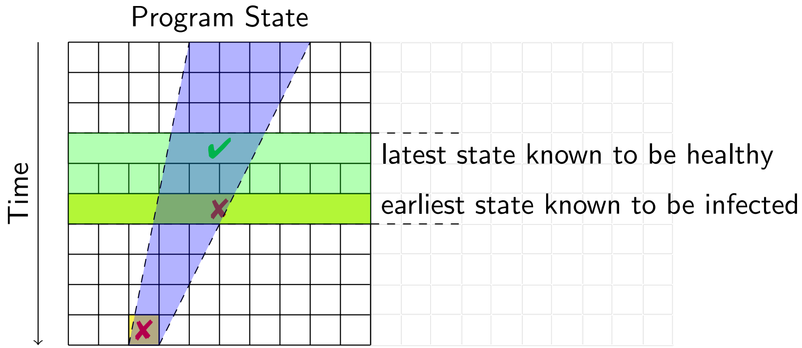
Failure becomes observable much later

Main Steps in Systematic Debugging



- Separate healthy from infected states

Main Steps in Systematic Debugging



- Separate healthy from infected states
- Separate relevant parts from irrelevant ones

Debugging Techniques

The analysis suggests main techniques used in systematic debugging:

- Bug tracking — Which initial states cause failure?
- Program control — Design for Debugging
- Input simplification — Reduce state space
- State observation and watching using debuggers
- Tracking causes and effects — From failure to defect

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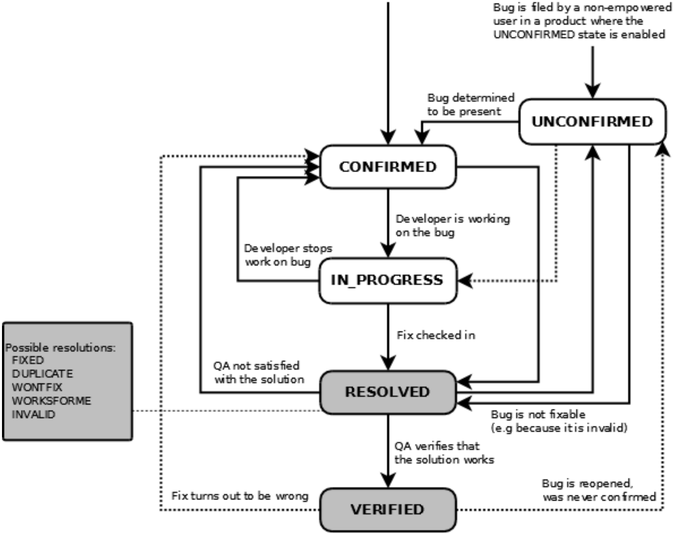
Common Themes

- Separate relevant from irrelevant
- Being systematic: avoid repetition, ensure progress, use tools

Bug Tracking

Bug Tracking Lifecycle: Bugzilla



Uses of Bug Tracking Tools

- Feature tracking
- Team communication
- Patch management
- Manage quality assurance
- Integration with revision control systems

From Bug to Test Case

Program Control: From Bug to Test Case

Bug Report:

Firefox crashes while printing a certain URL to file

We need to turn the bug report into an automated test case!

Program Control: From Bug to Test Case

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Automated test case execution essential

- Reproduce the bug reliably (cf. scientific experiment)
- Repeated execution necessary during isolation of defect
- After successful fix, test case becomes part of test suite

Prerequisites for automated execution

1. Program control (without manual interaction)
2. Isolating small program units that contain the bug

Program Control

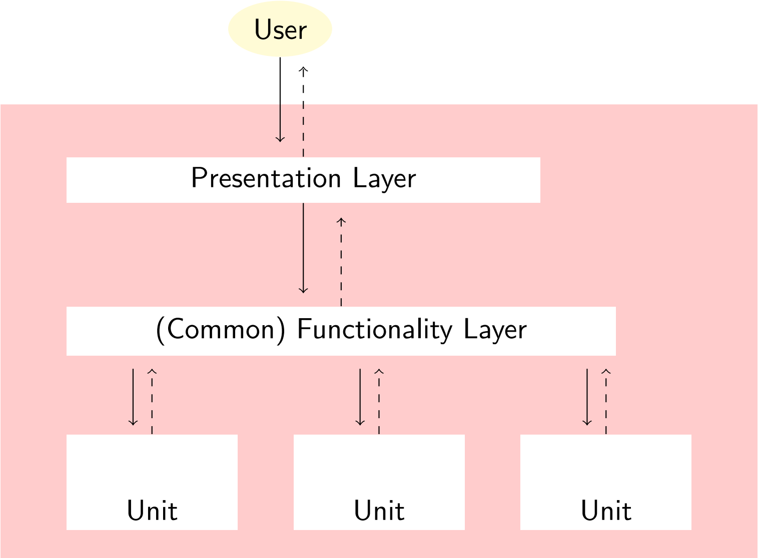
Program Control

Enable automated run of program that may involve user interaction

Example (Sequence of interaction that led to the crash)

1. Launch Firefox
2. Open URL location dialogue
3. Type in a location
4. Open Print dialogue
5. Enter printer settings
6. Initiate printing

Alternative Program Interfaces for Testing



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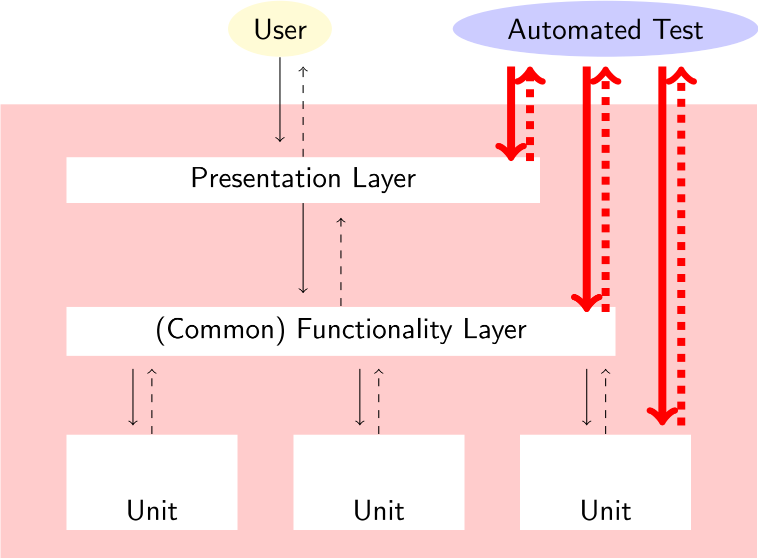

Automated Testing at Different Layers

Presentation

Scripting languages for capturing & replaying user I/O

- Specific to an OS/Window system/Hardware
- Scripts tend to be brittle

Functionality

Interface scripting languages

1. Implementation-specific scripting languages: VBScript
2. Universal scripting languages with application-specific extension: Python, Perl, Tcl

Unit testing frameworks (as in previous lecture)

JUnit, CPPUnit, VBUnit, ...

Testing Layers: Discussion

The higher the layer, the more difficult becomes automated testing

- Scripting languages specific to OS/Window S./Progr. L.
- Test scripts depend on (for example):
  - application environment (printer driver)
  - hardware (screen size), working environment (paper size)

Testing Layers: Discussion

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Test at the unit layer whenever possible!

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Test at the unit layer whenever possible!

Requires component design with low coupling

- Good design is essential even for testing and debugging!
- We concentrate on decoupling rather than specific scripts

Excursion: Criteria for Component Decomposition

- Major processing activity: business rules, user interface, database access, system dependencies
- Consistent abstraction
- Information hiding: encapsulate a design decision or hide complexity
  e.g., input format, data layout, choice of algorithm, computed data vs. stored data, ...
- Anticipate change
- Maximize cohesion: all elements of a component should contribute to accomplish a single functionality
- Minimize coupling: component only gains access to data essential for accomplishing its functionality

Cohesion and Coupling

Cohesion

- Qualitative measure of dependency of items within a single component(8 levels)
- Worst coincidental cohesion: Component performs multiple unrelated actions
- Best functional cohesion: all actions contribute to a single, well-defined task

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Coupling

- Qualitative measure of interdependence of a collection of components (5 levels)
- Worst content coupling: components directly reference data in one another
- Best data coupling: communication via parameter passing. The parameters passed are only those that the recipient needs.

Isolating Units

Use test interfaces to isolate smallest unit containing the defect

- In the Firefox example, unit for file printing easily identified
- In general, use debugger to trace execution

Problem Simplification

From Bug to Test Case, Part II

Bug report:

FIREFOX crashes while printing a loaded URL to file

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We managed to isolate the relevant program unit, but . . .

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We managed to isolate the relevant program unit, but ...

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD␣HTML␣4.01//EN
    ">
<html lang="en">

<head>
 <title>Mozilla.org</title>
 <meta http-equiv="Content-Type"
       content="text/html;␣charset=UTF-8">
... about 200 lines more
```

Problem Simplification

We need a small test case that fails!

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Divide-and-Conquer

1. Cut away one half of the test input
2. Check, whether one of the halves still exhibits failure
3. Continue until minimal failing input is obtained

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Problems

- Tedious: rerun tests manually
- Boring: cut-and-paste, rerun
- What if none of the halves exhibits a failure?

Automatic Input Simplification

- Automate cut-and-paste and re-running tests
- Increase granularity of chunks when no failure occurs

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Example

`public static int checkSum(int[] a)`

- is supposed to compute the checksum of an integer array
- gives wrong result, whenever `a` contains two identical consecutive numbers, but we don't know that yet
- we have a failed test case from transmission trace:

  `{1,3,5,3,9,17,44,3,6,1,1,0,44,1,44,0}`

Input Simplification ($n =$ number of chunks)

1	3	5	3	9	17	44	3	6	1	1	0	44	1	44	0

✘

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1	3	5	3	9	17	44	3	6	1	1	0	44	1	44	0	✘

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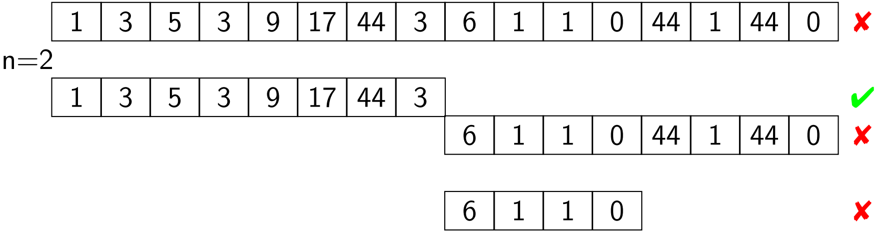

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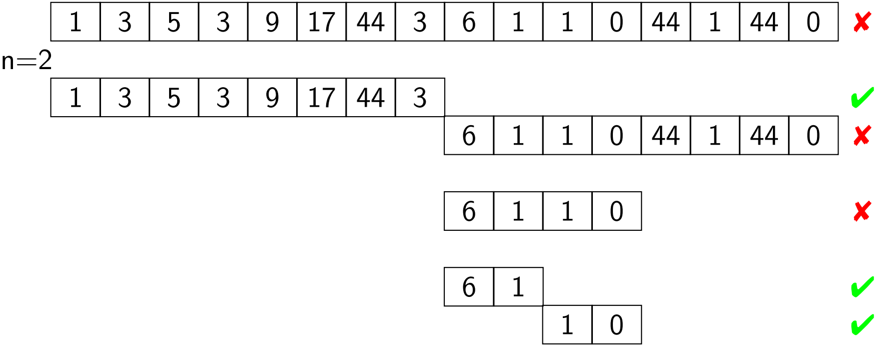

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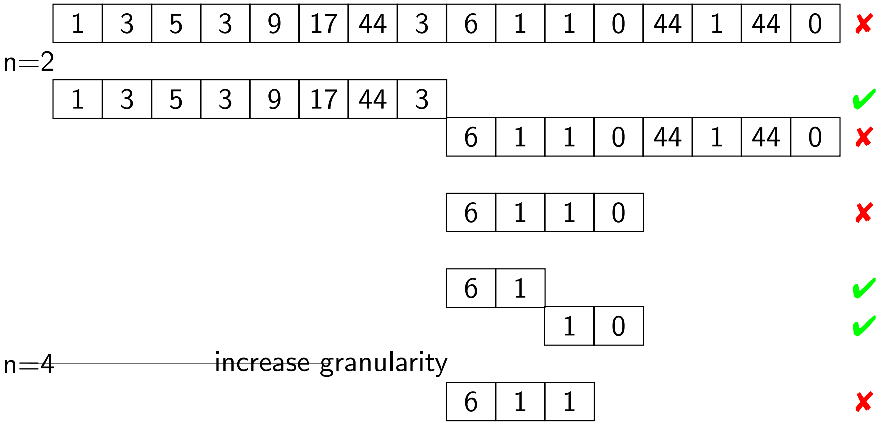

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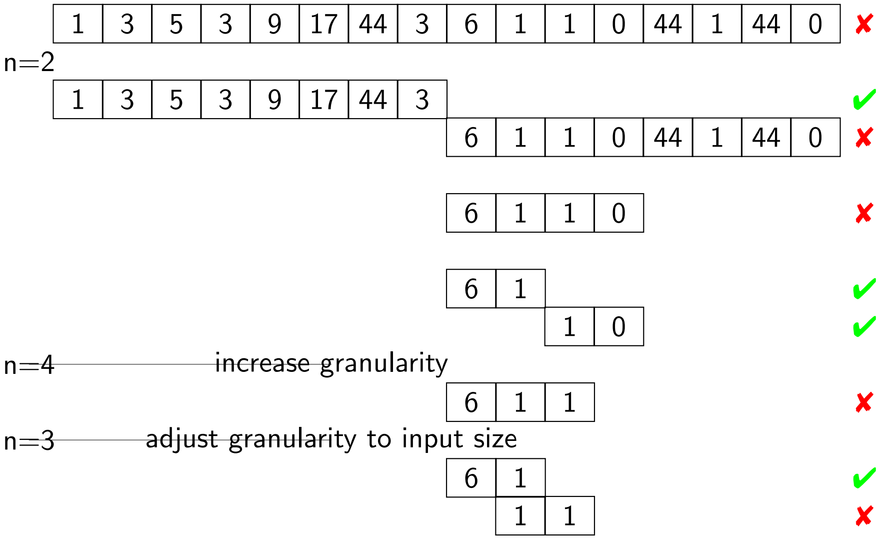

Simplification Algorithm — Delta Debugging

Prerequisites

- test(c) $\in \{✔, ✘, ?\}$ runs a test on configuration c
- Let $c_{✘}$ be a failing input configuration with
  - test($c_{✘}$) $=$ ✘
  - length $l = |c_{✘}|$ if $c_{✘} = \{x_1, \ldots, x_l\}$
  - view at granularity $n \leq l$: $c_{✘} = c_1 \cup \cdots \cup c_n$, $c_i \neq \emptyset$
  - write $c_i \in_n c$

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Find minimal failing input: call $\text{dd}_{Min}(c_0, 2)$ with $\text{test}(c_0) = ✘$

$\text{dd}_{Min}(c_{✘}, n) =$

$$
\begin{cases}
c_{✘} & |c_{✘}| = 1 \\
\text{dd}_{Min}(c_{✘} - c, \max(n-1, 2)) & c \in_n c_{✘} \wedge \text{test}(c_{✘} - c) = ✘ \\
\text{dd}_{Min}(c_{✘}, \min(2n, |c_{✘}|)) & n < |c_{✘}| \\
c_{✘} & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases}
$$

Minimal Failure Configuration

- Minimization algorithm is easy to implement
- Realizes input size minimization for failed run
- Implementation:
  - Small program in your favorite PL (Zeller: PYTHON, JAVA)
  - Eclipse plugin DDINPUT at `www.st.cs.uni-sb.de/eclipse/`
-

Demo: `DD.java`, `Dubbel.java`

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Consequences of Minimization

- Input small enough for observing, tracking, locating (next topics)
- Minimal input often provides important hint for source of defect

Principal Limitations of Input Minimization

- Algorithm computes minimal failure-inducting subsequence of the input:

  Taking away any chunk of any length removes the failure
- However, there may be failing inputs with smaller size!
  1. Algorithm investigates only one failing input of smaller size
  2. Misses failure-inducing inputs created by taking away several chunks

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Example (Incompleteness of minimization)

Failure occurs for integer array when frequency of occurrences of all numbers is even:

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Example (Incompleteness of minimization)

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{1,2,1,2} fails
Taking away any chunk of size 1 or 2 passes
{1,1} fails, too, and is even smaller

Limitations of Linear Minimization

Minimization algorithm ignores structure of input

Example (`.html` input configuration)

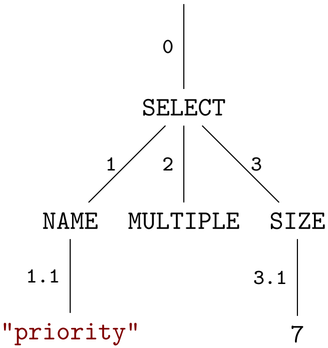
```
<SELECT NAME="priority"MULTIPLE SIZE=7>
```
✘

- Most substrings are not valid HTML: test result ? (“unresolved”)
- There is no point to test beneath granularity of tokens

Minimization may require a very large number of steps

Structured Minimization

Linearization of $c_{\text{✘}}$:

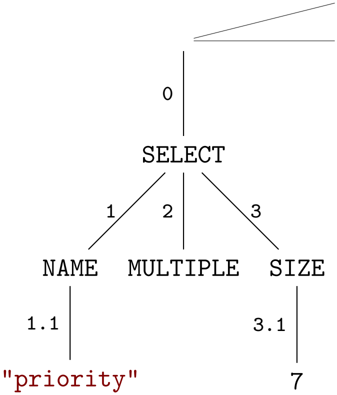


Input configuration consists of nodes in ABS not characters

Structured Minimization

Linearization of $c_{\text{✘}}$:

<SELECT NAME="priority" MULTIPLE SIZE=7>



$c_{\text{✘}} = \{0, 1, 1.1, 2, 3, 3.1\}$

Structured Minimization

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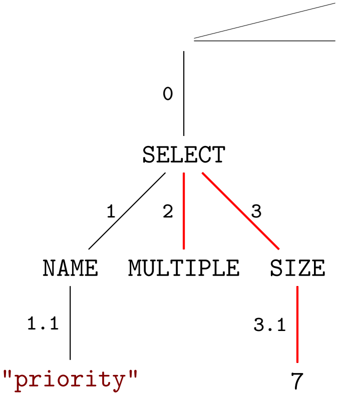

$c_{✘} = \{0, 1, 1.1, 2, 3, 3.1\}$ infeasible (not a tree) return ?

Structured Minimization

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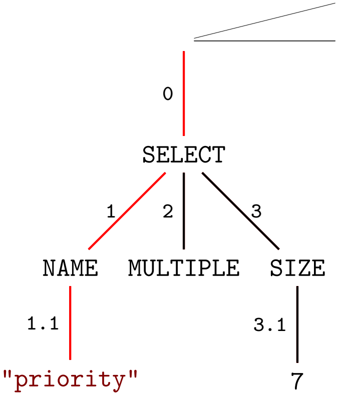

$c_{\text{✘}} = \{0, 1, 1.1, 2, 3, 3.1\}$ Failure occurs, reduce length

Structured Minimization

Linearization of $c_{✘}$:

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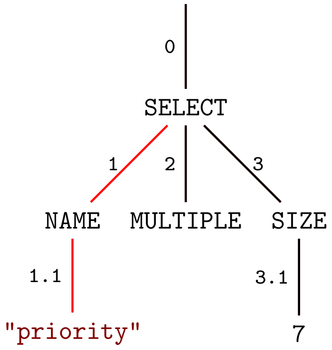
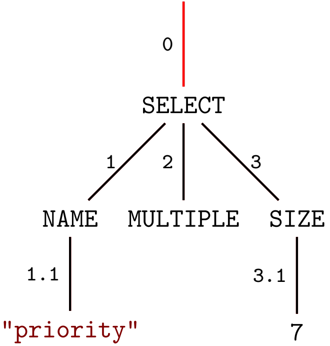


$c_{✘} = \{0,\ 1,\ 1.1,\ 2,\ 3,\ 3.1\}$ infeasible (not well-formed HMTL) return ?

Structured Minimization

Linearization of $c_{✘}$:

<SELECT NAME="priority" MULTIPLE SIZE=7>



$c_{✘} = \{0, 1, 1.1, 2, 3, 3.1\}$ Failure occurs, can't be minimized further

Delta Debugging, Adaptive Testing

The Bigger Picture

- Minimization of failure-inducing input is instance of delta debugging
- Delta debugging is instance of adaptive testing

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Definition (Delta Debugging)

Isolating failure causes by narrowing down differences ("δ") between runs

This principle is used in various debugging activities

Delta Debugging, Adaptive Testing

The Bigger Picture

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- Delta debugging is instance of adaptive testing

Definition (Delta Debugging)

Isolating failure causes by narrowing down differences (“δ”) between runs

This principle is used in various debugging activities

Definition (Adaptive Testing)

Test series where each test depends on the outcome of earlier tests

Literature for this Lecture

Essential

Zeller Why Programs Fail: A Guide to Systematic Debugging, Morgan Kaufmann, 2005
Chapters 2, 3, 5

Background

McConnell Code Complete: A Practical Handbook for Software Construction, 2nd edition, Microsoft Press, 2004
Chapter 23