Nginx Haskell module (yet another doc with examples)

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Why bother?

The *nginx-haskell-module* allows for running in Nginx written in Haskell synchronous and asynchronous tasks, request body handlers, per-worker and shared services, and content handlers.

Synchronous tasks

Synchronous tasks are mostly pure Haskell functions of various types. To make them available in Nginx configuration files, they must be exported with special declarations named exporters. Below is a table of type/exporter correspondence for all available synchronous handlers.

Type	Exporter
String -> String	ngxExportSS (NGX_EXPORT_S_S)
String -> String -> String	ngxExportSSS (NGX_EXPORT_S_SS)
String -> Bool	ngxExportBS (NGX_EXPORT_B_S)
String -> String -> Bool	ngxExportBSS (NGX_EXPORT_B_SS)
[String] -> String	${\tt ngxExportSLS}~({\tt NGX_EXPORT_S_LS})$
[String] -> Bool	${\tt ngxExportBLS}~({\tt NGX_EXPORT_B_LS})$
ByteString -> L.ByteString	<pre>ngxExportYY (NGX_EXPORT_Y_Y)</pre>
ByteString -> Bool	${\tt ngxExportBY}~({\tt NGX_EXPORT_B_Y})$
ByteString -> IO L.ByteString	ngxExportIOYY (NGX_EXPORT_IOY_Y)

All synchronous handlers may accept strings (one or two), a list of strings, or a strict bytestring, and return a string, a boolean or a lazy bytestring. The last handler from the table is impure or effectful, and it returns a lazy bytestring wrapped in IO Monad.

There are two kinds of exporters which differ only in their implementations. The first kind — camel-cased exporters — is implemented by means of Template Haskell, the other kind — exporters in braces, as they are shown in the table — is implemented using CPP macros. Both of them provide FFI declarations for functions they export, but the camel-cased exporters are available only from a separate Haskell module ngx-export, which can be downloaded and installed by cabal, whereas the CPP exporters are implemented inside the nginx-haskell-module in so-called standalone approach, where custom Haskell declarations get wrapped inside common Haskell code.

Examples

In all examples in this section and later we will use *modular* approach with *camel-cased* exporters and separate compilation of Haskell code.

File test.hs

In this module we declared three synchronous handlers: to Upper, reverse, and is InList. Handler reverse exports existing and well-known Haskell function reverse which reverses lists. Let's compile test.hs and move the library to a directory, from where we will load this.

File test.conf

```
nginx;
worker_processes
                         4;
events {
   worker_connections 1024;
}
http {
    default_type
                         application/octet-stream;
    sendfile
                        on;
    haskell load /var/lib/nginx/test.so;
    server {
        listen
                        8010;
        server_name
                        main;
        location / {
            haskell_run toUpper $hs_upper $arg_u;
```

```
haskell_run reverse $hs_reverse $arg_r;
haskell_run isInList $hs_isInList $arg_a $arg_b $arg_c $arg_d;
echo "toUpper $arg_u = $hs_upper";
echo "reverse $arg_r = $hs_reverse";
echo "$arg_a 'isInList' [$arg_b, $arg_c, $arg_d] = $hs_isInList";
}
}
}
```

Library test.so gets loaded by Nginx directive haskell load. All synchronous handlers run from directive haskell_run. The first argument of the directive is a name of a Haskell handler exported from the loaded library test.so, the second argument is an Nginx variable where the handler will put the result of its computation, the rest arguments are passed to the Haskell handler as parameters. Directive haskell_run has lazy semantics in the sense that it runs its handler only when the result is needed in a content handler or rewrite directives.

Let's test the configuration with *curl*.

```
curl 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/?u=hello&r=world&a=1&b=10&c=1'
toUpper hello = HELLO
reverse world = dlrow
1 'isInList' [10, 1, ] = 1
```

Synchronous content handlers

There are three types of exporters for synchronous content handlers.

Type	Exporter
ByteString -> ContentHandlerResult	ngxExportHandler (NGX_EXPORT_HANDLER)
ByteString -> L.ByteString	<pre>ngxExportDefHandler (NGX_EXPORT_DEF_HANDLER)</pre>
ByteString -> UnsafeContentHandlerResult	ngxExportUnsafeHandler (NGX_EXPORT_UNSAFE_HANDLER)

Types ContentHandlerResult and UnsafeContentHandlerResult are declared as type synonyms in module NgxExport.

```
type ContentHandlerResult = (L.ByteString, ByteString, Int)
type UnsafeContentHandlerResult = (ByteString, ByteString, Int)
```

All content handlers are *pure* Haskell functions, as well as the most of other synchronous handlers. The *normal* content handler returns a 3-tuple (response-body, content-type, HTTP-status). The response body consists of a number of chunks packed in a lazy bytestring, the content type is a strict bytestring such as text/html. The default handler defaults the content

type to *text/plain* and the HTTP status to 200, thus returning only chunks of the response body. The *unsafe* handler returns a 3-tuple with a single-chunked response body, the content type and the status, but the both bytestring parameters are supposed to be taken from static data, which must not be cleaned up after request termination.

Normal and default content handlers can be declared with two directives: haskell_content and haskell_static_content. The second directive runs its handler only once, when the first request comes, and returns the same response on further requests. The unsafe handler is declared with directive haskell_unsafe_content.

An example

Let's replace Nginx directive echo with our own default content handler echo. Add in test.hs,

```
import     Data.ByteString (ByteString)
import qualified Data.ByteString.Lazy as L

-- ...

echo :: ByteString -> L.ByteString
echo = L.fromStrict
ngxExportDefHandler 'echo
```

compile it and put test.so into /var/lib/nginx/. Add new location /ch into test.conf,

```
location /ch {
    haskell_run toUpper $hs_upper $arg_u;
    haskell_run reverse $hs_reverse $arg_r;
    haskell_run isInList $hs_isInList $arg_a $arg_b $arg_c $arg_d;
    haskell_content echo
"toUpper $arg_u = $hs_upper
reverse $arg_r = $hs_reverse
$arg_a 'isInList' [$arg_b, $arg_c, $arg_d] = $hs_isInList
";
}
```

and test again.

Asynchronous tasks and request body handlers

There are two types of Haskell handlers for per-request asynchronous tasks: an asynchronous handler and an asynchronous request body handler.

Type	Exporter
ByteString -> IO L.ByteString	ngxExportAsyncIOYY (NGX_EXPORT_ASYNC_IOY_Y)
L.ByteString -> ByteString -> IO L.ByteString	<pre>ngxExportAsyncOnReqBody (NGX_EXPORT_ASYNC_ON_REQ_BODY)</pre>

Normal asynchronous handler accepts a strict bytestring and returns a lazy bytestring. Its type exactly corresponds to that of the handlers exported with ngxExportIOYY. Request body handler additionally accepts request body chunks in its first parameter.

Unlike synchronous handlers, asynchronous per-request handlers are eager. This means that they will always run when declared in a location, no matter whether their results are going to be used in the response and rewrite directives, or not. The asynchronous handlers run in an early rewrite phase (before rewrite directives), and in a late rewrite phase (after rewrite directives, if in the final location there are more asynchronous tasks declared). It is possible to declare many asynchronous tasks in a single location: in this case they are spawned one by one in order of their declarations, which lets using results of early tasks in inputs of later task.

Asynchronous tasks are bound to the Nginx event loop by means of eventfd (or POSIX pipes if eventfd was not available on the platform when Nginx was being compiled). When the rewrite phase handler of this module spawns an asynchronous task, it opens an eventfd, then registers it in the event loop, and passes it to the Haskell handler. As soon as the Haskell handler finishes the task and pokes the result into buffers, it writes into the eventfd, thus informing the Nginx part that the task has finished. Then Nginx gets back to the module's rewrite phase handler, and it spawns the next asynchronous task, or returns (when there are no more tasks left), moving request processing to the next stage.

An example

Let's add two asynchronous handlers into *test.hs*: one for extracting a field from POST data, and the other for delaying response for a given number of seconds.

File test.hs (additions)

```
threadDelay $ t * 1000000
return $ C8L.pack $ show t
ngxExportAsyncIOYY 'delay
```

This code must be linked with threaded Haskell RTS this time!

Let's make location /timer, where we will read how many seconds to wait in POST field timer, and then wait them until returning the response.

File test.conf (additions)

```
location /timer {
   haskell_run_async_on_request_body reqFld $hs_timeout timer;
   haskell_run_async delay $hs_waited $hs_timeout;
   echo "Waited $hs_waited sec";
}
```

Run curl tests.

```
curl -d 'timer=3' 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/timer'
Waited 3 sec
curl -d 'timer=bad' 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/timer'
Waited 0 sec
```

Asynchronous content handlers

There are two types of *impure* content handlers that allow for effectful code. One of them corresponds to that of the *normal* content handler, except the result is wrapped in *IO Monad*. The other accepts request body chunks in its first argument like the handler exported with ngxExportAsyncOnReqBody.

Type	Exporter
ByteString -> IO ContentHandlerResult	ngxExportAsyncHandler (NGX_EXPORT_ASYNC_HANDLER)
<pre>L.ByteString -> ByteString -> IO ContentHandlerResult</pre>	<pre>ngxExportAsyncHandlerOnReqBody (NGX_EXPORT_ASYNC_HANDLER_ON_REQ_BODY)</pre>

The first handler is declared with directive $haskell_async_content$, the handler that accepts request body chunks is declared with directive $haskell_async_content_on_request_body$.

It's easy to emulate effects in a synchronous content handler by combining the latter with an asynchronous task like in the following example.

```
location /async_content {
    haskell_run_async getUrl $hs_async_httpbin "http://httpbin.org";
    haskell_content echo $hs_async_httpbin;
}
```

Here getUrl is an asynchronous Haskell handler that returns content of an HTTP page. This approach has at least two deficiencies related to performance and memory usage. The content may be huge and chunked, and its chunks could be naturally reused in the content handler. But they won't, because here they get collected by directive $haskell_run_async$ into a single chunk, and then passed to the content handler echo. The other problem deals with eagerness of asynchronous tasks. Imagine that we put in the location a rewrite to another location: handler getUrl will run before redirection, but variable $hs_async_httpbin$ will never be used because we'll get out from the current location.

The asynchronous task runs in a late *access phase*, and the lazy bytestring — the contents — gets used in the content handler as is, with all of its originally computed chunks.

Examples (including online image converter)

Let's rewrite our *timer* example using *haskell_async_content*.

File test.hs (additions)

```
{-# LANGUAGE TupleSections #-}
{-# LANGUAGE MagicHash #-}
import
                 GHC.Prim
                 Data.ByteString.Unsafe
import
                 Data.ByteString.Internal (accursedUnutterablePerformIO)
import
packLiteral :: Int -> GHC.Prim.Addr# -> ByteString
packLiteral 1 s = accursedUnutterablePerformIO $ unsafePackAddressLen 1 s
delayContent :: ByteString -> IO ContentHandlerResult
delayContent v = do
    v' <- delay v
    return $ (, packLiteral 10 "text/plain"#, 200) $
        L.concat ["Waited ", v', " sec\n"]
ngxExportAsyncHandler 'delayContent
```

For the *content type* we used a static string "text/plain"# that ends with a magic hash merely to avoid any dynamic memory allocations.

File test.conf (additions)

```
location /timer/ch {
   haskell_run_async_on_request_body reqFld $hs_timeout timer;
   haskell_async_content delayContent $hs_timeout;
}
```

Run curl tests.

```
curl -d 'timer=3' 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/timer/ch'
Waited 3 sec
curl 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/timer/ch'
Waited 0 sec
```

In the next example we will create an *online image converter* to convert images of various formats into PNG using Haskell library *JuicyPixels*.

File test.hs (additions)

We are going to run instances of *convertToPng* on multiple CPU cores, and therefore it's better now to compile this with option *-feager-blackholing*.

File test.conf (additions)

```
haskell rts_options -N4 -A32m -qg;
limit_conn_zone all zone=all:10m;
# ...
location /convert/topng {
    limit_conn all 4;
```

```
client_max_body_size 20m;
haskell_request_body_read_temp_file on;
haskell_async_content_on_request_body convertToPng;
}
```

Directive haskell rts_options declares that we are going to use 4 CPU cores (-N4) for image conversion tasks: this is a good choice on a quad-core processor when high CPU utilization is expected. For dealing with huge images, we also increased Haskell GC allocation area up to 32Mb (-A32m) to possibly minimize frequency of GC calls. We also forcibly switched to sequential GC (-qg), which is quite appropriate in our intrinsically single-threaded handler convertToPng. Directives $limit_conn_zone$ and $limit_conn$ must effectively limit number of simultaneously processed client requests to the number of CPU cores (4) in order to protect the CPU from overloading.

In location /convert/topng, directive client_max_body_size declares that all requests whose bodies exceed 20Mb will be rejected. Directive haskell_request_body_read_temp_file on makes the Haskell part able to read huge request bodies that have been buffered in a temporary file by Nginx. Notice that we do not pass any value into directive haskell_async_content_on_request_body, therefore its second argument is simply omitted.

For running tests, an original file, say *sample.tif*, must be prepared. We will pipe command *display* from *ImageMagick* to the output of curl for more fun.

```
curl --data-binary @sample.tif 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/convert/topng' | \angle display
```

Asynchronous services

Asynchronous tasks run in a request context, whereas asynchronous services run in a worker context. They start when the module gets initialized in a worker, and stop when a worker terminates. They are useful for gathering rarely changed data shared in many requests.

There is only one type of asynchronous services exporters.

Туре	Exporter	
ByteString -> Bool -> IO L.ByteString	<pre>ngxExportServiceIOYY (NGX_EXPORT_SERVICE_IOY_Y)</pre>	

It accepts a strict bytestring and a boolean value, and returns a lazy bytestring (chunks of data). If the boolean argument is *True* then this service has never been called before in this worker process: this can be used to initialize some global data needed by the service on the first call.

Services are declared with Nginx directive *haskell_run_service*. As far as they are not bound to requests, the directive is only available on the *http* configuration level.

```
haskell_run_service getUrlService $hs_service_httpbin "http://httpbin.org";
```

The first argument is, as ever, the name of a Haskell handler, the second — a variable where the service result will be put, and the third argument is data passed to the handler getUrlService in its first parameter. Notice that the third argument cannot contain variables because variable handlers in Nginx are only available in a request context, hence this argument may only be a static string.

Asynchronous services are bound to the Nginx event loop in the same way as asynchronous tasks. When a service finishes its computation, it pokes data into buffers and writes into eventfd (or a pipe's write end). Then the event handler immediately restarts the service with the boolean argument equal to *False*. This is responsibility of the author of a service handler to avoid dry runs and make sure that it is called not so often in a row. For example, if a service polls periodically, then it must delay for this time itself like in the following example.

An example

Let's retrieve content of a specific URL, say *httpbin.org*, in background. Data will update every 20 seconds.

File test.hs (additions)

```
import
                 Network.HTTP.Client
import
                 Control.Exception
                 System. IO. Unsafe
import
import
                 Control.Monad
httpManager :: Manager
httpManager = unsafePerformIO $ newManager defaultManagerSettings
{-# NOINLINE httpManager #-}
getUrl :: ByteString -> IO C8L.ByteString
getUrl url = catchHttpException $ getResponse url $ flip httpLbs httpManager
    where getResponse u = fmap responseBody. (parseRequest (C8.unpack u) >>=)
catchHttpException :: IO C8L.ByteString -> IO C8L.ByteString
catchHttpException = ('catch' \e ->
        return $ C8L.pack $ "HTTP EXCEPTION: " ++ show (e :: HttpException))
getUrlService :: ByteString -> Bool -> IO L.ByteString
getUrlService url firstRun = do
    unless firstRun $ threadDelay $ 20 * 1000000
    getUrl url
ngxExportServiceIOYY 'getUrlService
```

The httpManager defines a global state, not to say a variable: this is an asynchronous HTTP client implemented in module Network. HTTP. Client. Pragma NOINLINE ensures that all functions will refer to the same client object, i.e. it will nowhere be inlined. Functions getUrl and catchHttpException are used in our service handler getUrlService. The handler waits 20

seconds on every run except the first, and then runs the HTTP client. All HTTP exceptions are caught by catchHttpException, others hit the handler on top of the custom Haskell code and get logged by Nginx.

File test.conf (additions)

```
haskell_run_service getUrlService $hs_service_httpbin "http://httpbin.org";
# ...
location /httpbin {
    echo $hs_service_httpbin;
}
```

Run curl tests.

This must run really fast because it shows data that has already been retrieved by the service, requests do not trigger any network activity with *httpbin.org* by themselves!

Termination of a service

Services are killed on a worker's exit with Haskell asynchronous exception *ThreadKilled*. Then the worker waits *synchronously* until all of its services' threads exit, and calls *hs_exit()*. This scenario has two important implications.

- 1. The Haskell service handler may catch *ThreadKilled* on exit and make persistency actions such as writing files if they are needed.
- 2. *Unsafe blocking* FFI calls must be avoided in service handlers as they may hang the Nginx worker, and it won't exit. Using *interruptible* FFI fixes this problem.

Shared services

An asynchronous service may store its result in shared memory accessible from all worker processes. This is achieved with directive *haskell_service_var_in_shm*. For example, the following declaration (in *http* clause),

```
haskell_service_var_in_shm httpbin 512k /tmp $hs_service_httpbin;
```

makes service getUrlService, that stores its result in variable $hs_service_httpbin$, shared. The first argument of the directive — httpbin — is an identifier of a shared memory segment, 512k is its maximum size, /tmp is a directory where $file\ locks$ will be put (see below), and $$hs_service_httpbin$ is the service variable.

Shared services are called *shared* not only because they store results in shared memory, but also because at any moment of the Nginx master lifetime there is only one worker that runs a specific service. When workers start, they race to acquire a *file lock* for a service, and if a worker wins the race, it holds the lock until it exits or dies. Other workers' services of the same type wait until the lock is freed. The locks are implemented via POSIX *advisory* file locks, and so require a directory where they will be put. The directory must be *writable* to worker processes, and /tmp seems to be a good choice in general.

Update variables

The active shared service puts the value of the shared variable in a shared memory, services on other workers wait and do nothing else. Requests may come to any worker (with active or inactive services), fortunately the service result is shared and they can return it as is. But what if the result must be somehow interpreted by Haskell handlers before returning it in the response? Could the handlers just peek into the shared memory and do what they want with the shared data? Unfortunately, not: the shared memory is accessible for reading and writing only from the Nginx part!

Does it mean that we have only one option to let the Haskell part update its global state unavailable in inactive workers: passing values of shared variables into the Haskell part on every request? This would be extremely inefficient. Update variables is a trick to avoid this. They evaluate to the corresponding service variable's value only when it changes in the shared memory since the last check in the current worker, and to an empty string otherwise. Every service variable has its update variable counterpart which name is built from the service variable's name with prefix _upd__.

An example

Let's extend our example with loading a page in background. We are still going to load <code>httpbin.org</code>, but this time let's assume that we have another task, say extracting all links from the page and showing them in the response sorted. For that we could add a Haskell handler, say <code>sortLinks</code>, and pass to it all the page content on every request. But the page may appear huge, let's extract all the links from it and put them into a global state using update variable <code>_upd__hs_service_httpbin</code>. In this case function <code>sortLinks</code> must be impure, as it must be able to read from the global state.

File test.hs (additions)

```
import
                 Data.List
import qualified Data.ByteString as B
gHttpbinLinks :: IORef [ByteString]
gHttpbinLinks = unsafePerformIO $ newIORef []
{-# NOINLINE gHttpbinLinks #-}
grepLinks :: ByteString -> [ByteString]
grepLinks =
    map (fst . snd) . filter ((1 ==) . fst) . concatMap A.assocs .
        filter (not . null) . concatMap (matchAllText regex) .
            C8.lines
    where regex = makeRegex $ C8.pack "a href=\"([^\"]+)\"" :: Regex
grepHttpbinLinks :: ByteString -> IO L.ByteString
grepHttpbinLinks "" = return ""
grepHttpbinLinks v = do
    writeIORef gHttpbinLinks $ grepLinks $ B.copy v
    return ""
ngxExportIOYY 'grepHttpbinLinks
sortLinks :: ByteString -> IO L.ByteString
sortLinks "httpbin" =
    L.fromChunks . sort . map ('C8.snoc' '\n') <$> readIORef gHttpbinLinks
sortLinks _ = return ""
ngxExportIOYY 'sortLinks
```

Here gHttpbinLinks is the global state, grepHttpbinLinks is a handler for update variable _upd__hs_service_httpbin, almost all the time it does nothing — just returns an empty string, but when the update variable becomes not empty, it updates the global state and returns an empty string again. Notice that the original bytestring is copied with B.copy before its parts get collected as matches and put in the global state. This is an important step because the original bytestring's lifetime does not extend beyond the current request whereas the global state may last much longer! Sometimes copying is not necessary, for example when the bytestring gets deserialized into an object in-place. Handler sortLinks is parameterized by data identifier: when the identifier is equal to httpbin, it reads the global state and returns it sorted, otherwise it returns an empty string.

File test.conf (additions)

```
haskell_service_var_in_shm httpbin 512k /tmp $hs_service_httpbin;

# ...

location /httpbin/sortlinks {
    haskell_run grepHttpbinLinks $_upd_links_ $_upd__hs_service_httpbin;
    haskell_run sortLinks $hs_links "${_upd_links_}httpbin";
    echo $hs_links;
}
```

We have to pass variable $_upd_links_$ in sortLinks because this will trigger update in the worker by grepHttpbinLinks, otherwise update won't run: remember that Nginx directives are lazy? On the other hand, $_upd_links_$ is always empty and won't mess up with the rest of the argument — value httpbin.

Run curl tests.

```
curl 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/httpbin/sortlinks'
/
/absolute-redirect/6
/anything
/basic-auth/user/passwd
/brotli
/bytes/1024
...
```

Shm stats variables

Every service variable in shared memory has another associated variable that provides basic stats in format $timestamp \mid size \mid changes \mid failures \mid failed$, where timestamp is a number of seconds elapsed from the beginning of the UNIX epoch till the last change of the variable's value, size is the size of the variable in bytes, changes is a number of changes, and failures is a number of memory allocation failures since the last Nginx reload, the value of flag failed (0 or 1) denotes if the last attempt of memory allocation from the shared memory pool for a new value of the variable has failed. The name of the shm stats variable is built from the service variable's name with prefix $_shm__$.

An example

Let's add a location to show shm stats about our httpbin service. This time only configuration file test.conf is affected.

File test.conf (additions)

```
location /httpbin/shmstats {
    echo "Httpbin service shm stats: $_shm_hs_service_httpbin";
}
```

Run curl tests.

```
curl 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/httpbin/shmstats'
Httpbin service shm stats: 1516274639 | 13011 | 1 | 0 | 0
```

From this output we can find that payload size of *httpbin.org* is 13011 bytes, the service variable was updated only once (less than 20 seconds elapsed from start of Nginx), and that there were no memory allocation failures.

Update callbacks

There is a special type of single-shot services called update callbacks. They are declared like

```
haskell_service_var_update_callback cbHttpbin $hs_service_httpbin optional_value;
```

Here cbHttpbin is a Haskell handler exported by ngxExportServiceIOYY as always. Variable $hs_service_httpbin$ must be declared in directive $haskell_service_var_in_shm$. Argument $optional_value$ is a string, it can be omitted in which case handler cbHttpbin gets an empty string as its first argument.

Update callbacks do not return results. They run from a worker that holds the active service on every change of the service variable, and shall be supposedly used to integrate with other Nginx modules by signaling specific Nginx locations via an HTTP client.

An example

Let's count changes in service variable $hs_service_httpbin$ during Nginx lifetime (originally I supposed that its content won't change after the first initialization because httpbin.org looks like a static page, but responses appeared to be able to vary from time to time). For this we will use counters from nginx-custom-counters-module.

File test.hs (additions)

```
cbHttpbin :: ByteString -> Bool -> IO L.ByteString
cbHttpbin url firstRun = do
   when firstRun $ threadDelay $ 5 * 1000000
   getUrl url
ngxExportServiceIOYY 'cbHttpbin
```

Handler *cbHttpbin* is a simple HTTP client. On the first run it waits 5 seconds before sending request because the request is supposed to be destined to self, while Nginx workers may appear to be not ready to accept it.

File test.conf (additions)

Wait at least 5 seconds after Nginx start and run curl tests.

```
curl 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/counters'
Httpbin service changes count: 1
```

Further the count will probably be steadily increasing.

```
curl 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/counters'
Httpbin service changes count: 3
```

Service hooks

Service hooks allow for interaction with running services, both per-worker and shared. They are supposed to change global states that affect services behavior and can be thought of as service API handlers, thereto being run from dedicated Nginx locations.

Type	Exporter	
ByteString -> IO L.ByteString	ngxExportServiceHook (NGX_EXPORT_SERVICE_HOOK)	

Service hooks install a content handler when declared. In the following example,

```
location /httpbin/url {
    haskell_service_hook getUrlServiceHook $hs_service_httpbin $arg_v;
}
```

location /httpbin/url derives the content handler which signals all workers via an event channel upon receiving a request. Then the event handlers in all workers run the hook (getUrlServiceHook in our case) synchronously, and finally send an asynchronous exception ServiceHookInterrupt to the service to which the service variable from the service hook declaration (hs_service_httpbin) corresponds. Being run synchronously, service hooks are expected to be fast, only writing data passed to them (value of arg_v in our case) into a global state. In contrast to update variables, this data has a longer lifetime being freed in the Haskell part when the original bytestring gets garbage collected.

An example

Let's make it able to change the URL for the httpbin service in runtime. For this we must enable getUrlService to read from a global state where the URL value will reside.

File test.hs (additions, getUrlService reimplemented)

```
import Data.Maybe
-- ...
getUrlServiceLink :: IORef (Maybe ByteString)
```

```
getUrlServiceLink = unsafePerformIO $ newIORef Nothing
{-# NOINLINE getUrlServiceLink #-}
getUrlServiceLinkUpdated :: IORef Bool
getUrlServiceLinkUpdated = unsafePerformIO $ newIORef True
{-# NOINLINE getUrlServiceLinkUpdated #-}
getUrlService :: ByteString -> Bool -> IO L.ByteString
getUrlService url = const $ do
    url' <- fromMaybe url <$> readIORef getUrlServiceLink
    updated <- readIORef getUrlServiceLinkUpdated</pre>
    atomicWriteIORef getUrlServiceLinkUpdated False
    unless updated $ threadDelay $ 20 * 1000000
    getUrl url'
ngxExportServiceIOYY 'getUrlService
getUrlServiceHook :: ByteString -> IO L.ByteString
getUrlServiceHook url = do
    writeIORef getUrlServiceLink $ if B.null url
                                       then Nothing
                                       else Just url
    atomicWriteIORef getUrlServiceLinkUpdated True
    return $ if B.null url
                 then "getUrlService reset URL"
                 else L.fromChunks ["getUrlService set URL ", url]
ngxExportServiceHook 'getUrlServiceHook
```

Service hook getUrlServiceHook writes into two global states: getUrlServiceLink where the URL is stored, and getUrlServiceLinkUpdated which will signal service getUrlService that the URL has been updated.

File test.conf (additions)

```
haskell_service_hooks_zone hooks 32k;

# ...

location /httpbin/url {
    allow 127.0.0.1;
    deny all;
    haskell_service_hook getUrlServiceHook $hs_service_httpbin $arg_v;
}
```

Directive *haskell_service_hooks_zone* declares a shm zone where Nginx will temporarily store data for the hook (the value of *arg_v*). This directive is not mandatory: shm zone is not really needed when service hooks pass nothing. Location /httpbin/url is protected from unauthorized access with Nginx directives *allow* and *deny*.

Run curl tests.

First let's check that *httpbin.org* replies as expected.

Then change URL to, say, example.com,

```
curl 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/httpbin/url?v=http://example.com'
```

and peek, by the way, into the Nginx error log.

```
2018/02/13 16:12:33 [alert] 28794#0: service hook reported "getUrlService ∠

set URL http://example.com"

2018/02/13 16:12:33 [alert] 28795#0: service hook reported "getUrlService ∠

set URL http://example.com"

2018/02/13 16:12:33 [alert] 28797#0: service hook reported "getUrlService ∠

set URL http://example.com"

2018/02/13 16:12:33 [alert] 28798#0: service hook reported "getUrlService ∠

set URL http://example.com"

2018/02/13 16:12:33 [alert] 28797#0: an exception was caught while ∠

set URL http://example.com"

2018/02/13 16:12:33 [alert] 28797#0: an exception was caught while ∠

setting value of service variable "hs_service_httpbin": "Service ∠

was interrupted by a service hook", using old value
```

All 4 workers were signaled, and the only *active* service (remember that *getUrlService* was made *shared*) was interrupted. Do not be deceived by *using old value*: the new URL will be read in by the service from the global state immediately after restart, and the service variable will be updated.

Let's see what we are getting now.

```
curl 'http://127.0.0.1:8010/httpbin/sortlinks'
http://www.iana.org/domains/example
```

Let's reset the URL.

In the log we'll find

```
2018/02/13 16:24:12 [alert] 28795#0: service hook reported "getUrlService ∠

reset URL"

2018/02/13 16:24:12 [alert] 28794#0: service hook reported "getUrlService ∠

reset URL"

2018/02/13 16:24:12 [alert] 28797#0: service hook reported "getUrlService ∠

reset URL"

2018/02/13 16:24:12 [alert] 28798#0: service hook reported "getUrlService ∠

reset URL"

2018/02/13 16:24:12 [alert] 28798#0: service hook reported "getUrlService ∠

reset URL"

2018/02/13 16:24:12 [alert] 28797#0: an exception was caught while ∠

getting value of service variable "hs_service_httpbin": "Service ∠

was interrupted by a service hook", using old value
```

Service update hooks

This is a reimplementation of *update variables* for shared services by means of service hooks. Update hooks have a number of advantages over update variables.

- 1. No need for obscure treatment of update variables in configuration files.
- 2. No need for copying the original argument: its data is freed on the Haskell part.
- 3. Nginx don't need to access shared memory on every single request for checking if the service data has been altered.

There is a subtle difference with update variables. As soon as with update hooks new service variable data is propagated to worker processes asynchronously via an event channel, there always exists a very short transient period between the moments when the service variable gets altered in shared memory and the global state gets updated in a worker, during which events related to client requests may occur.

An update hook is exported with exporter ngxExportServiceHook, and declared using directive $haskell_service_update_hook$ on the http configuration level.

An example

Let's reimplement the example with update of service links.

File test.hs (additions)

File test.conf (additions)

```
haskell_service_update_hook grepHttpbinLinksHook $hs_service_httpbin;
# ...

location /httpbin/sortlinks/hook {
    haskell_run sortLinks $hs_links httpbin;
    echo $hs_links;
}
```

For testing this, watch the Nginx error log and change the URL of the service with requests to location /httpbin/url like in the previous example.

Efficiency of data exchange between Nginx and Haskell parts

Haskell handlers may accept strings (String or [String]) and strict bytestrings (ByteString), and return strings, lazy bytestrings and booleans. Input C-strings are marshaled into a String with peekCStringLen which has linear complexity O(n), output Strings are marshaled into C-strings with newCStringLen which is also O(n). The new C-strings get freed upon the request termination in the Nginx part.

The bytestring counterparts are much faster. Both input and output are O(1), using unsafePackCStringLen and a Haskell stable pointer to lazy bytestring buffers created inside Haskell handlers. If an output lazy bytestring has more than one chunk, a new single-chunked C-string will be created in variable and service handlers, but not in content handlers because the former use the chunks directly when constructing contents. Holding a stable pointer to a bytestring's chunks on the Nginx part ensures that they won't be garbage collected until the pointer gets freed. Stable pointers get freed upon the request termination for variable and content handlers, and before the next service iteration for service handlers.

Complex scenarios may require typed exchange between Haskell handlers and the Nginx part using serialized data types such as Haskell records. In this case bytestring flavors of the handlers would be the best choice. There are two well-known serialization mechanisms: packing Show / unpacking Read and ToJSON / FromJSON from Haskell package aeson. In practice, Show is basically faster than ToJSON, however in many cases FromJSON outperforms Read.

A variable handler of a shared service makes a copy of the variable's value because shared data can be altered by any worker at any moment, and there is no safe way to hold a reference to a shared data without locking. In contrast, a variable handler of a normal per-worker service shares a reference to the value with the service. Obviously, this is still not safe. Imagine that some request gets a reference to a service value from the variable handler, then lasts some time and later uses this reference again: the reference could probably be freed by this time because the service could have altered its data since the beginning of the request. This catastrophic scenario could have been avoided by using a copy of the service value in every request like in shared services, but this would unnecessarily hit performance, therefore requests share *counted references*, and as soon as the count reaches θ , the service value gets freed.

Exceptions in Haskell handlers

There is no way to catch exceptions in *pure* handlers. However they can arise from using *partial* functions such as *head* and *tail*! Switching to their *total* counterparts from module *Safe* can mitigate this issue, but it is not possible to eliminate it completely.

Fortunately, all exceptions, synchronous and asynchronous, are caught on top of the module's Haskell code. If a handler does not catch an exception itself, the exception gets caught higher and logged by Nginx. However, using exception handlers in Haskell handlers, when it's possible, should be preferred.

Summary table of all Nginx directives of the module

Directive	Level	Comment
haskell compile	http	Compile Haskell code from the last argument. Accepts arguments threaded (use threaded RTS library) and standalone (use standalone approach).
haskell load	http	Load specified Haskell library.

Directive	Level	Comment
haskell ghc_extra_options	http	Specify extra options for GHC when the library compiles.
haskell rts_options	http	Specify options for Haskell RTS.
haskell program_options	http	Specify program options. This is just another way for passing data into Haskell handlers.
haskell_run	server, location, location if	Run a synchronous Haskell task.
haskell_run_async	location, location if	Run an asynchronous Haskell task.
haskell_run_async_on_request_body	location, location if	Run an asynchronous Haskell request body handler.
haskell_run_service	http	Run a Haskell service.
haskell_service_var_update_callback	http	Run a callback on a service variable's update.
haskell_content	location,	Declare a Haskell content handler.
haskell_static_content	location, location if	Declare a static Haskell content handler.
haskell_unsafe_content	location, location if	Declare an unsafe Haskell content handler.
haskell_async_content	location, location if	Declare an asynchronous Haskell content handler.
haskell_async_content_on_request_body	location, location if	Declare an asynchronous Haskell content handler with access to request body.
haskell_service_hook	location, location if	Declare a service hook and create a content handler for managing the corresponding service.
haskell_service_update_hook	http	Declare a service update hook.
haskell_request_body_read_temp_file	server, location, location if	This flag (on or off) makes asynchronous tasks and content handlers read buffered in a temporary file POST data. If not set, then buffered data is not read.

Directive	Level	Comment
haskell_var_nocacheable	http	All variables in the list become no cacheable and safe for using in ad-hoc iterations over <i>error_page</i> cycles.
haskell_var_compensate_uri_changes	http	All variables in the list allow to cheat <i>error_page</i> when used in its redirections and make the cycle infinite.
haskell_service_var_ignore_empty	http	Do not write the service result when its value is empty.
haskell_service_var_in_shm	http	Store the service result in a shared memory. Implicitly declares a shared service.
haskell_service_hooks_zone	http	Declare shm zone for a temporary storage of service hooks data.

Appendix

File test.hs

```
{-# LANGUAGE TemplateHaskell #-}
{-# LANGUAGE TupleSections #-}
{-# LANGUAGE MagicHash #-}
{-# LANGUAGE OverloadedStrings #-}
module NgxHaskellUserRuntime where
import
                 NgxExport
import qualified Data.Char as C
                 Data.ByteString (ByteString)
import qualified Data.ByteString.Lazy as L
import qualified Data.ByteString.Char8 as C8
import qualified Data.ByteString.Lazy.Char8 as C8L
import
                 Control.Concurrent
import
                 Safe
import
                 GHC.Prim
import
                 Data.ByteString.Unsafe
                 Data.ByteString.Internal (accursedUnutterablePerformIO)
import
import
                 Codec.Picture
                 Network.HTTP.Client
import
import
                 Control.Exception
import
                 System. IO. Unsafe
import
                 Control.Monad
                 Data.IORef
import
import
                 Text.Regex.PCRE.ByteString
                 Text.Regex.Base.RegexLike
import
import qualified Data.Array as A
import
                 Data.List
import qualified Data.ByteString as B
import
                 Data.Maybe
toUpper :: String -> String
toUpper = map C.toUpper
ngxExportSS 'toUpper
ngxExportSS 'reverse
isInList :: [String] -> Bool
isInList [] = False
isInList (x : xs) = x 'elem' xs
ngxExportBLS 'isInList
echo :: ByteString -> L.ByteString
echo = L.fromStrict
ngxExportDefHandler 'echo
reqFld :: L.ByteString -> ByteString -> IO L.ByteString
```

```
regFld a fld = return $ maybe C8L.empty C8L.tail $
    lookup (C8L.fromStrict fld) $ map (C8L.break (== '=')) $ C8L.split '&' a
ngxExportAsyncOnReqBody 'reqFld
delay :: ByteString -> IO L.ByteString
delay v = do
    let t = readDef 0 $ C8.unpack v
    threadDelay $ t * 1000000
    return $ C8L.pack $ show t
ngxExportAsyncIOYY 'delay
packLiteral :: Int -> GHC.Prim.Addr# -> ByteString
packLiteral 1 s = accursedUnutterablePerformIO $ unsafePackAddressLen 1 s
delayContent :: ByteString -> IO ContentHandlerResult
delayContent v = do
    v' <- delay v
    return $ (, packLiteral 10 "text/plain"#, 200) $
        L.concat ["Waited ", v', " sec\n"]
ngxExportAsyncHandler 'delayContent
convertToPng :: L.ByteString -> ByteString -> IO ContentHandlerResult
convertToPng t = const $ return $
    case decodeImage $ L.toStrict t of
        Left e -> (C8L.pack e, packLiteral 10 "text/plain"#, 500)
        Right image -> case encodeDynamicPng image of
                Left e -> (C8L.pack e, packLiteral 10 "text/plain"#, 500)
                Right png -> (png, packLiteral 9 "image/png"#, 200)
ngxExportAsyncHandlerOnReqBody 'convertToPng
httpManager :: Manager
httpManager = unsafePerformIO $ newManager defaultManagerSettings
{-# NOINLINE httpManager #-}
getUrl :: ByteString -> IO C8L.ByteString
getUrl url = catchHttpException $ getResponse url $ flip httpLbs httpManager
    where getResponse u = fmap responseBody. (parseRequest (C8.unpack u) >>=)
catchHttpException :: IO C8L.ByteString -> IO C8L.ByteString
catchHttpException = ('catch' \e ->
        return $ C8L.pack $ "HTTP EXCEPTION: " ++ show (e :: HttpException))
getUrlServiceLink :: IORef (Maybe ByteString)
getUrlServiceLink = unsafePerformIO $ newIORef Nothing
{-# NOINLINE getUrlServiceLink #-}
getUrlServiceLinkUpdated :: IORef Bool
getUrlServiceLinkUpdated = unsafePerformIO $ newIORef True
{-# NOINLINE getUrlServiceLinkUpdated #-}
getUrlService :: ByteString -> Bool -> IO L.ByteString
getUrlService url = const $ do
```

```
url' <- fromMaybe url <$> readIORef getUrlServiceLink
    updated <- readIORef getUrlServiceLinkUpdated</pre>
    atomicWriteIORef getUrlServiceLinkUpdated False
    unless updated $ threadDelay $ 20 * 1000000
    getUrl url'
ngxExportServiceIOYY 'getUrlService
getUrlServiceHook :: ByteString -> IO L.ByteString
getUrlServiceHook url = do
    writeIORef getUrlServiceLink $ if B.null url
                                       then Nothing
                                       else Just url
    atomicWriteIORef getUrlServiceLinkUpdated True
    return $ if B.null url
                 then "getUrlService reset URL"
                 else L.fromChunks ["getUrlService set URL ", url]
ngxExportServiceHook 'getUrlServiceHook
gHttpbinLinks :: IORef [ByteString]
gHttpbinLinks = unsafePerformIO $ newIORef []
{-# NOINLINE gHttpbinLinks #-}
grepLinks :: ByteString -> [ByteString]
grepLinks =
    map (fst . snd) . filter ((1 ==) . fst) . concatMap A.assocs .
        filter (not . null) . concatMap (matchAllText regex) .
            C8.lines
    where regex = makeRegex $ C8.pack "a href=\"([^\"]+)\"" :: Regex
grepHttpbinLinks :: ByteString -> IO L.ByteString
grepHttpbinLinks "" = return ""
grepHttpbinLinks v = do
    writeIORef gHttpbinLinks $ grepLinks $ B.copy v
    return ""
ngxExportIOYY 'grepHttpbinLinks
sortLinks :: ByteString -> IO L.ByteString
sortLinks "httpbin" =
    L.fromChunks . sort . map ('C8.snoc' '\n') <$> readIORef gHttpbinLinks
sortLinks _ = return ""
ngxExportIOYY 'sortLinks
cbHttpbin :: ByteString -> Bool -> IO L.ByteString
cbHttpbin url firstRun = do
    when firstRun $ threadDelay $ 5 * 1000000
    getUrl url
ngxExportServiceIOYY 'cbHttpbin
grepHttpbinLinksHook :: ByteString -> IO L.ByteString
grepHttpbinLinksHook\ v\ =\ do
    let links = grepLinks v
        linksList = let ls = B.intercalate " " links
```

File test.conf

```
user
                        nginx;
worker_processes
                        4;
events {
   worker_connections 1024;
}
http {
    default_type
                        application/octet-stream;
    sendfile
    haskell load /var/lib/nginx/test.so;
    # Use 4 cores (-N4) and a large GC allocation area (-A32m), and force
    # sequential GC (-qg) for image conversion tasks.
    #haskell rts_options -N4 -A32m -qg;
    limit_conn_zone all zone=all:10m;
    haskell_run_service getUrlService $hs_service_httpbin "http://httpbin.org";
    haskell_service_var_in_shm httpbin 512k /tmp $hs_service_httpbin;
    haskell_service_var_update_callback cbHttpbin $hs_service_httpbin
                                        "http://127.0.0.1:8010/httpbin/count";
    haskell_service_hooks_zone hooks 32k;
    haskell_service_update_hook grepHttpbinLinksHook $hs_service_httpbin;
    server {
        listen
                        8010;
        server_name
                        main;
        location / {
            haskell_run toUpper $hs_upper $arg_u;
            haskell_run reverse $hs_reverse $arg_r;
            haskell_run isInList $hs_isInList $arg_a $arg_b $arg_c $arg_d;
            echo "toUpper $arg_u = $hs_upper";
            echo "reverse $arg_r = $hs_reverse";
            echo "$arg_a 'isInList' [$arg_b, $arg_c, $arg_d] = $hs_isInList";
```

```
}
        location /ch {
            haskell_run toUpper $hs_upper $arg_u;
            haskell_run reverse $hs_reverse $arg_r;
            haskell_run isInList $hs_isInList $arg_a $arg_b $arg_c $arg_d;
            haskell_content echo
"toUpper $arg_u = $hs_upper
reverse $arg_r = $hs_reverse
$arg_a 'isInList' [$arg_b, $arg_c, $arg_d] = $hs_isInList
        location /timer {
            haskell_run_async_on_request_body reqFld $hs_timeout timer;
            haskell_run_async delay $hs_waited $hs_timeout;
            echo "Waited $hs_waited sec";
        }
        location /timer/ch {
            haskell_run_async_on_request_body reqFld $hs_timeout timer;
            haskell_async_content delayContent $hs_timeout;
        }
        location /convert/topng {
            limit_conn all 4;
            client_max_body_size 20m;
            haskell_request_body_read_temp_file on;
            haskell_async_content_on_request_body convertToPng;
        }
        location /httpbin {
            echo $hs_service_httpbin;
        }
        location /httpbin/sortlinks {
            haskell_run grepHttpbinLinks $_upd_links_ $_upd__hs_service_httpbin;
            haskell_run sortLinks $hs_links "${_upd_links_}httpbin";
            echo $hs_links;
        }
        location /httpbin/sortlinks/hook {
            haskell_run sortLinks $hs_links httpbin;
            echo $hs_links;
        }
        location /httpbin/shmstats {
            echo "Httpbin service shm stats: $_shm__hs_service_httpbin";
        }
        location /httpbin/url {
            allow 127.0.0.1;
```

```
deny all;
    haskell_service_hook getUrlServiceHook $hs_service_httpbin $arg_v;
}

# Counters require Nginx module nginx-custom-counters-module,
# enable the next 2 locations if your Nginx build has support for them.

#location /httpbin/count {
    #counter $cnt_httpbin inc;
    #return 200;
#}

#location /counters {
    #echo "Httpbin service changes count: $cnt_httpbin";
#}
}
```