

Interpreter Events

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1. Concept

In order to support writing debuggers, profilers, analyzers and other useful tools that are needed for efficient programming, the interpreter is offering a generic event-oriented low-level API on top of which all these tools can be built. It is similar to the `parse/trace` and `lexer/trace` instrumentation approach.

2. Interpreter instrumentation

In order to access internal interpreter states, the interpreter is generating events at key points of his internal code evaluation process. Those events can be captured using a user-provided callback function. Events are emitted only if a *tracing* mode is enabled in the interpreter using `/trace` refinement on `do`.

```
do/trace <code> <callback>
```

```
<code>      : a block of code to evaluate in tracing mode.
```

```
<callback> : a callback function, triggered on each interpreter event.
```

Example

```

logger: function [
  event  [word!]                ;-- Event name
  code   [any-block! none!]     ;-- Currently evaluated block
  offset [integer!]             ;-- Offset in evaluated block
  value  [any-type!]            ;-- Value currently processed
  ref    [any-type!]            ;-- Reference of current call (usually word or
path)
  frame  [pair!]                ;-- Stack frame start/top positions
][
  print [
    pad uppercase form event 8
    mold/part/flat either any-function? :value [:ref][:value] 20
  ]
]

do/trace [print 1 + 2] :logger

```

will output:

```

INIT    none                ;-- Initializing tracing mode
ENTER   none                ;-- Entering block to evaluate
FETCH   print               ;-- Fetching and evaluating `print` value
OPEN    print               ;-- Results in opening a new call stack frame
FETCH   +                   ;-- Fetching and evaluating `+` infix operator
OPEN    +                   ;-- Results in opening a new call stack frame
FETCH   1                   ;-- Fetching left operand `1`
PUSH    1                   ;-- Pushing integer! value `1` on stack
FETCH   2                   ;-- Fetching and evaluating right operand
PUSH    2                   ;-- Pushing integer! value `2`
CALL    +                   ;-- Calling `+` operator
RETURN  3                   ;-- Returning the resulting value
CALL    print               ;-- Calling `print`
3        ;-- Outputting 3
RETURN  unset               ;-- Returning the resulting value
EXIT    none                ;-- Exiting evaluated block
END     none                ;-- Ending tracing mode

```

3. Events

When the tracing mode is active, the interpreter will trigger events described below. Events can be grouped into the following categories:

- Global events: **INIT**, **END**
- Evaluating a block/paren/path of code: **ENTER**, **EXIT**
- Calling any type of function: **OPEN**, **CALL**, **RETURN**
- Evaluating a function body block: **PROLOG**, **EPILOG**

- Expression evaluation: **FETCH**, **PUSH** , **SET**, **ERROR**
- Exceptions handling: **THROW**, **CATCH**

Detailed description:

Event	Code	Offset	Value	Ref	Description
INIT	none	-1	n/a (none)	n/a (none)	when the tracing mode is initiated (do/trace call).
END	none	-1	n/a (none)	n/a (none)	when the tracing mode is ended (do/trace call exiting).
ENTER ⁽¹⁾	any-block!	-1	n/a (none)	n/a (none)	when a block is about to be evaluated.
EXIT ⁽¹⁾	any-block!	-1	last any-type! evaluated value	n/a (none)	when current evaluated block's or path's tail has been reached.
OPEN	any-block!	integer!	any-function!	word! , path!	when a new function (any-function!) call is initiated and a new stack frame is opened.
CALL	any-block!	integer!	any-function! to call	word! , path! , any-function!	a function with all arguments fetched on the stack gets called.
RETURN	any-block!	integer!	returned any-type! value	word! , path!	when a function call has returned and its stack frame has been closed.
PROLOG	any-block!	-1	called function! value	word! , path!	when entering a function! body.
EPILOG	any-block!	-1	called function! value	word! , path!	when exiting a function! body.
FETCH	any-block!	integer!	fetched any-type! value	n/a (none)	a value is read from the input block to be evaluated.
PUSH	any-block!	integer!	pushed any-type! value	n/a (none)	a value has been pushed on the stack.
SET	any-block!	integer!	any-type!	set-word! , set-path!	a set-word or set-path is set to a value.

Event	Code	Offset	Value	Ref	Description
ERROR	none	-1	error! value	n/a (none)	when an error occurs and is about to be thrown up in the stack.
THROW	none	-1	thrown any-type! value	n/a (none)	when a value is thrown using throw native.
CATCH	none	-1	thrown any-type! value	n/a (none)	when a value is caught using catch native.

⁽¹⁾ Note that a pair of **enter** and **exit** events are generated for any path evaluation (like for other block datatypes).

Events come with extra information:

- **code**: when available, it provides the input **block!** or **paren!** series currently interpreted.
- **offset**: when different from **-1**, indicates the input series offset at the event moment.
- **value**: when available, the currently processed value.
- **ref**: when available, references the word or path from which evaluation produced the current event/value.

4. Event handler

Here is the prototype of event handlers suitable to be passed as argument to **do/trace**:

```
func [
  event  [word!]
  code   [any-block! none!]
  offset [integer!]
  value  [any-type!]
  ref    [any-type!]
  frame  [pair!]
][
  [events]                ;-- optional restricted event names list
  ...body...
]
```

Argument	Description
event	Event name.
code	Block of code currently evaluated.
offset	Offset in block currently evaluated.
value	Value currently processed in the event.
ref	Reference of the call (word or path) associated to the event.

Argument	Description
<code>frame</code>	Pair of indexes in the Red internal stack denoting the beginning and end of the call frame. ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Note that the `frame` index range is for the internal Red stack, not the one used in the debugger (which is managed by the debugger itself).

The body block can start with an optional filtering block, for indicating which events will be triggered. This allows to reduce the number of callback calls resulting in much better processing performance.

5. Tracing control

5.1. `trace` function

Syntax

```
trace <mode>

<mode>: new event generation mode (logic!)
```

Description

`trace` allows to turn on/off event generation during a traced evaluation (inside code evaluated with `do/trace`). Using `trace` in such way outside of a traced evaluation has no effect. `trace` function has also another usage described in "Predefined tools" section.

Example

```
do/trace [
  print "before"
  trace off
  print "between"
  trace on
  print "after"
] :logger
```

will output

```

INIT      none
ENTER     none
FETCH     print
OPEN      print
FETCH     "before"
PUSH      "before"
CALL      print
before
RETURN    unset
FETCH     trace
OPEN      trace
FETCH     off
PUSH      false
CALL      trace      ;-- calling `trace off`
between   ;-- only `print` output but no related events
RETURN    true       ;-- next event is the return of `trace on`
FETCH     print
OPEN      print
FETCH     "after"
PUSH      "after"
CALL      print
after
RETURN    unset
EXIT      unset
END       none

```

5.2. Function attributs

Any function called during a traced evaluation can be set to either avoid generating any event or be forced to generate events while event generation is disabled. This can be achieved using specific function attributs.

5.2.1. trace

Syntax

```
func [[trace]...][...]
```

Description

When this attribut is used, the function will be forced to generate events during a traced evaluation. This propagates to nested calls also (unless they explicitly disable event generation). Note that it is still possible to locally turn event generation on/off using `trace`.

Example

```
foo: func [[trace]][1 + 2]
do/trace [
    trace off
    print "before"
    foo
    print "after"
    trace on
] :logger
```

will output

```
INIT      none
ENTER     none
FETCH     trace
OPEN      trace
FETCH     off
PUSH      false
CALL      trace
before    ;-- no related events for `print "before"`
PROLOG    foo      ;-- events enabled from beginning of `foo` body
evaluation
ENTER     none
FETCH     +
OPEN      +
FETCH     1
PUSH      1
FETCH     2
PUSH      2
CALL      +
RETURN    3
EXIT      3
EPILOG    foo      ;-- event generation stopped again when `foo` exits
after     ;-- no related events for `print "after"`
RETURN    true     ;-- next event is the return of `trace on`
EXIT      true
END       none
```

5.2.2. no-trace

Syntax

```
func [[no-trace]...][...]
```

Description

When this attribut is used, the function will be blocked from generating events during a traced evaluation. This propagates to nested calls also (unless they explicitly disable event generation).

Note that it is still possible to locally turn event generation on/off using **trace**.

Example

```
foo: func [[no-trace]][print 1 + 2]
do/trace [print "before" foo print "after"] :logger
```

will output

```
INIT      none
ENTER     none
FETCH     print
OPEN      print
FETCH     "before"
PUSH      "before"
CALL      print
before
RETURN    unset
FETCH     foo
OPEN      foo
CALL      foo          ;-- last event before entering `foo`
3          ;-- no event generated from inside `foo`
RETURN    unset       ;-- next event is the return from `foo`
FETCH     print
OPEN      print
FETCH     "after"
PUSH      "after"
CALL      print
after
RETURN    unset
EXIT      unset
END       none
```

6. Predefined tools

6.1. debug

Debugger commands:

- **help** or **?**: prints a list of debugger's commands.
- **next** or **n** or just ENTER: evaluate next value.
- **continue** or **c**: exit debugging console but continue evaluation.
- **quit** or **q**: exit debugger and stop evaluation.
- **stack** or **s**: display the current calls and expression stack.
- **parents** or **p**: display the parents call stack.

- `:word`: outputs the value of `word`. If it is a `function!`, outputs the local context.
- `:a/b/c`: outputs the value of `a/b/c` path.
- `watch <word1> <word2>...`: watch one or more words. `w` can be used as shortcut for `watch`.
- `-watch <word1> <word2>...`: stop watching one or more words. `-w` can be used as shortcut for `-watch`.
- `+stack` or `+s`: outputs expression stack on each new event.
- `-stack` or `-s`: do not output expression stack on each new event.
- `+locals` or `+l`: output local context for each entry in the callstack.
- `-locals` or `-l`: do not output local context for each entry in the callstack.
- `+indent` or `+i`: indent the output of the expression stack.
- `-indent` or `-i`: do not indent the output of the expression stack.

6.2. profile

Syntax

```
profile <code>
profile/by <code> <category>

<code>      : code to profile (any-type!)
<category> : sort by a specific category: 'name, 'count, 'time (word!)
```

Description

Profiles the provided code, counting function invocations and measuring duration. Once the code evaluation returns, a report is printed. The default sorting is per invocation count. Alternative sorting can be used through the `/by` refinement. `profile` accepts the same arguments as `do`.

Notes:

- Timing is currently not very accurate for durations less than 20ms on Windows platform (default timer accuracy). This will be improved in the future with better timers and functions prolog/epilog more accurate exclusions.
- Nested functions duration are currently added to their parent timing. Proper function timing (excluding nested calls) will be added in the future.
- Function calls with refinement are counted separately as specific function instances (same refinements in different order will be counted separately too currently).

Options

By default, `profile` will account for any type of functions (`any-function!` typeset). It is possible to restrict to a sub-group by directly modifying the option `system/tools/options/profile/types`, setting it to a different typeset.

Examples

```
profile [print 1 + 2 + 3 * 5]
```

```
30
#1  +           | 2           | 0:00:00
#2  *           | 1           | 0:00:00
#3  print       | 1           | 0:00:00.001
```

```
profile https://raw.githubusercontent.com/red/red/master/tests/demo.red
```

```

      RedRed           d
      d      d         e
      e      e         R
      R      R      edR      dR d
      d      d      d      R      R      Re
      edRedR      e      d      d      R
      R      e      RedR      e      d
      d      e      d      R      e
      e      R      e      d      d      dR
      R      R      edR      dR      d
#1  if           | 420           | 0:00:00
#2  <=           | 391           | 0:00:00
#3  prin        | 241           | 0:00:00.240773
#4  +           | 220           | 0:00:00
#5  either      | 210           | 0:00:00
#6  all         | 210           | 0:00:00.0028192
#7  >           | 210           | 0:00:00.0020021
#8  =           | 210           | 0:00:00.0010021
#9  tail?      | 37            | 0:00:00
#10 unless     | 37            | 0:00:00
#11 skip       | 37            | 0:00:00
#12 repeat     | 10            | 0:00:00.212984
#13 next       | 10            | 0:00:00
#14 foreach    | 1             | 0:00:00.251109

```

```
system/tools/options/profile/types: make typeset! [op!]
profile https://raw.githubusercontent.com/red/red/master/tests/demo.red
```

```

RedRed          d
d      d        e
e      e        R
R      R      edR      dR d
d      d d      R      R Re
edRedR      e      d      d      R
R      e      RedR      e      d
d      e      d      R      e
e      R      e      d      d dR
R      R      edR      dR d

#1  <=          | 391          | 0:00:00.0000038
#2  +          | 220          | 0:00:00
#3  >          | 210          | 0:00:00
#4  =          | 210          | 0:00:00.0010005
```

6.3. trace

TBD

7. Implementation notes