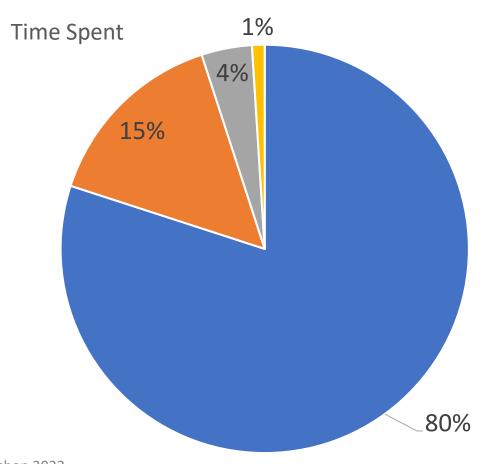
# 10 Years of Superlinear Slowness in Coq

By Jason Gross and Andres Erbsen



## My PhD



- Performance engineering (working around slowness in Coq)
- Coding new things

Misc

Discovering interesting new things

# Why We Need Automation: Verification Overhead

• 10x—100x overhead

CompCert	5880	36,120		
seL4	8700	1,092,121		
CertiKOS	6500	96,642		
Fiat Cryptography	603	94,196		

Lines of Code Lines of Verification

# Automating Verification: ≈ No Marginal Overhead

#### Fiat Cryptography:

188,365

94,196

Lines of Runtime Code (Handwritten)

Lines of Runtime Code (Autogenerated)

Lines of Verification (Handwritten)

#### Proof Engine: The API for Automation

#### Proof engine is:

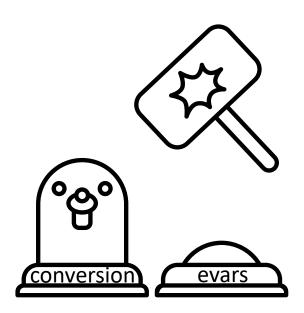
- an interface for programmers: build tactics on top of this
  - e.g., rewrite is not a building block, it's something that should be built
  - would be nice to have minimal, orthogonal, performant interface

Proof assistants prove by typechecking proof terms

- want modular, incremental construction of proof terms
  - want feedback at the location of error (modularity)
  - want power everything should be doable in parts (incrementality)
  - want efficiency

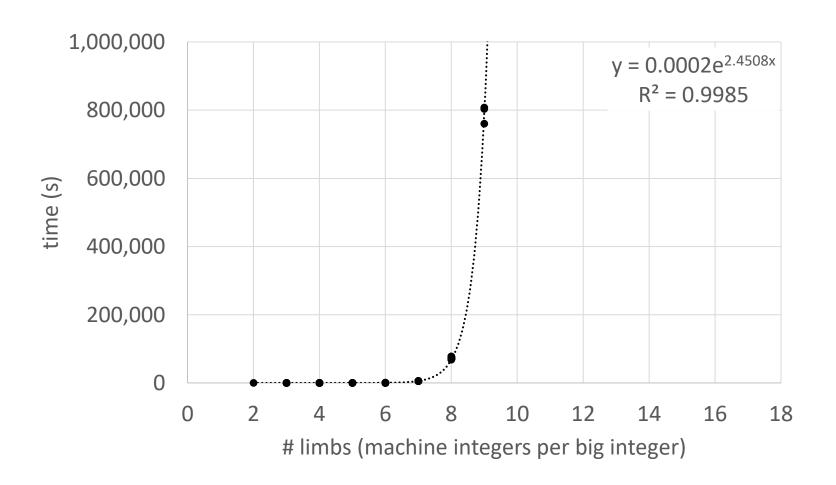
#### This Presentation

- POPLmark for Proof Engines
- Presentation will sketch the most salient ways we find Coq's current proof engine inadequate
  - Superlinear
  - Whack-a-mole
  - Incoherent



# Superlinearity

## Superlinearity: 4,000 Millenia is Too Long!



# Superlinearity: 4,000 Millenia is Too Long!

What was slow?

abstract reflexivity

Why was it slow?

black-box conversion heuristics

## What's Hard About Conversion, By Example

#### Let's unify

fact 
$$10 \equiv 10 \cdot \text{fact } 9$$

#### We have four choices:

1. Heuristically reduce factorial on the left one step (desired in this case)

2. Heuristically reduce multiplication on the right one step (very bad)

fact 10 
$$\equiv$$
 fact 9 + 9 · fact 9  
fact 10  $\equiv$  fact 9 + fact 9 + 8 · fact 9

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## What's Hard About Conversion, By Example

Let's unify

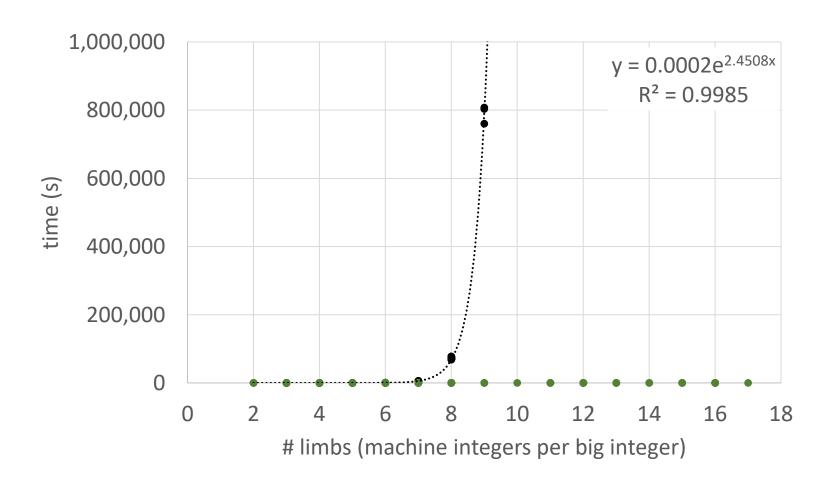
fact 
$$10 \equiv 10 \cdot \text{fact } 9$$

We have four choices:

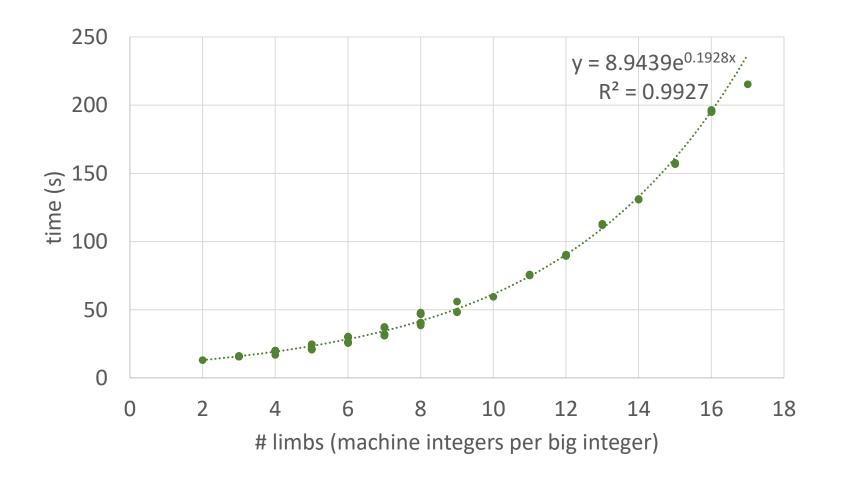
- 1. Heuristically reduce factorial on the left one step (desired in this case)
- 2. Heuristically reduce multiplication on the right one step (very bad)
- 3. Fully reduce both sides (also very slow)
- 4. Demand conversion hints from the user

Unclear what's best, but (4) should at least be an option.

## Superlinearity: 4,000 Millenia is Too Long!



## Superlinearity: Exponential is Too Slow 😊



#### Conversion is Everywhere

- Fixpoint refolding: cbn, simpl, hnf, intro, inductive type checking, formerly type inference; performance depends on size of fixpoint body (<a href="mailto:coq/coq#11887">coq/coq#11887</a>)
- Extraction (coq/coq#16172)
- decide equality (coq/coq#16290)
- set (occurs modulo unification when there are holes)
- destruct (inductive type extraction, pattern, convoying, retypechecking goal/context; see also coq/coq#374)
- clearbody (needed to ensure well-typing)
- rewrite (sometimes desirable, but no way to turn off modulo unification/conversion)
- apply (often desirable, but hard to control)

• • •

Setup: Imperative code inside weakest precondition (wp) predicate

```
Theorem my_function_correct : forall state,
  my_precondition state
```

→ weakest\_precondition state my\_function postcondition.

#### Real example: verifying chacha20

```
my function := ...; i = 0; while (i < 10) { i += 1;
   x0 += x4 ; x12 ^= x0 ; x12 <<<= 16;
                                                     x0 += x5; x15 ^= x0; x15 <<<= 16;
   x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 12;
                                                     x10 += x15; x5 ^= x10; x5 <<<= 12;
   x0 += x4 ; x12 ^= x0 ; x12 <<<= 8;
                                                     x0 += x5; x15 ^= x0; x15 <<<= 8;
   x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 7;
                                                     x10 += x15; x5 ^= x10; x5 <<<= 7;
   x1 += x5 ; x13 ^= x1 ; x13 <<<= 16;
                                                     x1 += x6; x12 ^= x1; x12 <<<= 16;
   x9 += x13; x5 ^= x9; x5 <<<= 12;
                                                     x11 += x12; x6 ^= x11; x6 <<<= 12;
   x1 += x5; x13 ^= x1; x13 <<<= 8;
                                                     x1 += x6 ; x12 ^= x1 ; x12 <<<= 8;
   x9 += x13; x5 ^= x9; x5 <<<= 7;
                                                     x11 += x12; x6 ^= x11; x6 <<<= 7;
   x2 += x6 ; x14 ^= x2 ; x14 <<<= 16;
                                                     x2 += x7 ; x13 ^= x2 ; x13 <<<= 16;
   x10 += x14; x6 ^= x10; x6 <<<= 12;
                                                     x8 += x13; x7 ^= x8; x7 <<<= 12;
                                                     x2 += x7; x13 ^= x2; x13 <<<= 8;
   x2 += x6 ; x14 ^= x2 ; x14 <<<= 8;
                                                     x8 += x13; x7 ^= x8; x7 <<<= 7;
   x10 += x14; x6 ^= x10; x6 <<<= 7;
   x3 += x7 ; x15 ^= x3 ; x15 <<<= 16;
                                                     x3 += x4 ; x14 ^= x3 ; x14 <<<= 16;
   x11 += x15; x7 ^= x11; x7 <<<= 12;
                                                     x9 += x14; x4 ^= x9; x4 <<<= 12;
                                                     x3 += x4 ; x14 ^= x3 ; x14 <<<= 8;
   x3 += x7 ; x15 ^= x3 ; x15 <<<= 8;
   x11 += x15; x7 ^= x11; x7 <<<= 7;
                                                     x9 += x14; x4 ^= x9; x4 <<<= 7;
```

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```
•••
```

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```
st<sub>o</sub> := ...
v<sub>o</sub> := ?v
st<sub>1</sub> := st<sub>o</sub>[x0:=v<sub>o</sub>]
```

\_\_\_\_\_\_

```
exists v0 v4,

[x0]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v0

/\ [x4]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v4

/\ v0 + v4 = ?v
```

```
st_{0} := ...
v_{0} := ?v
st_{1} := st_{0}[x0:=v_{0}]
```

```
Solve with repeat eexists; repeat split; reflexivity
```

```
x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 16;

x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 12;

x0 += x4; x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 8;

x0 += x4; x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 8; post

x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 7;
```

exists v0 v4,

[x0]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v0

/\ [x4]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v4

/\ v0 + v4 = ?v

```
st_{0} := ...
v_{0} := x + y
st_{1} := st_{0}[x0:=v_{0}]
```

\_\_\_\_\_\_

```
st<sub>0</sub> := ...

v<sub>0</sub> := x + y

st<sub>1</sub> := st<sub>0</sub>[x0:=v<sub>0</sub>]

v<sub>1</sub> := ?v

st<sub>2</sub> := st<sub>1</sub>[x12:=v<sub>1</sub>]
```

\_\_\_\_\_\_

```
Wp (x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 16;
x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 12;
x0 += x4; x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 8;
x0 += x4; x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 8;
x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 7;</pre>
```

```
exists v12 v0,

[x12]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v12

/\ [x0]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v0

/\ v12 ^ v0 = ?v
```

```
st<sub>0</sub> := ...

v<sub>0</sub> := x + y

st<sub>1</sub> := st<sub>0</sub>[x0:=v<sub>0</sub>]

v<sub>1</sub> := ?v

st<sub>2</sub> := st<sub>1</sub>[x12:=v<sub>1</sub>]
```

```
Solve with repeat eexists; repeat split; reflexivity
```

```
x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 12;

x0 += x4; x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 8;

x0 += x4; x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 8;

x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 7;
```

exists v12 v0, O [x12]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v12 /\ [x0]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v0 /\ v12 ^ v0 = ?v

```
st<sub>o</sub> := ...
v_0 := x + y
st_1 := st_0[x0:=v_0]
V_1 := Z \wedge V_0
st_2 := st_1[x12:=v_1]
x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 16;

x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 12;

x0 += x4; x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 8;

x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 7;
```

```
st_0 := ...
 V_0 := X + Y
 st_1 := st_0[x0:=v_0]
V_1 := Z ^ V_0
 st_2 := st_1[x12:=v_1]
x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 12;

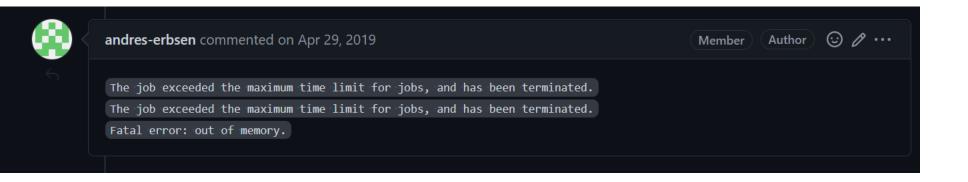
x0 += x4; x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 8;

x0 += x4; x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 8;

x0 += x4; x12 ^= x0; x12 <<<= 8;

x8 += x12; x4 ^= x8; x4 <<<= 7;
```

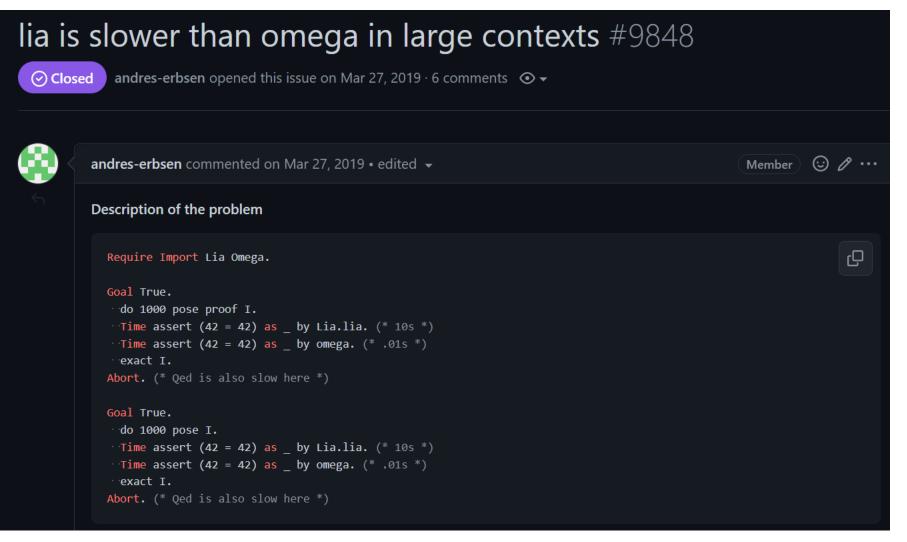
#### Performance?



#### LtacProf!

total time: 71.126s				
tactic	local	total	calls	max
-straightline	65.8%	92.5%	11109	0.862s
<pre>-straightline_cleanup</pre>	31.0%	77.5%	27471	0.103s
<pre>-clear (hyp_list)</pre>	45.2%	45.2%	188438	0.023s
<pre>-cbn[interp_binop] in *</pre>	8.4%	8.4%	2807	0.016s
-ensure_free	0.0%	3.0%	0	0.034s
<pre>-rename_to_different</pre>	0.0%	3.0%	194	0.033s
<pre>-assert_succeeds</pre>	0.0%	2.9%	194	0.032s
<pre>-assert_fails</pre>	0.0%	2.8%	291	0.032s
-tac	0.0%	2.8%	194	0.032s
-set (H := Set)	2.8%	2.8%	194	0.032s

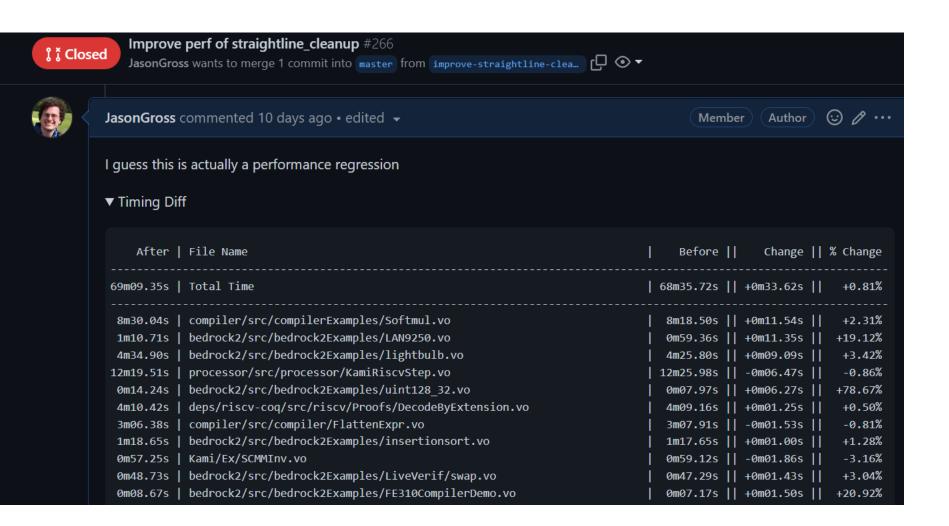
# Why clear?



## Dumb Algorithmics Forced By Ltac

```
Ltac straightline cleanup :=
  repeat match goal with
  | x : Syntax.cmd |- _ => clear x
                                    O(n^3)
  | x : BinNums.Z |- _ => clear x
  | x : unit |- _ => clear x
  | x : bool |- _ => clear x
  | x : list _ |- _ => clear x
  | x : nat | - => clear x
```

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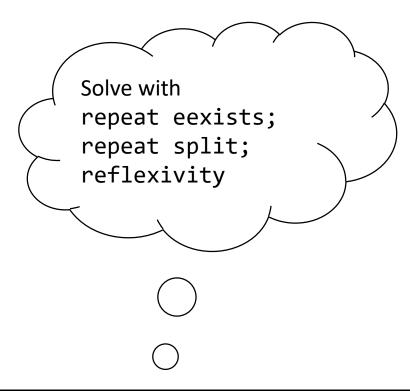
# Can we just skip clear?

total time: 29.464s				
tactic	local	total	calls	max
l	1			
-straightline	0.0%	98.9%	1324	0.588s
-refine (uconstr)	79.4%	79.4%	516	0.137s
<pre>-straightline_side_condition_solver_inli</pre>	79.0%	79.0%	97	0.507s
-straightline_refl	1.0%	57.6%	419	0.149s
-straightline_set	0.1%	17.9%	1194	0.078s
<pre>-straightline_split</pre>	0.1%	17.0%	161	0.067s
-letexists_as	0.3%	12.5%	97	0.062s
-straightline_cleanup	0.3%	5.3%	1324	0.007s
<pre>-straightline_cleanup_destruct</pre>	3.8%	3.8%	1194	0.005s
<pre>-unify (constr) (constr)</pre>	3.4%	3.4%	140	0.014s
-split	3.3%	3.3%	258	0.016s
-change (x = y)	2.3%	2.3%	97	0.015s
-unfold1_cmd_goal Coq Workshop 2022	0.1%	2.1%	193	0.008s

# What's up with refine?

total time: 29.464s				
tactic	local	total	calls	max
-straightline	0.0%	98.9%	1324	0.588s
-refine (uconstr)	79.4%	79.4%	516	0.137s
-straightline_side_condition_solver_inli	79.0%	79.0%	97	0.507s
-straightline_refl	1.0%	57.6%	419	0.149s
-straightline_set	0.1%	17.9%	1194	0.078s
-straightline_split	0.1%	17.0%	161	0.067s
-letexists_as	0.3%	12.5%	97	0.062s
-straightline_cleanup	0.3%	5.3%	1324	0.007s
<pre>-straightline_cleanup_destruct</pre>	3.8%	3.8%	1194	0.005s
<pre>-unify (constr) (constr)</pre>	3.4%	3.4%	140	0.014s
-split	3.3%	3.3%	258	0.016s
-change (x = y)	2.3%	2.3%	97	0.015s
-unfold1_cmd_goal Coq Workshop 2022	0.1%	2.1%	193	0.008s

## It's reflexivity again!



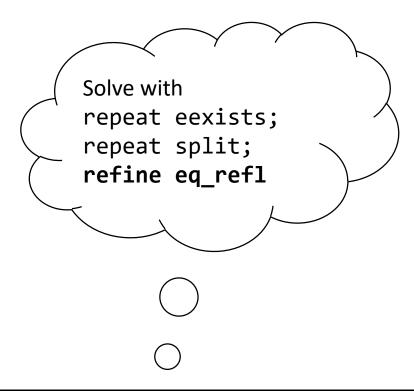
```
exists v12 v0, 

[x12]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v12

/\ [x0]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v0

/\ v12 ^ v0 = ?v
```

# It's reflexivity refine eq\_refl



```
exists v12 v0, 

[x12]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v12

/\ [x0]<sub>sto</sub> = Some v0

/\ v12 ^ v0 = ?v
```

#### You say toMAYto, I say toMAHto

```
Goal: ?e = t (at type T)
                                             Running Time
Tactic
reflexivity
                                             1.594s
refine eq refl
                                             5.847s
exact eq refl
                                             5.999s
refine (@eq refl T t)
                                             1.701s
refine (@eq refl T ?e)
                                             1.746s
instantiate (1:=t); reflexivity
                                             0.423s
instantiate (1:=t); refine eq refl
                                             0.491s
instantiate (1:=t); refine (@eq refl T t)
                                             0.414s
```

#### Evars and Holes are Everywhere

- Created whenever a term is not given fully
- Easily forgotten:

```
Check (id 7). \longrightarrow Check (@id _ 7).
```

Hold a copy of the entire context(!!!)

#### Created by:

- Literally every tactic that changes the goal EXCEPT change, move
- rewrite for pattern unification
- Passing terms (constr, open\_constr) to tactics

#### Reducing Context Size ...

```
Goal: ?e = t (at type T)
                                              Time
Tactic
reflexivity
                                              1.594s
refine eq refl
                                              5.847s
exact eq refl
                                              5.999s
refine (@eq refl T t)
                                              1.701s
refine (@eq refl T ?e)
                                              1.746s
instantiate (1:=t); reflexivity
                                             0.423s
instantiate (1:=t); refine eq refl
                                             0.491s
instantiate (1:=t); refine (@eq refl T t)
                                             0.414s
```

### Reducing Context Size ...

```
Goal: ?e = t (at type T)
                                             Time
Tactic
                                                        Less Time
reflexivity
                                             1.594s
                                                        0.041s
refine eq refl
                                             5.847s
                                                        0.132s
exact eq refl
                                             5.999s
                                                        0.131s
refine (@eq refl T t)
                                             1.701s
                                                        0.047s
refine (@eq refl T ?e)
                                             1.746s
                                                        0.0495
instantiate (1:=t); reflexivity
                                             0.423s
                                                        0.092s
instantiate (1:=t); refine eq refl
                                             0.491s
                                                        0.094s
instantiate (1:=t); refine (@eq refl T t)
                                             0.414s
                                                        0.083s
```

# Optimized Proof of Entire Loop Body

total time: 9.577s (vs original 71.126s)				
tactic	local	total	calls	max
-straightline	0.1%	90.5%	1324	0.168s
<pre>-straightline_side_condition_solver_inli</pre>	60.8%	60.8%	97	0.147s
-straightline_refl	1.5%	36.4%	419	0.041s
-refine (uconstr)	31.9%	31.9%	516	0.037s
-refine_eq_refl_v	0.2%	25.4%	0	0.031s
<pre>-vm_compute</pre>	23.6%	23.6%	161	0.030s
-straightline_set	1.0%	22.6%	1194	0.032s
-straightline_split	0.3%	19.1%	161	0.037s
<pre>-unfold1_cmd_goal</pre>	0.2%	10.4%	193	0.022s
-straightline_cleanup	1.1%	9.3%	1324	0.019s
-change G	9.2%	9.2%	484	0.022s
-straightline_unfold	0.8%	8.1%	1097	0.027s

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# Example 3: Rewriting is Hard

- Dumb reasons
- Interesting technical reasons
- Reasons that contain research-level technical challenges

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## Example 3: Rewriting is Slow

#### Dumb reasons (some now fixed, others still open)

- evar use: #6101, #8304, #8822, #12524, #13576, #13708
- uncontrollable unification and conversion: #7933, #9283, #9286, #9287, #10969, #13338, #13346, #15593
- invoking simpl refolding when reducing types to hnf: #6101, #8304
- typeclasses: #3795, #3921, #15596, #15701, #15747
- universes: #11973, #14488
- undiagnosed: <u>#4977</u>, <u>#8823</u>

# Example 3: Rewriting is Hard

#### Interesting technical reasons

Example: hard to build a rewrite that doesn't duplicate entire goal for every rewrite location

## Example 3: Rewriting is Hard

#### Reasons that contain research-level technical challenges

When binders are involved:

- generate a linearly-sized proof term (tricky)
- in linear time (more tricky)
- using only well-typed incremental modular primitives (open problem)
- with linear time Qed (open problem)

## What we hope you now believe

- Performant modular proof engines are important
- We don't have one yet, and don't even know how to spec one yet
- POPLmark for proof engines would be a great first step!
- Looking for underlying building blocks, not just a faster rewrite/program logic solver
  - Should work for structured conversion, program logic, etc
  - Building a framework to evaluate these primitives is part of the quest (POPLmark for proof engines)

### Discussion & Questions

#### Our questions:

- What are the right (incremental modular) building blocks for conversion?
- How should binders and contexts be represented?
- What asymptotic performance is "adequate" for the various building blocks?

Your questions: ...?

### Extra Content

### Rewriting Pseudocode: With Binders

```
rw (fun x:T => e) =
   let rrw := (fun x:T => rw e) in
   let mid := (fun y:T => let (e', _) := beta (rrw y) in e') in
   let f mid := functional extensionality
                 (fun z:T => let ( , e'e) := beta (rrw z) in e'e) in
   match rwh mid with
   | (result, mid result) => (result, eq trans f mid mid result)
      => (mid, f mid)
   end
```

## Rewriting Pseudocode: No Binders

```
rw(fx) =
  let (mid, fx mid) :=
    match rw f, rw x with
    (f', f'f), (x', x'x) => (f' x', app_cong f'f x'x)
     => (f x, eq refl (f x))
    end in
   match rwh mid with
   | (result, mid result) => (result, eq trans fx mid mid result)
   => (mid, fx mid)
  end
```

### Rewrite Performance With Binders

