

RetDec: An Open-Source Machine-Code Decompiler

Jakub Křoustek

Peter Matula

Petr Zemek

Threat Labs



 Jakub Křoustek

- founder of RetDec
- Threat Labs lead @Avast (previously @AVG)
- reverse engineer, malware hunter, security researcher
-  @JakubKroustek
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 Peter Matula

- main developer of the RetDec decompiler
- senior developer @Avast (previously @AVG)
-  rock climbing and 
-  peter.matula@avast.com

```
.text:004015BB    push  ebp
.text:004015BC    mov   ebp, esp
.text:004015BE    and   esp, 0FFFFFFF0h
.text:004015C1    sub   esp, 20h
.text:004015C4    call  __main
.text:004015C9    mov   [esp+20h+var_4], 0
.text:004015D1    mov   [esp+20h+var_8], 0
.text:004015D9    mov   [esp+20h+var_C], 0
.text:004015E1    lea   eax, [esp+20h+var_C]
.text:004015E5    mov   [esp+20h+var_18], eax
.text:004015E9    lea   eax, [esp+20h+var_8]
.text:004015ED    mov   [esp+20h+var_1C], eax
.text:004015F1    mov   [esp+20h+Format], offset Format
.text:004015F8    call  _scanf
.text:004015FD    mov   edx, [esp+20h+var_C]
.text:00401601    mov   eax, [esp+20h+var_8]
.text:00401605    mov   [esp+20h+var_1C], edx
.text:00401609    mov   [esp+20h+Format], eax
.text:0040160C    call  _ack
.text:00401611    mov   [esp+20h+var_4], eax
.text:00401615    mov   edx, [esp+20h+var_C]
.text:00401619    mov   eax, [esp+20h+var_8]
.text:0040161D    mov   ecx, [esp+20h+var_4]
.text:00401621    mov   [esp+20h+var_14], ecx
.text:00401625    mov   [esp+20h+var_18], edx
.text:00401629    mov   [esp+20h+var_1C], eax
.text:0040162D    mov   [esp+20h+Format], offset aAckermanDDD
.text:00401634    call  _printf
.text:00401639    mov   eax, [esp+20h+var_4]
.text:0040163D    leave
.text:0040163E    retn
```

.text:000110E4	STMFD	SP!, {R11,LR}
.text:000110E8	ADD	R11, SP, #4
.text:000110EC	SUB	SP, SP, #0x14
.text:000110F0	STR	R0, [R11,#var_14]
.text:000110F4	STR	R1, [R11,#var_18]
.text:000110F8	BL	__gccmain
.text:000110FC	MOV	R3, #0
.text:00011100	STR	R3, [R11,#var_8]
.text:00011104	MOV	R3, #0
.text:00011108	STR	R3, [R11,#var_C]
.text:0001110C	MOV	R3, #0
.text:00011110	STR	R3, [R11,#var_10]
.text:00011114	SUB	R2, R11, #-var_C
.text:00011118	SUB	R3, R11, #-var_10
.text:0001111C	LDR	R0, =aDD
.text:00011120	MOV	R1, R2
.text:00011124	MOV	R2, R3
.text:00011128	BL	scanf
.text:0001112C	LDR	R2, [R11,#var_C]
.text:00011130	LDR	R3, [R11,#var_10]
.text:00011134	MOV	R0, R2
.text:00011138	MOV	R1, R3
.text:0001113C	BL	ack
.text:00011140	MOV	R3, R0
.text:00011144	STR	R3, [R11,#var_8]
.text:00011148	LDR	R2, [R11,#var_C]
.text:0001114C	LDR	R3, [R11,#var_10]
.text:00011150	LDR	R0, =aAckermanDDD
.text:00011154	MOV	R1, R2
.text:00011158	MOV	R2, R3
.text:0001115C	LDR	R3, [R11,#var_8]
.text:00011160	BL	printf

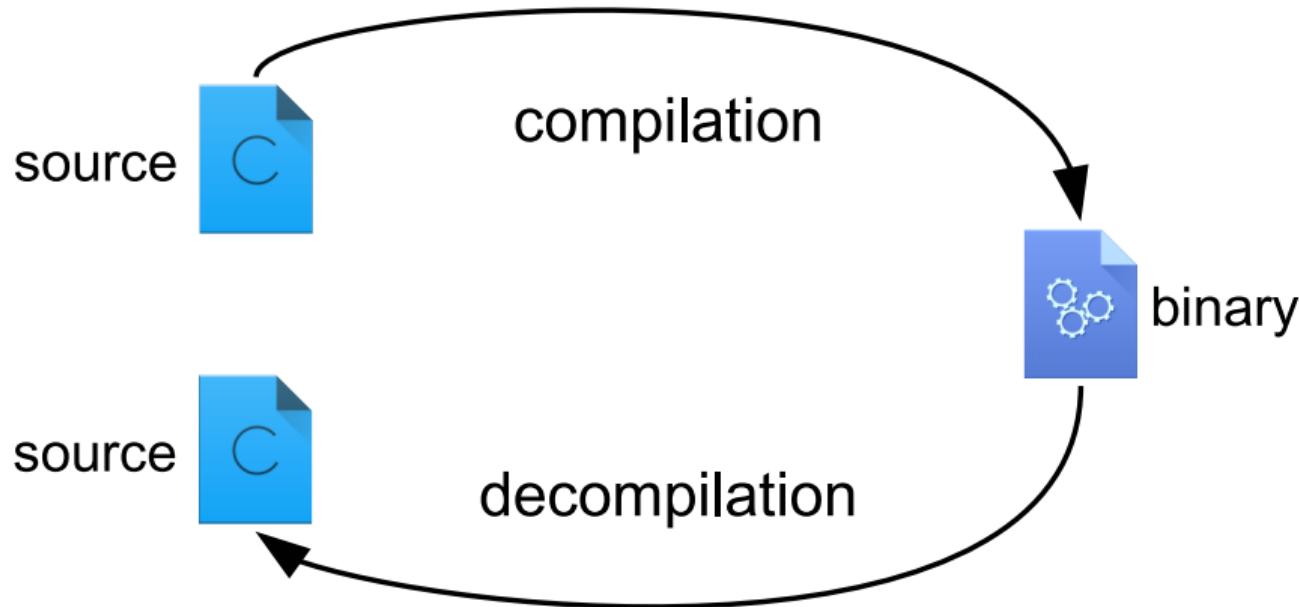
```
.text:08900428    addiu   $sp, -0x20
.text:0890042C    sw      $ra, 0x20+var_4($sp)
.text:08900430    sw      $fp, 0x20+var_8($sp)
.text:08900434    move    $fp, $sp
.text:08900438    sw      $a0, 0x20+var_10($fp)
.text:0890043C    sw      $a1, 0x20+var_C($fp)
.text:08900440    sw      $zero, 0x20+var_20($fp)
.text:08900444    sw      $zero, 0x20+var_1C($fp)
.text:08900448    sw      $zero, 0x20+var_18($fp)
.text:0890044C    addiu   $v1, $fp, 0x20+var_1C
.text:08900450    addiu   $a2, $fp, 0x20+var_18
.text:08900454    lui     $v0, 0x891
.text:08900458    addiu   $a0, $v0, (aDD - 0x8910000)
.text:0890045C    move    $a1, $v1
.text:08900460    jal     scanf
.text:08900464    nop
.text:08900468    lw      $v0, 0x20+var_1C($fp)
.text:0890046C    lw      $v1, 0x20+var_18($fp)
.text:08900470    move    $a0, $v0
.text:08900474    move    $a1, $v1
.text:08900478    jal     ack
.text:0890047C    nop
.text:08900480    sw      $v0, 0x20+var_20($fp)
.text:08900484    lw      $v1, 0x20+var_1C($fp)
.text:08900488    lw      $a2, 0x20+var_18($fp)
.text:0890048C    lui     $v0, 0x891
.text:08900490    addiu   $a0, $v0, (aAckermanDDD - 0x8910000)
.text:08900494    move    $a1, $v1
.text:08900498    lw      $a3, 0x20+var_20($fp)
.text:0890049C    jal     printf
```

```
.text:1000056C          stwu   r1, back_chain(r1)
.text:10000570          mflr   r0
.text:10000574          stw    r0, 0x30+sender_lr(r1)
.text:10000578          stw    r31, 0x30+var_4(r1)
.text:1000057C          mr     r31, r1
.text:10000580          stw    r3, 0x18(r31)
.text:10000584          stw    r4, 0x1C(r31)
.text:10000588          li     r0, 0
.text:1000058C          stw    r0, 8(r31)
.text:10000590          li     r0, 0
.text:10000594          stw    r0, 0xC(r31)
.text:10000598          li     r0, 0
.text:1000059C          stw    r0, 0x10(r31)
.text:100005A0          lis    r0, 0x1000
.text:100005A4          addic r11, r0, 0x82C # 0x1000082C
.text:100005A8          addi   r9, r31, 0xC
.text:100005AC          addi   r0, r31, 0x10
.text:100005B0          mr    r3, r11
.text:100005B4          mr    r4, r9
.text:100005B8          mr    r5, r0
.text:100005BC          crclr 4*crl1+eq
.text:100005C0          bl    __isoc99_scanf
.text:100005C4          lwz    r9, 0xC(r31)
.text:100005C8          lwz    r0, 0x10(r31)
.text:100005CC          mr    r3, r9
.text:100005D0          mr    r4, r0
.text:100005D4          bl    ack
.text:100005D8          stw    r3, 8(r31)
.text:100005DC          lis    r0, 0x1000
.text:100005E0          addic r11, r0, 0x834 # 0x10000834
.text:100005E4          lwz    r9, 0xC(r31)
.text:100005E8          lwz    r0, 0x10(r31)
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The same, but decompiled to C

```
int main(int argc, char ** argv) {
    __main();
    int32_t v1 = 0;
    int32_t v2 = 0;
    scanf("%d %d", &v1, &v2);
    int32_t result = _ack(v1, v2);
    printf("ackerman( %d , %d ) = %d\n", v1, v2, result);
    return result;
}
```



Q Binary analysis

- reverse engineering
- malware analysis
- vulnerability detection
- verification
- binary comparison
- ...

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C Binary recompilation (yeah, like that's ever gonna work)

- porting
- bug fixing
- adding new features
- original sources got lost
- optimizations

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 - exponential complexities
 - obfuscation, packing, anti-debugging

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 - x86, ARM, MIPS, PowerPC, ...
 - CISC vs. RISC
 - bit length, endianness, floating points
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- generic decompilation of binary code

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⌚ History

- 2011–2013 (AVG + BUT FIT via TAČR TA01010667 grant)
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 3-4 core developers

 ≈ 20 BSc/MSc/PhD students

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¶ Lines of code

 419,451 code

 205,222 comments, etc.

 624,673 total

⌚ Supports

- architectures (32-bit): x86, ARM, PowerPC, MIPS
- OFFs: ELF, PE, COFF, Mach-O, Intel HEX, AR, raw
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- statically linked code detection
- OS loader simulation
- recursive traversal disassembling
- high-level constructions/types reconstruction
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► Runs on (hopefully)



Windows



Linux

🔗 RetDec goes open-source under the MIT license

- december 2017, shortly after the conference

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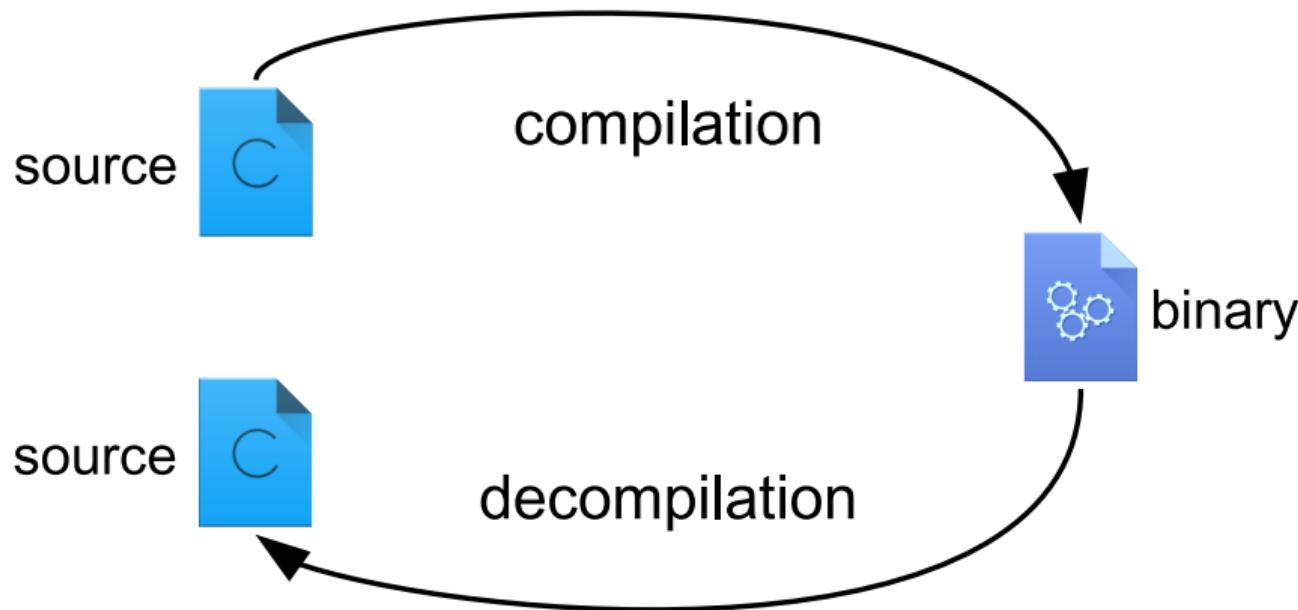
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🧩 Repositories

- 🌐 11 core
- 📦 6 support
- 🛒 8 third party

✍️ Contacts

- 🌐 <https://retdec.com/>
- 💻 <https://github.com/avast-tl>
- 🐦 <https://twitter.com/retdec>
- RSS <https://retdec.com/rss/>
- ✉️ info@retdec.com



| ... by using cool technologies

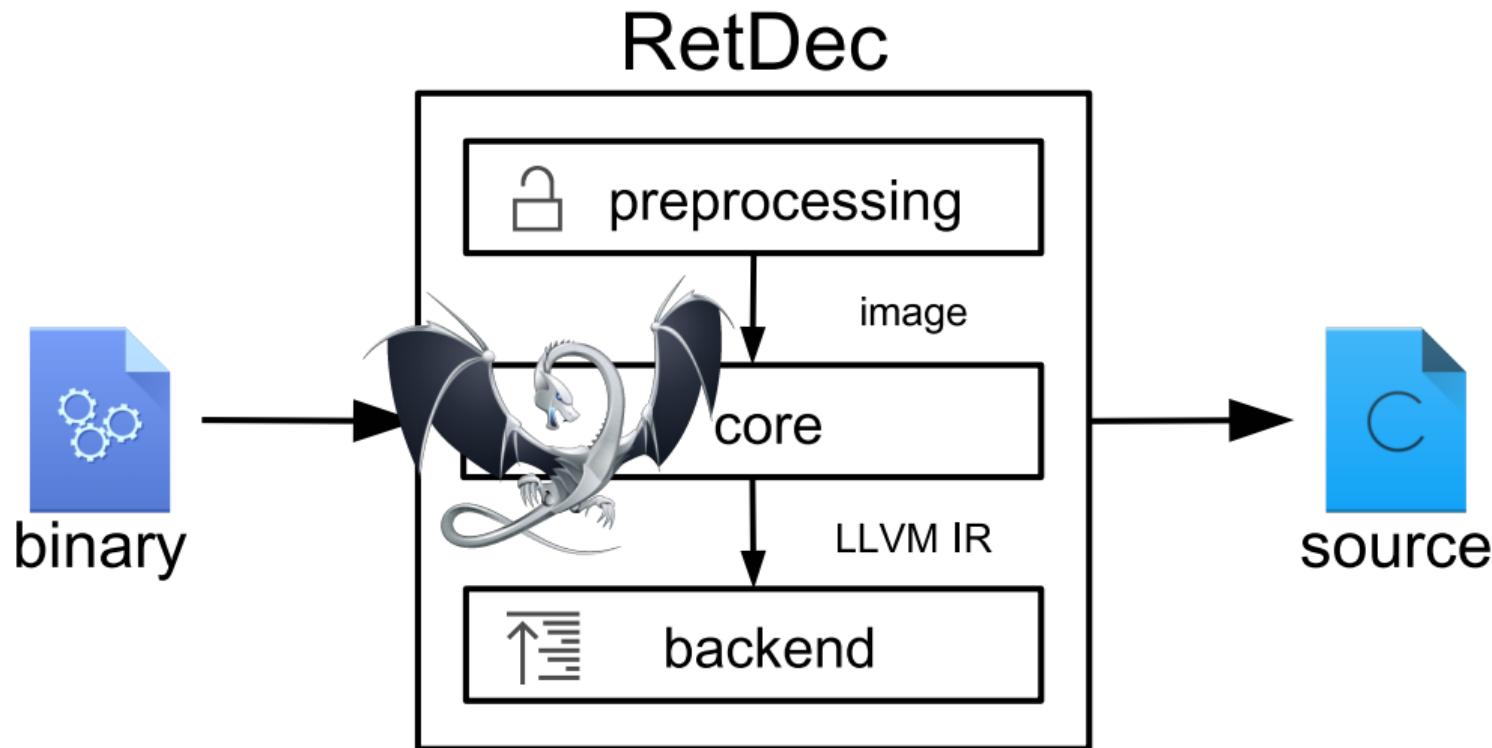


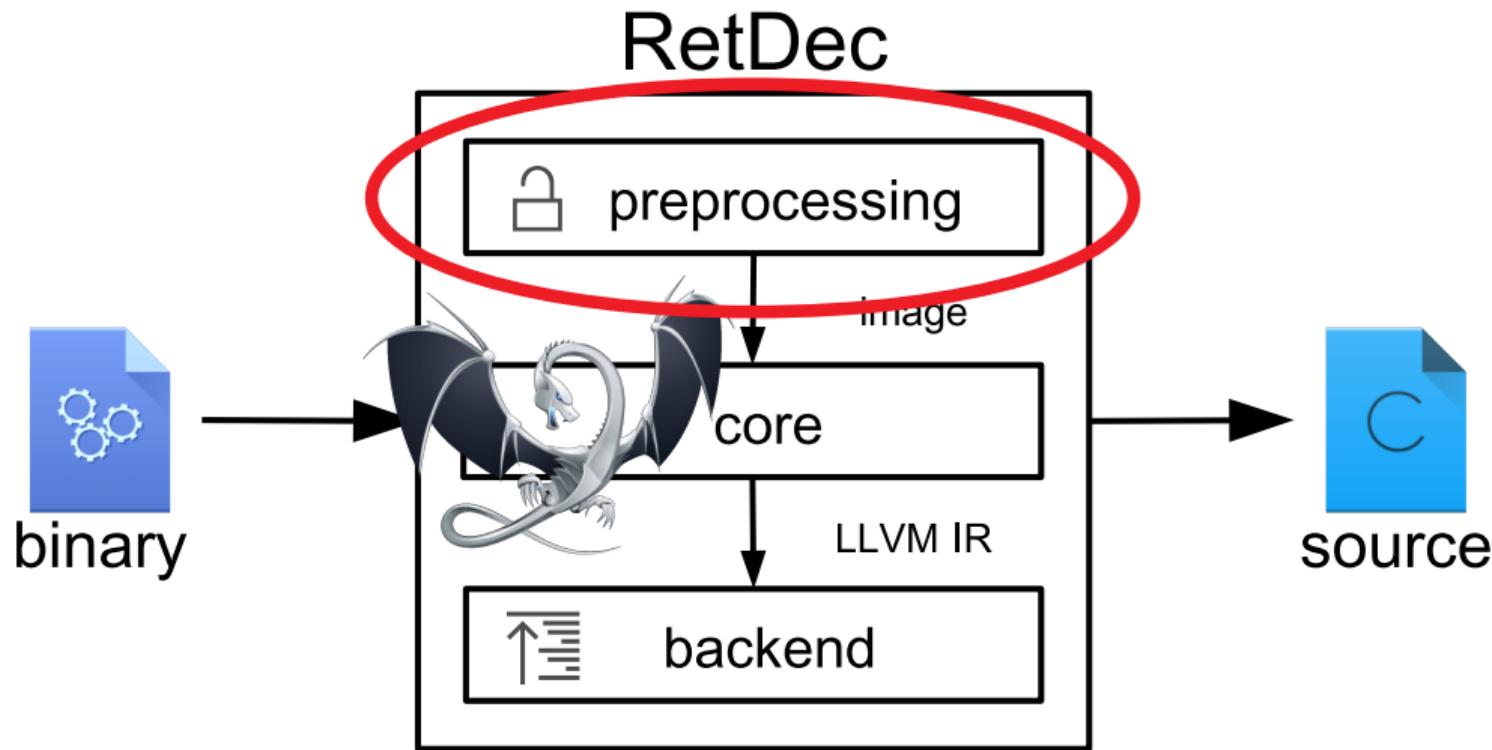
googletest
Google C++ Testing Framework

OpenSSL



python™

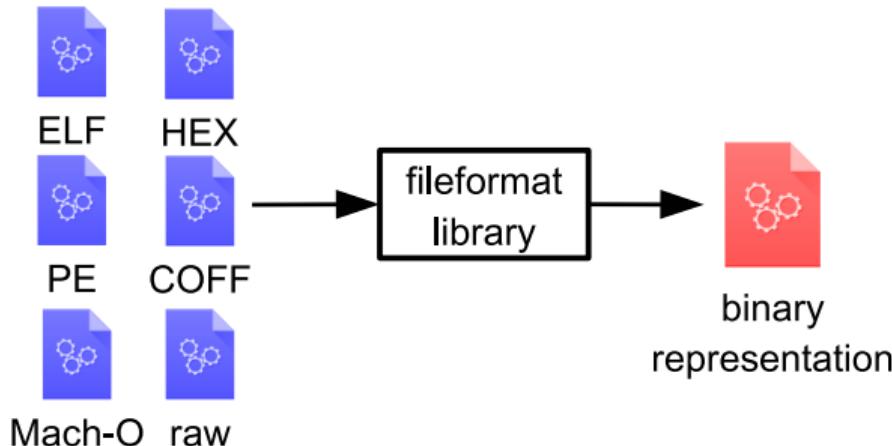


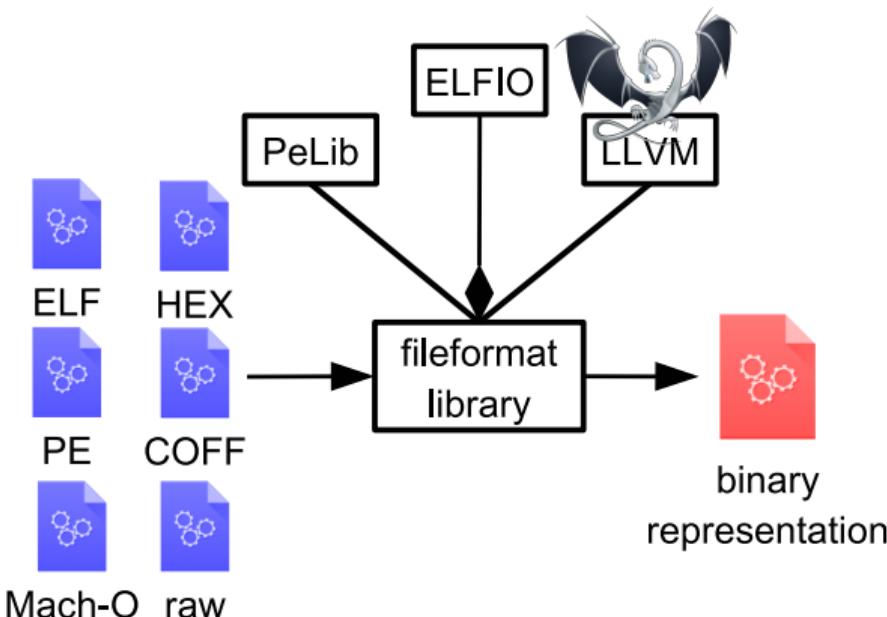


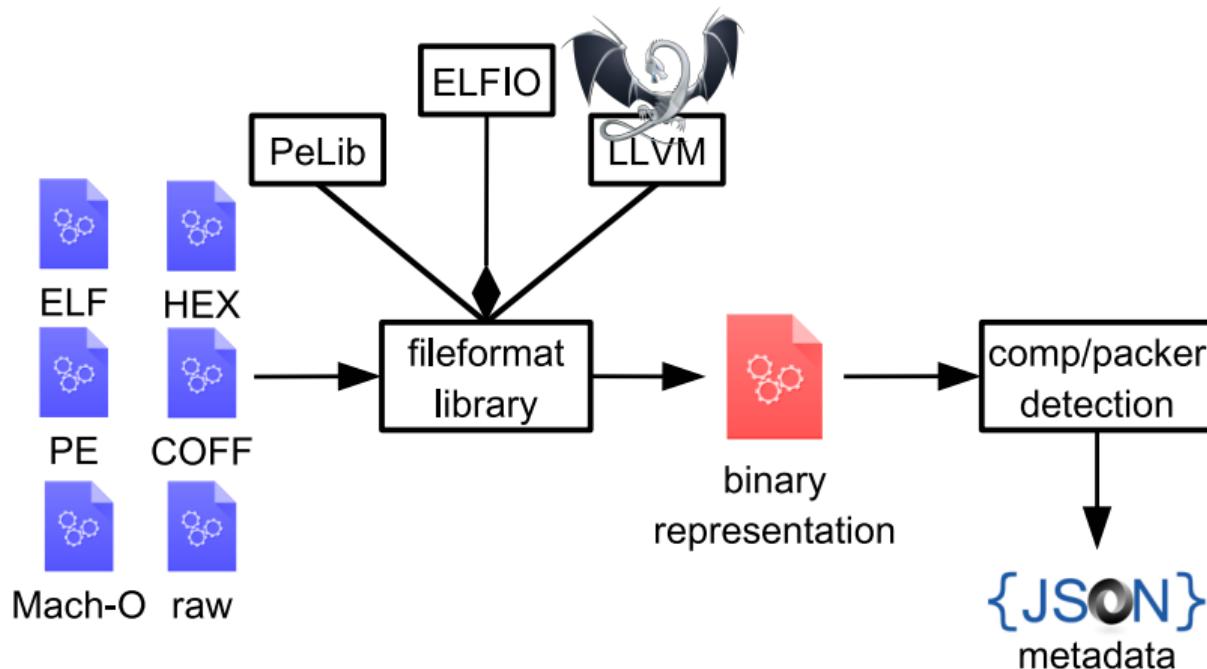


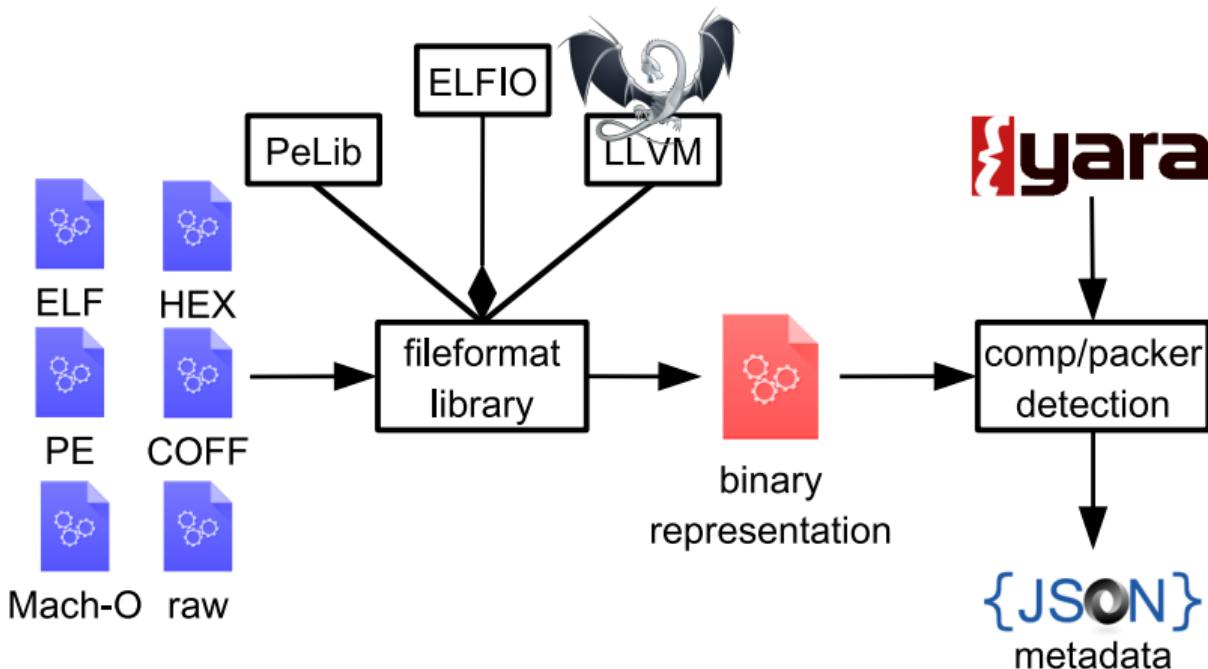
binary

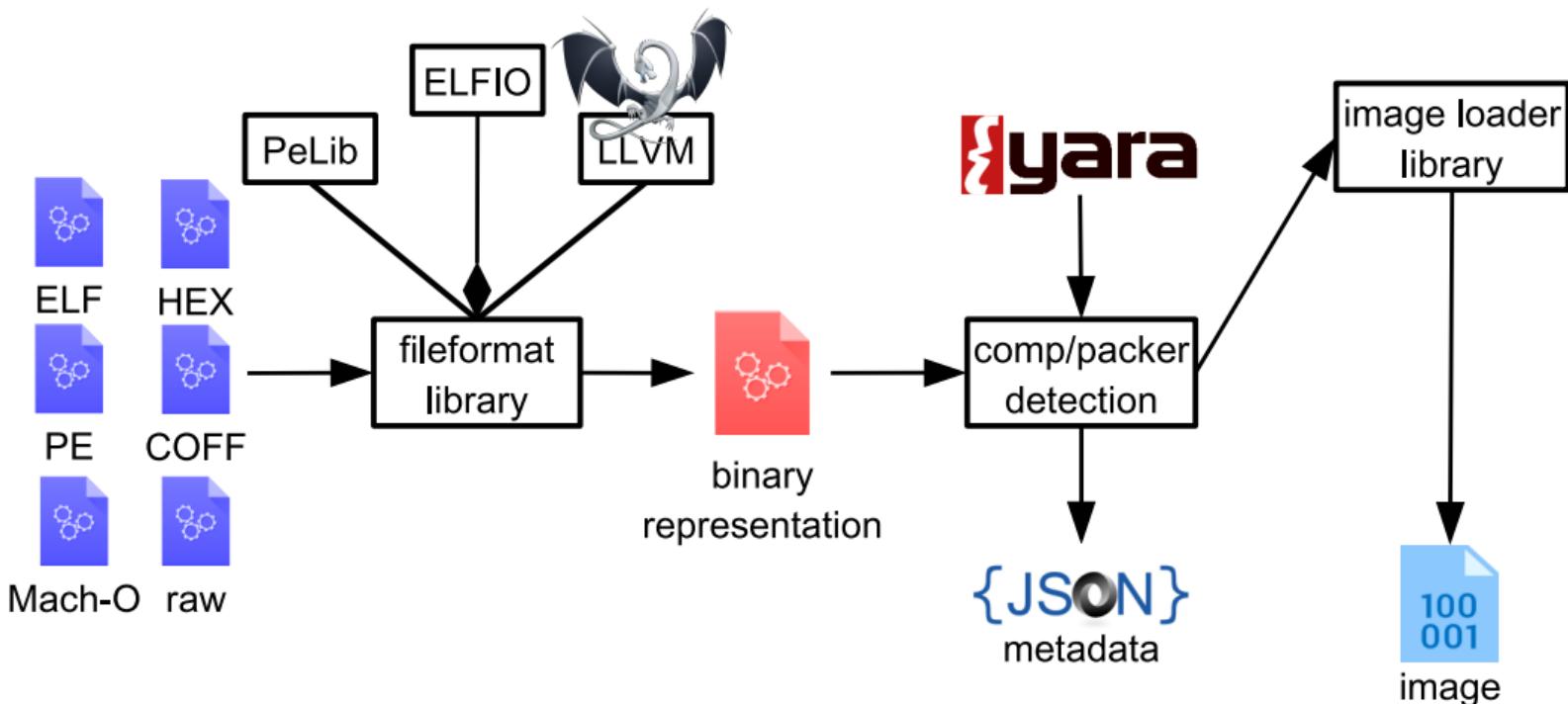


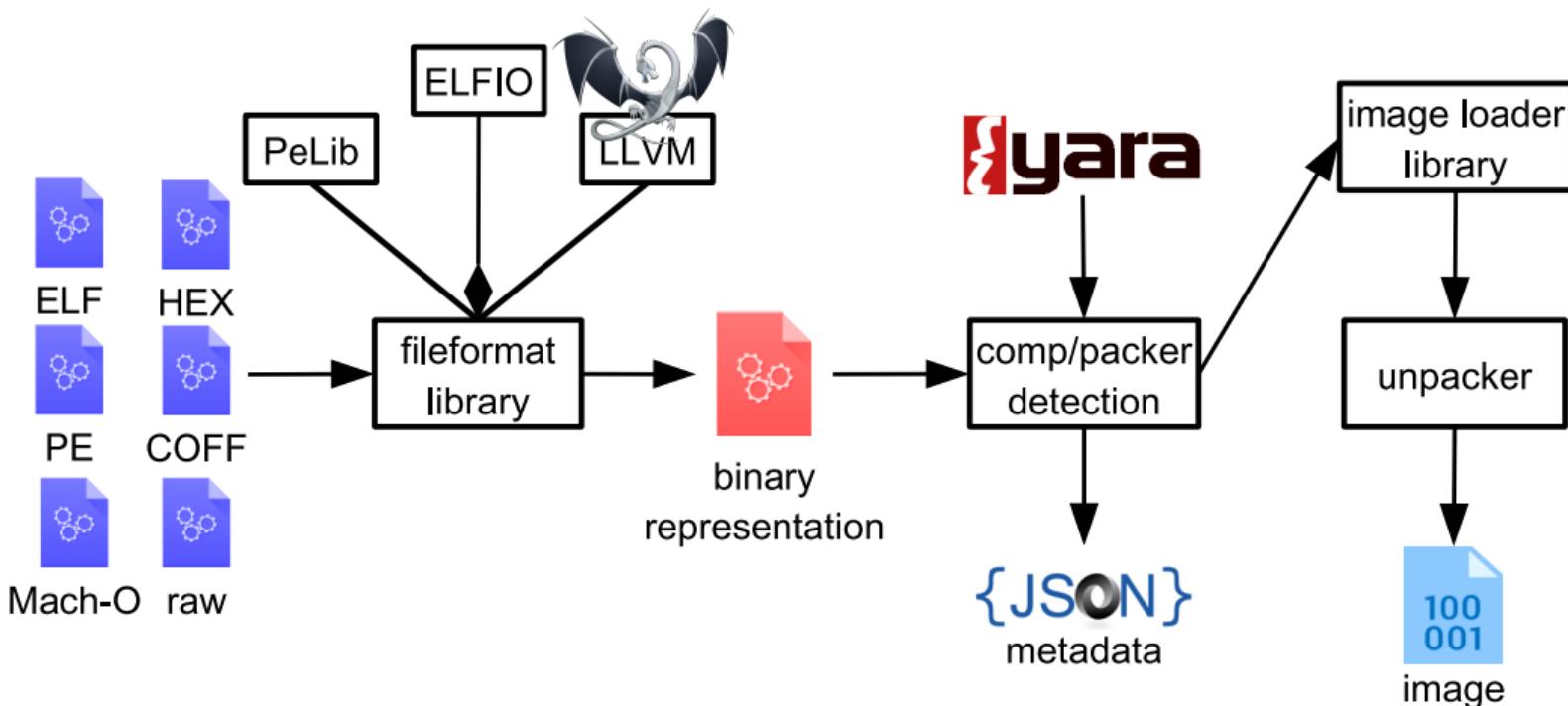


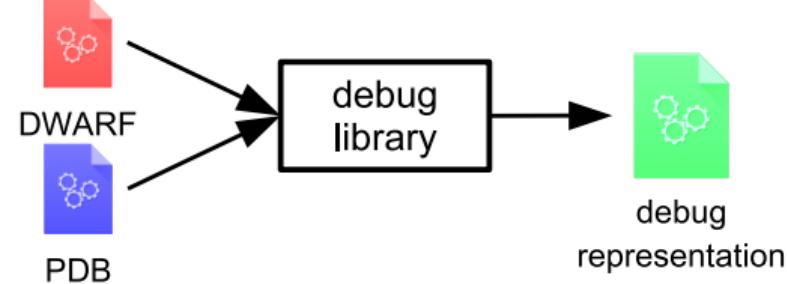


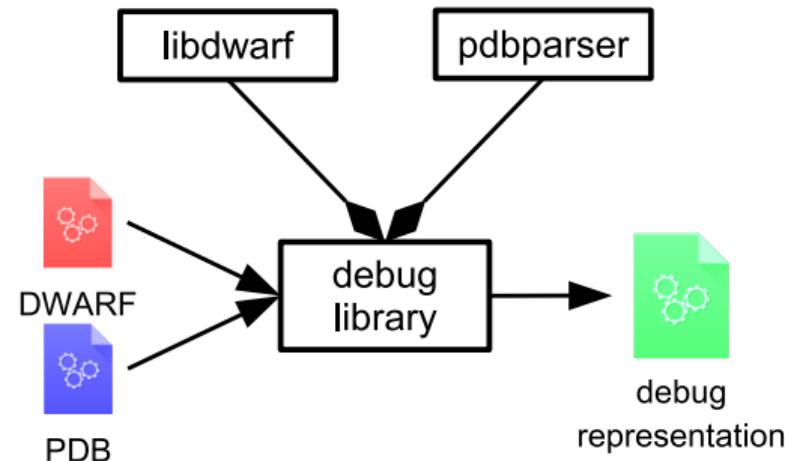












git Fileformat

- fileformat, loader, cpdetect, fileinfo, unpacker
- ar-extractor, macho-extractor, ...

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- strengthened
- new modules (rich header, delayed imports, security dir, ...)

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- will hopefully be replaced by LLVM parsers

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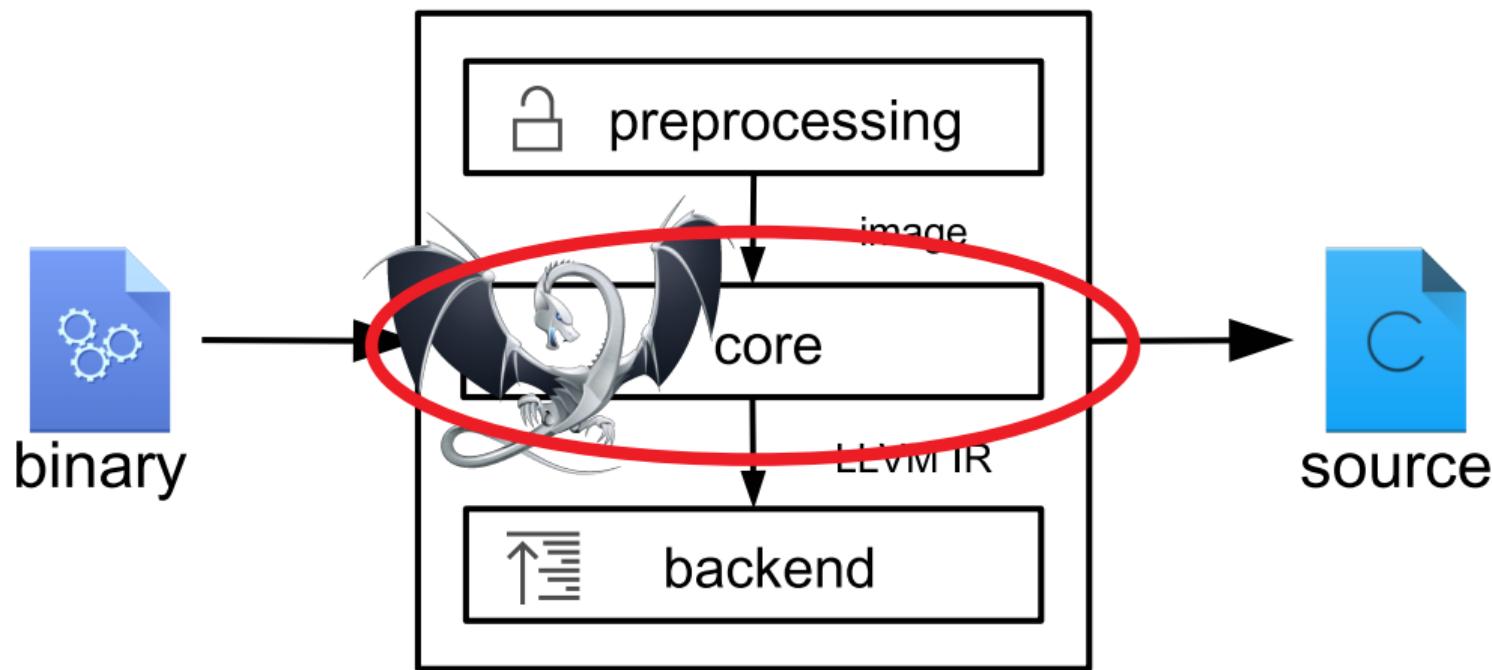
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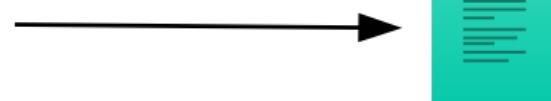
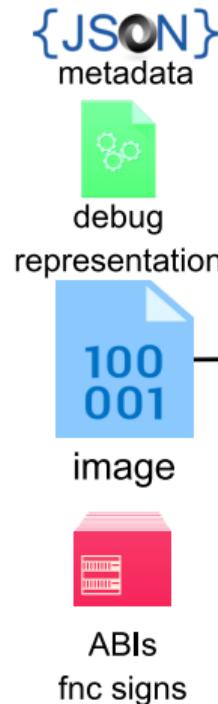
git Yaracpp

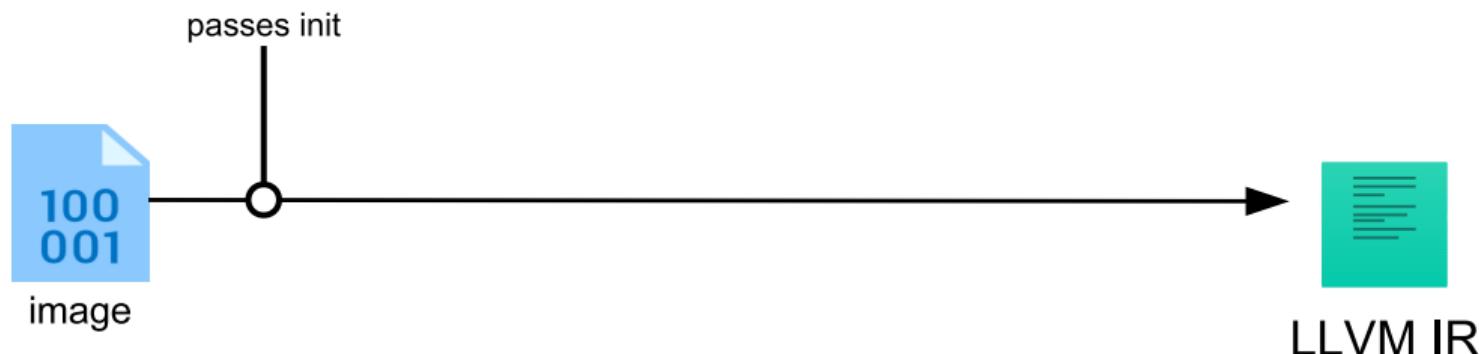
- YARA C++ wrapper

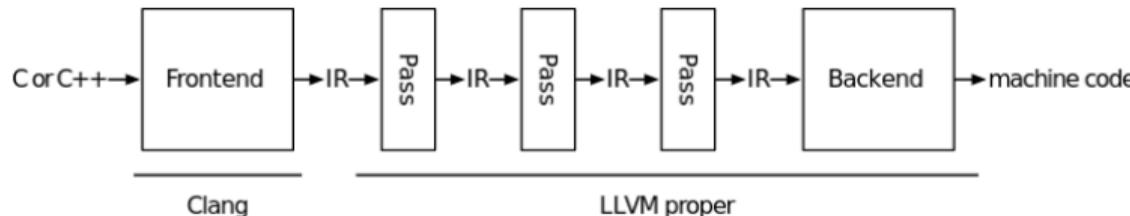
RetDec



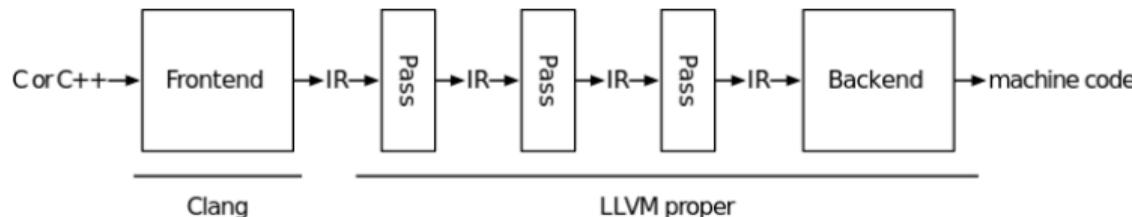








- dozens of analysis & transform & utility passes
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- clang -o hello hello.c -O3
 - 217 passes
 - -targetlibinfo -tti -tbaa -scoped-noalias -assumption-cache-tracker -profile-summary-info -forceattrs -inferattrs -ipsccp -globalopt -domtree -mem2reg -deadargelim -domtree -basicaa -aa -instcombine -simplifycfg -basicccg -globals-aa -prune-eh -inline -functionattrs -argpromotion -domtree -sroa -basicaa -aa -memoryssa -early-cse-memssa -speculative-execution -domtree -basicaa -aa -lazy-value-info -jump-threading ...

- LLVM IR = LLVM Intermediate Representation
 - kind of assembly language / three address code

```
@global = global i32
define i32 @fnc(i32 %arg) {
    %x = load i32, i32* @global
    %y = add i32 %x, %arg
    store i32 %y, @global
    return i32 %y
}
```

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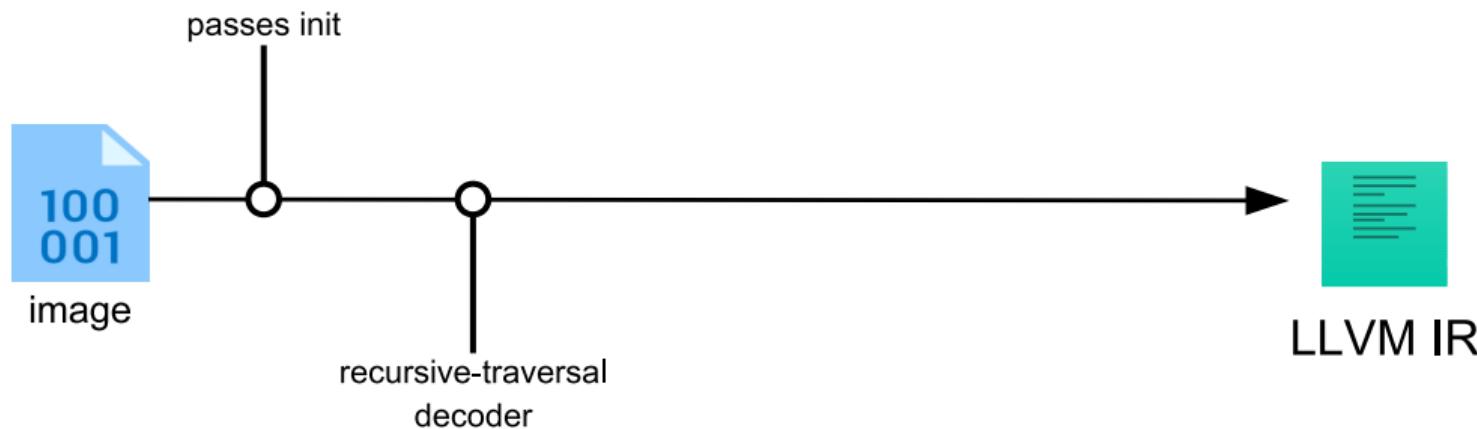
- SSA = Static Single Assignment
 - %y = add i32 %x, %arg
- Load/Store architecture
 - %x = load i32, i32* @global
- Functions, arguments, returns, data types
- (Un)conditional branches, switches

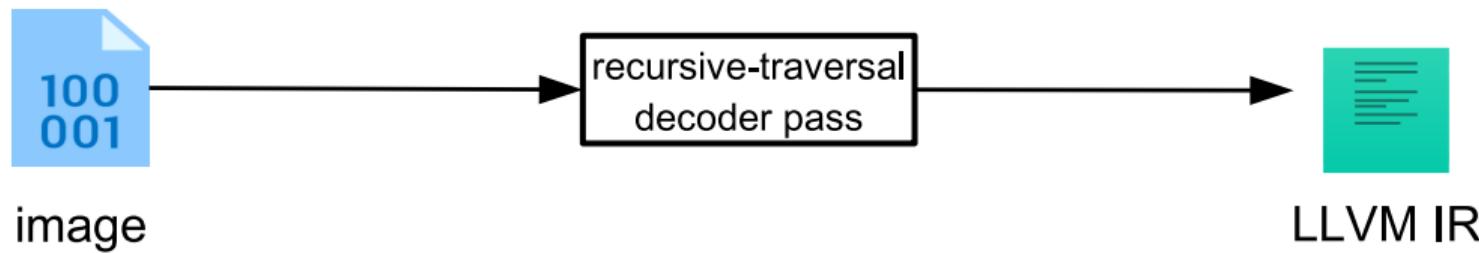
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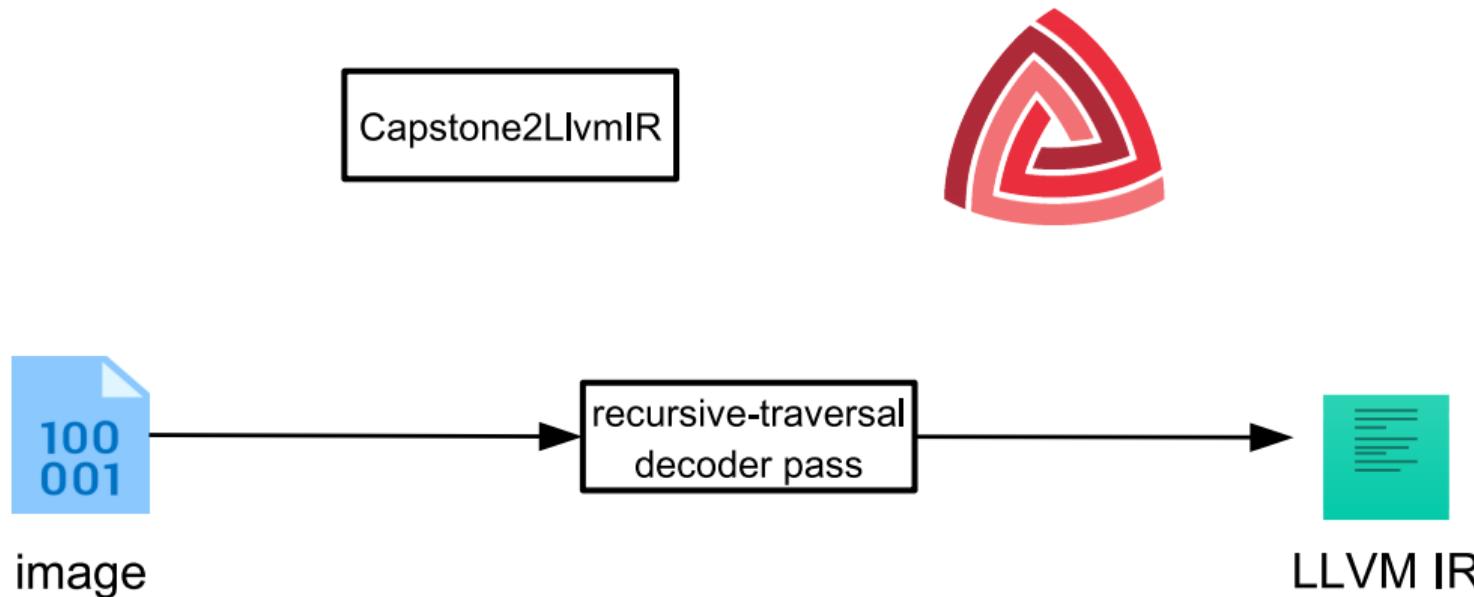
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@global = global i32
define i32 @fnc(i32 %arg) {
    %x = load i32, i32* @global
    %y = add i32 %x, %arg
    store i32 %y, @global
    return i32 %y
}
```

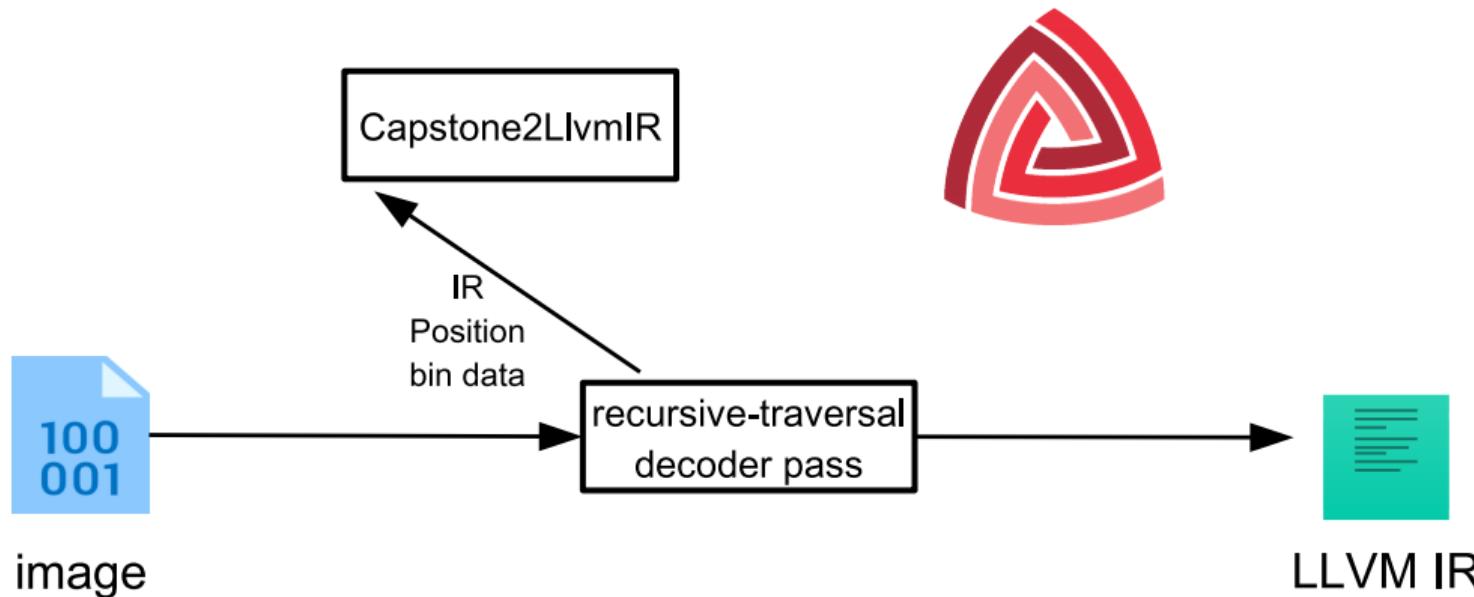
- SSA = Static Single Assignment
 - %y = add i32 %x, %arg
- Load/Store architecture
 - %x = load i32, i32* @global
- Functions, arguments, returns, data types
- (Un)conditional branches, switches
-  Universal IR for efficient compiler transformations and analyses

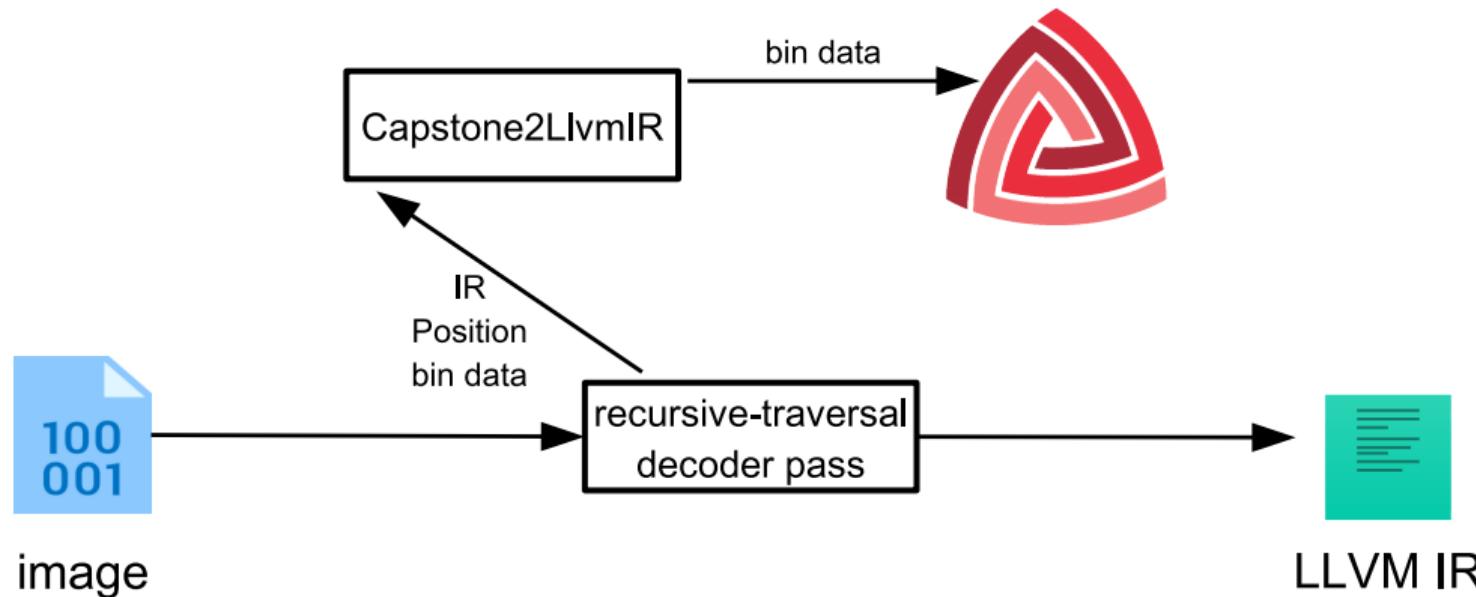


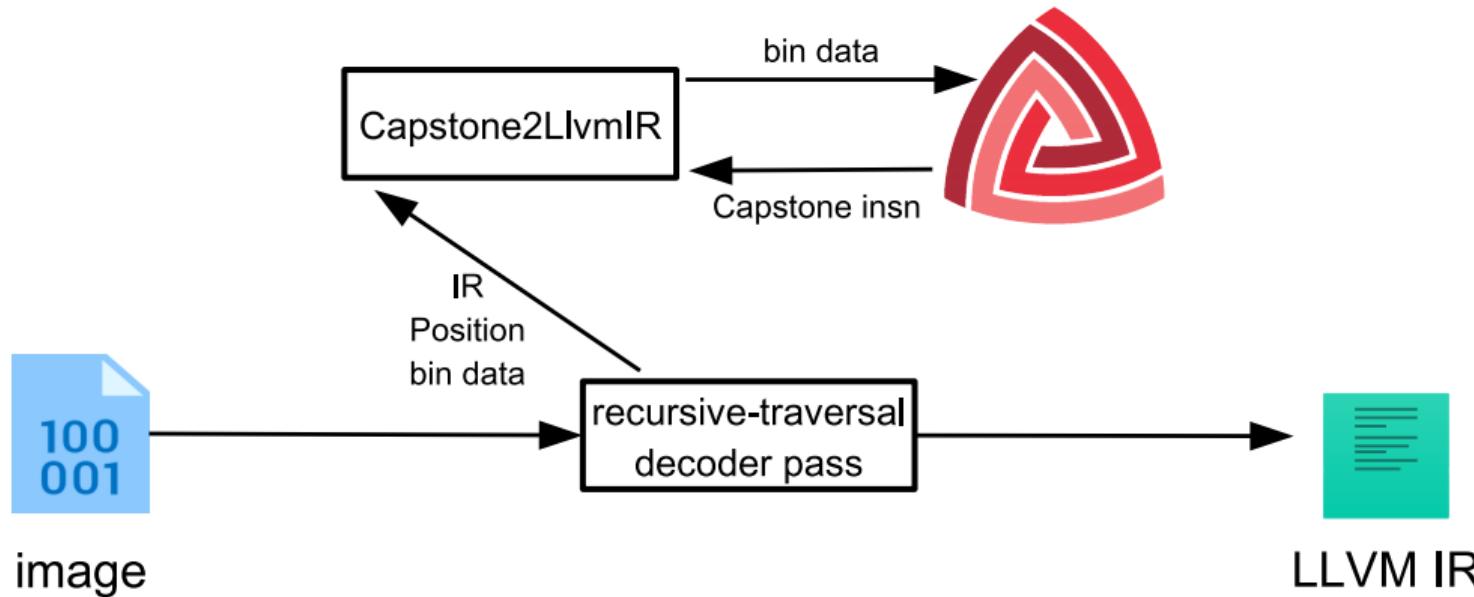


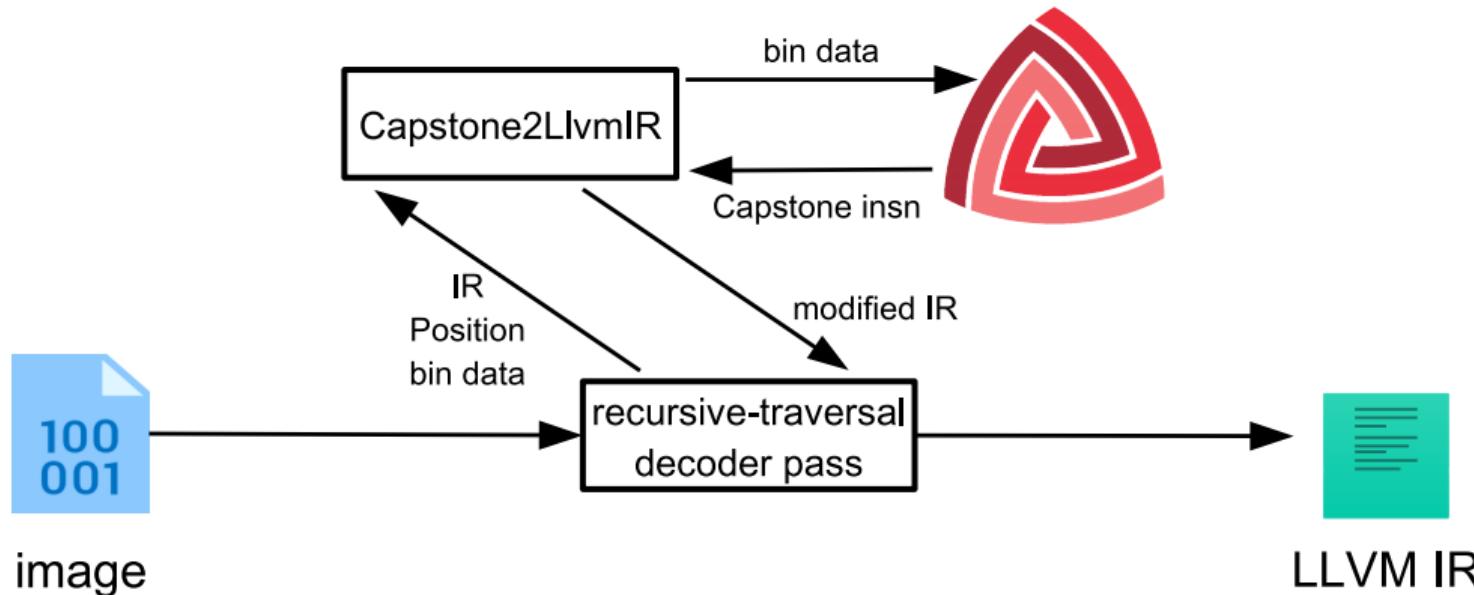












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- Handcoded sequences
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- Decompilation & advanced insns

Would you rather ...

• PMULHUW

- Multiply Packed Unsigned Integers and Store High Result

```
if (OperandSize == 64) {
    //PMULHUW instruction with 64-bit operands:
    Tmp0[0..31] = Dst[0..15] * Src[0..15];
    Tmp1[0..31] = Dst[16..31] * Src[16..31];
    Tmp2[0..31] = Dst[32..47] * Src[32..47];
    Tmp3[0..31] = Dst[48..63] * Src[48..63];
    Dst[0..15] = Tmp0[16..31];
    Dst[16..31] = Tmp1[16..31];
    Dst[32..47] = Tmp2[16..31];
    Dst[48..63] = Tmp3[16..31];
}
else {
    //PMULHUW instruction with 128-bit operands:
    // Even longer ...
}
```

__asm_PMULHUW(mm1, mm2);

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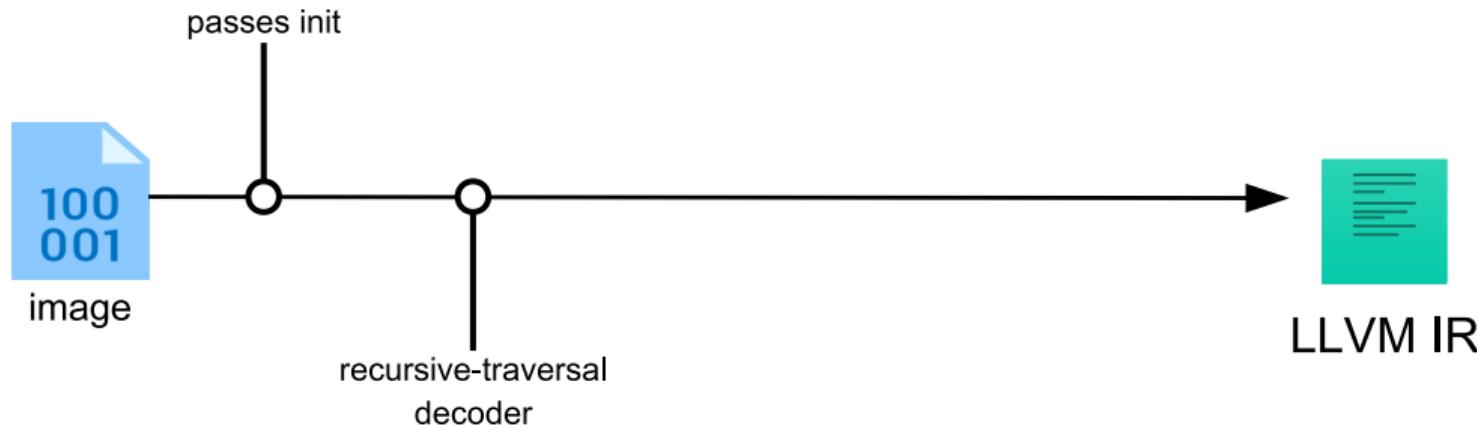
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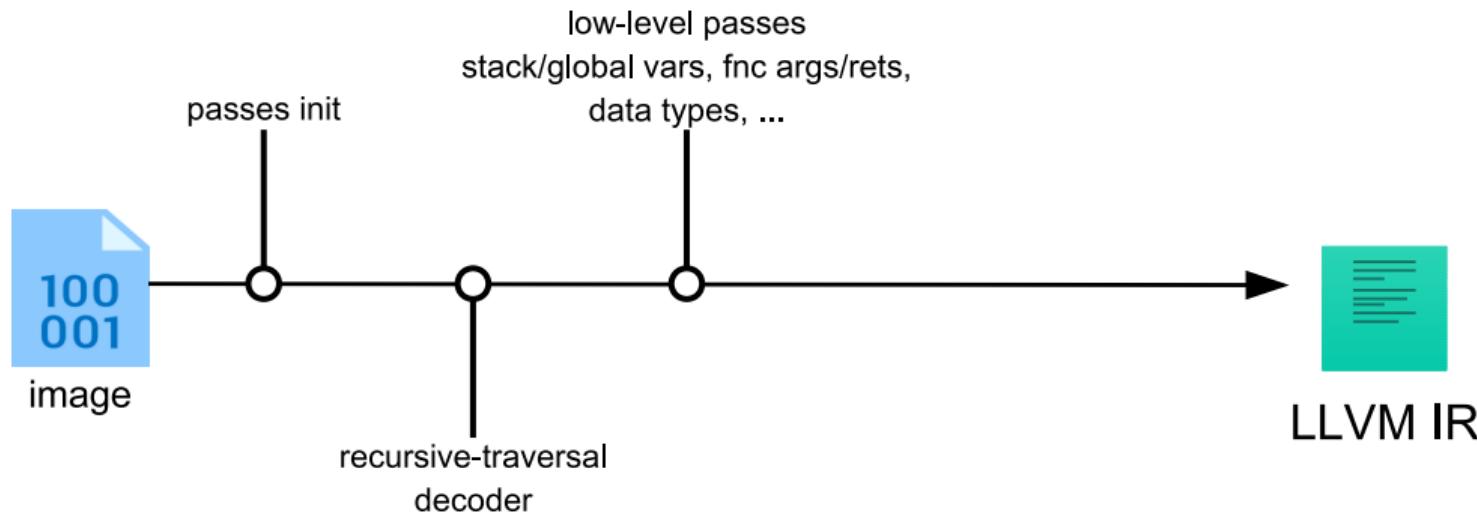
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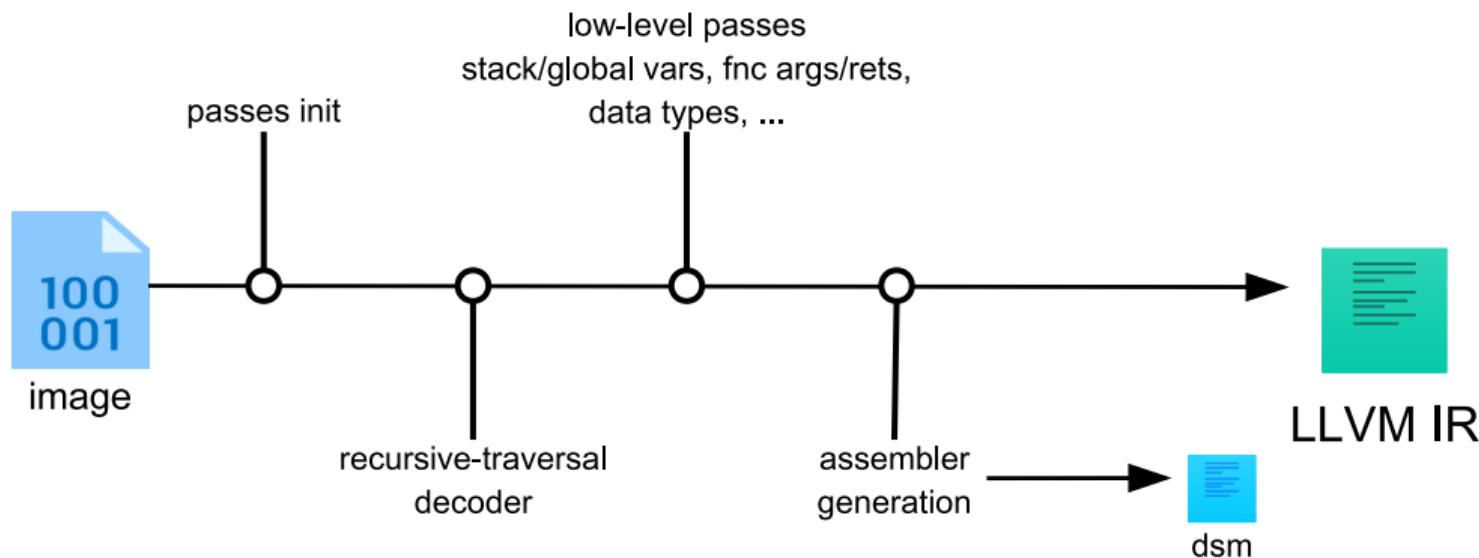


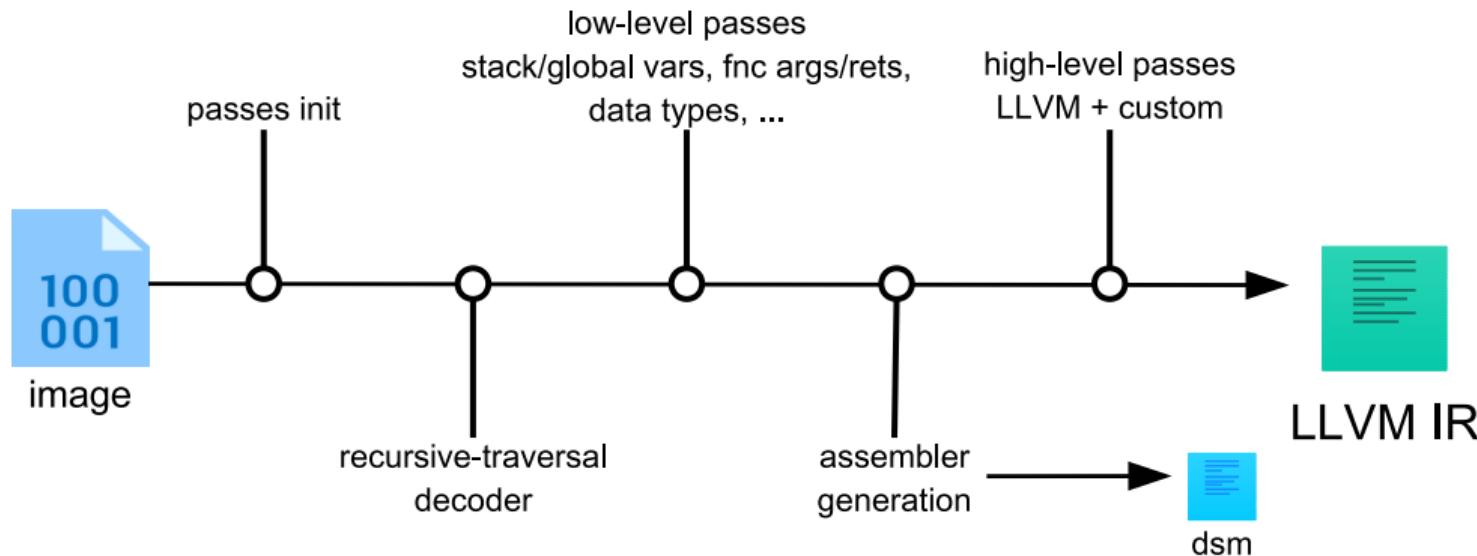
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| Core repos

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- bin2llvmirtool

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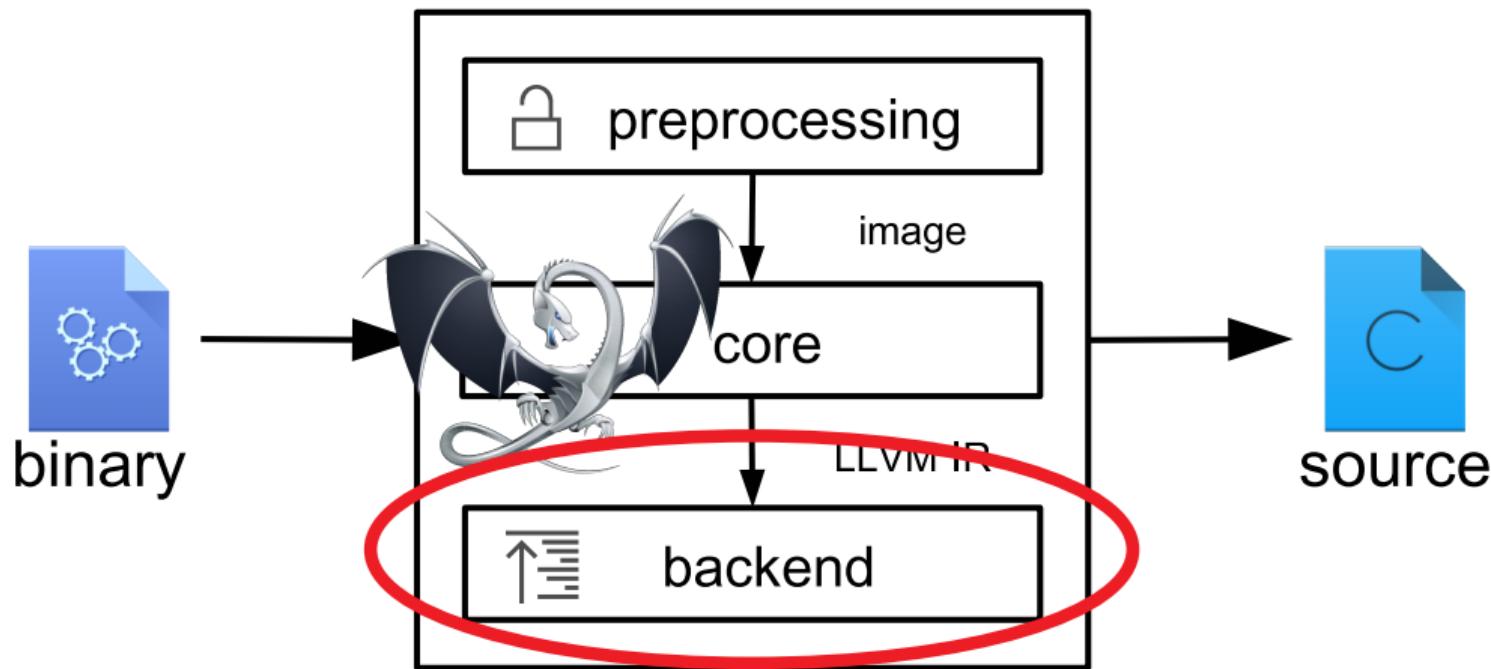
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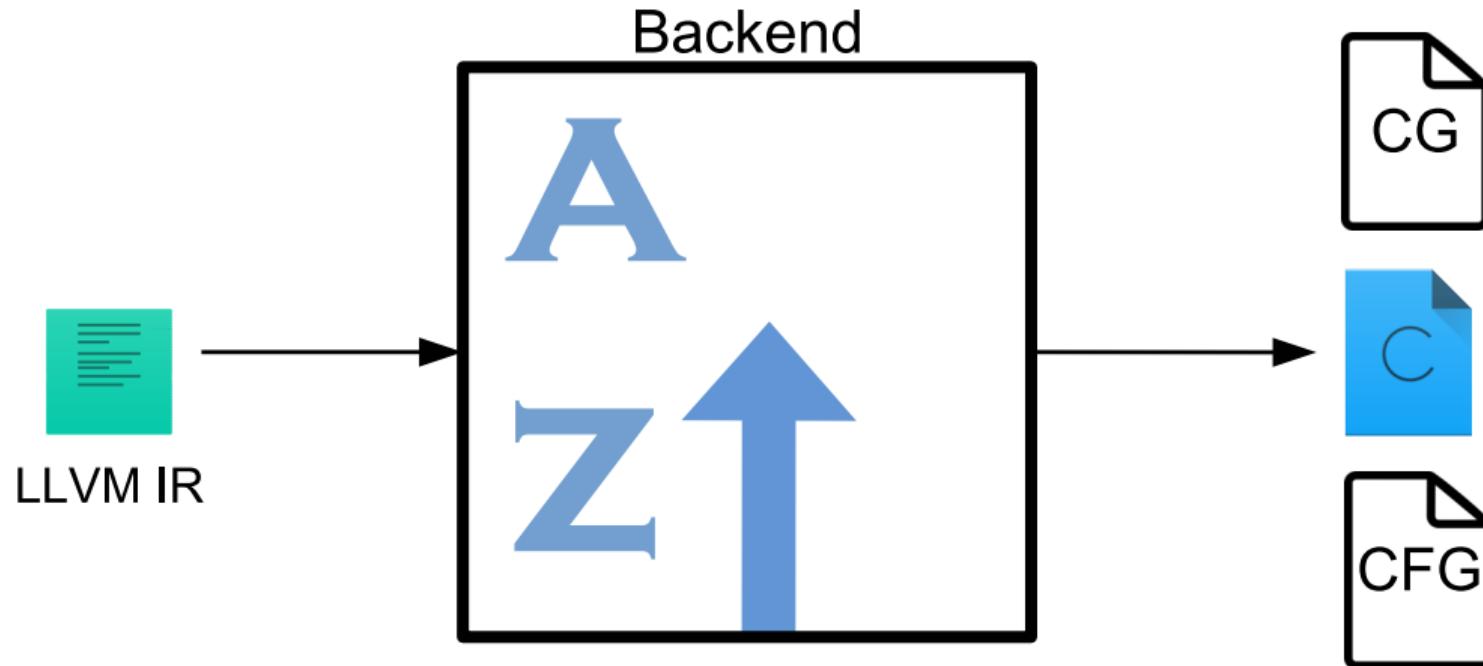
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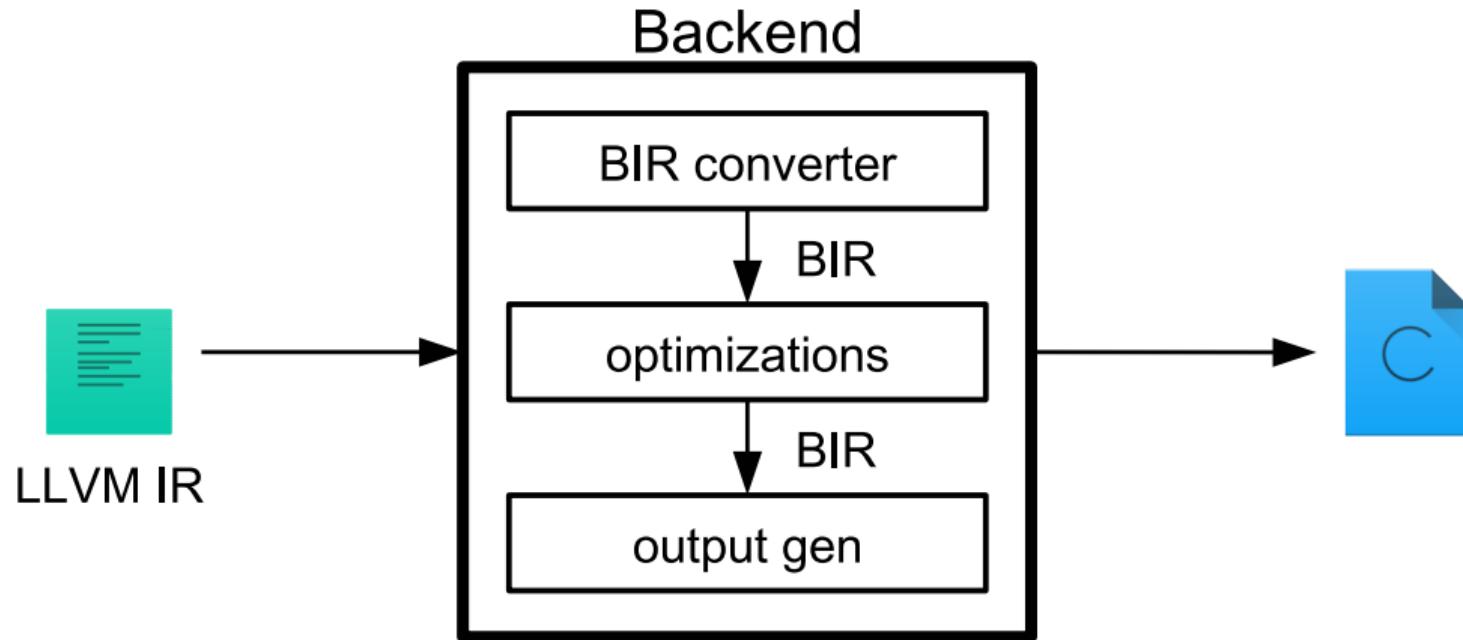
git Demangler

- gcc/Clang, Microsoft Visual C++, and Borland C++

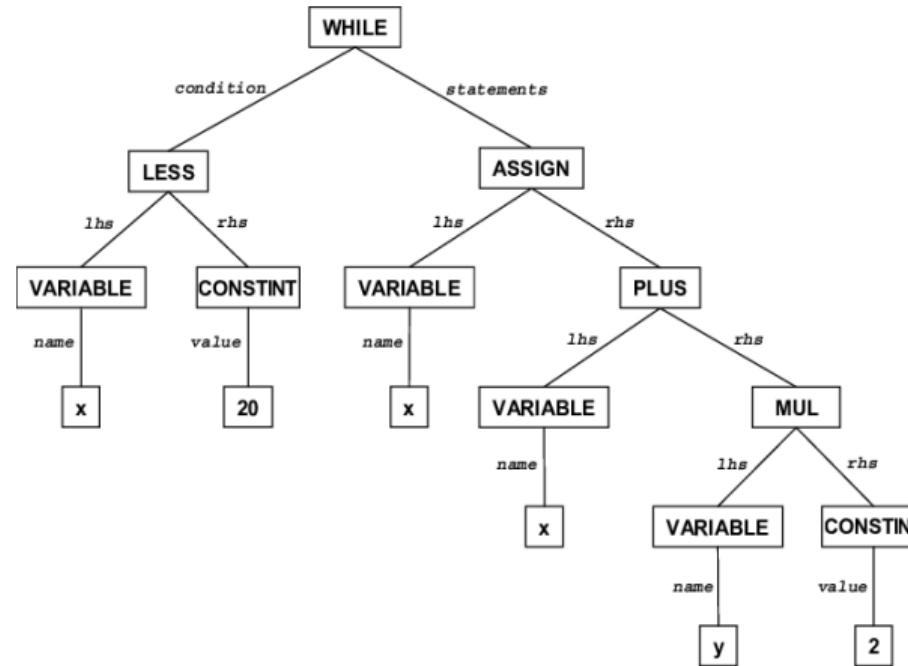
RetDec





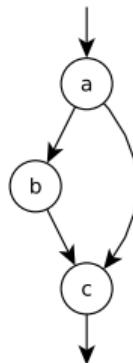


- BIR = Backend IR
- AST = Abstract syntax tree
- **while** (*x* < 20) { *x* = *x* + (*y* * 2); }

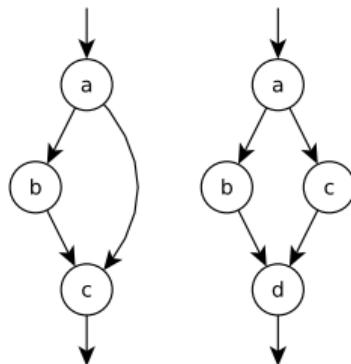


- LLVM IR: only (un)conditional branches & switches
- identify high-level control-flow patterns
- restructure BIR: if-else, for-loop, while-loop, switch, break, continue

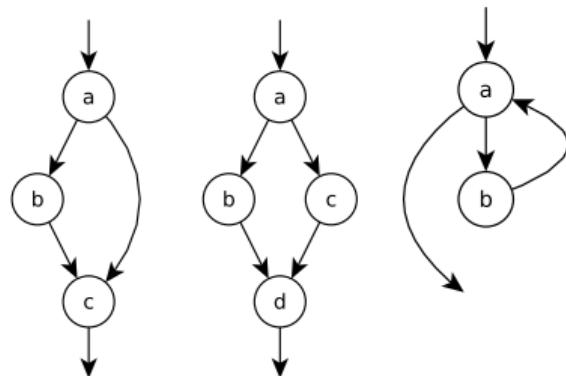
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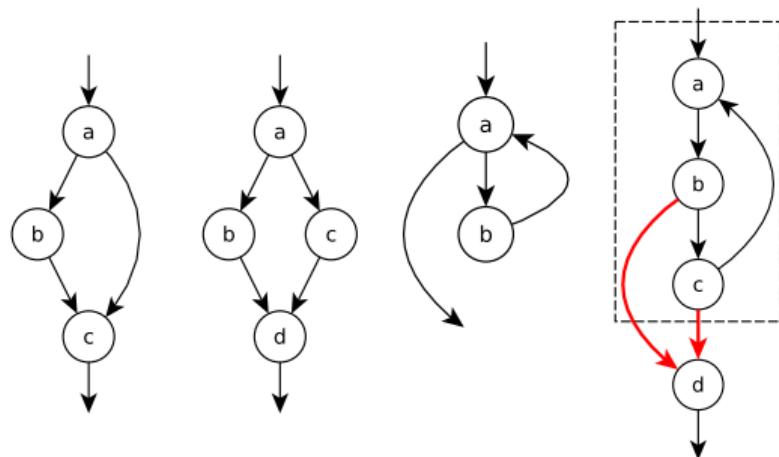
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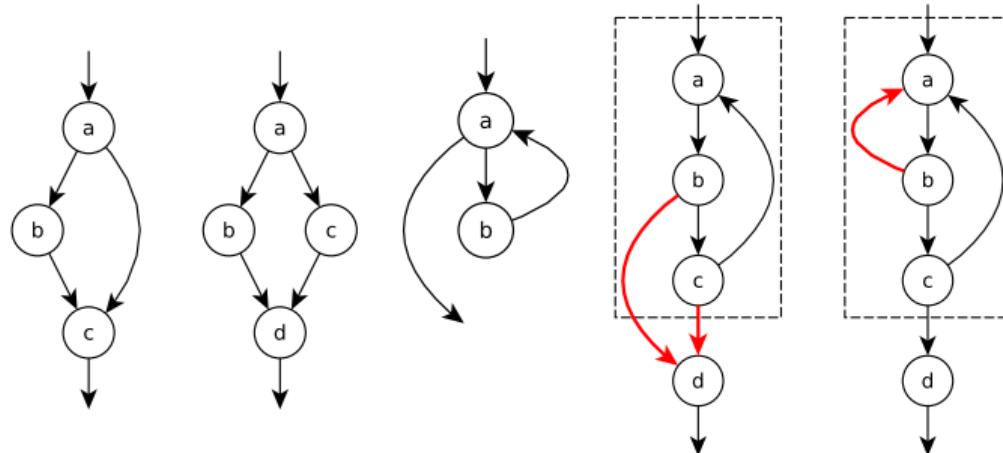
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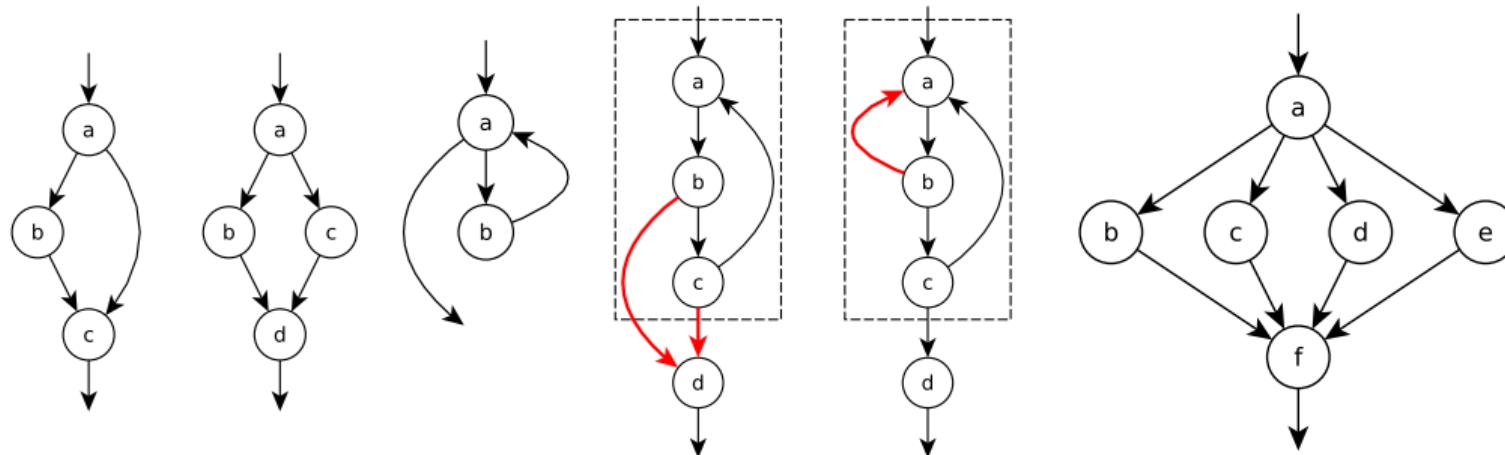
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- variable name assignment
 - induction variables: `for (i = 0; i < 10; ++i)`
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- output generation
 - C
 - CFG = Control-Flow Graph
 - Call Graph

git RetDec

- llvmlir2hll library
- llvmlir2hlltool

⌚ Online decompilation service

<https://retdec.com/decompilation/>

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⚙️ CMake, 🐍 gcc/Clang, 🖥 Visual Studio 2015 Update 2

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⬇ Get RetDec IDA plugin

What is RetDec IDA plugin



```
.text:004015BB      push    ebp
.text:004015BC      mov     ebp, esp
.text:004015BE      and     esp, 0FFFFFFF0h
.text:004015C1      sub     esp, 20h
.text:004015C4      call    __main
.text:004015C9      mov     [esp+20h+var_4], 0
.text:004015D1      mov     [esp+20h+var_8], 0
.text:004015D9      mov     [esp+20h+var_C], 0
.text:004015E1      lea     eax, [esp+20h+var_C]
.text:004015E5      mov     [esp+20h+var_18], eax
.text:004015E9      lea     eax, [esp+20h+var_8]
.text:004015ED      mov     [esp+20h+var_1C], eax
.text:004015F1      mov     [esp+20h+Format], offset Format
.text:004015F8      call    _scanf
.text:004015FD      mov     edx, [esp+20h+var_C]
.text:00401601      mov     eax, [esp+20h+var_8]
.text:00401605      mov     [esp+20h+var_1C], edx
.text:00401609      mov     [esp+20h+Format], eax
.text:0040160C      call    _ack
.text:00401611      mov     [esp+20h+var_4], eax
.text:00401615      mov     edx, [esp+20h+var_C]
.text:00401619      mov     eax, [esp+20h+var_8]
.text:0040161D      mov     ecx, [esp+20h+var_4]
.text:00401621      mov     [esp+20h+var_14], ecx
.text:00401625      mov     [esp+20h+var_18], edx
.text:00401629      mov     [esp+20h+var_1C], eax
.text:0040162D      mov     [esp+20h+Format], offset aAckermanDDD
.text:00401634      call    _printf
.text:00401639      mov     eax, [esp+20h+var_4]
.text:0040163D      leave
.text:0040163E      retn

// This file was generated by the Retargetable Decompiler
// Website: https://retdec.com
// Copyright (c) 2017 Retargetable Decompiler <info@retdec.com>
//

#include <stdint.h>
#include <stdio.h>

// -----
// Functions -----
int32_t _ack(int32_t a1, int32_t a2) {
    if (a1 == 0) {
        return a2 + 1;
    }
    int32_t result;
    if (a2 == 0) {
        result = _ack(a1 - 1, 1);
    } else {
        result = _ack(a1 - 1, _ack(a1, a2 - 1));
    }
    return result;
}

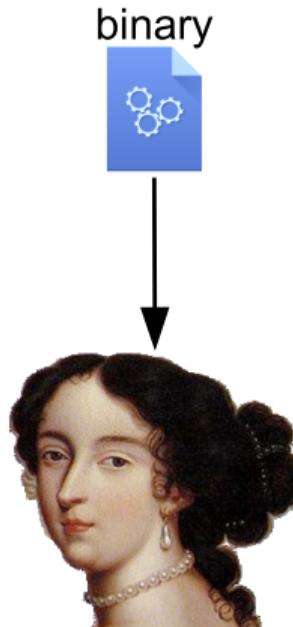
int main(int argc, char ** argv) {
    __main();
    int32_t v1 = 0;
    int32_t v2 = 0;
    scanf("%d %d", &v1, &v2);
    int32_t result = _ack(v1, v2);
    printf("ackerman( %d , %d ) = %d\n", v1, v2, result);
    return result;
}
```

◎ Goals

- look & feel native
- same object names as IDA
- interactive

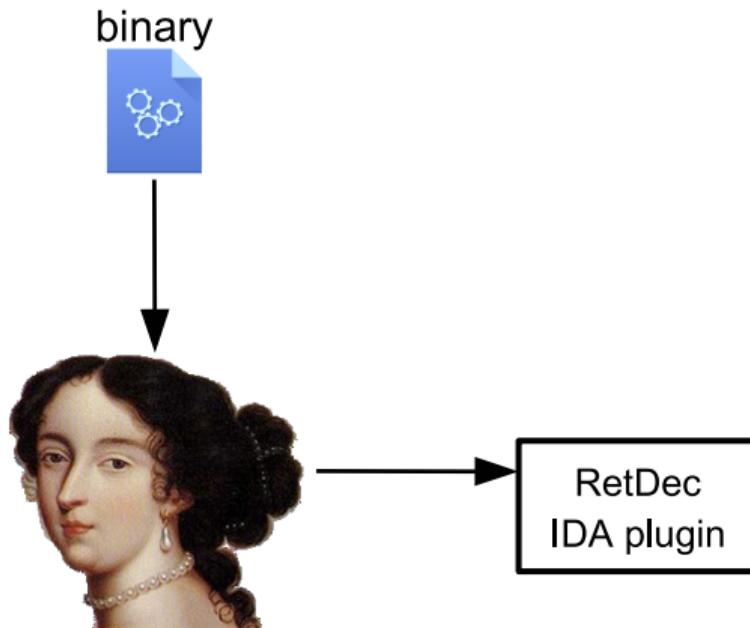
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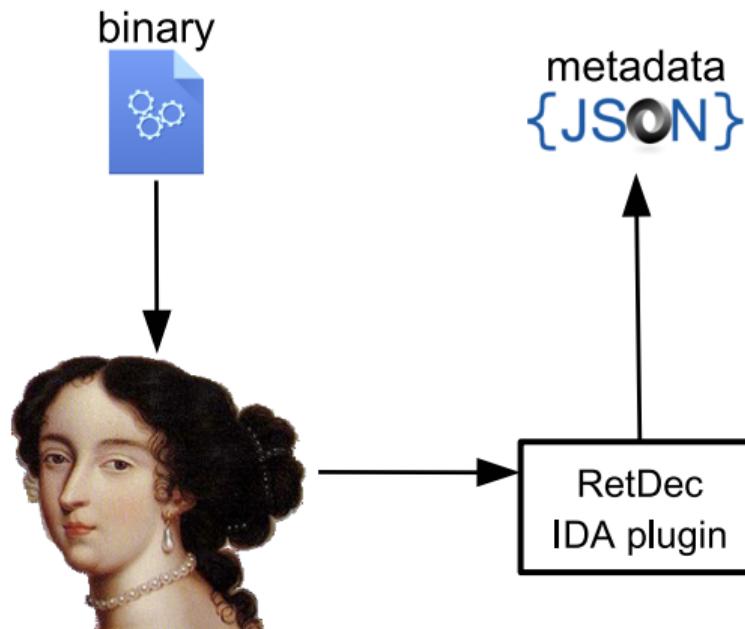
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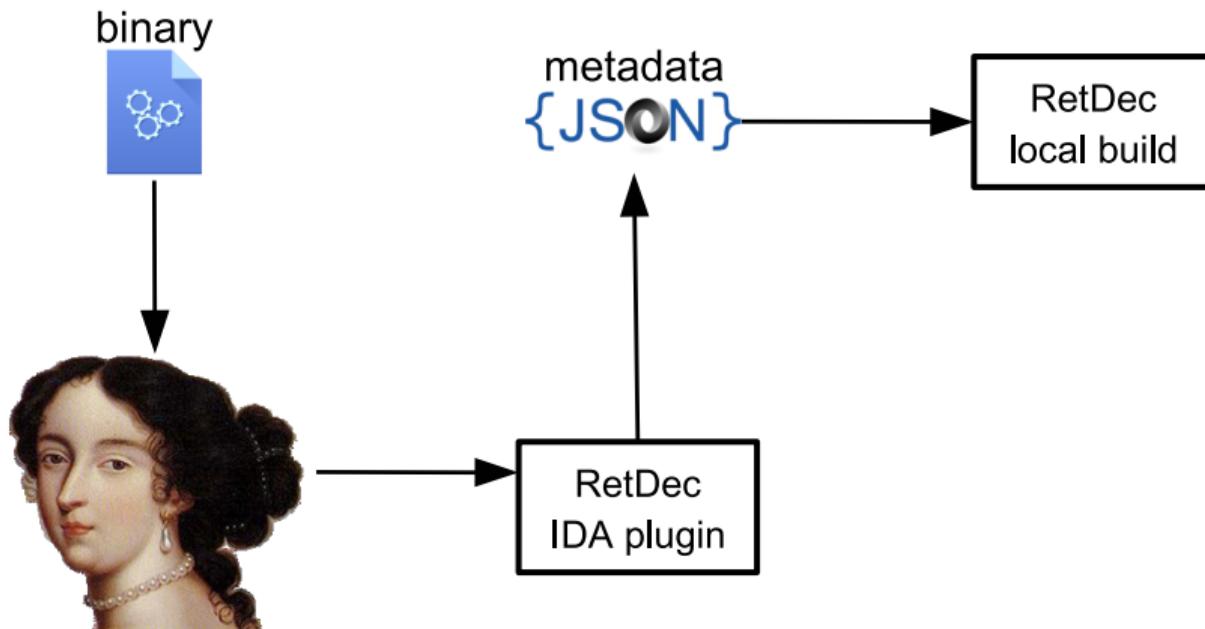
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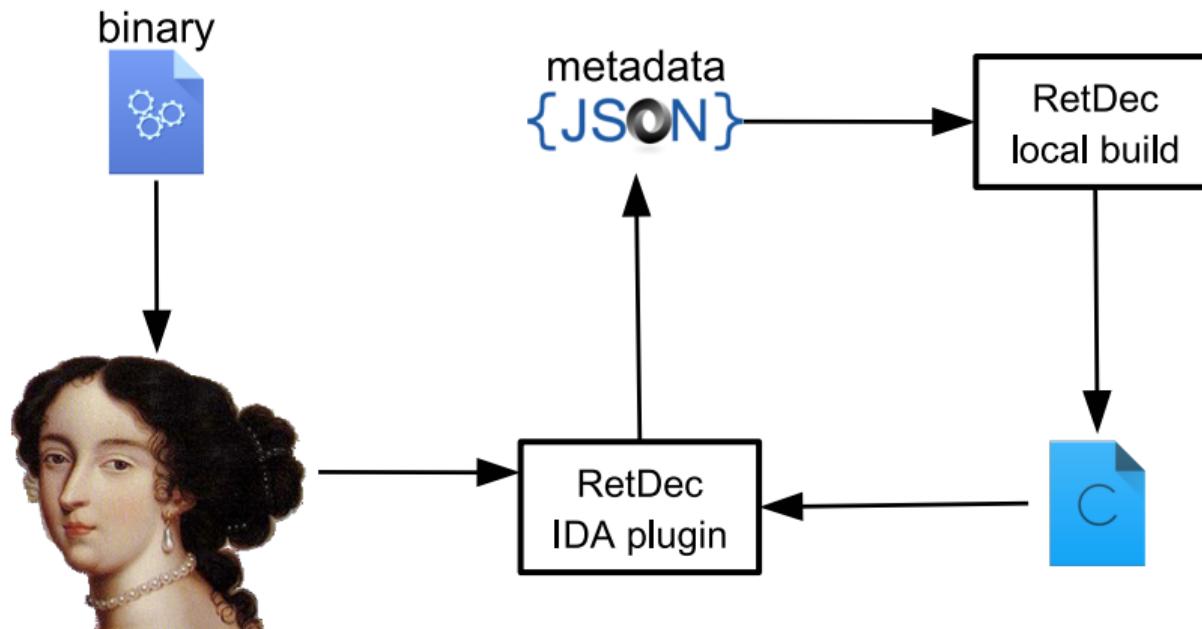


| How does RetDec IDA plugin work



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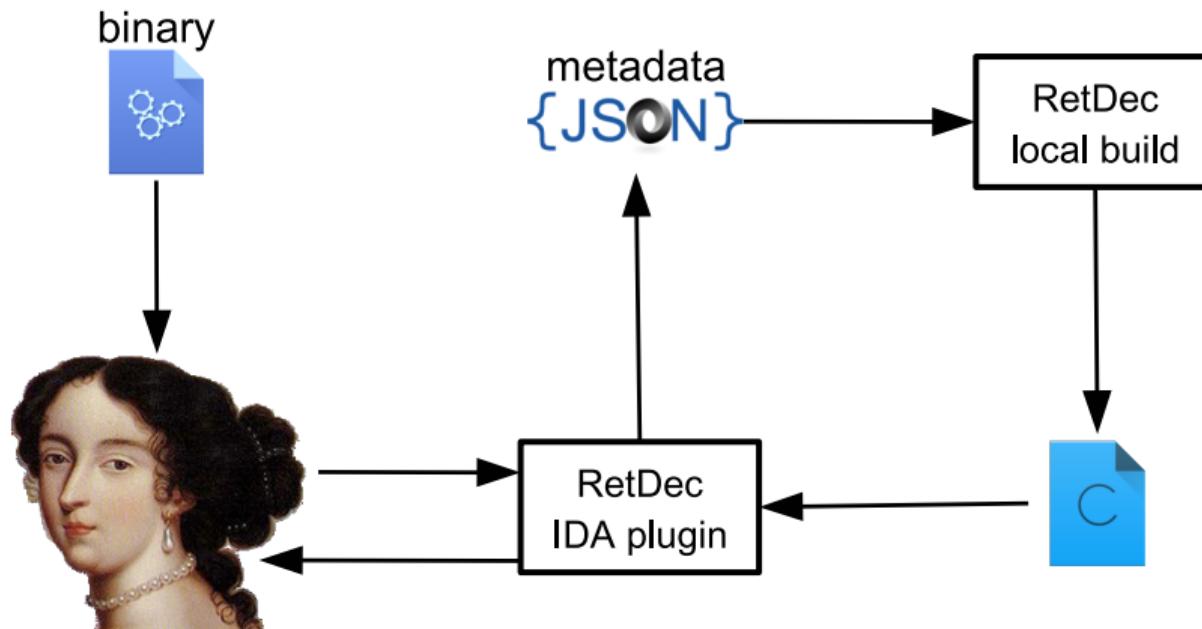


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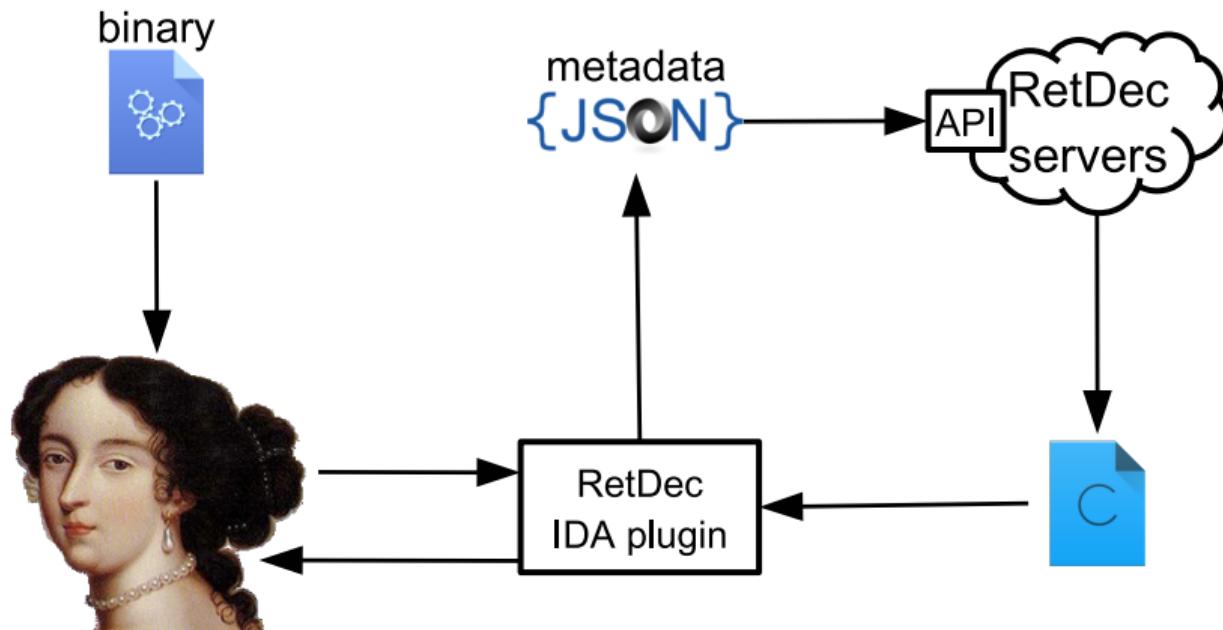


| How does RetDec IDA plugin work



◎ Goals

- ✍ look & feel native
- ☐ same object names as IDA
- ⟳ interactive



```
// From module: /home/peter/decompiler/decompiler
// Address range: 0x804851c - 0x8048576           // -----
// Line range: 4 - 11
int32_t ack(int32_t m, int32_t n) {
    // 0x8   Jump to ASM      A
    if (m) Rename function      N
    //     Change type declaration Y
    //     Open xrefs window      X
    //     Open calls window     C
    re Edit func comment      /
    // 0x8   Move backward      Esc
    // 0x8   Move forward       Ctrl+Enter
    int32_t result; // 0x8048576_11
    if (n == 0) {
        // 0x8048536
        result = ack(m - 1, 1);
        // branch -> 0x8048575
    } else {
        // 0x804854e
        result = ack(m - 1, ack(m, n - 1));
        // branch -> 0x8048575
    }
    // 0x8048575
    return result;
}

int32_t _CTOR_LIST_ = -1; // 0x80497f4
// -----
// -----
// Address range: 0x8048680 - 0x80486a9
int32_t _do_global_ctors_aux(void) {
    // 0x8048680
    if (_CTOR_LIST_ == -1) {
        // 0x80486a4
        return -1;
    }
    int32_t v1 = 0x8
    unknown_ffffffff
    // branch -> 0x8048698
    while (*(int32_t *)(&v1 - 4)) != -1) {
        // 0x8048698
        v1 -= 4;
        unknown_ffffffff();
        // continue -> 0x8048698
    }
    // 0x80486a4
    return -1;
}
```

- 📅 retdec.com launched on 2015-02-05

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- ▶ 423,000 decompilations
 - 🌐 350,000 Web
 - ☁️ 73,000 API
- 📊 410 decompilations daily

DSM

```
.text:1000DD3E ; HKEY __usercall getNextRegValueOfFCkey@<eax>(CHAR *outSubKey@<edx>, char **filename, DWORD *pcbData)
.text:1000DD3E getNextRegValueOfFCkey proc near
.text:1000DD3E          push    ebp
.text:1000DD3F          mov     ebp, esp
.text:1000DD41          sub     esp, 14h
```

Hex-Rays

```
HKEY __usercall getNextRegValueOfFCkey@<eax>(CHAR *outSubKey@<edx>, char **filename, DWORD *pcbData)
{
    v3 = outSubKey;
    v11 = 0;
    lstrcpyA(outSubKey, "SOFTWARE\\");
    lstrcatA(v3, byte_10032D70);
```

RetDec

```
struct HKEY__ * getNextRegValueOfFCkey(char * outSubKey, char ** filename, int32_t * pcbData) {
    int32_t lpValueName = (int32_t)outSubKey; // esi
    lstrcpyA(outSubKey, "SOFTWARE\\");
    lstrcatA(outSubKey, byte_10032D70);
```

Real example #2: Vawtrak (x86)



Hex-Rays

```
int unregisterAutorun3()
{
    CHAR pszPath; // [esp+0h] [ebp-118h]@1
    int v2; // [esp+104h] [ebp-14h]@3
    int v3; // [esp+108h] [ebp-10h]@3
    CHAR *v4; // [esp+10Ch] [ebp-Ch]@3
    int v5; // [esp+114h] [ebp-4h]@1

    v5 = getApplicationDataFullPath(26, 0, 0, &pszPath);
    if ( !v5 )
        return 0;
    v2 = -2147483647;
    v3 = 0;
    v4 = &pszPath;
    regOpenKeyAndCallProc(
        HKEY_CURRENT_USER,
        "Software\\Microsoft\\Windows\\CurrentVersion\\Run",
        (int)sub_10018797,
        (int)&v2);
    v2 = -2147483646;
    regOpenKeyAndCallProc(
        HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE,
        "Software\\Microsoft\\Windows\\CurrentVersion\\Run",
        (int)sub_10018797,
        (int)&v2);
    return v3;
}
```

RetDec

```
int32_t unregisterAutorun3(void) {
    int32_t v1 = 0; // bp-284
    if (getApplicationDataFullPath(26, NULL, NULL, (char *)&v1) != 0) {
        int32_t v2 = -0x7fffffff; // bp-24
        int32_t v3 = &v2; // 0x10018849
        regOpenKeyAndCallProc((struct HKEY__ *)-0x7fffffff,
            "Software\\Microsoft\\Windows\\CurrentVersion\\Run",
            0x10018797,
            v3);
        v2 = -0x7fffffff;
        regOpenKeyAndCallProc((struct HKEY__ *)-0x7fffffff,
            "Software\\Microsoft\\Windows\\CurrentVersion\\Run",
            0x10018797,
            v3);
    }
    // 0x10018889
    return 0;
}
```

Real example #3: CryproWall (x86)



DSM

Hex-Rays

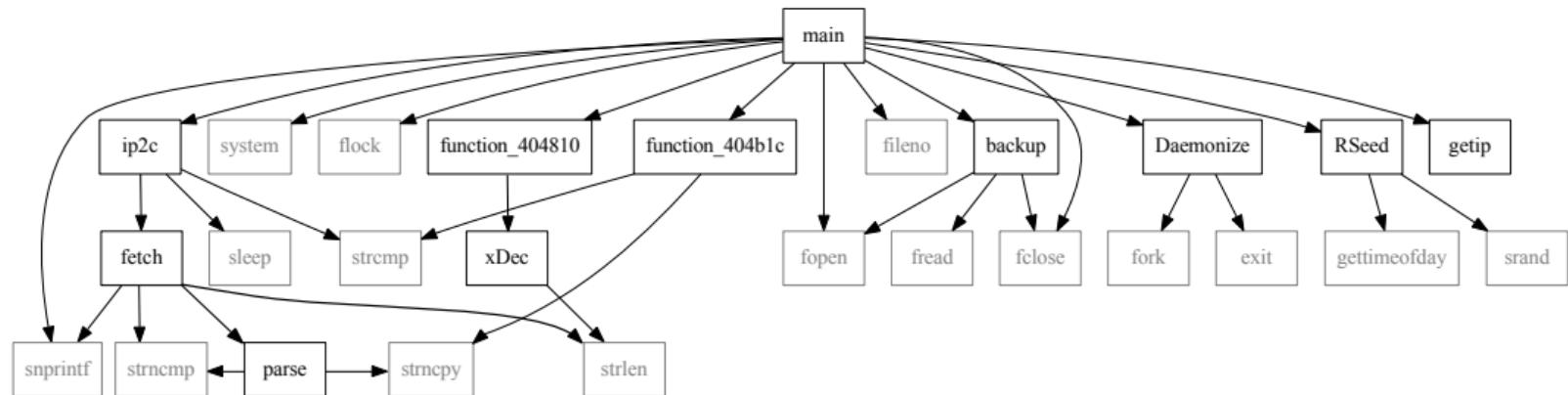
```
v4 = 1;
switch ( GetLastError() )
{
    case 0u:
        v4 = 0;
        break;
    case 2u:
    case 3u:
        v4 = 6;
        break;
    case 5u:
        v4 = 4;
        break;
    case 8u:
        v4 = 3;
        break;
    case 0x57u:
        v4 = 2;
        break;
    default:
        break;
}
```

RetDec

```
int32_t result = 1; // esi
switch (GetLastError()) {
    case 0: {
        result = 0;
        break;
    }
    case 2: {
        result = 6;
        break;
    }
    case 3: {
        result = 6;
        break;
    }
    case 5: {
        result = 4;
        break;
    }
    case 8: {
        result = 3;
        break;
    }
    case 87: {
        result = 2;
        break;
    }
}
```

```
// Address range: 0x419378 - 0x41946f
int32_t uptime(void) {
    struct _IO_FILE * file = fopen("/proc/uptime", "r"); // 0x4193bc
    int32_t str = 0; // bp-56
    fgets((char *)&str, 32, file);
    fclose(file);
    int32_t result = 0; // bp-64
    sscanf((char *)&str, "%d", &result);
    return result;
}
```

Real example #5: Psyb0t (mips) RetDec



NO!

- IDA and Hex-Rays are great

-  output quality
-  interactive
-  seamlessly integrated
-  mature
-  many plugins
-  official support

NO!

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 - 👍 output quality
 - ⌚ interactive
 - ⚡ seamlessly integrated
 - 🏆 mature
 - 💼 many plugins
 - 🔧 official support
- IDA and Hex-Rays have flaws
 - ฿ not free
 - 🔒 proprietary
 - ⌚ big monolithic GUI app

- Obvious reasons
 - ฿ it is free
 - + MIPS architecture
 - ⌚ MIT license
 - 🔧 you can play with the sources

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- Not so obvious reasons
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 - ⚠ different basic designs: interactive GUI vs. pipeline
 - 💻 LLVM is OP (don't worry, it won't be nerfed)

git RetDec – the decompiler

git RetDec IDA plugin – Hex-Rays impersonation

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git RetDec IDA plugin – Hex-Rays impersonation

git Fileformat – generic OFF parsing and analysis

git Capstone2LLvmIR – binary to LLVM translation

git Fnc-patterns – statically linked code detection in YARA (IDA F.L.I.R.T.)

git Yaramod – hack YARA rules in C++

git Yaracpp – YARA C++ wrapper

git Ctypes – info on function types

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- We will see...

Thanks!

✍ Contacts

- ⌚ <https://retdec.com/>
- ⌚ <https://github.com/avast-tl>
- 🐦 <https://twitter.com/retdec>
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