

The Penultimate Challenge: Bug report construction in the Clang Static Analyzer

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2019. oct. 22.

Windows XP



Task failed successfully.

OK

Clear, precise bug reports are important

- One of the main selling points of Clang back in the day
- Not only wording, it requires a good infrastructure
- Tools without it are miserable to use

Agenda

- Path-sensitive analysis in the Clang Static Analyzer
- Current state of bug report construction
- Difficulties, current state of research, future work

Path-sensitive analysis in the Clang Static Analyzer

The Clang Static Analyzer

It employs a variety of techniques to analyze C, C++, ObjectiveC, ObjectiveC++ code:

- AST matching
- CFG based analyses
- Symbolic execution

Exploring paths of execution

- Traverse the control flow graph (CFG) of a function
- On branches, explore a path on which the condition is true, and one on which its false
- How does this work interprocedurally?

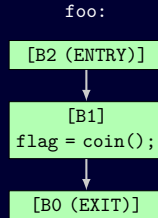
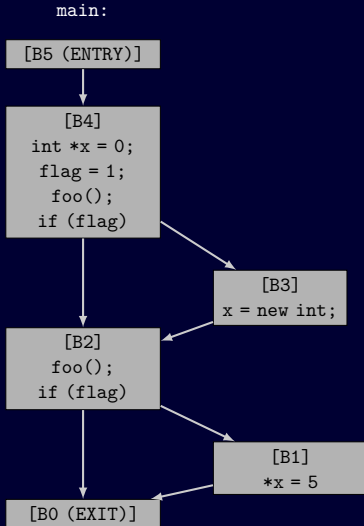
Exploring paths of execution

- Traverse the control flow graph (CFG) of a function
- On branches, explore a path on which the condition is true, and one on which its false
- How does this work interprocedurally? Inlining!


```

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02 bool coin();
03
04 void foo() {
05     flag = coin();
06 }
07
08 int main() {
09     int *x = 0;
10     flag = 1;
11     foo();
12     if (flag)
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15
16     if (flag)
17         *x = 5;
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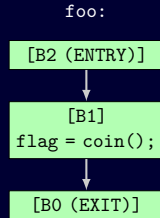
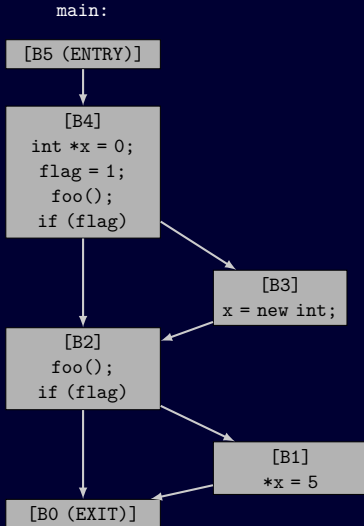
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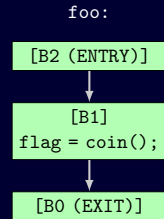
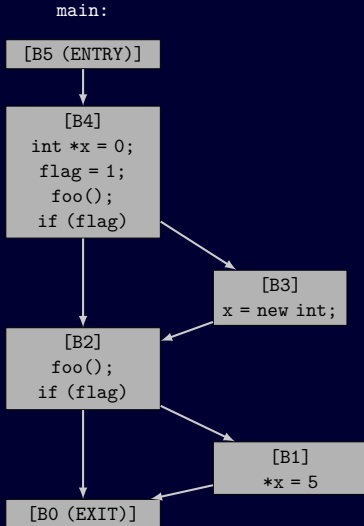
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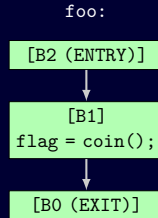
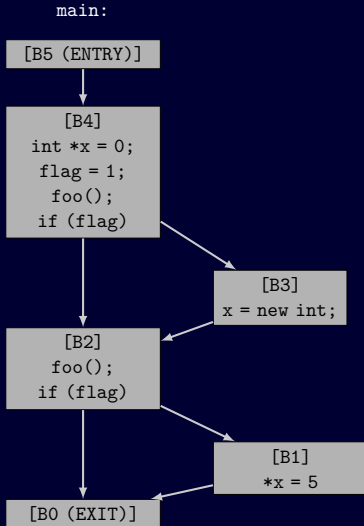
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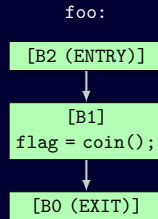
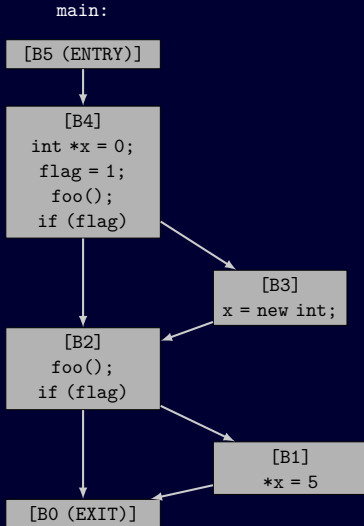
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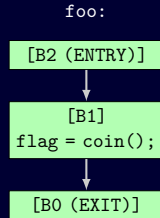
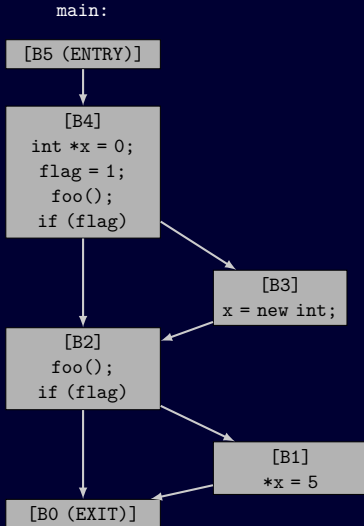
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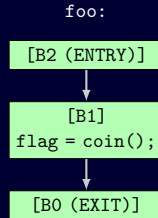
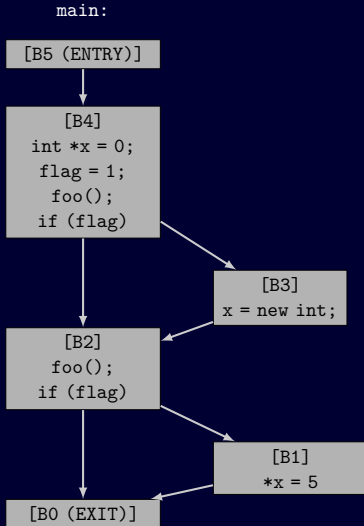
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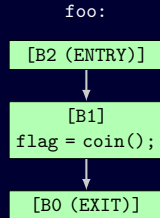
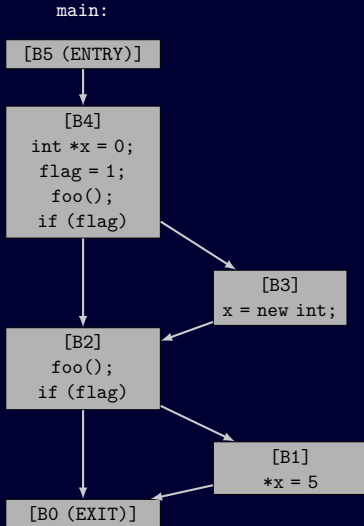
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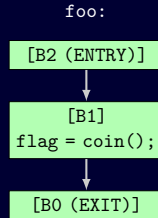
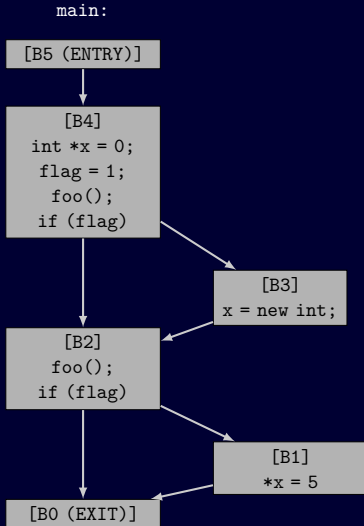
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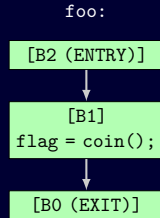
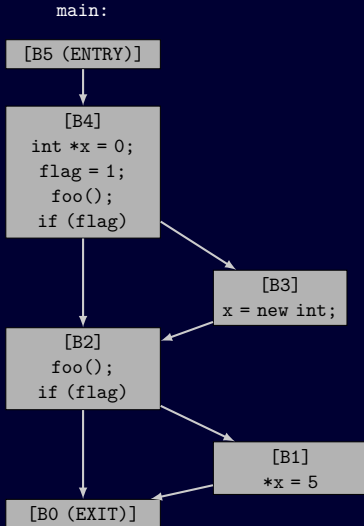
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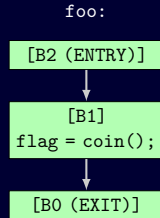
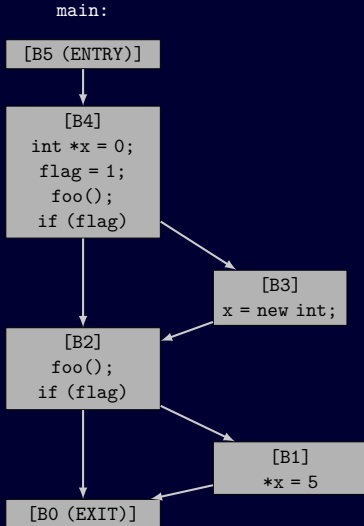
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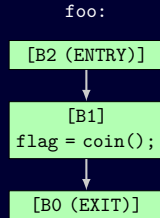
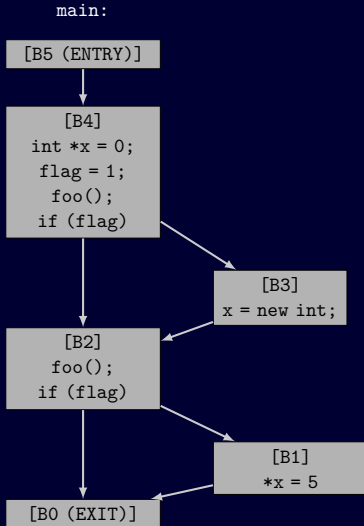
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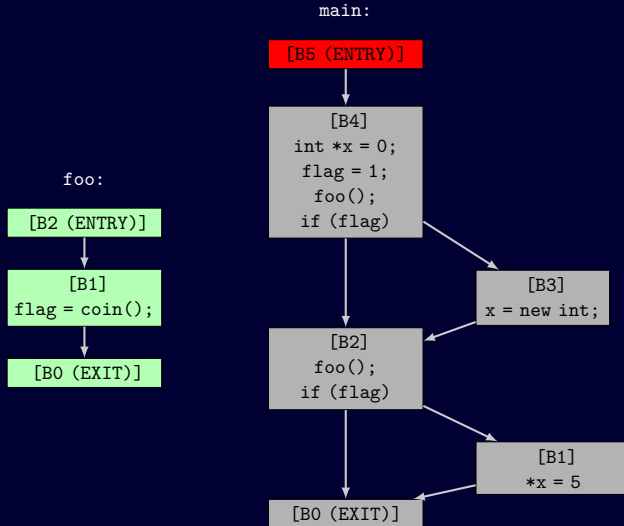


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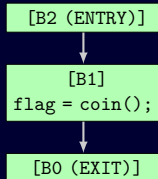
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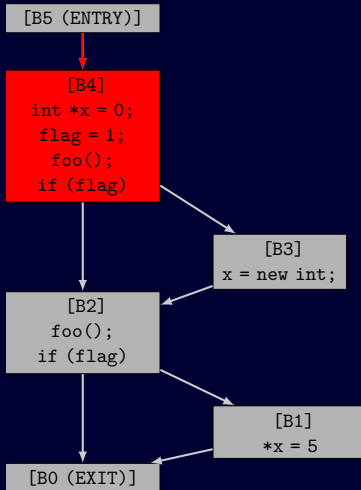


```
flag == 1;  
x == nullptr;
```

foo:

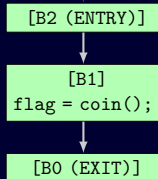


main:

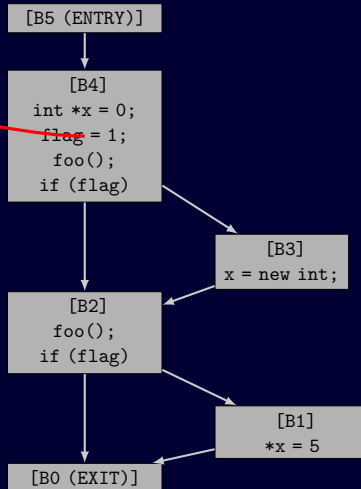


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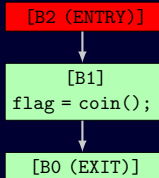


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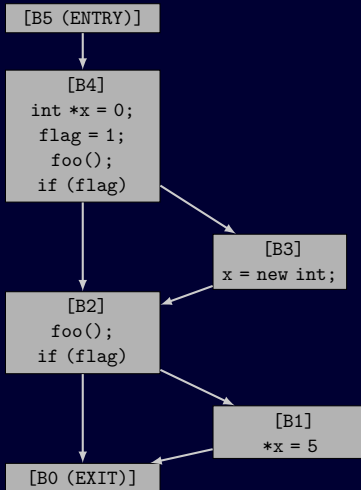


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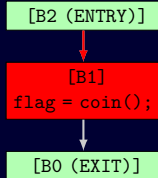


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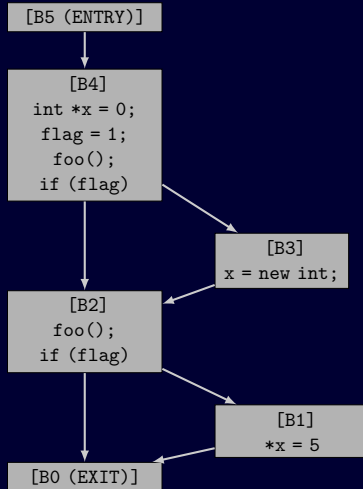


`flag ∈ (-∞, ∞);`
`x == nullptr;`

foo:

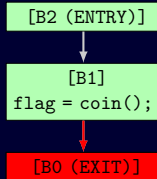


main:

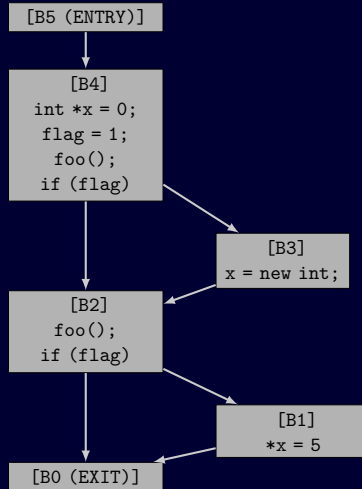


$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty);$
 $x == \text{nullptr};$

foo:

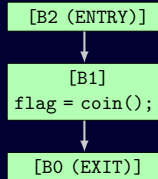


main:

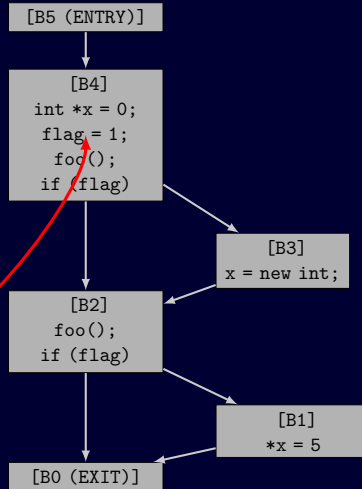


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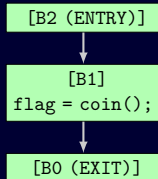


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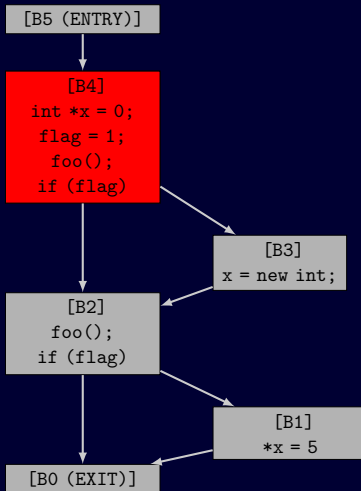


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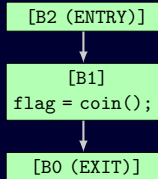


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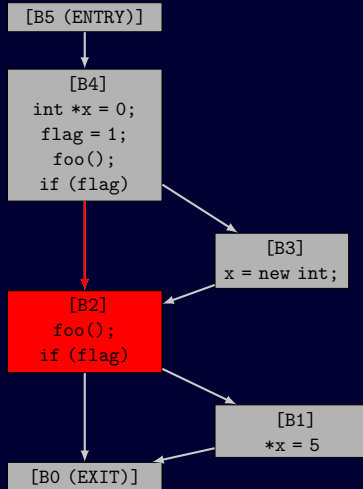


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flag == 0;  
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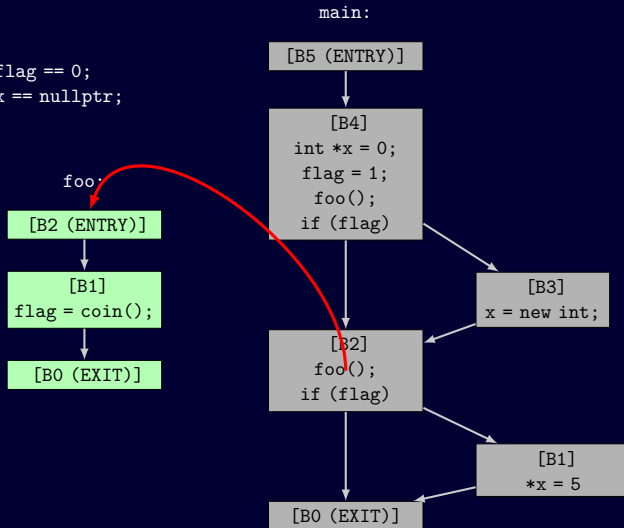
foo:



main:

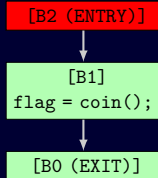


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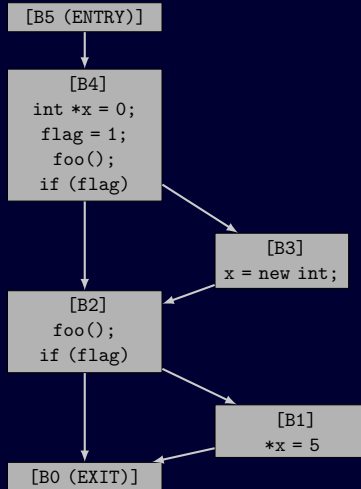


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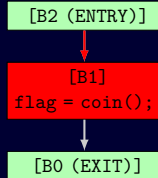


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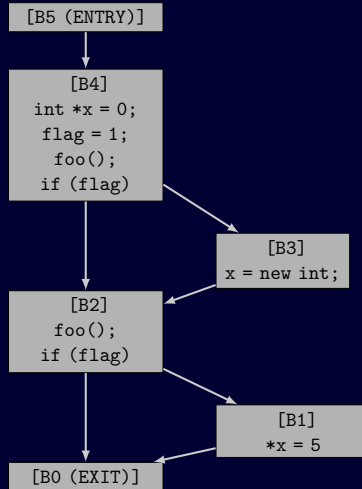


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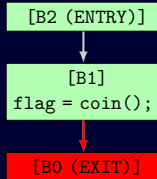


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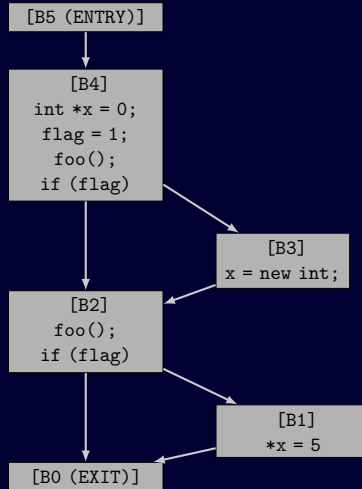


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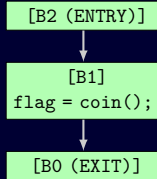


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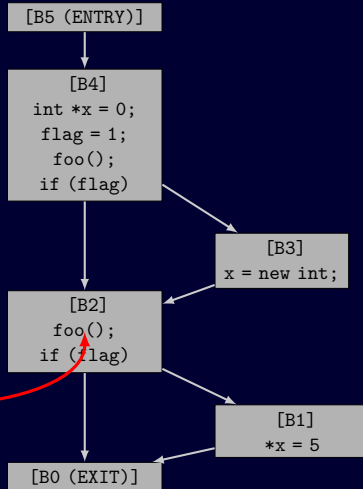


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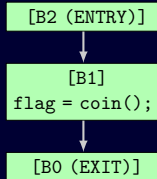


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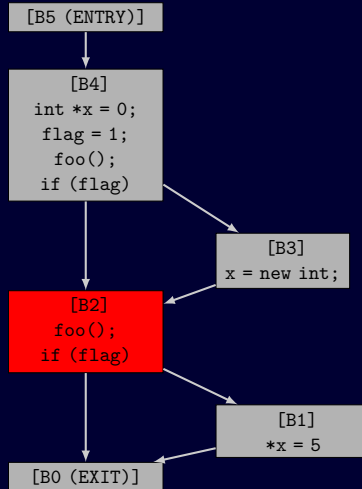


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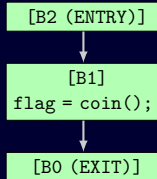


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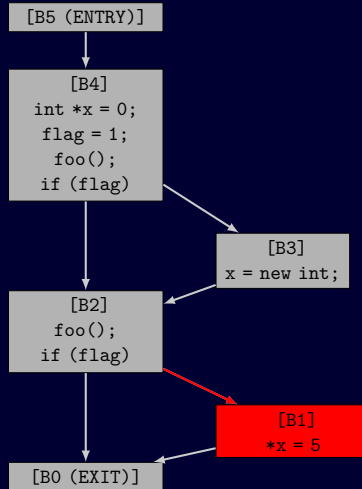


$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, 0) \cup (0, \infty);$
 $x == \text{nullptr};$
dereference of $x!$

foo:

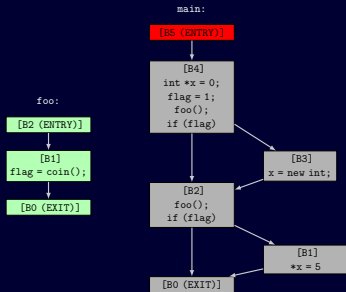


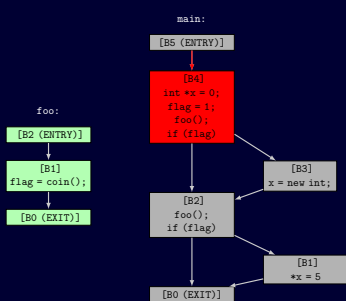
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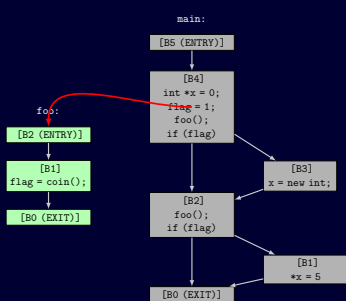
The ExplodedGraph

- Contains everything the analyzer learned during symbolic execution
- All explored paths of execution
- Every symbolic value in every program state

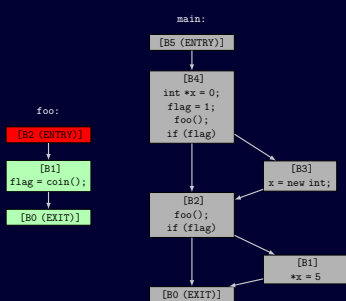




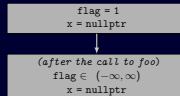
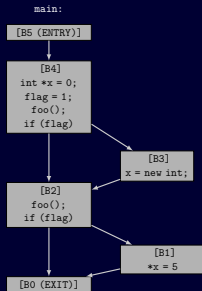
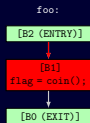
```
flag = 1
x = nullptr
```

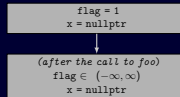
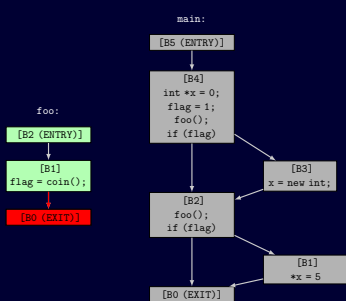


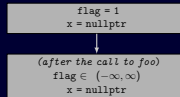
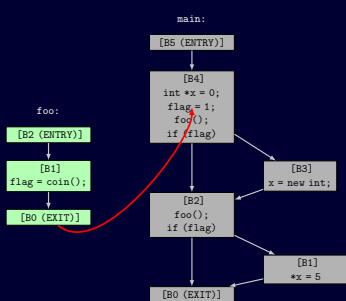
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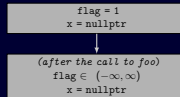
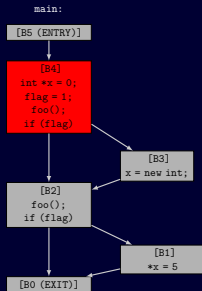
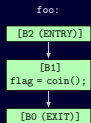



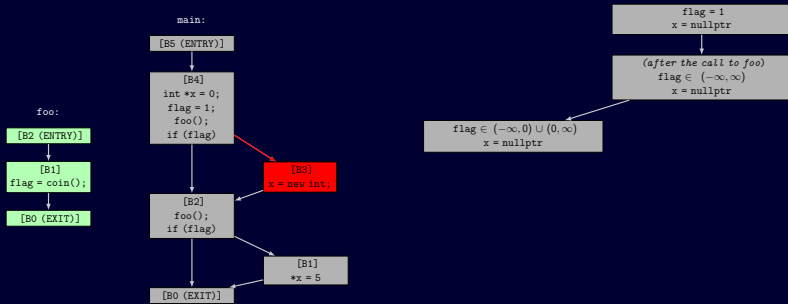
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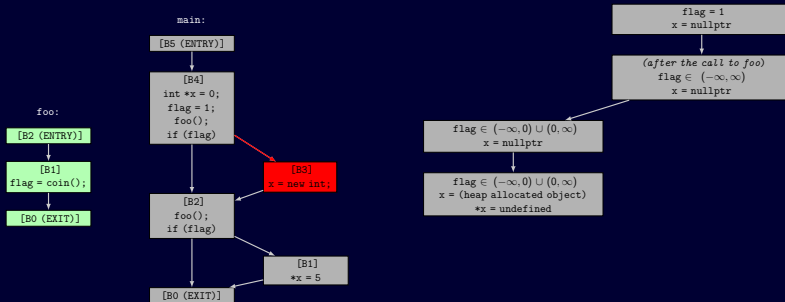


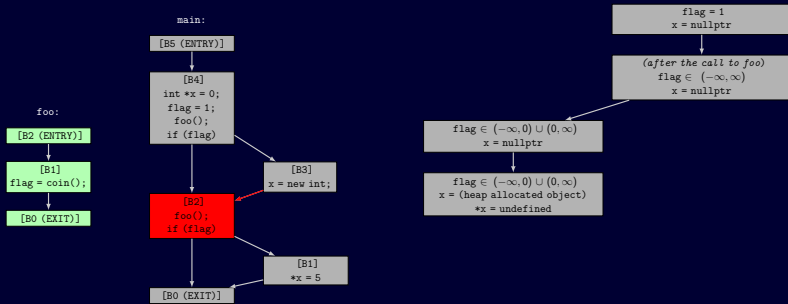


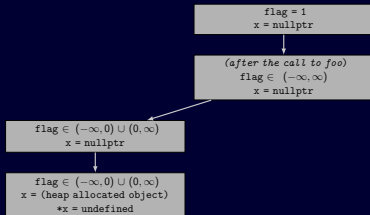
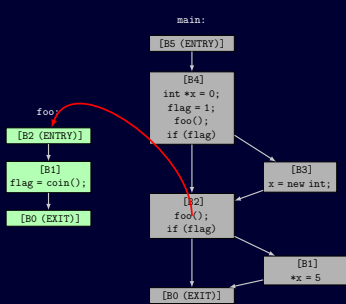


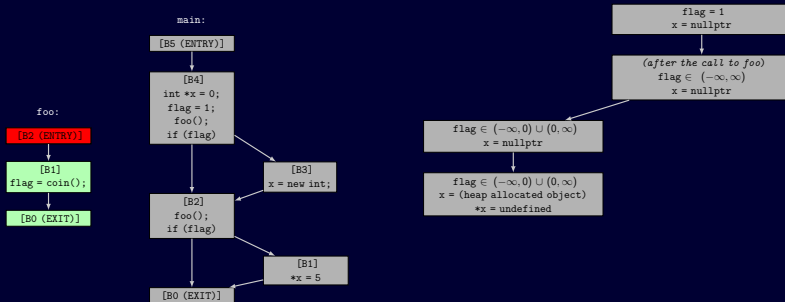


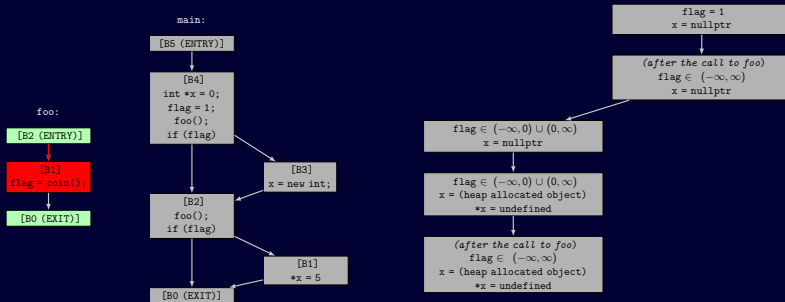


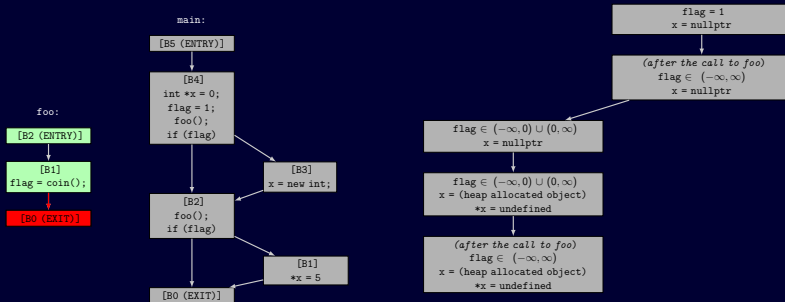


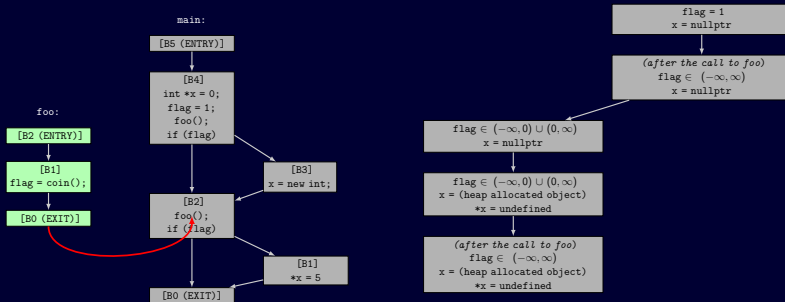


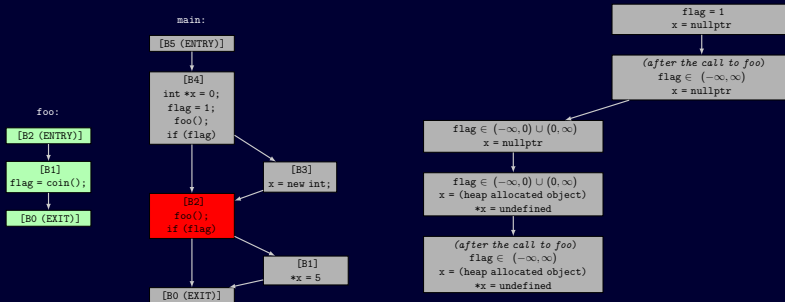


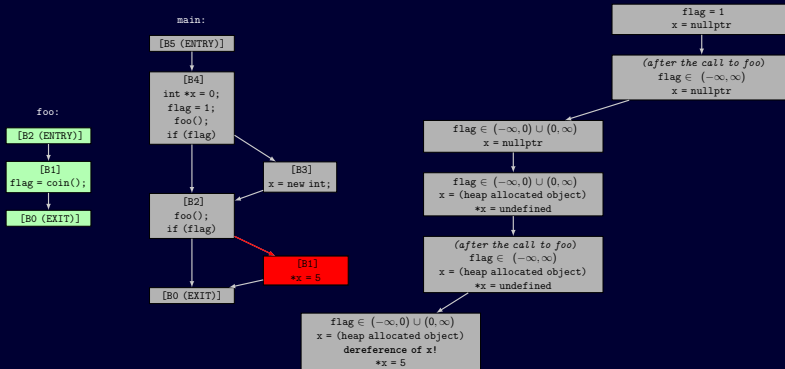


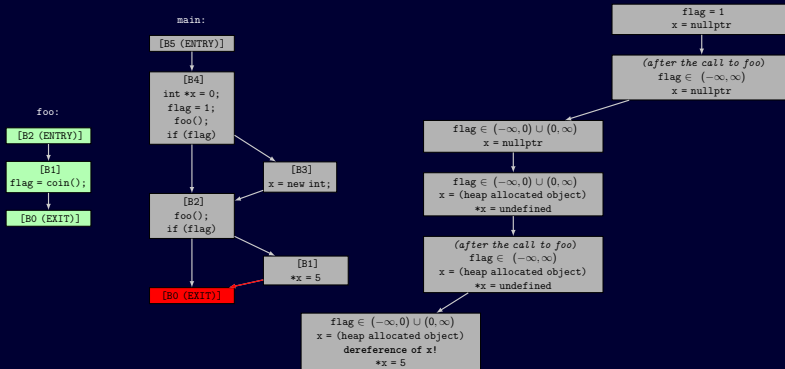


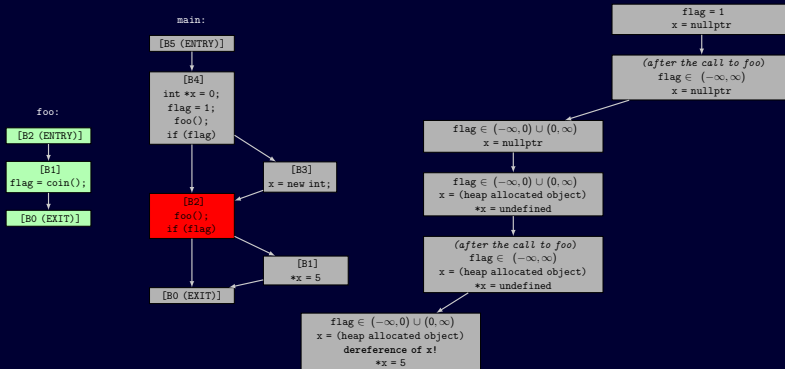


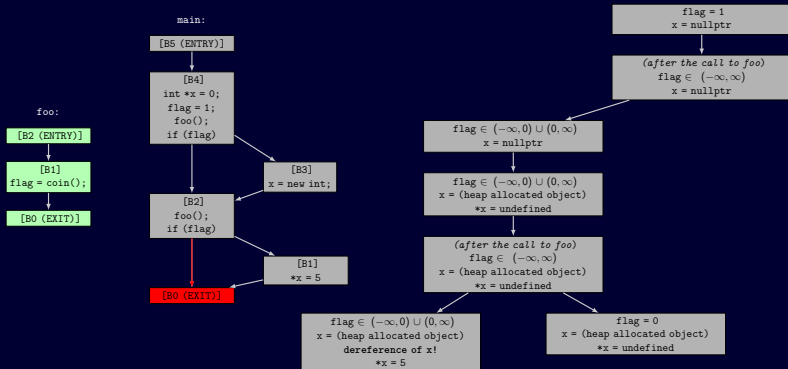


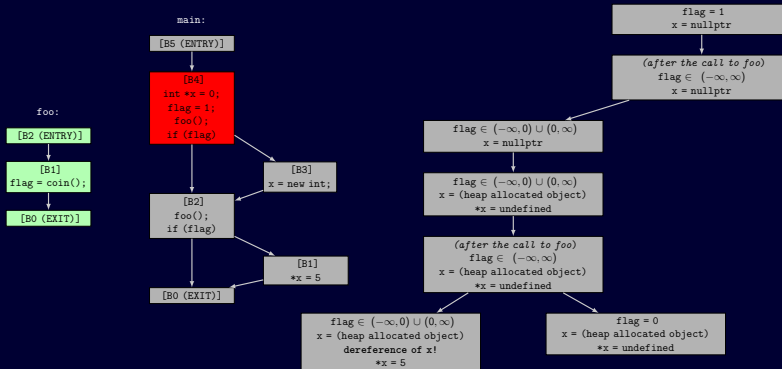


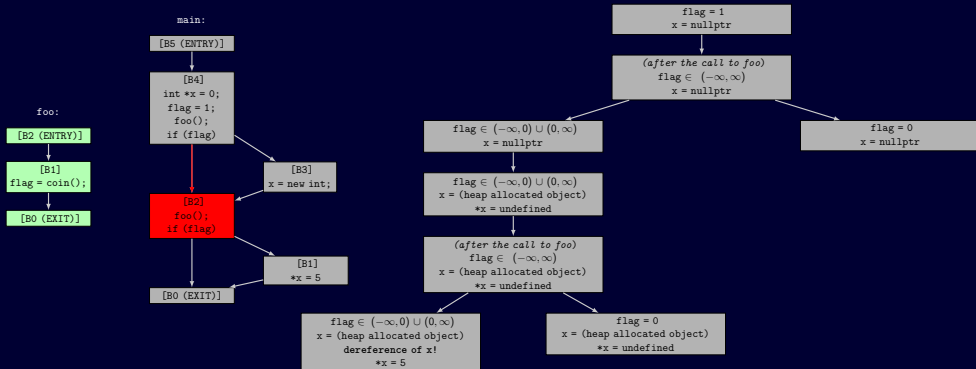


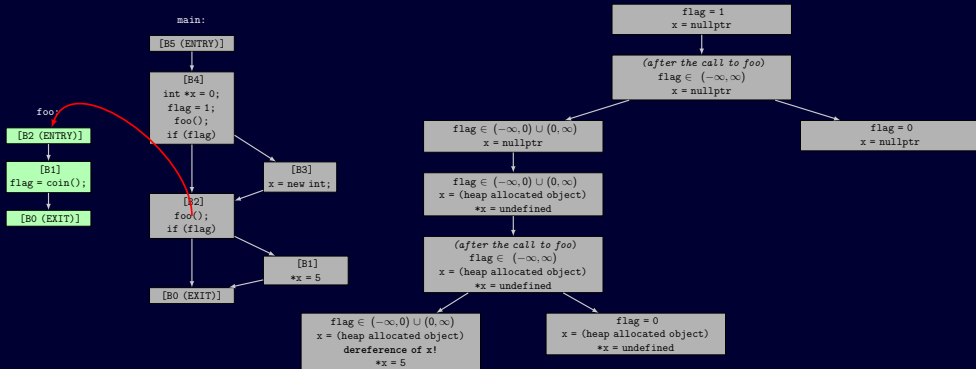


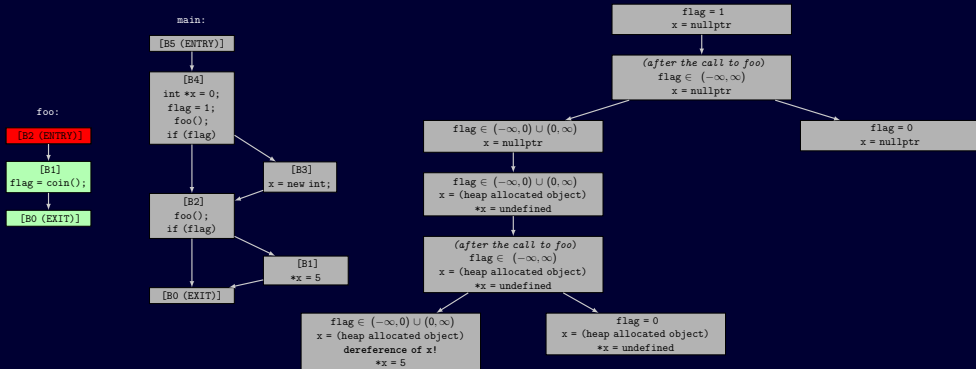


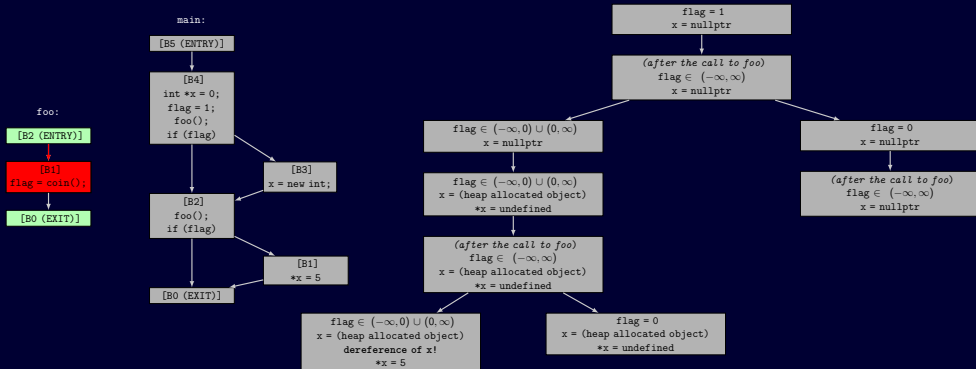


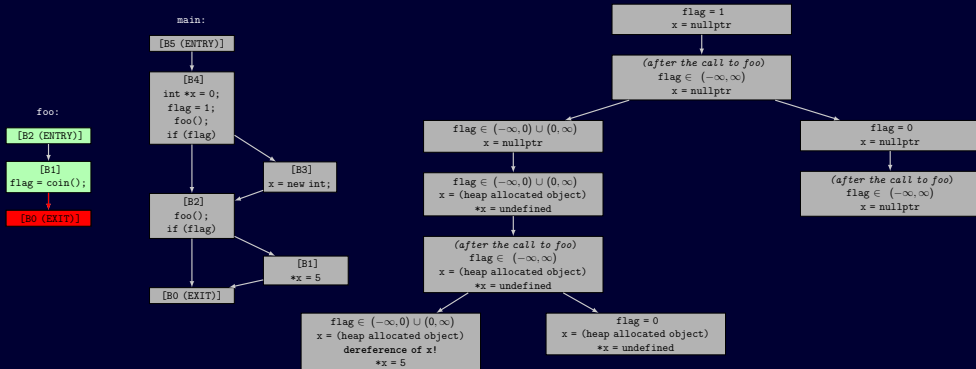


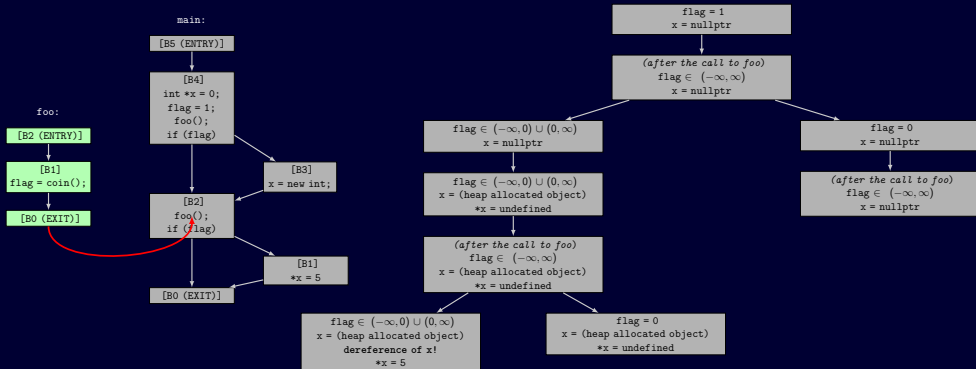


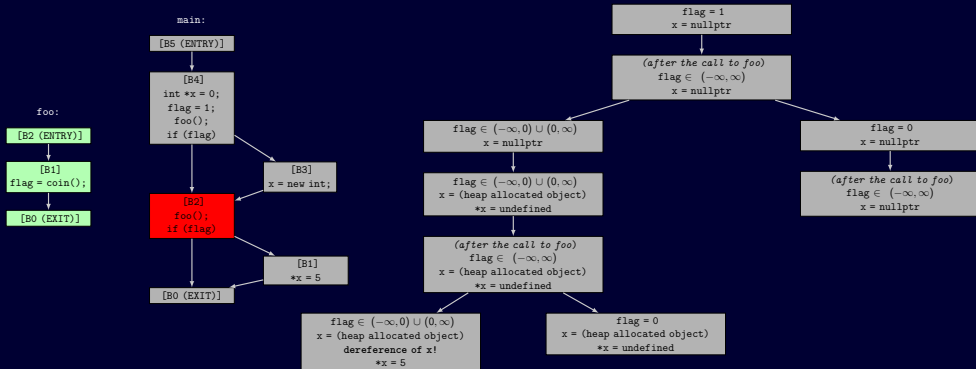


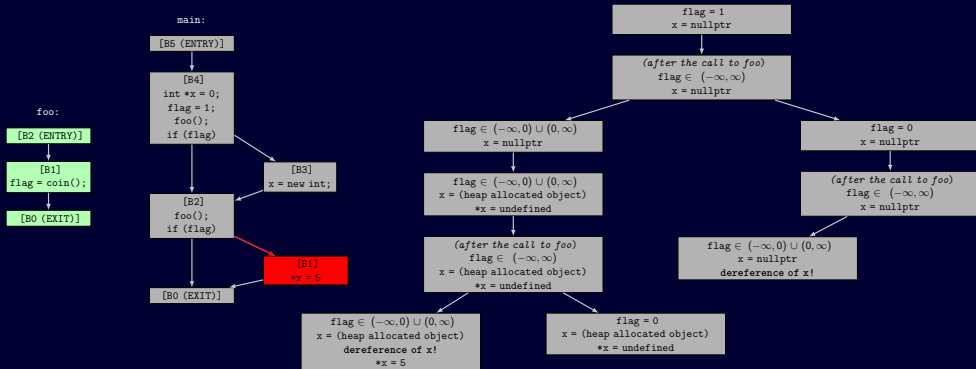


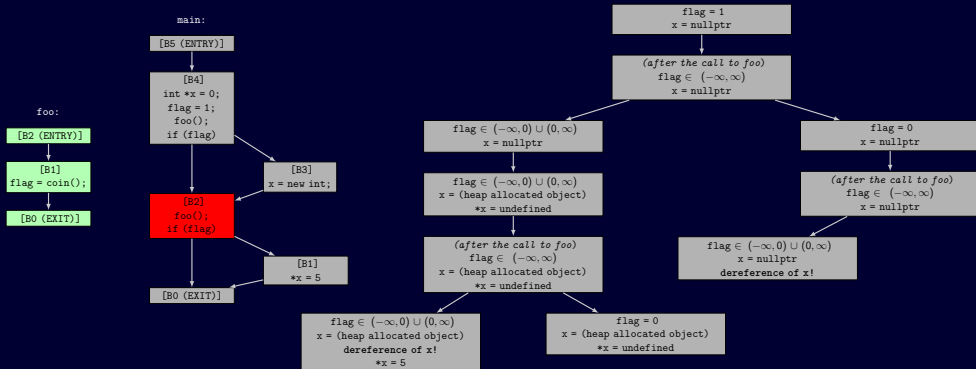


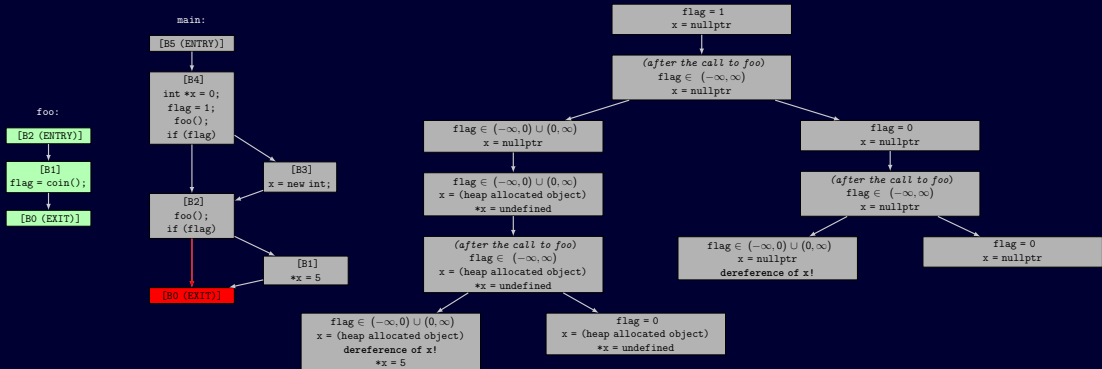












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- Branches in the ExplodedGraph may happen far more often
- Representation of values, regions: symbols
- ExplodedGraphs are usually very-very large, and contain tremendous amount of information

Bug report construction

Processing of the ExplodedGraph

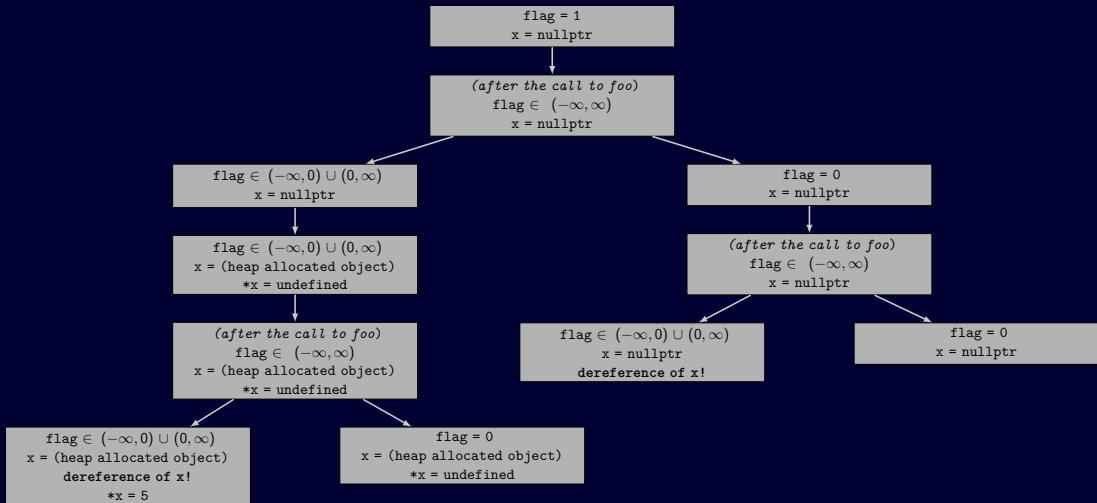
- Bugs are represented with error nodes
- The graph may contain several of them

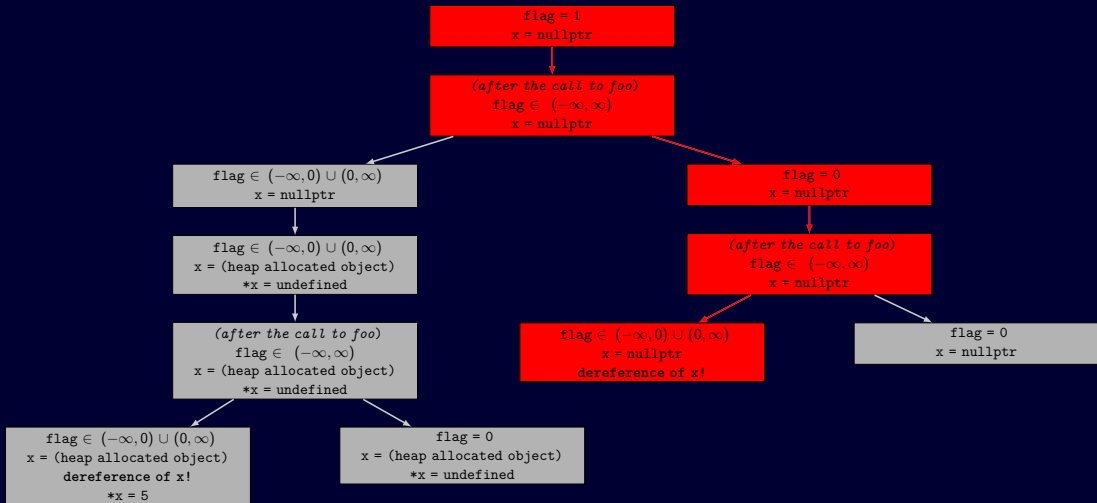
Processing of the ExplodedGraph

- Bugs are represented with error nodes
- The graph may contain several of them
- The goal is to explain the path to these nodes

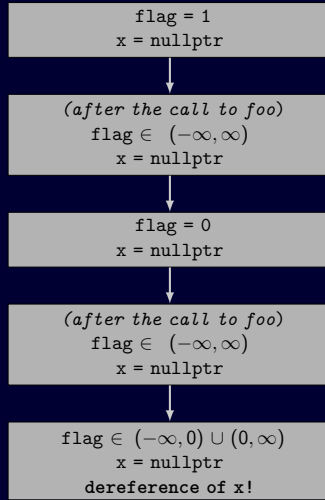
Processing of the ExplodedGraph

- Bugs are represented with error nodes
- The graph may contain several of them
- The goal is to explain the path to these nodes
- For each node, construct the shortest path from the root to the error node
- This is called a bug path





```
01 int flag;  
02 bool coin();  
03  
04 void foo() {  
05     flag = coin();  
06 }  
07  
08 int main() {  
09     int *x = 0;  
10     flag = 1;  
11     foo();  
12     if (flag)  
13         x = new int;  
14     foo();  
15  
16     if (flag)  
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18 }
```



The ideal bug report

The goal is to generate a bug report from the bug path that is

- complete: contains every information necessary to understand how the bug occurred
- minimal: contains no unnecessary information

Techniques used by the analyzer

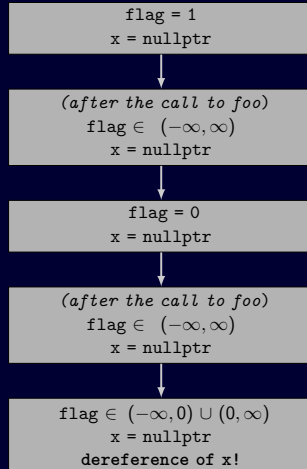
- 2 techniques:

Techniques used by the analyzer

- 2 techniques:
 - BugReporterVisitors
 - Interestingness propagation

Techniques used by the analyzer

- 2 techniques:
 - BugReporterVisitors
 - Interestingness propagation
- Visit the nodes of the bugpath from the error node to the root



<warning msg>

$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, 0) \cup (0, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$
dereference of x!

$\text{flag} = 1$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$

(after the call to foo)
 $\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$

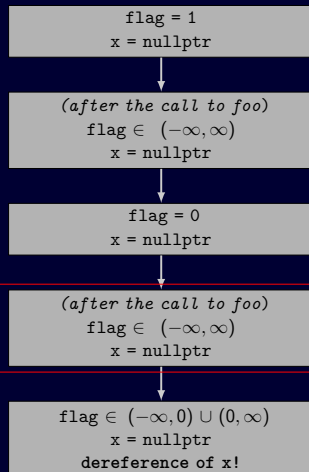
$\text{flag} = 0$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$

(after the call to foo)
 $\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$

$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, 0) \cup (0, \infty)$
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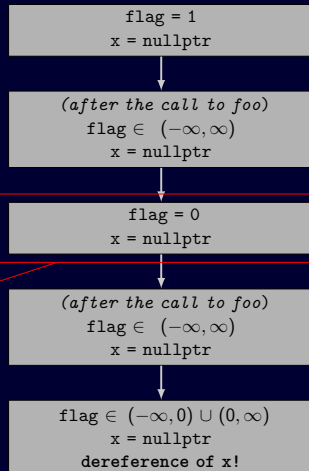
<diagnostic msg 4>

(after the call to foo)
 $\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$



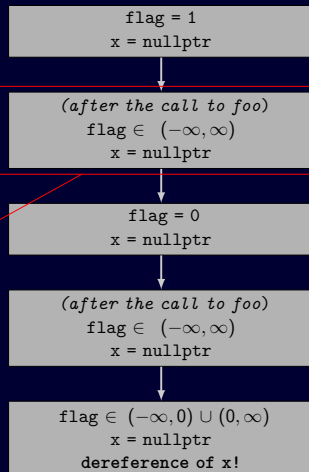
<diagnostic msg 3>

flag = 0
x = nullptr



<diagnostic msg 2>

(after the call to foo)
 $\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$



<diagnostic msg 1>

```
flag = 1
x = nullptr
```

```
flag = 1
x = nullptr
```

(after the call to foo)
 $\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$

```
flag = 0
x = nullptr
```

(after the call to foo)
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- Their `visitNode()` is called on each node visit
- Visitors may create diagnostic messages about the node they are currently visiting
- Despite the misleading name, they are more like callbacks than visitors

Visitors

- `ConditionBRVisitor`: Describes conditions of if branches, loops, conditional operators etc.

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TrackControlDependencyCondBRVisitor

- Most recent addition, available in Clang 10.0.0
- GSoC'19 project mentored by Artem Dergachev, Gábor Horváth and Ádám Balogh
- <https://szelethus.github.io/gsoc2019/>

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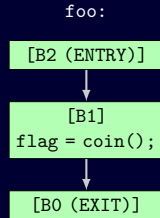
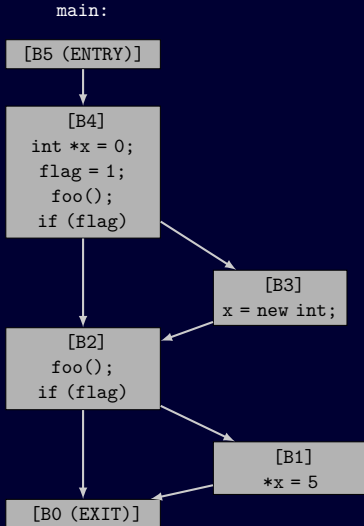
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- GSoC'19 project mentored by Artem Dergachev, Gábor Horváth and Ádám Balogh
- <https://szelethus.github.io/gsoc2019/>
- Calculates control dependencies to points of interest
- Tells the analyzer to explain the conditions of control dependency blocks

```

01 int flag;
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04 void foo() {
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07
08 int main() {
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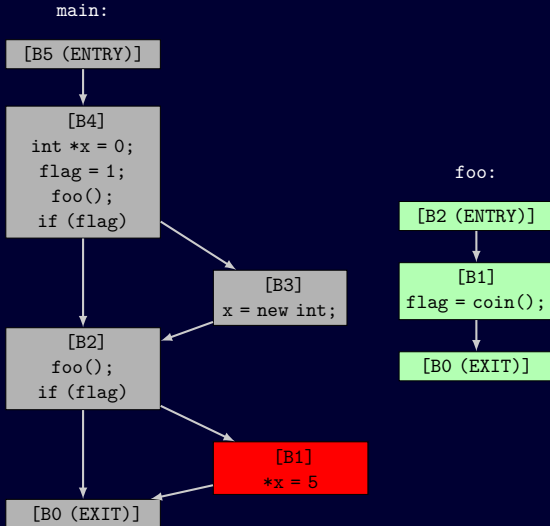
```



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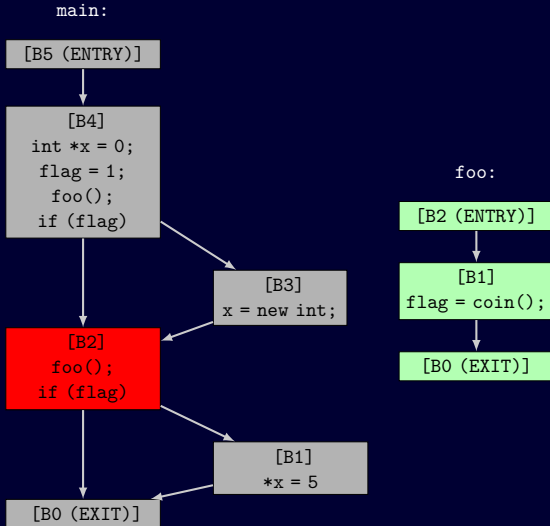
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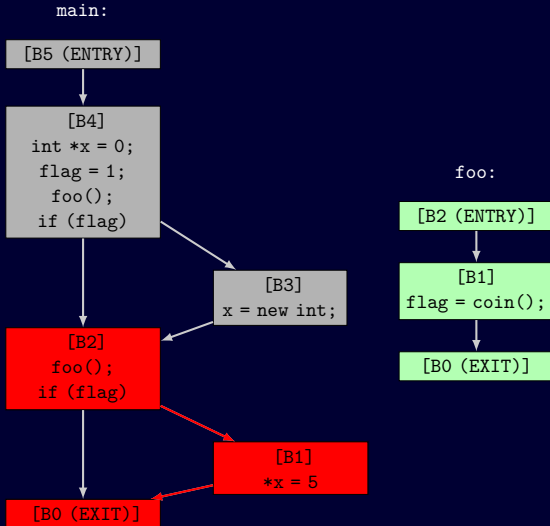
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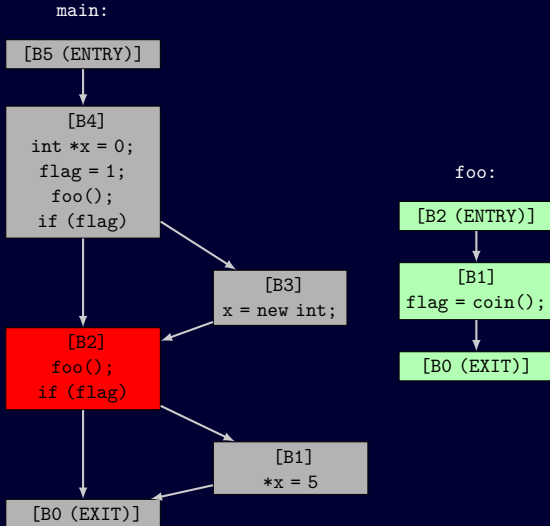
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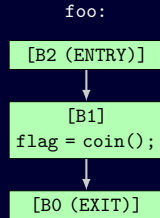
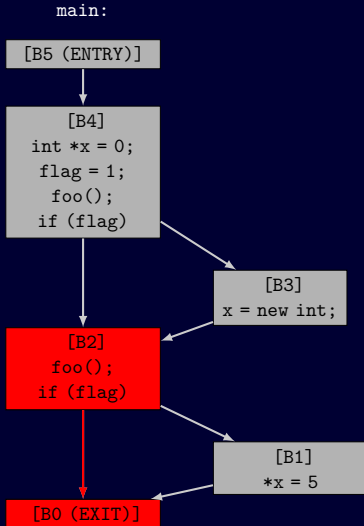
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Interestingness propagation

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- During bug report construction, propagate interestingness to entities that interact with an interesting entity
- Nodes in the bug path that do not describe an interesting entity are pruned

Combining Visitors and Interestingness

Expression value tracking!

Combining Visitors and Interestingness

Expression value tracking!

- Mark the expression as interesting

Combining Visitors and Interestingness

Expression value tracking!

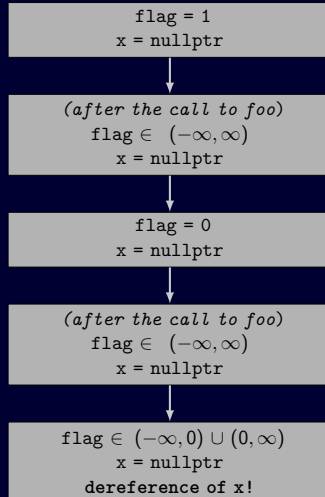
- Mark the expression as interesting
- Register visitors to describe events related to it
 - FindLastStoreBRVisitor
 - TrackControlDependencyCondBRVisitor
 - ReturnVisitor
 - UndefOrNullArgVisitor
 - etc...

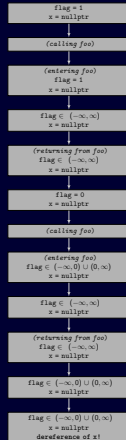
Combining Visitors and Interestingness

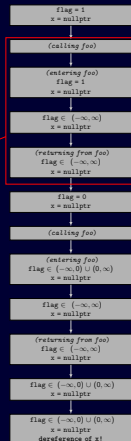
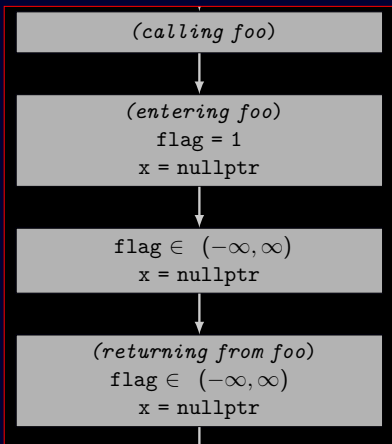
Expression value tracking!

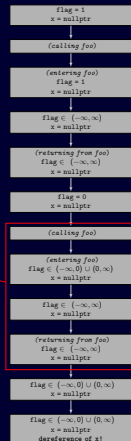
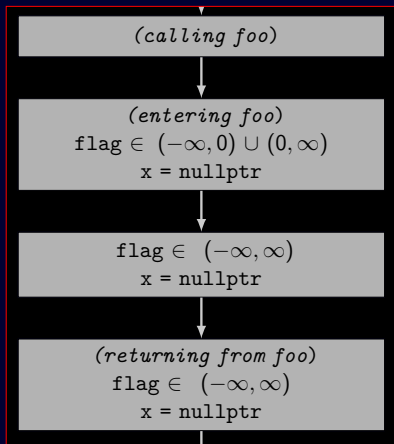
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 - etc...
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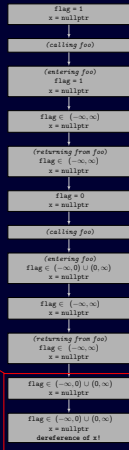




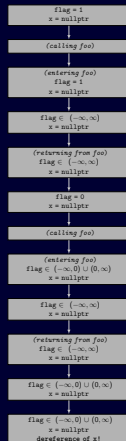


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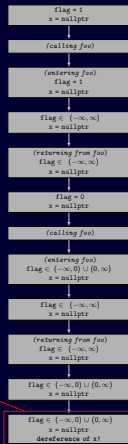
Stage 1: Visitor notes



The checker tracks x's value

$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, 0) \cup (0, \infty)$
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dereference of x!

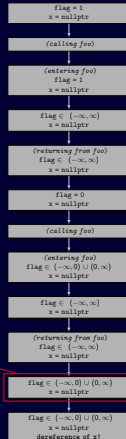
Tracked variables: $\{x\}$



ConditionBRVisitor: Assuming 'flag' is not equal to 0

$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, 0) \cup (0, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$

Tracked variables: $\{x\}$

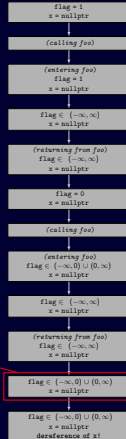


note: Assuming flag is true

TrackControlDependencyCond-
BRVisitor tracks flag

$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, 0) \cup (0, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$

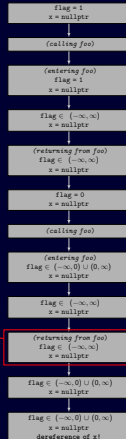
Tracked variables: $\{x, \text{flag}\}$



note: Assuming flag is true

(returning from foo)
 $\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$

Tracked variables: $\{x, \text{flag}\}$

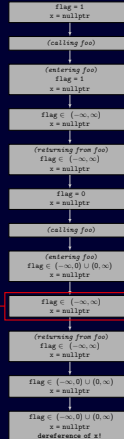


note: Assuming flag is true

FindLastStoreBRVisitor:
Value assigned to 'flag'

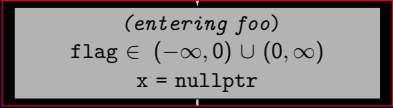
$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
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Tracked variables: $\{x, \text{flag}\}$

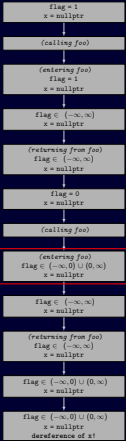


note: flag is assigned a value

note: Assuming flag is true

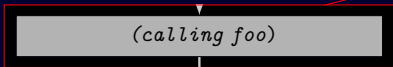


Tracked variables: {x, flag}

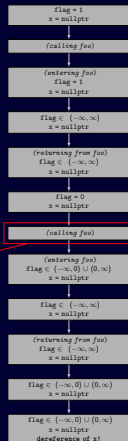


note: flag is assigned a value

note: Assuming flag is true



Tracked variables: $\{x, \text{flag}\}$



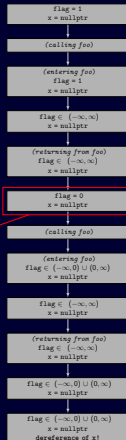
note: flag is assigned a value

note: Assuming flag is true

ConditionBRVisitor: Assuming 'flag' is 0

flag = 0
x = nullptr

Tracked variables: {x, flag}



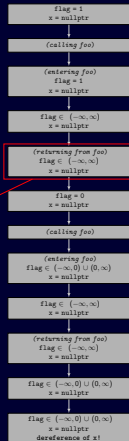
note: Assuming flag is false

note: flag is assigned a value

note: Assuming flag is true

(returning from foo)
 $\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$

Tracked variables: $\{x, \text{flag}\}$



note: Assuming flag is false

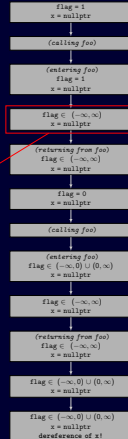
note: flag is assigned a value

note: Assuming flag is true

FindLastStoreBRVisitor is
already satisfied, no notes

$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$

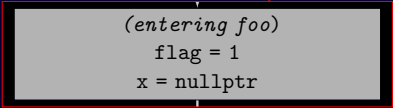
Tracked variables: $\{x, \text{flag}\}$



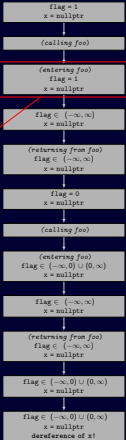
note: Assuming flag is false

note: flag is assigned a value

note: Assuming flag is true



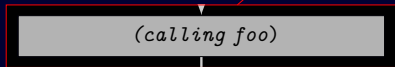
Tracked variables: {x, **flag**}



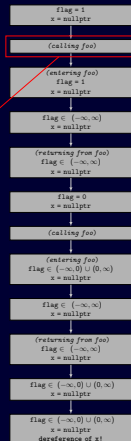
note: Assuming flag is false

note: flag is assigned a value

note: Assuming flag is true



Tracked variables: $\{x, \text{flag}\}$



note: Assuming flag is false

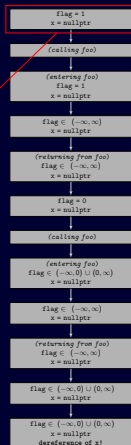
note: flag is assigned a value

note: Assuming flag is true

FindLastStoreBRVisitor:
'x' initialized to null pointer
value

flag = 1
x = nullptr

Tracked variables: {x, flag}



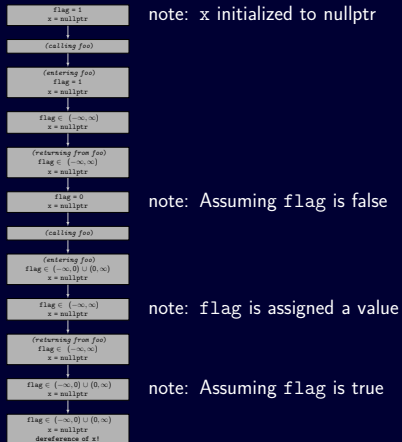
note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Assuming flag is false

note: flag is assigned a value

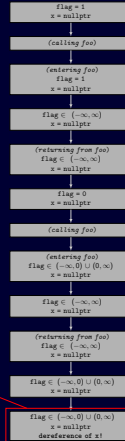
note: Assuming flag is true

Stage 2: Non-visitor notes



The warning message is supplied by the checker

$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, 0) \cup (0, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$
dereference of x !



note: x initialized to `nullptr`

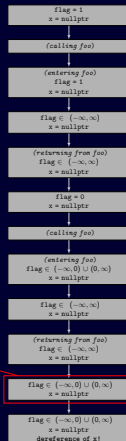
note: Assuming flag is false

note: flag is assigned a value

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: `Nullptr` dereference

$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, 0) \cup (0, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Assuming flag is false

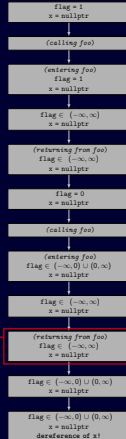
note: flag is assigned a value

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

Returning from 'foo'

(returning from foo)
 $\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Assuming flag is false

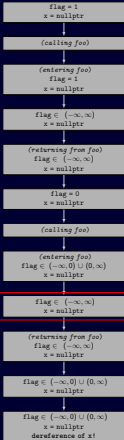
note: flag is assigned a value

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Assuming flag is false

note: flag is assigned a value

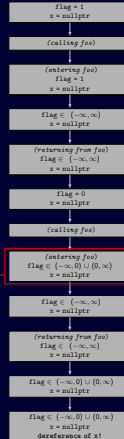
note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

Entering call from 'main'

(entering foo)
 $\text{flag} \in (-\infty, 0) \cup (0, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Assuming flag is false

note: Entered function from main

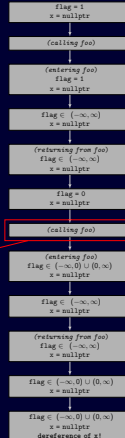
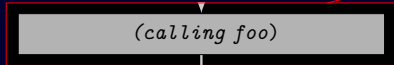
note: flag is assigned a value

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

Calling 'foo'



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Assuming flag is false

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

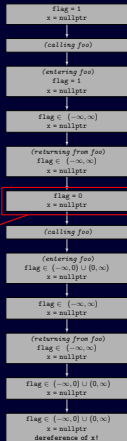
note: flag is assigned a value

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

flag = 0
x = nullptr



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Assuming flag is false

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

note: flag is assigned a value

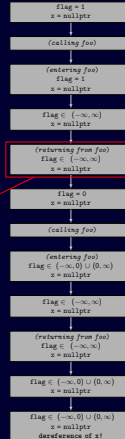
note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

Returning from 'foo'

(returning from foo)
 $\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is false

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

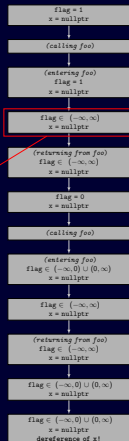
note: flag is assigned a value

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

$\text{flag} \in (-\infty, \infty)$
 $x = \text{nullptr}$



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is false

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

note: flag is assigned a value

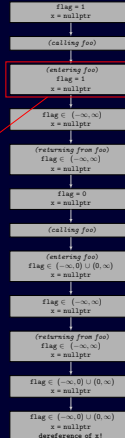
note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

Entering call from 'main'

```
(entering foo)
flag = 1
x = nullptr
```



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Entered function from main

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is false

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

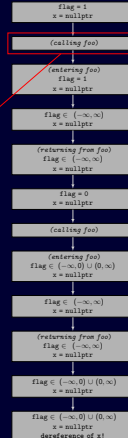
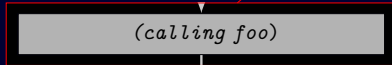
note: flag is assigned a value

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

Calling 'foo'



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is false

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

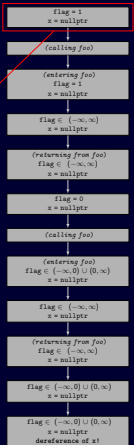
note: flag is assigned a value

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

flag = 1
x = nullptr



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is false

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

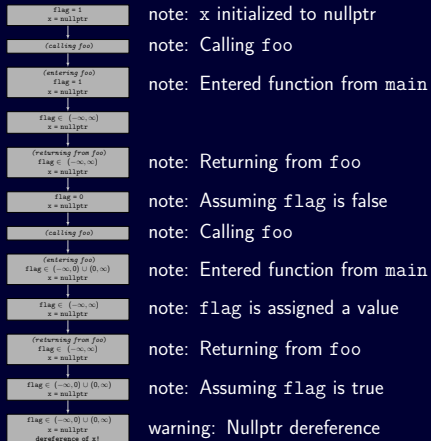
note: flag is assigned a value

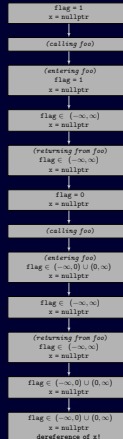
note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

Stage 3: Pruning





note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is false

note: Calling foo

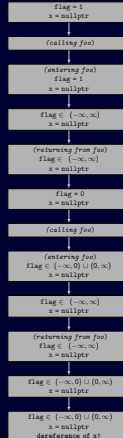
note: Entered function from main

note: flag is assigned a value

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference



note: x initialized to nullptr

note: Assuming flag is false

note: Calling foo

note: Entered function from main

note: flag is assigned a value

note: Returning from foo

note: Assuming flag is true

warning: Nullptr dereference

```
1 int flag;
2
3 bool coin();
4
5 void foo() {
6     flag = coin();
7 }
8
9 int main() {
10     int *x = 0;
11     flag = true;
12     foo();
13     if (!flag) {
14         x = new int;
15     }
16     foo();
17     if (!flag) {
18         *x = 5;
19     }
20 }
```

4 < Entered call from 'main' >

5 < Value assigned to 'flag', which participates in a condition later >

1 < 'x' initialized to a null pointer value >

2 < Assuming 'flag' is 0 >

3 < Calling 'foo' >

6 < Returning from 'foo' >

7 < Assuming 'flag' is not equal to 0 >

8 < Dereference of null pointer (loaded from variable 'x') >





Present problems, research

Very hard to solve problems

- Relevant information isn't found in the bug path

Very hard to solve problems

- Relevant information isn't found in the bug path
- Ad absurdum, not even in the ExplodedGraph

```
1 int flag;
2
3 bool coin();
4
5 void foo() {
6     flag = coin();
7 }
8
9 int main() {
10     int *x = 0;
11     flag = true;
12     foo();
13     if (!flag) {
14         x = new int;
15     }
16     foo();
17     if (!flag) {
18         *x = 5;
19     }
20 }
```

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```
01 int flag;
02 bool coin();
03
04 void foo() {
05     flag = coin();
06 }
07
08 int main() {
09     int *x = 0;
10     flag = 1;
11     foo();
12     if (flag)
13         x = new int;
14     foo();
15
16     if (flag)
17         *x = 5;
18 }
```

```
01
02
03
04
05
06
07
08 int main() {
09     int *x = 0;
10     flag = 1;
11     foo();
12     if (flag)
13         x = new int;
14     foo();
15
16     if (flag)
17         *x = 5;
18 }
```

```
01
02
03
04
05
06
07
08 int main() {
09     int *x = 0;
10     flag = 1;
11     foo();
12     if (flag)
13         printf("Nothing to see here!");
14     foo();
15
16     if (flag)
17         *x = 5;
18 }
```

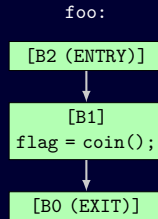
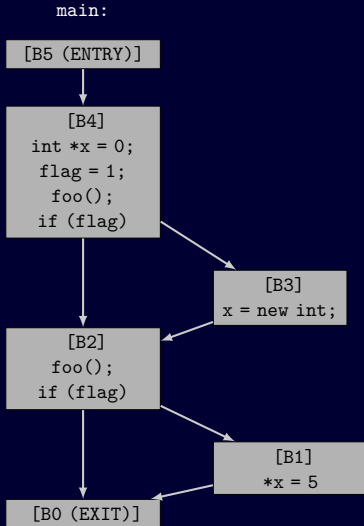
Reaching definitions analysis

- An algorithm to find a set of last stores (definitions) to a variable
- Regard all definitions to a variable as a point of interest
- <https://reviews.llvm.org/D64991>

```

01 int flag;
02 bool coin();
03
04 void foo() {
05     flag = coin();
06 }
07
08 int main() {
09     int *x = 0;
10     flag = 1;
11     foo();
12     if (flag)
13         x = new int;
14     foo();
15
16     if (flag)
17         *x = 5;
18 }

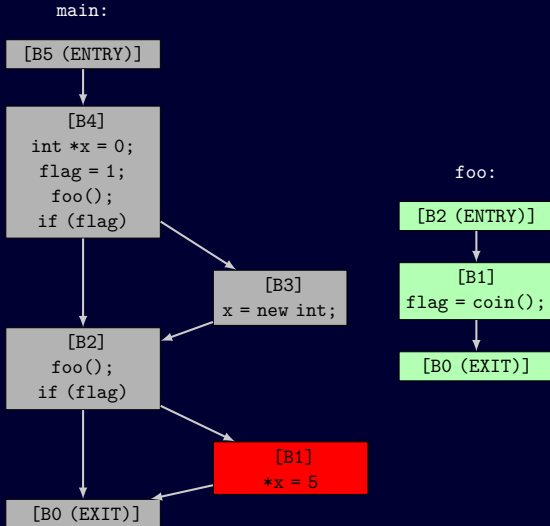
```



```

01 int flag;
02 bool coin();
03
04 void foo() {
05     flag = coin();
06 }
07
08 int main() {
09     int *x = 0;
10     flag = 1;
11     foo();
12     if (flag)
13         x = new int;
14     foo();
15
16     if (flag)
17         *x = 5;
18 }

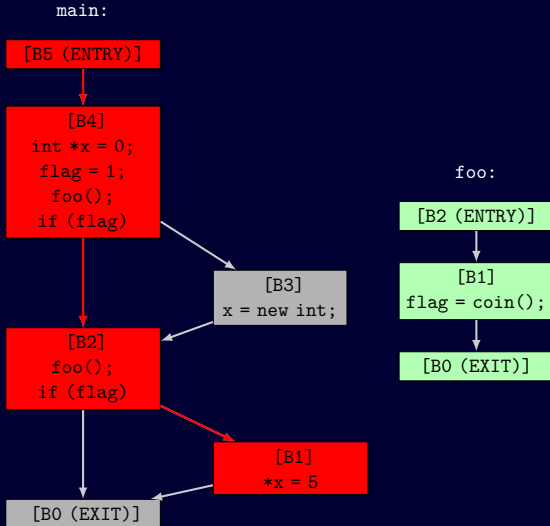
```




```

01 int flag;
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03
04 void foo() {
05     flag = coin();
06 }
07
08 int main() {
09     int *x = 0;
10     flag = 1;
11     foo();
12     if (flag)
13         x = new int;
14     foo();
15
16     if (flag)
17         *x = 5;
18 }

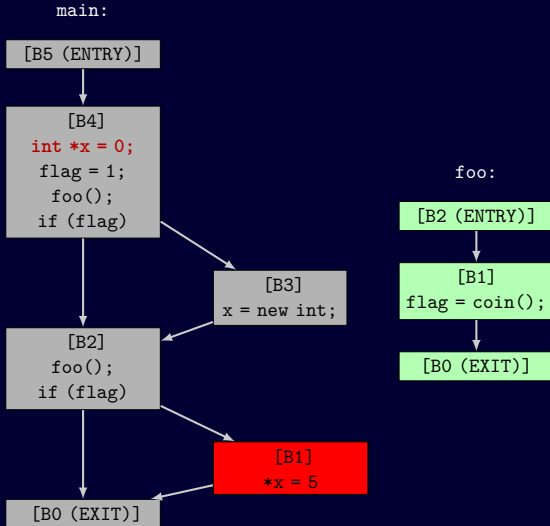
```



```

01 int flag;
02 bool coin();
03
04 void foo() {
05     flag = coin();
06 }
07
08 int main() {
09     int *x = 0;
10     flag = 1;
11     foo();
12     if (flag)
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14     foo();
15
16     if (flag)
17         *x = 5;
18 }

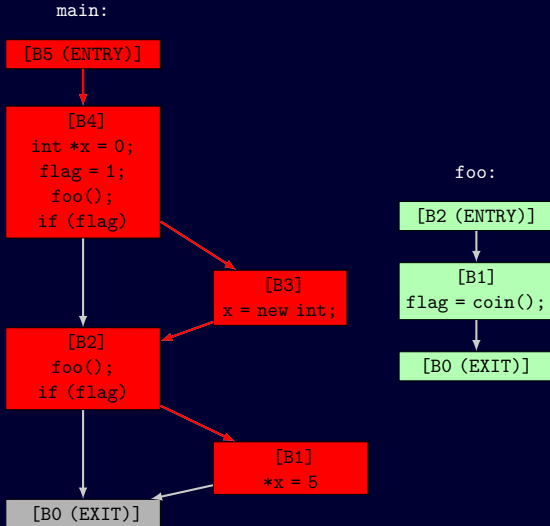
```



```

01 int flag;
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03
04 void foo() {
05     flag = coin();
06 }
07
08 int main() {
09     int *x = 0;
10     flag = 1;
11     foo();
12     if (flag)
13         x = new int;
14     foo();
15
16     if (flag)
17         *x = 5;
18 }

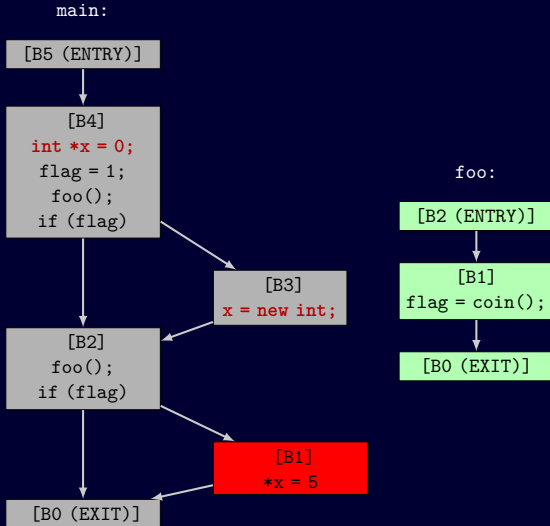
```



```

01 int flag;
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03
04 void foo() {
05     flag = coin();
06 }
07
08 int main() {
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10     flag = 1;
11     foo();
12     if (flag)
13         x = new int;
14     foo();
15
16     if (flag)
17         *x = 5;
18 }

```



Problems with reaching definitions

- Originally conceived for instructions
- Incredibly complex to implement for C, C++, etc...
- Doesn't argue about aliasing
- Only works in a given CFG...

Problems with reaching definitions

- Originally conceived for instructions
- Incredibly complex to implement for C, C++, etc...
- Doesn't argue about aliasing
- Only works in a given CFG...
- Using visitors, its possible to make this algorithm semi-interprocedural

Conclusion

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Conclusion

- Clear and precise bug reports are important
- The analyzer uses callbacks (or visitors) and interestingness propagation to construct path-sensitive bug reports
- Problems that require arguing outside the bugpath, especially the ExplodedGraph are insanely difficult
- The analyzer gets better by the minute

```
1 int flag;
2
3 bool coin();
4
5 void foo() {
6     flag = coin();
7 }
8
9 void bar() {
10     int *x = 0;
11     flag = true;
12     foo();
13     if (flag) {
14         x = new int;
15     }
16     foo();
17     if (flag) {
18         *x = 1;
19     }
20 }
```

1 'x' initialized to a null pointer value >

2 < Assuming 'flag' is 0 >

3 < Assuming 'flag' is not equal to 0 >

4 < Dereference of null pointer (loaded from variable 'x')

```
1 int flag;
2
3 bool coin();
4
5 void foo() {
6     flag = coin();
7 }
8
9 int main() {
10     int *x = 0;
11     flag = true;
12     foo();
13     if (!flag) {
14         x = new int;
15     }
16     foo();
17     if (!flag) {
18         *x = 5;
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20 }
```

4 < Entered call from 'main' >

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1 < 'x' initialized to a null pointer value >

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EMBERI ERŐFORRÁSOK MINISZTERIUMA

SZÉCHENYI  2020



MAGYARORSZÁG
KORMÁNYA

Európai Unió
Európai Szociális
Alap



BEFEKTETÉS A JÖVŐBE

Questions?