

Solidity Language Summit

Verifying LLM-powered Code Transformations with Equivalence Checking

John Toman

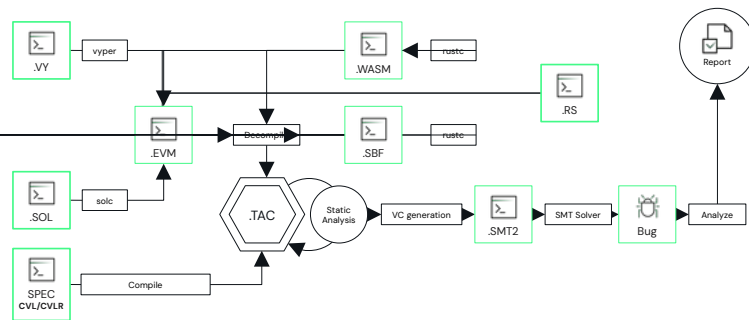
Agenda

- Background & Motivation
- Concordance: In Brief
- *Defining* Equivalence
- *Checking* Equivalence
- Concordance: The Details

Background & Motivation

A brief digression...

- Certora Prover is our “flagship” technology
- Verifies smart contracts written in Solidity (& others)
- Relies on static analysis of memory, storage, etc.



Analysis Kryptonite

- Solidity's frequently (ab)used feature:

Inline assembly!

- Frequently causes issues with critical static analyses

```
assembly {  
    mstore(  
        add(mload(0x0),  
            sload(calldataload(0x4))),  
        calldataload(0x24))  
}
```

Motivating Example: Solady

- Representative example of Solady code
- Heavily optimized, gas efficient

```
function safeTransferFrom(
    address token,
    address from,
    address to,
    uint256 amount
) internal {
    assembly {
        let m := mload(0x40)
        mstore(0x60, amount)
        mstore(0x40, to)
        mstore(0x2c, shl(96, from))
        mstore(0x0c, 0x23b872dd000000000000000000000000)
        let success := call(gas(), token, 0, 0x1c, 0x64, 0x00, 0x20)
        if iszero(and(eq(mload(0x00), 1), success)) {
            if iszero(
                lt(
                    or(iszero(extcodesize(token)), returndatasize()),
                    success
                )
            ) {
                mstore(0x00, 0x7939f424)
                revert(0x1c, 0x04)
            }
            mstore(0x60, 0)
            mstore(0x40, m)
        }
    }
}
```



Motivating Example: Solady (cont)

- Representative of a lot of modern DeFi code
- Absolutely *kills* some of our static analyses...

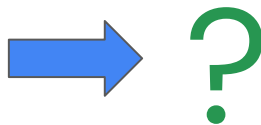
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            }
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        mstore(0x60, 0)
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    }
}
```

Motivation

Can we automatically
generate “equivalent”
implementations?

(for auditing, code
review, analysis ...)

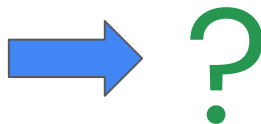
```
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  address to,
  uint256 amount
) internal {
  assembly {
    let m := mload(0x40)
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    mstore(0x2c, shl(96, from))
    mstore(0x0c, 0x238872dd00000000000000000000000000)
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      }
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}
```



Motivation

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  }
}
```

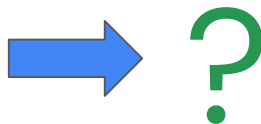


Concordance: In Brief

Motivation

Can we automatically
generate “equivalent”
implementations?

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    }
    mstore(0x60, 0)
    mstore(0x40, m)
  }
}
```



"AI powered"

```
function safeTransferFrom(
    address token,
    address from,
    address to,
    uint256 amount
) internal {
    assembly {
        let m := mload(0x40)
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                revert(0x1c, 0x04)
            }
        }
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    }
}
```

Any
available
LLM

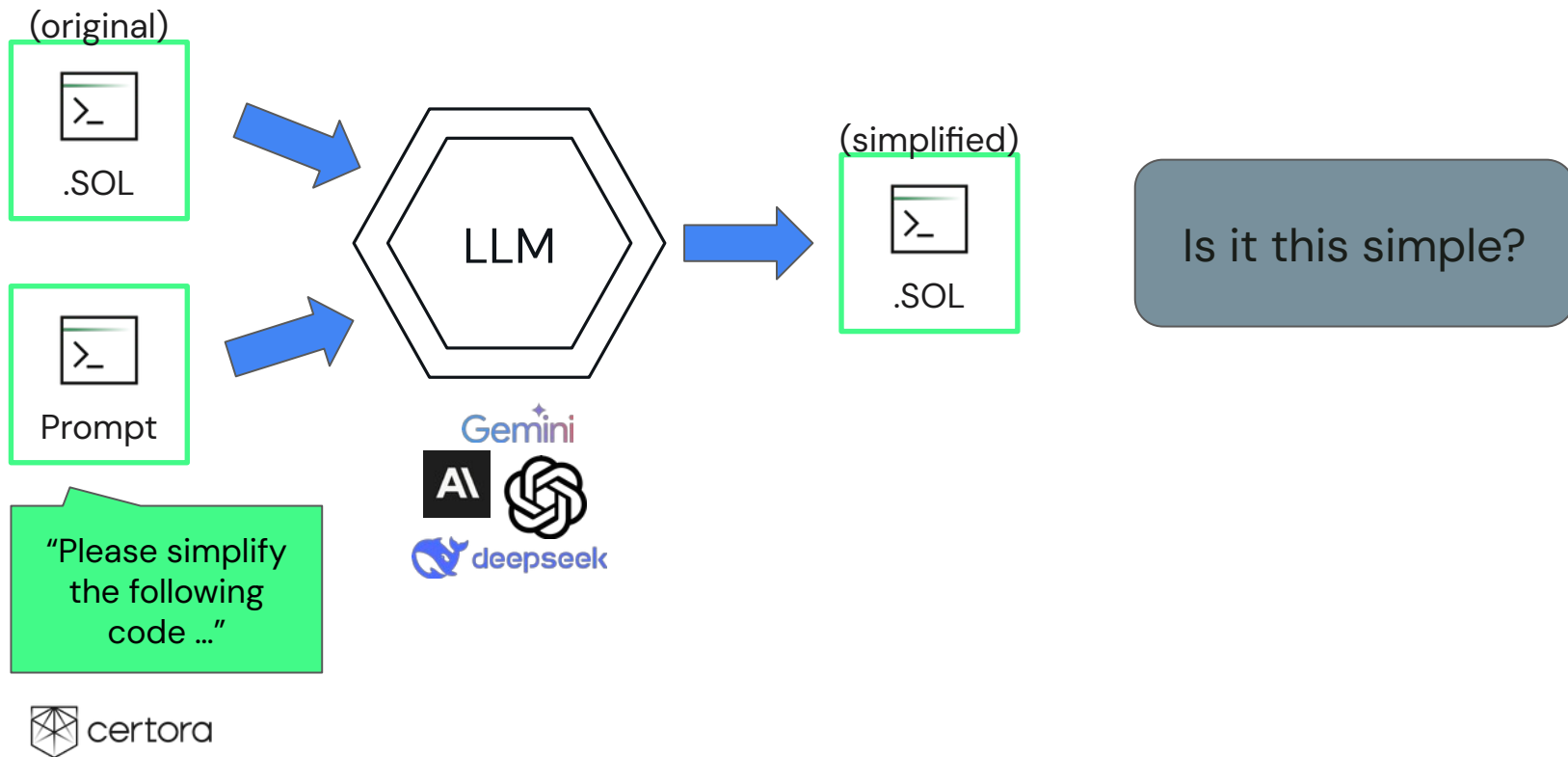


"Please rewrite the
following code to use
standard solidity instead of
inline assembly. Make sure
it's equivalent ..."

Is it this simple?

```
function safeTransferFrom(
    address token,
    address from,
    address to,
    uint256 amount
) internal {
    (bool success, bytes memory returndata) =
        token.call(
            abi.encodeWithSelector(
                0x23b872dd, from, to, amount
            )
        );
    // ...
}
```

Concordance: "AI powered"



"AI powered" ... mistakes

Proposed rewrite by Claude

```
function safeTransferFrom(
    address token,
    address from,
    address to,
    uint256 amount
) internal {
    assembly {
        let m := mload(0x40)
        mstore(0x60, amount)
        mstore(0x40, to)
        mstore(0x2c, shl(96, from))
        mstore(0x0c, 0x23b872dd00000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000)
        let success := call(gas(), token, 0, 0, 0, m, 0x23b872dd)
        if iszero(and(eq(mload(0x00), 1), success)) {
            if iszero(
                lt(
                    or(iszero(extcodesize(token)), iszero(extcodesize(from)))
                )
            ) {
                mstore(0x00, 0x7939f424)
                revert(0x1c, 0x04)
            }
        }
        mstore(0x60, 0)
        mstore(0x40, m)
    }
}
```

Gemini can make mistakes, so double-check it.

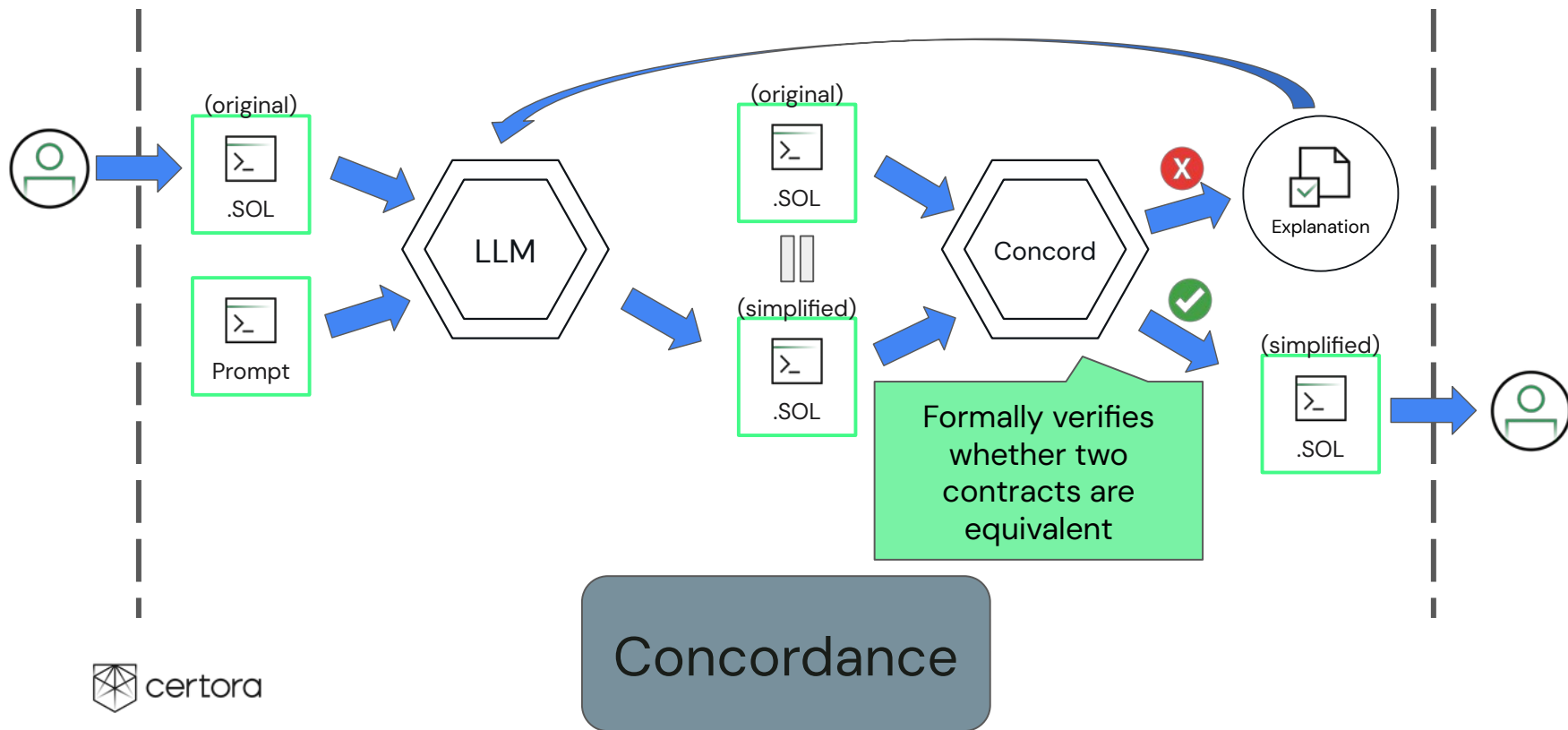
ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info.

Claude can make mistakes. Please double-check responses.

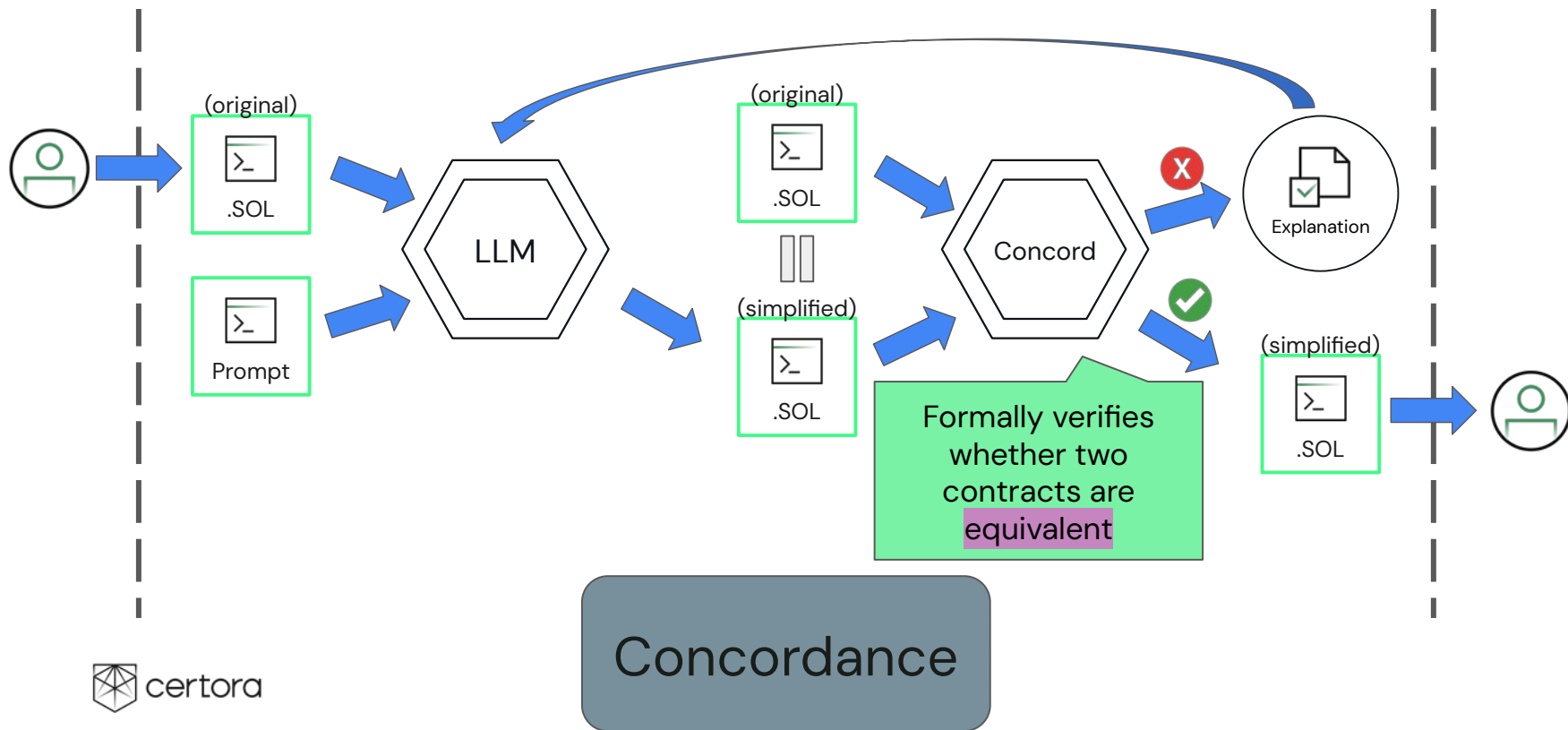
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    address token,
    address from,
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    uint256 amount
) internal {
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        let m := mload(0x40)
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        let success := call(gas(), token, 0, 0, 0, m, 0x23b872dd)
        if iszero(and(eq(mload(0x00), 1), success)) {
            if iszero(
                lt(
                    or(iszero(extcodesize(token)), iszero(extcodesize(from)))
                )
            ) {
                mstore(0x00, 0x7939f424)
                revert(0x1c, 0x04)
            }
        }
        mstore(0x60, 0)
        mstore(0x40, m)
    }
}

// All other cases should revert with TransferFromFailed
revert TransferFromFailed;
```

Concordance: AI powered ... with guardrails



Concordance: AI powered ... with guardrails



Defining Equivalence

Intuitive Definition

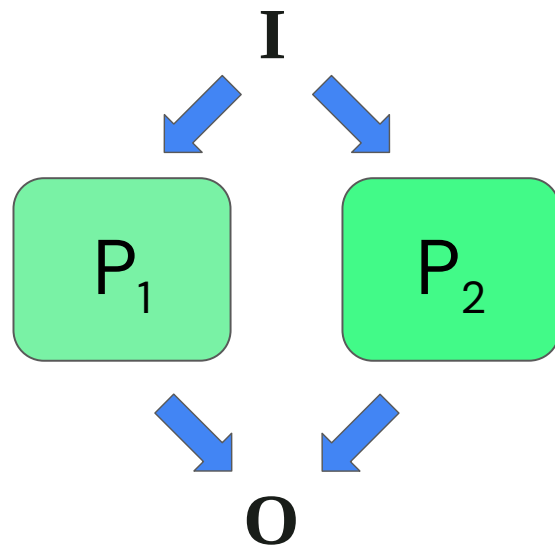
Two programs are
“equivalent” if they “do
the same thing” on “the
same inputs”.

Intuitive Definition

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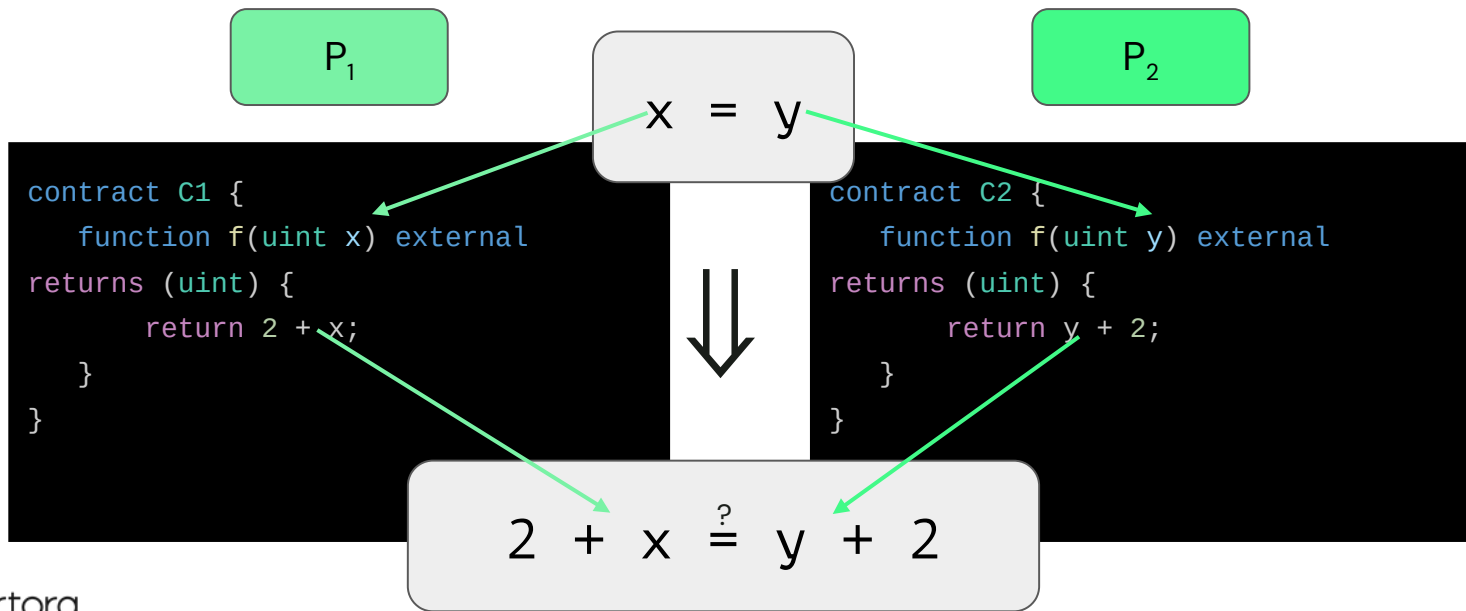
Intuitive Definition

Two programs are “equivalent” if they “produce the same outputs” on “the same inputs”.



Formalizing the Definition

Two programs are “equivalent” if they “produce the same outputs” on “the same inputs”.



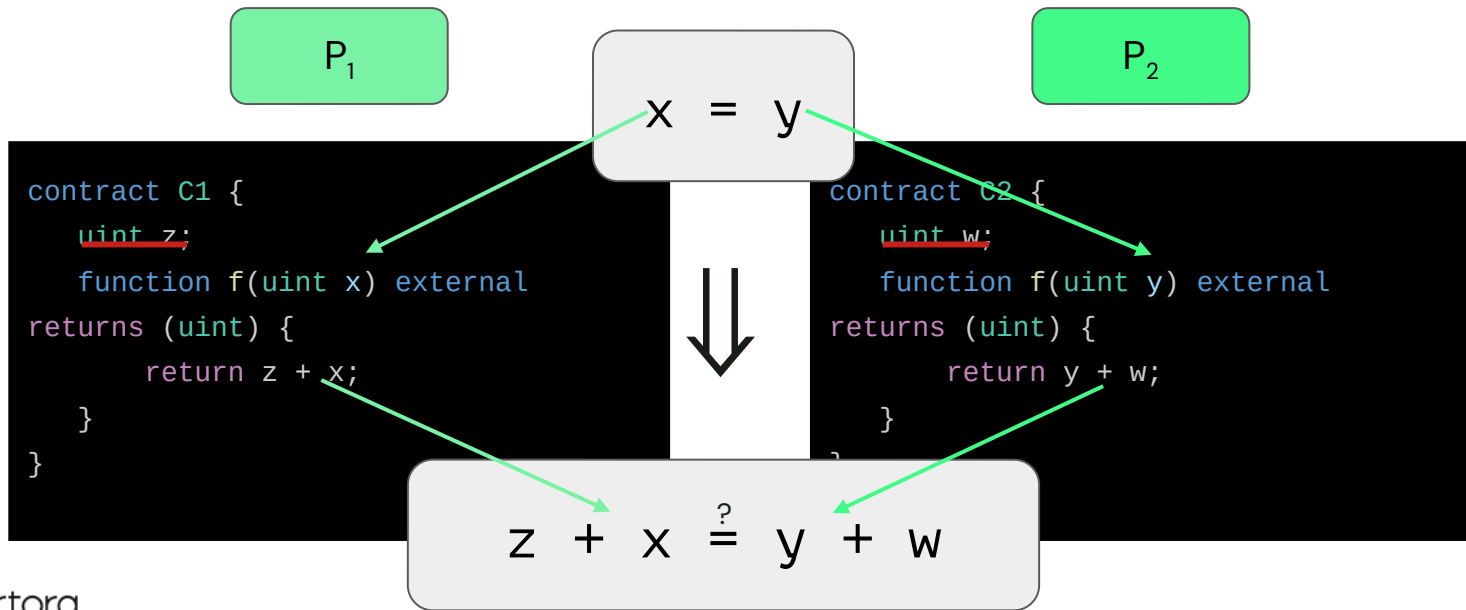
Formalizing the Definition (cont)

"the same inputs" $\stackrel{\text{def}}{=}$ "the same call data buffers"

"produce the same outputs" $\stackrel{\text{def}}{=}$ "produce the same return data buffers"

Formalizing the Definition (cont)

Two programs are “equivalent” if they “produce the same returndata buffers” on “the same calldata buffers”.



Expanding inputs

Smart contracts “implicitly” receive their current storage, and the state of the rest of the Ethereum blockchain (codehashes, nonces, balances...) as input!

9.3. Execution Environment. In addition to the system state σ , the remaining gas for computation g , and the accrued substate A , there are several pieces of important information used in the execution environment that the execution agent must provide; these are contained in the tuple I :

- I_a , the address of the account which owns the code that is executing.
- I_o , the sender address of the transaction that originated this execution.
- I_p , the price of gas paid by the signer of the transaction that originated this execution. This is defined as the effective gas price \tilde{p} in section 6.
- I_d , the byte array that is the input data to this execution; if the execution agent is a transaction, this would be the transaction data.
- I_s , the address of the account which caused the code to be executing; if the execution agent is a transaction, this would be the transaction sender.
- I_v , the value, in Wei, passed to this account as part of the same procedure as execution; if the execution agent is a transaction, this would be the transaction value.
- I_b , the byte array that is the machine code to be executed.
- I_H , the block header of the present block.
- I_e , the depth of the present message-call or contract-creation (i.e. the number of CALLs or CREATE(2)s being executed at present).
- I_w , the permission to make modifications to the state.

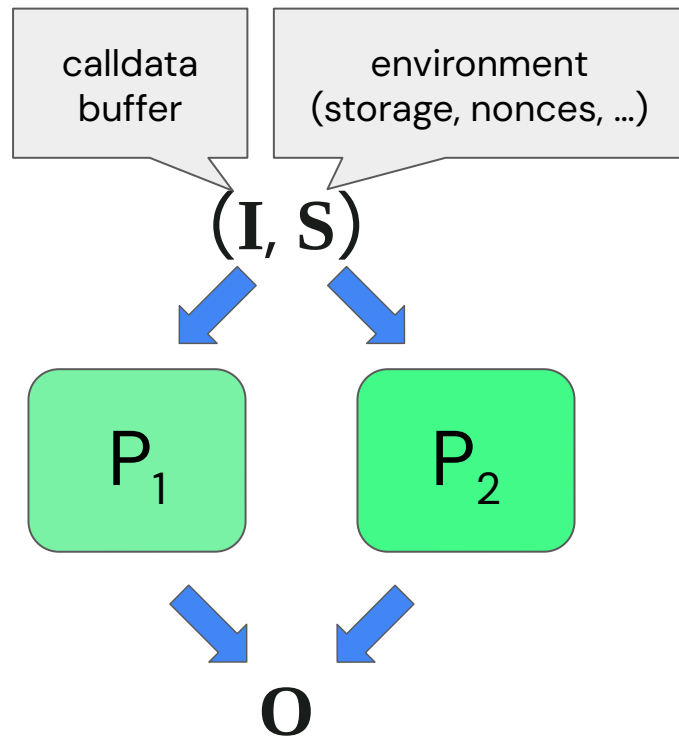
Formalizing the Definition (cont)

"the same inputs" $\stackrel{\text{def}}{=}$ "the same call data buffers AND environment"

"produce the same outputs" $\stackrel{\text{def}}{=}$ "produce the same return data buffers"

Formal Definition (?)

Two programs are “equivalent” if they “produce the same returndata buffers” on “the same calldata buffers AND environment”.



More outputs?

Two programs are “equivalent” if they “produce the same returndata buffers” on “the same calldata buffers AND environment”.

P_1

```
contract C1 {  
  uint public z;  
  function f(uint x) external {  
    z = z + x;  
  }  
}
```

\neq

P_2

```
contract C2 {  
  uint public z;  
  function f(uint y) external {  
    z = y + z + 1;  
  }  
}
```

Why?

More Intuition

An external actor shouldn't be able to "tell the difference" between two equivalent implementations.

Side Effects

```
// c1.z    = 6 =    // c2.z  
c1.f(5);           c2.f(5);  
c1.z() = 11#12 = c2.z()
```

Defining Side Effects

🟢 Mutating Storage

🟢 Emitting a log/event

🟢 Calling another contract

- balance transfers
- contract creation

🟢 [Self-Destruct]

🔴 Pushing/popping the stack

🔴 Mutating memory

Why not?

Defining Side Effects

An **external actor** shouldn't be able to "tell the difference" between two equivalent implementations.

Stack and memory are not visible to an external actor!

"If the stack gets popped in the forest and no one is around to hear it..."

Gas, Gas, Gas

- We *also* exclude gas!
- Definitely an observable side effect!
- Would overly restrict space of equivalent programs



Subtleties

- If a function reverts, it has no side effects (by definition)

```
contract C1 {  
    uint public z;  
    function f() external{  
        z = 1;  
        revert();  
    }  
}
```



```
contract C2 {  
    uint public z;  
    function f() external{  
        revert();  
    }  
}
```


Subtleties

- If a function reverts, it has no side effects (by definition)
- Logs are not observable on-chain, so the interleaving of logs/external calls is not important

```
contract C1 {  
    address token;  
    function f() external {  
        token.transfer(20);  
        emit Transferred(20);  
    }  
}
```



```
contract C2 {  
    address token;  
    function f() external {  
        emit Transferred(20);  
        token.transfer(20);  
    }  
}
```

Subtleties

- If a function reverts, it has no side effects (by definition)
- Logs are not observable on-chain, so the interleaving of logs/external calls is not important
- We only care about the *final* state of storage, not intermediate states*

```
contract C1 {  
    uint public z;  
    function f() external{  
        z = 1;  
        z = 42;  
    }  
}
```



```
contract C2 {  
    uint public z;  
    function f() external{  
        z = 42;  
    }  
}
```

Other Definitions

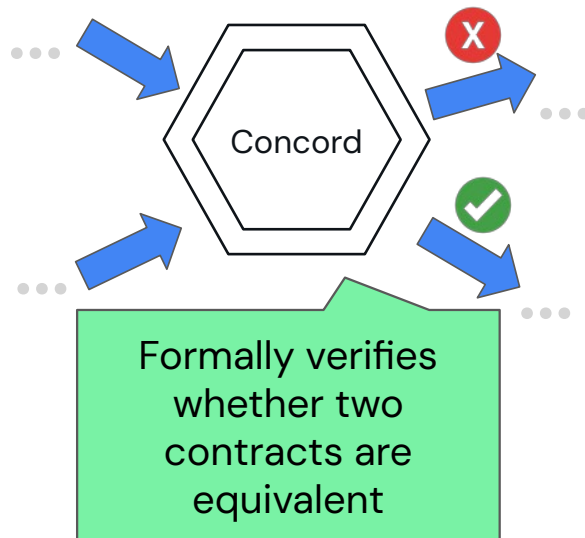
- Other reasonable definitions exist!
- Require strictly *less* gas
- Require identical interleavings of calls/logs
- Equivalent modulo valid calldata
- ...

Summary: Equivalence

Two contracts/programs are equivalent if, on the same calldata and in the same environment, they both:

1. Revert with identical returndata buffers, OR
2. Return with identical returndata buffers and:
 - a. Emit the same logs (in the same order)
 - b. Make the same external calls (in the same order)
 - c. End with equal storages

Next: Formal Verification

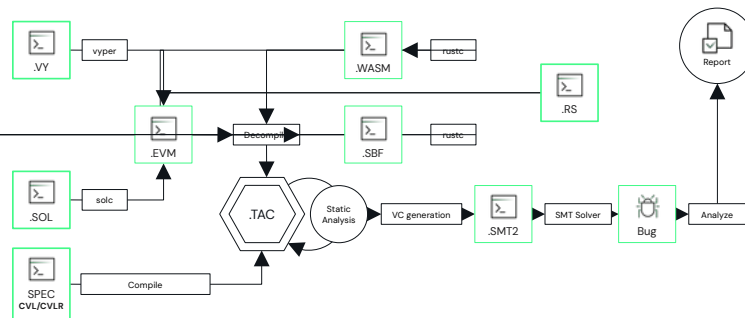


Checking Equivalence

(AKA the densest part of the talk)

Concord: Application of Certora Prover

- “Symbolic reasoning” tool
- Roughly: determine if programs satisfy mathematical formulae
- *Symbolic*: determination reached without running the program, searches infinite state space

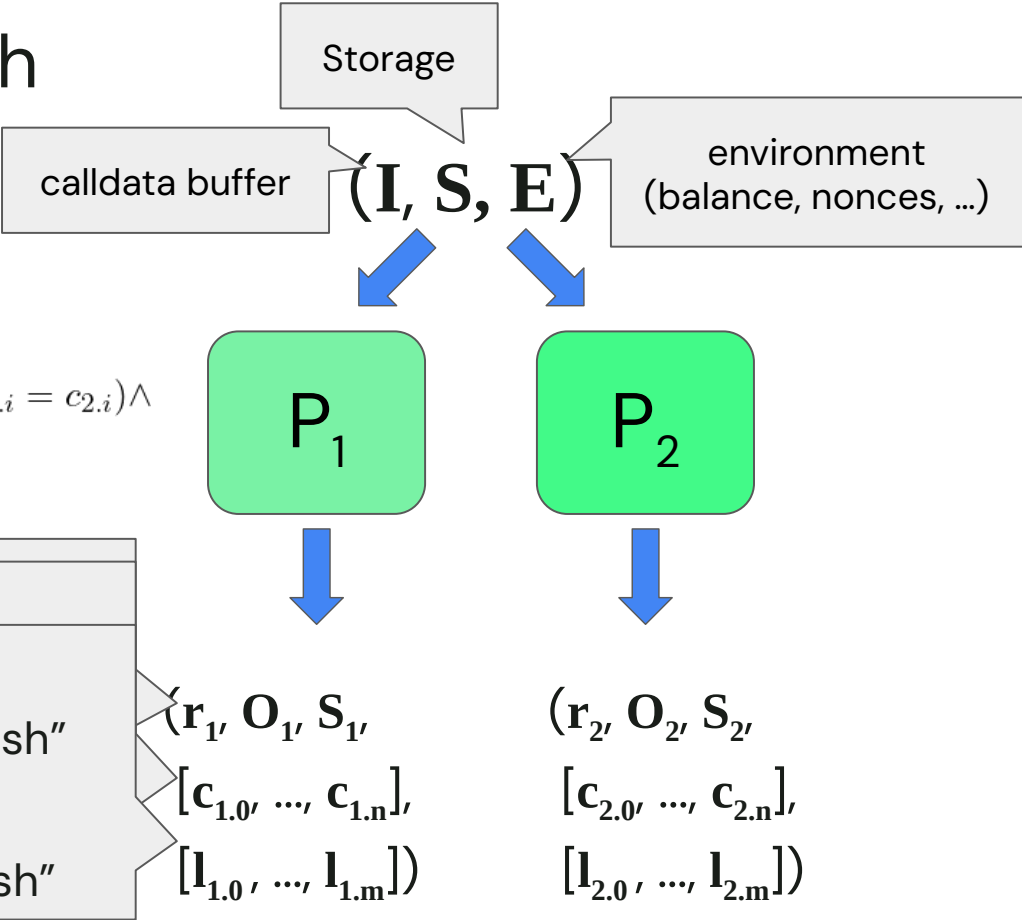
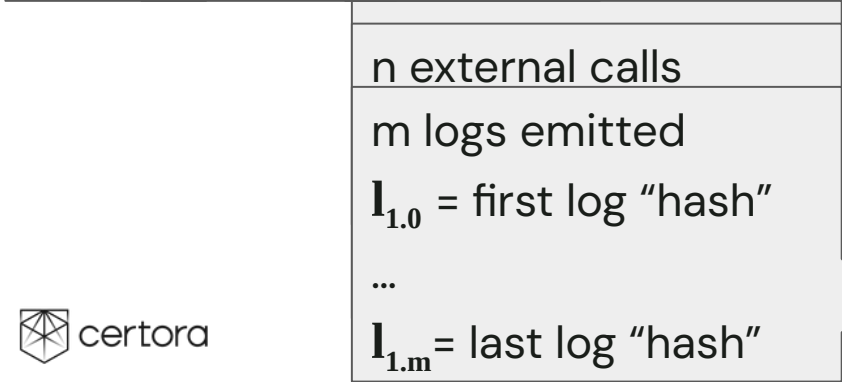


Certora
Prover

Checking ... with Math

Mathematical property:

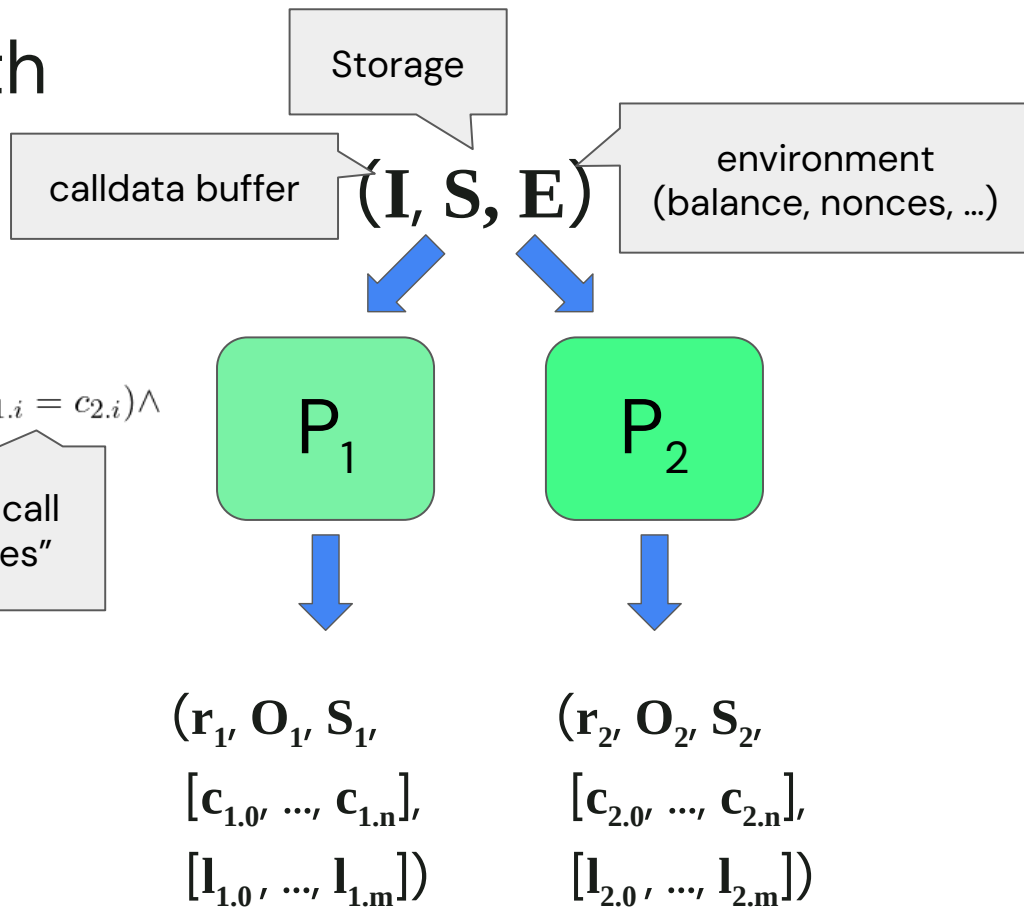
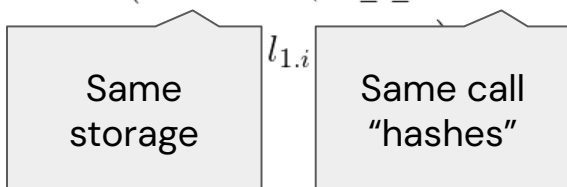
$$r_1 = r_2 \wedge O_1 = O_2 \wedge \left((r_1 = 1) \vee \left(\bigwedge_{i \leq n} c_{1,i} = c_{2,i} \wedge (2.i) \right) \right)$$



Checking ... with Math

Mathematical property:

$$r_1 = r_2 \wedge O_1 = O_2 \wedge \left((r_1 = 1) \vee \right. \\ \left. (S_1 = S_2 \wedge (\wedge_{0 \leq i \leq n} c_{1,i} = c_{2,i})) \wedge \right.$$

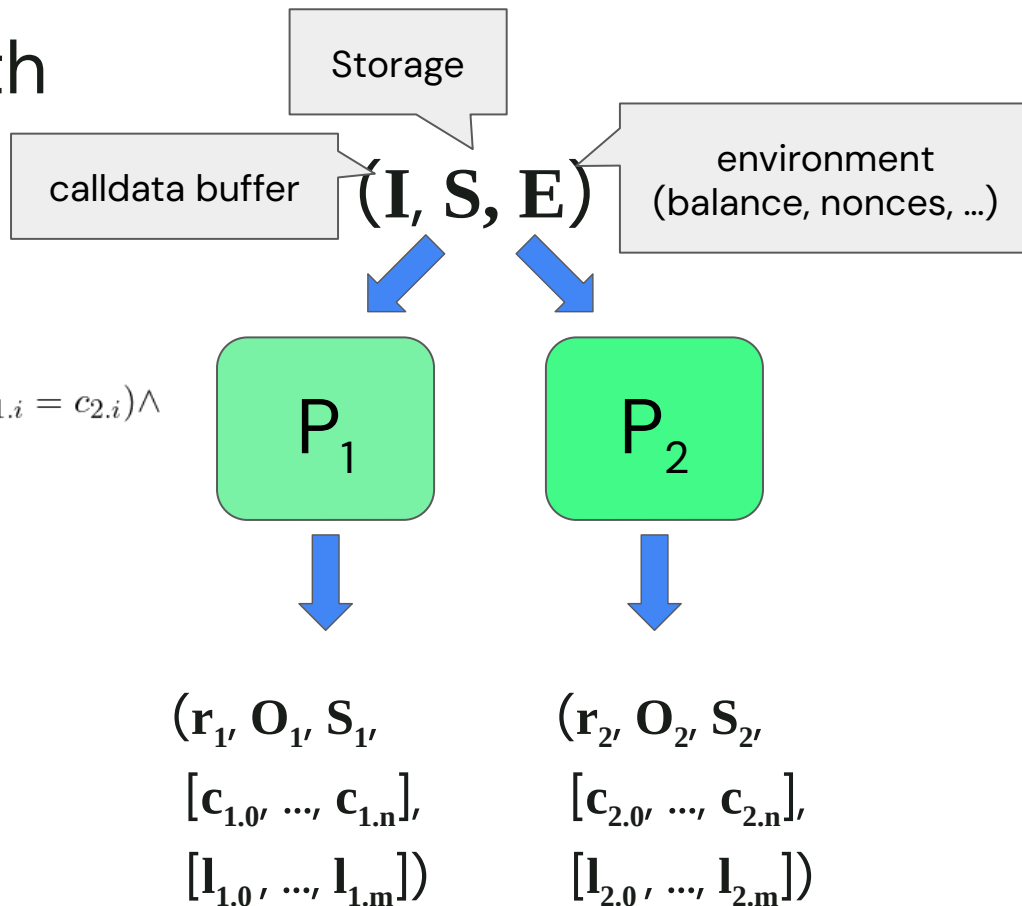


Checking ... with Math

Mathematical property:

$$r_1 = r_2 \wedge O_1 = O_2 \wedge \left((r_1 = 1) \vee \right. \\ \left. (S_1 = S_2 \wedge (\wedge_{0 \leq i \leq n} c_{1,i} = c_{2,i}) \wedge \right. \\ \left. (\wedge_{0 \leq i \leq m} l_{1,i} = l_{2,i})) \right)$$

Same log
"hashes"



“Symbolic” Instrumentation

```
v1 := calldataload(4)
// ...

v2 := call(tgt = r, amt = b, gas = g, in0ffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...

log3(t1, t2, t3, offs = i2, sz = sz2)
if(*) {

    return(i = ret, sz = sz3)
} else {

    revert(i = rev, sz = sz4)
}
```

"Symbolic" Instrumentation

```
v1 := calldatacopy
// ...
ci := hash(r, b, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S))
v2 := call(tgt = r, amt = b, gas = gas - 10000, offset = i, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...
lj := ... 3, hash(mem[i
log
if(
    (mem[ret:sz3])
    sz
}
r := 1, 0 := hash(
revert(i = rev, sz
}
```

Include hash of
sent buffer

Effects of call
soundly
modeled

function

"hash"* of
current storage
(re-entrancy)

Most of the
engineering

“Symbolic” Instrumentation

```
l := [], c = [], call_idx = 0, log_idx = 0
v1 := calldataload(4)
// ...
c[call_idx++] := hash(r, b, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S))
v2 := call(tgt = r, amt = b, gas = g, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...
l[log_idx++] := hash(t1, t2, t3, hash(mem[i2:sz2]))
log3(t1, t2, t3, offs = i2, sz = sz2)
if(*) {
    r := 0, 0 := hash(mem[ret:sz3])
    return(i = ret, sz = sz3)
} else {
    r := 1, 0 := hash(mem[rev:sz4])
    revert(i = rev, sz = sz4)
}
```

Checking with Instrumentation

Mathematical property:

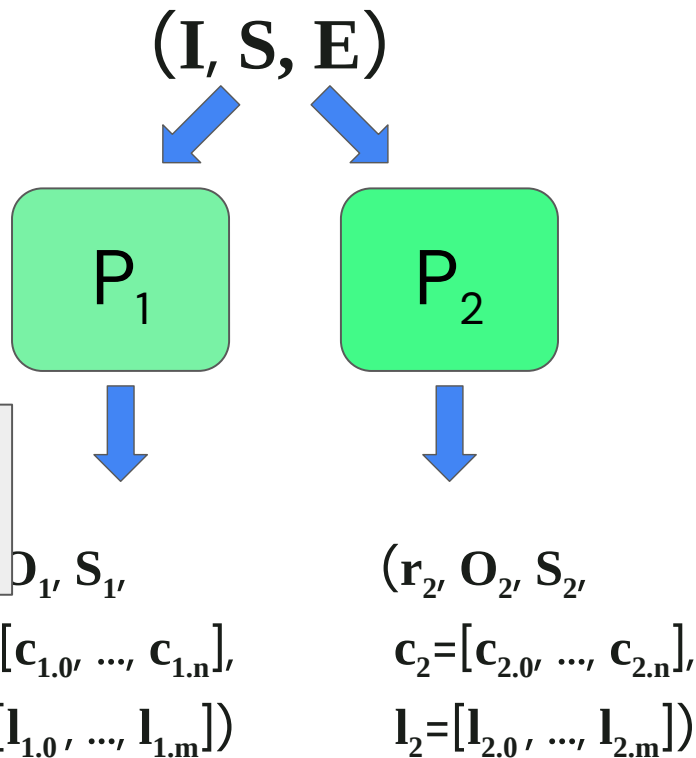
$$r_1 = r_2 \wedge O_1 = O_2 \wedge$$

$$(r_1 = 1 \vee$$

$$(S_1 = S_2 \wedge c_1 = c_2 \wedge l_1 = l_2))$$

How do you
compare "all of
storage"?

How do you
symbolically
compare lists?



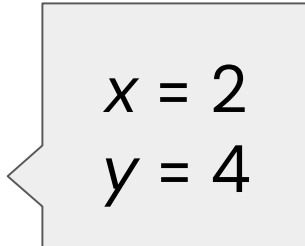
A Brief Digression on Solvers

- Fun drinking game: take a drink whenever someone from Certora says “solver”
- But, how are we using them, exactly?




Solvers: What do they do?

- Roughly: take a mathematical formula, determines if it can be “satisfied” (hence “SAT” solver)
- **OR** prove it can never be satisfied

$$x + 2 = y$$


$x = 2$
 $y = 4$

$$x + 1 = x + 2$$


404
Not Found

Solvers: For Verification?

- Ask the SAT solver to “satisfy” the *negation* of your assertion
- If it can, it “found” a way to violate your assertion
- **OR** it has proven the **negation** of your assertion **can’t** happen

```
function f(uint x) {  
    require(x > 4);  
    assert(x != 3);  
}
```

“Is there some possible value of x...

Nope!

$\exists x .$

$x > 4 \wedge x == 3$

... that is greater than 4 and ...

... and is **equal** to 3

How to compare lists (symbolically)

assert $l_1 = l_2$

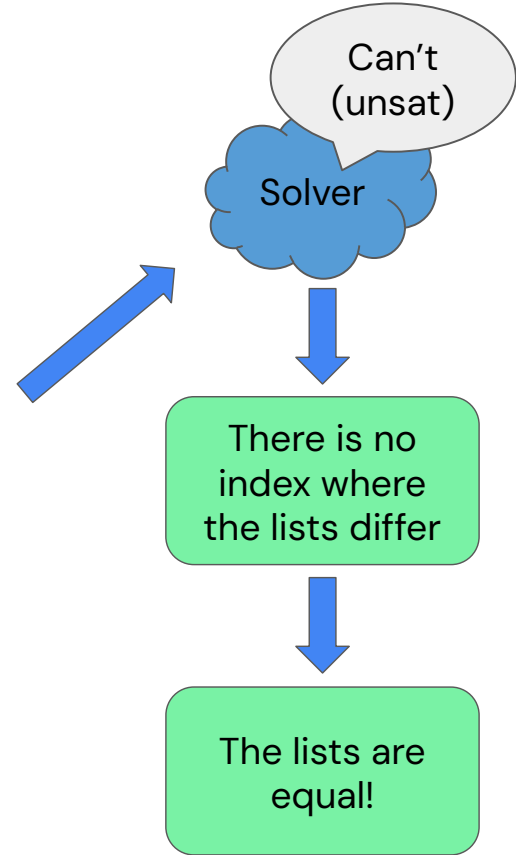
What we want to say "intuitively"

Pick any possible i ...

$i = *$

$l_1[i] \neq l_2[i]$

... where the values at i are different



Checking with Instrumentation

Mathematical property:

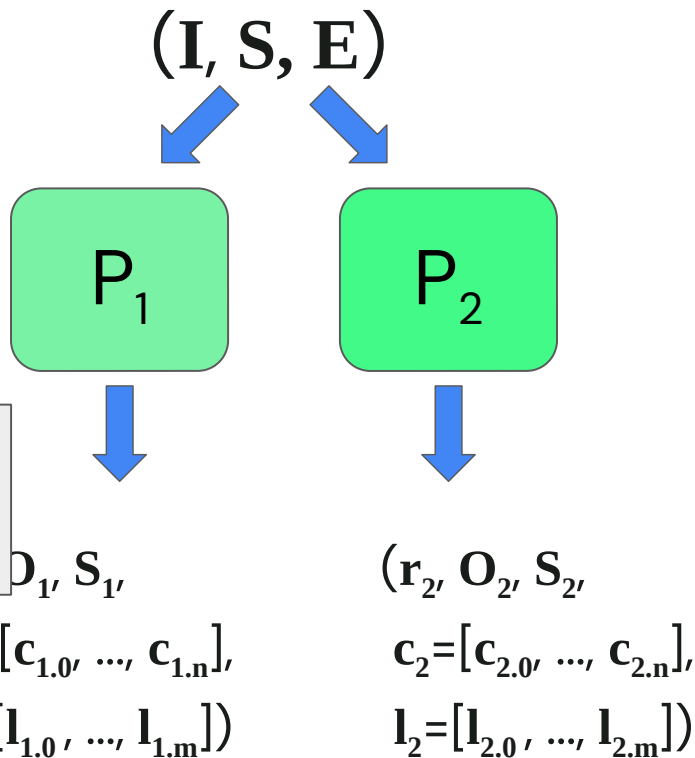
$$r_1 = r_2 \wedge O_1 = O_2 \wedge$$

$$(r_1 = 1 \vee$$

$$(S_1 = S_2 \wedge c_1 = c_2 \wedge l_1 = l_2))$$

How do you
compare "all of
storage"?

How do you
symbolically
compare lists?



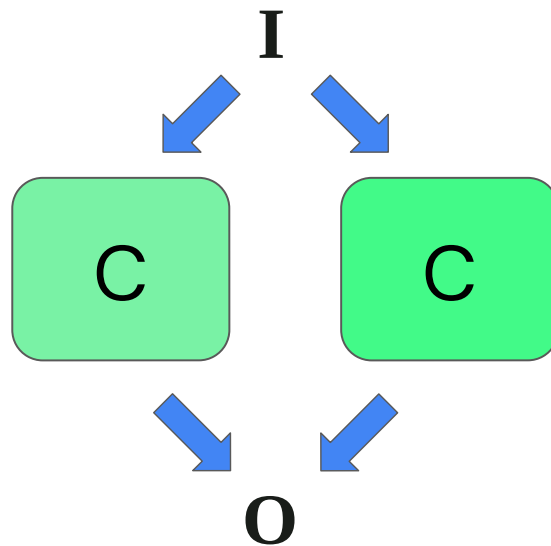
"Symbolic" Instrumentation

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v1 := calldataload(4)
// ...
c[call_idx++] := hash(r, b, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S))
v2 := call(tgt = r, amt = b, gas = g, inOffs = inSize = sz, ...)
// ...
l[log_idx++] := hash(t1, t2, t3, hash(mem[
log3(t1, t2, t3, offs = i2, sz = sz2)
if(*) {
    r := 0, 0 := hash(mem[ret:sz3])
    return(i = ret, sz = sz3)
} else {
    r := 1, 0 := hash(mem[rev:sz4])
    revert(i = rev, sz = sz4)
}
```

"hash"* of
current storage
(re-entrancy)

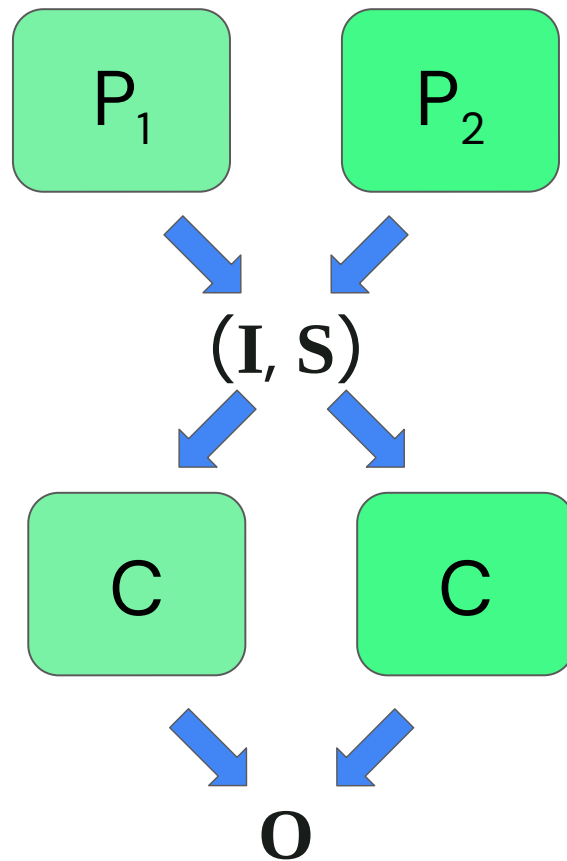
Re-entrancy and External Calls

- We **assume** that external calls are deterministic w.r.t. their inputs
- Calldata, value, etc.
- And “the environment”...



Re-entrancy and External Calls

- We **assume** that external calls are deterministic w.r.t. their inputs
- Calldata, value, etc.
- And “the environment”...
- ...which includes the storage of the **caller**, i.e., P_1 and P_2

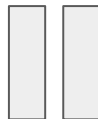


“Symbolic” Instrumentation

```
c1 = [], call_idx1 = 0
// ...
c1[call_idx1++] := hash(r1, b1, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S1))
v1 := call(tgt, as = g1, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...

c2 = [], call_idx2 = 0
// ...
c2[call_idx2++] := hash(r2, b2, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S2))
v2 := call(tgt, as = g1, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...
assert c1 = c2
```

“Injective”,
uninterpreted
function



If the output of the
functions are the
same, the inputs
MUST be the same

$$f(x) = f(y) \Rightarrow x = y$$

“Symbolic” Instrumentation

$$f(x) \neq f(y) \Rightarrow x \neq y$$

```
c1 = [], call_idx1 = 0
```

```
// ...
```

```
c1[call_idx1++] := hash(r1, b1, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S1))
```

“try to find
difference in
hashes”

```
r1, amt = b1, gas = g1, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
```

= 0

```
// ...
```

```
c2[call_idx2++] := hash(r2, b2, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S2))
```

```
v2 := call(tgt = r2, amt = b2, gas = g2, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
```

```
// ...
```

```
assert c1 = c2
```

“try to find
difference in
lists”

“Symbolic” Instrumentation

$$f(x) \neq f(y) \Rightarrow x \neq y$$

```
c1 = [], call_idx1 = 0
// ...
c1[call_idx1++] := hash(r1, b1, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S1))
v1 := call(tgt = r1, amt = b1, gas = g1, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...
c2 = []
// ...
c2[call_idx2++] := hash(r2, b2, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S2))
v2 := call(tgt = r2, amt = b2, gas = g2, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...
assert c1 = c2
```

“try to find difference in hash arguments”

“try to find difference in lists”

“Symbolic” Instrumentation

$$f(x) \neq f(y) \Rightarrow x \neq y$$

```
c1 = [], call_idx1 = 0
```

```
// ...
```

```
c1[call_idx1++] := hash(r1, b1, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S1))
```

```
v1 := call(tgt = r1, amt = b1, gas = g1, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
```

```
//
```

“try to find
difference in
hash arguments”

```
c2 =
```

```
// ...
```

```
c2[call_idx2++] := hash(r2, b2, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S2))
```

```
v2 := call(tgt = r2, amt = b2, gas = g2, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
```

```
// ...
```

```
assert c1 = c2
```

“try to find
difference in
lists”


Find difference
in storage...
... which is a list

“Symbolic” Instrumentation

```
c1 = [], call_idx1 = 0
// ...
repr1 = S1[f(call_idx1)]
c1[call_idx1++] := hash(r1, hash(S1))
v1 := call(tgt = r1, amt = 1, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...

c2 = [], call_idx2 = 0
// ...
repr2 = S2[f(call_idx2)]
c2[call_idx2++] := hash(r2, b2, hash(mem[i:sz]), hash(S2))
v2 := call(tgt = r2, amt = b2, gas = g2, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...
assert c1 = c2
```


Pick an arbitrary index, but that index is the same at both calls



“Symbolic” Instrumentation

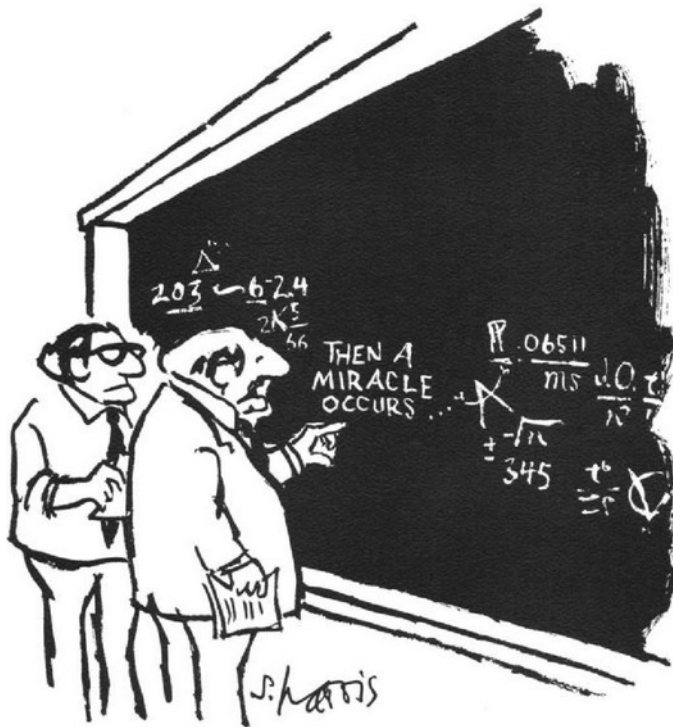
```
c1 = [], call_idx1 = 0
// ...
repr1 = S1[f(call_idx1)]
c1[call_idx1++] := hash(r1, b1, hash(mem[i:sz]), repr1)
v1 := call(tgt = r1, amt = b1, gas = g1, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...

c2 = [], call_idx2 = 0
// ...
repr2 = S2[f(call_idx2)]
c2[call_idx2++] := hash(r2, b2, hash(mem[i:sz]), repr2)
v2 := call(tgt = r2, amt = b2, gas = g2, inOffs = i, inSize = sz, ...)
// ...
assert c1 = c2
```



Glossed Over...

- Details of buffer hashing
- Model of external calls
- ...



"I THINK YOU SHOULD BE MORE EXPLICIT HERE IN STEP TWO."



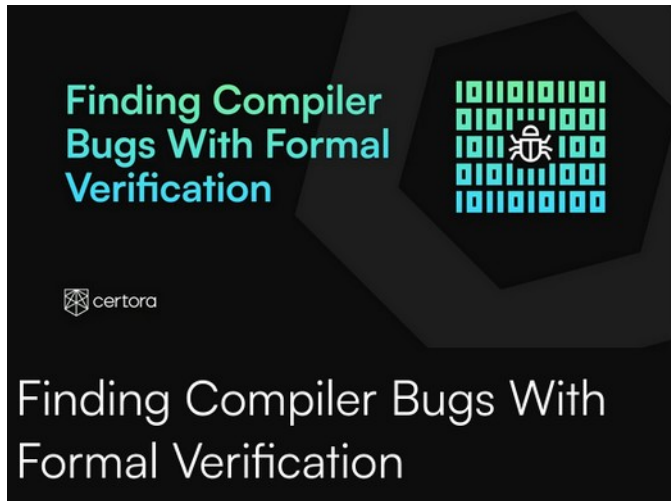
(Concord tech report)

Limitations

- Contracts **MUST** use the exact same storage layout
- Must have the same ABI
- Assumes no “reflection” by other actors (extcodesize, extcodehash, gasleft, etc.)

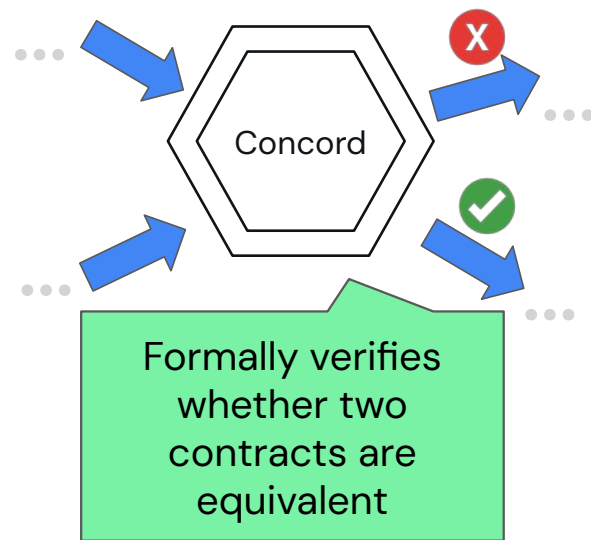
Success Stories

- Concord is crucial to our verified rewriting
- Useful in other contexts: verifying compiler optimizations
- To wit: it uncovered a bug in Vyper's experimental compilation pipeline



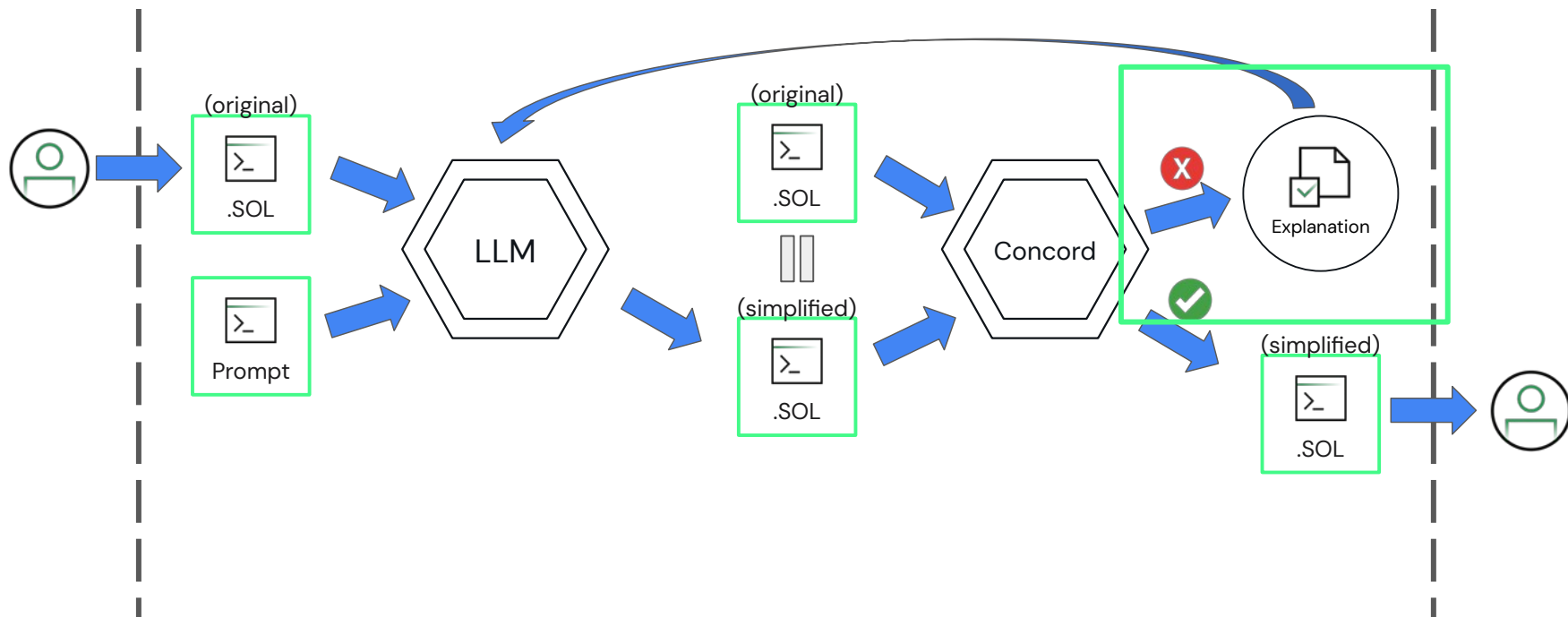
Summary: Concord

- Instrument code to record side effects
- Use symbolic reasoning of Certora Prover to check results/side effects are always the same
- Next: AI Hype-train



Concordance: The Details

Concordance: Feedback Loop



Explaining Explanations

- Certora Prover uses SMT solvers
- These produce a *concrete counterexample* demonstrating a violation
- Analyze counterexample; extract description of events

Explaining Explanations

```
function safeTransferFrom(
    address token,
    address from,
    address to,
    uint256 amount
) internal {
    assembly {
        let m := mload(0x40)
        mstore(0x60, amount)
        mstore(0x40, to)
        mstore(0x2c, shl(96, from))
        mstore(0x0c, 0x23b872dd00000000000000000000000000000000)
        let success := call(gas(), token, 0, 0x1c, 0x64, 0x00, 0x20)
        if iszero(and(eq(mload(0x00), 1), success)) {
            if iszero(
                lt(
                    or(iszero(extcodesize(token)), returndatasize()),
                    success
                )
            ) {
                mstore(0x00, 0x7939f424)
                revert(0x1c, 0x04)
            }
        }
        mstore(0x60, 0)
        mstore(0x40, m)
    }
}
```



```
function safeTransferFrom(
    address token,
    address from,
    address to,
    uint256 amount
) internal {
    (bool success, bytes memory returndata) = token.call(
        abi.encodeWithSelector(0x23b872dd, from, to, amount)
    );
    // Check if the call succeeded and returned true (1)
    if (success && returndata.length >= 32 && abi.decode(returndata,
(bool))) {
        return;
    }

    // Allow calls to contracts that don't return values (non-standard
tokens)
    if (success && token.code.length > 0 && returndata.length == 0) {
        return;
    }

    // All other cases should revert with TransferFromFailed
    revert TransferFromFailed;
}
```

Explaining Explanations

There were 1 call(s) prior to this event:

```
External call to 0xffffffffffffffffffffffffffffffffffffffff with eth: 0
```

The calldata buffer was:

```
23b872dd00000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000ffffffffff  
f000000000000000000000000000000000
```

The callee codesize was chosen as: 1

The call result was:

A successful return

With a buffer of length: 4294967295

The returned buffer model is:

[illegible]

```
4294967263 more bytes
```

The methods performed different actions.

```
In SafeTransferFromH[REDACTED]nal(address,address,address
```

! The call rever

Event Context:

No additional

The raw buffer

7939f424

In

[illegible]

! The call rever

Event Context:

No addition

The raw buffer

Original explicitly
reverts with
"TransferFromFailed()"

abi.decode reverts with empty buffer

Not a valid
encoding of a bool!

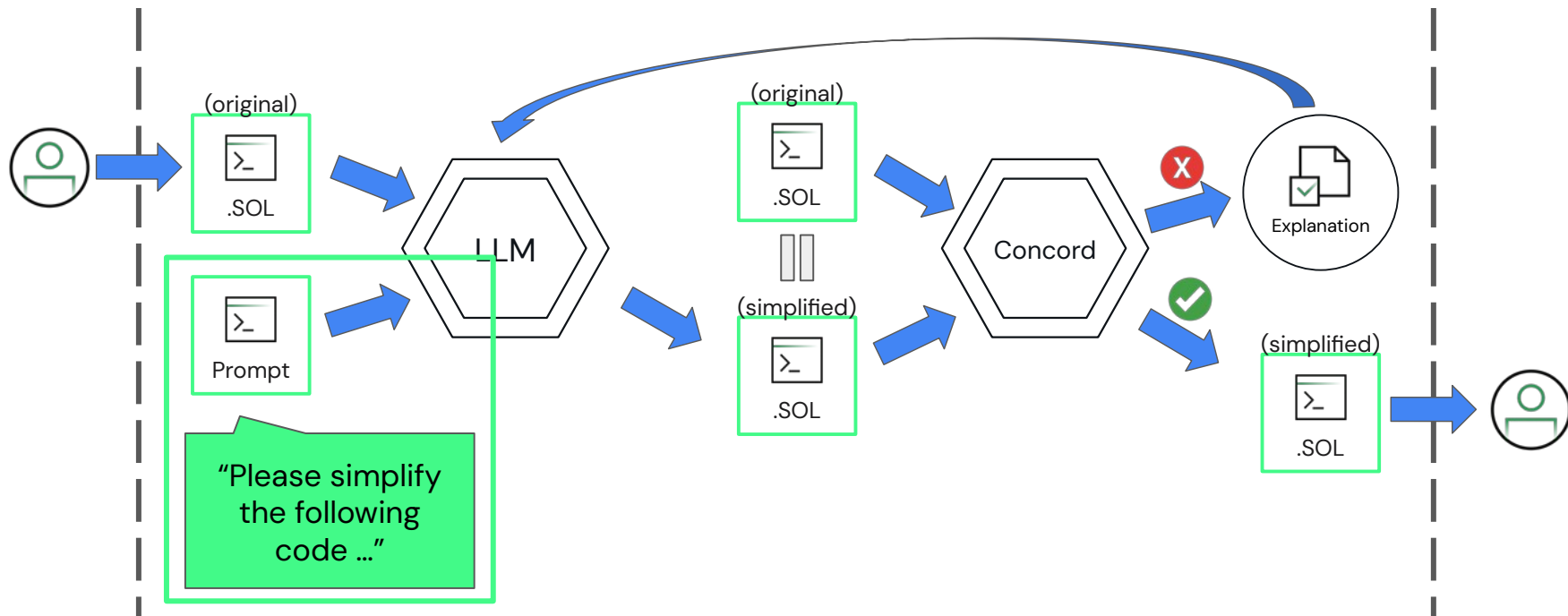
LLM Fix

```
if (success && returndata.length >= 32 && abi.decode(returndata, (bool)))  
{  
    return;  
}
```

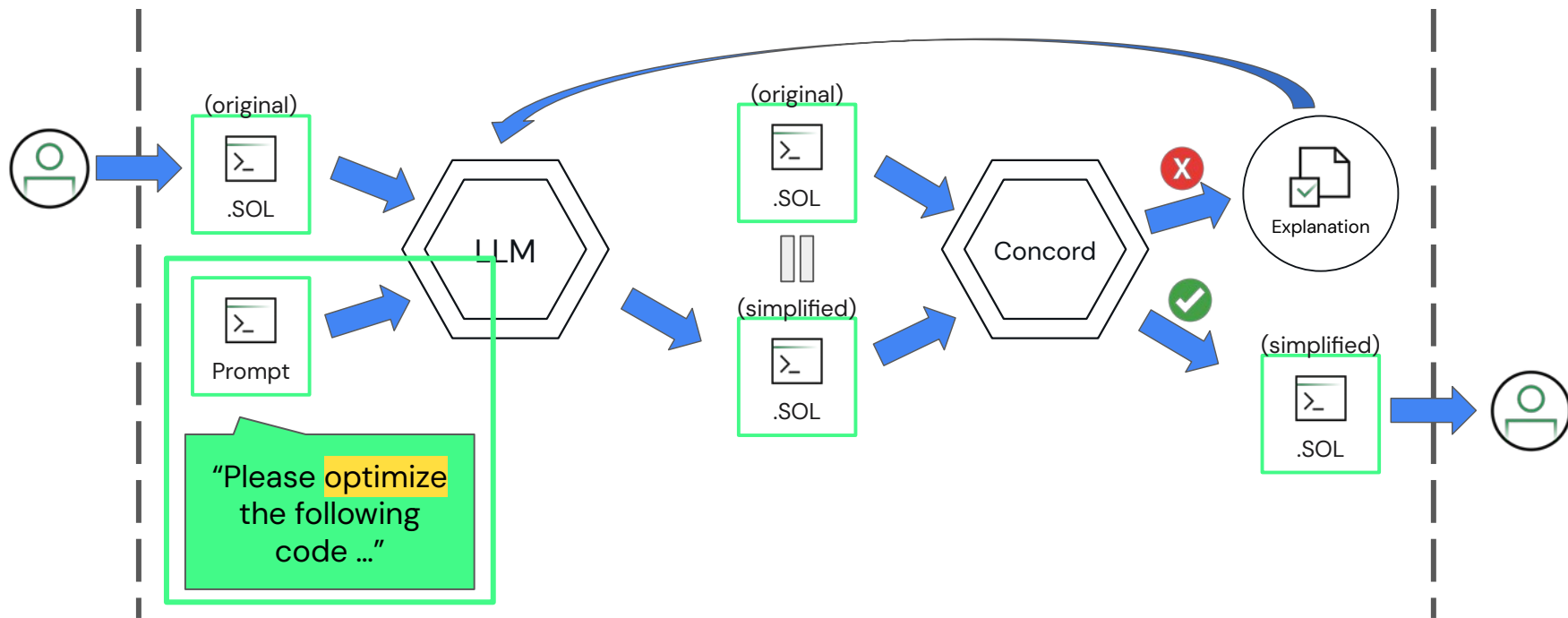


```
if (success && returndata.length >= 32 && uint256(bytes32(returndata)) ==  
1) {  
    return;  
}
```

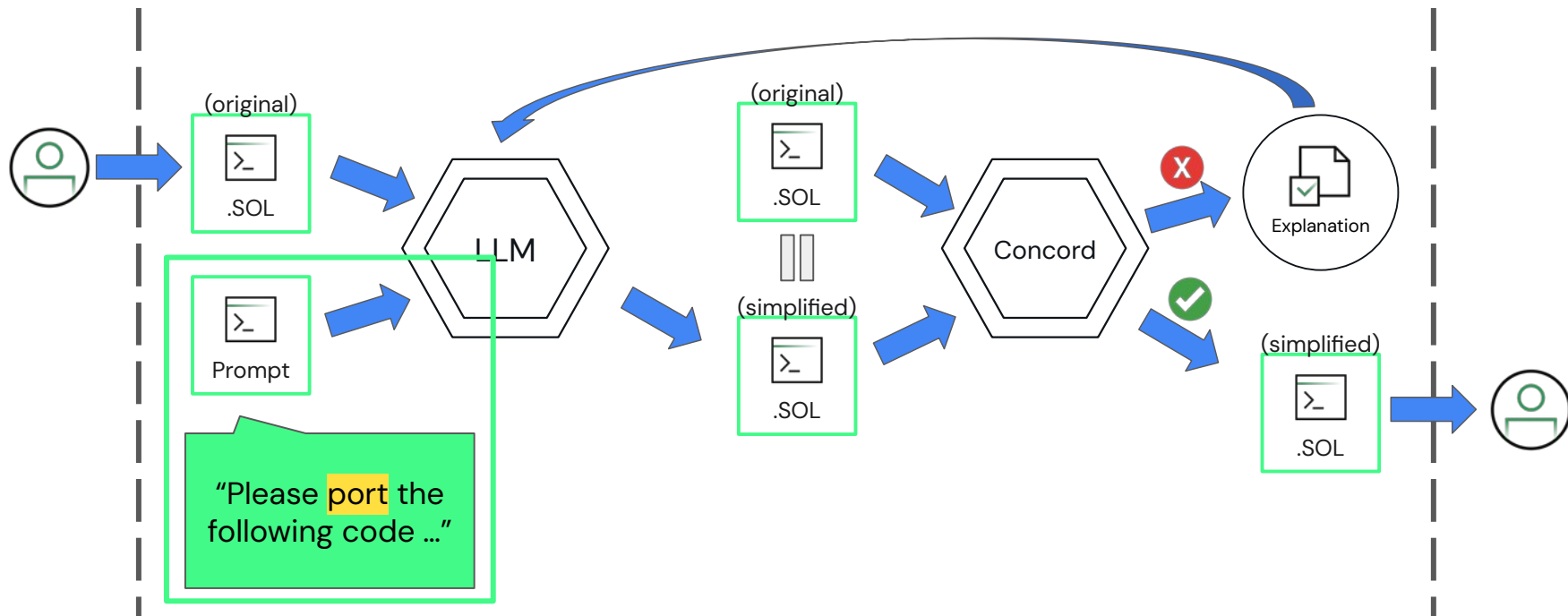
Concordance: Not Simply Simplification



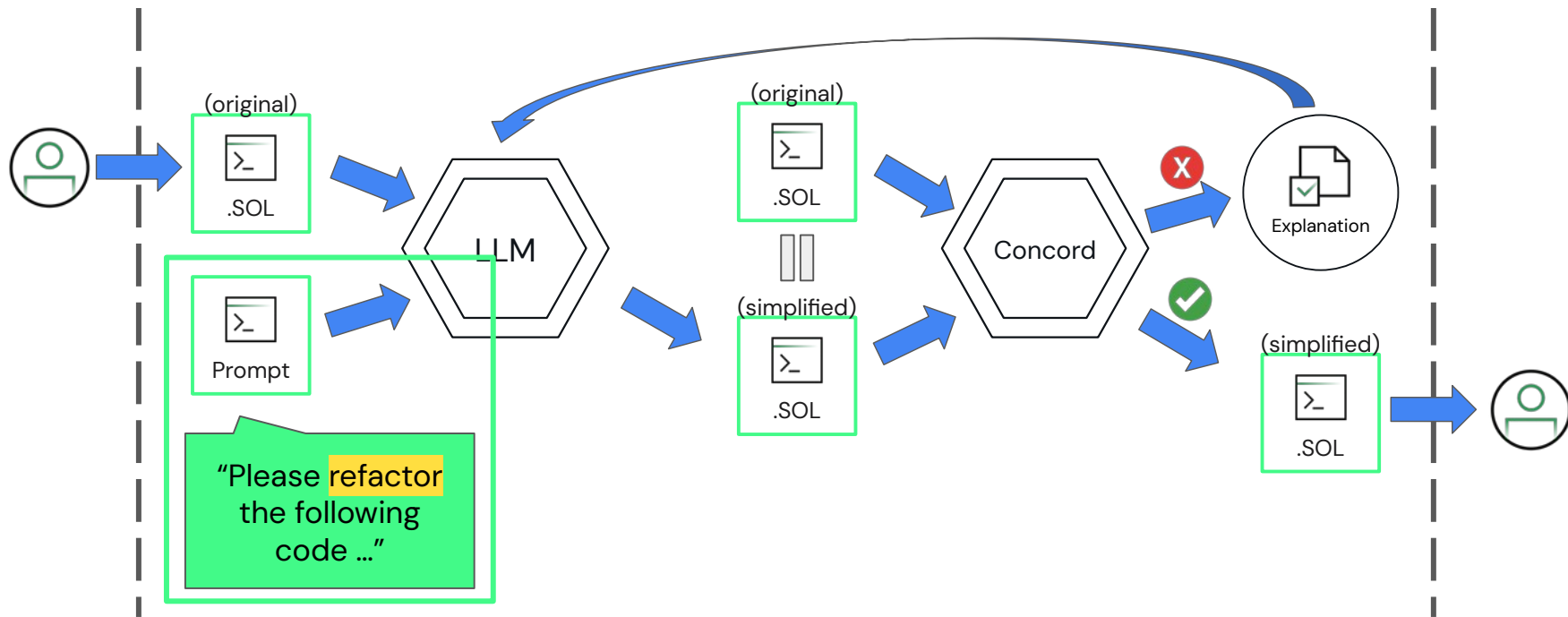
Concordance: Not Simply Simplification



Concordance: Not Simply Simplification



Concordance: Not Simply Simplification



It's open source!



(github link)

Thanks!

Questions?

