# Software Testing Basics

Spring 2025

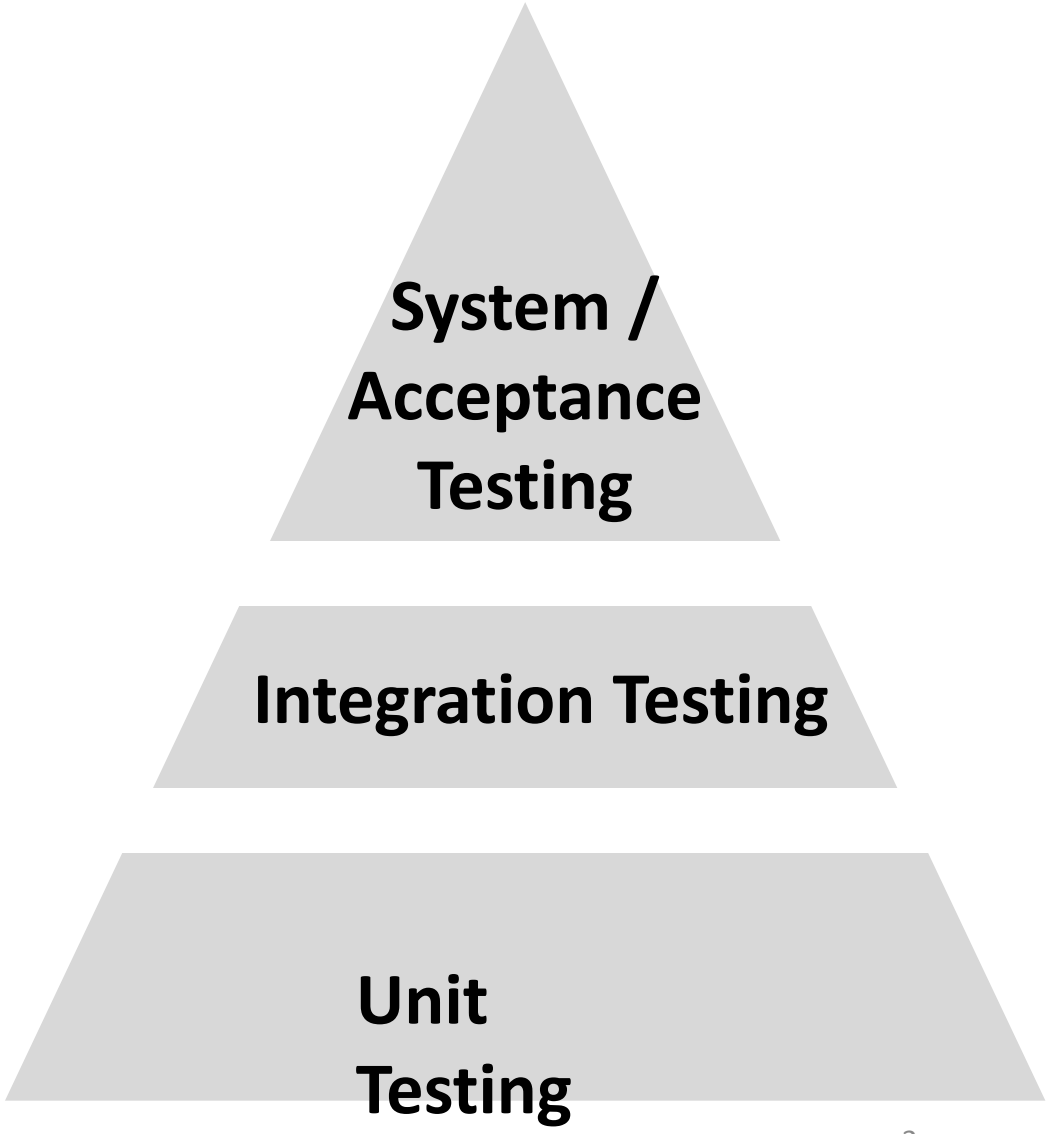
Lingming Zhang

# Testing: basic concepts

- **Test case** (or, simply **test**): an execution of the software with a given test input, including:
  - Input values
  - Sometimes include execution steps
  - Expected outputs (**test oracle**)
- **Test suite**: a finite set of tests
  - Usually can be run together in sequence
- **Test adequacy**: a measurement to evaluate the test quality
  - Such as code coverage

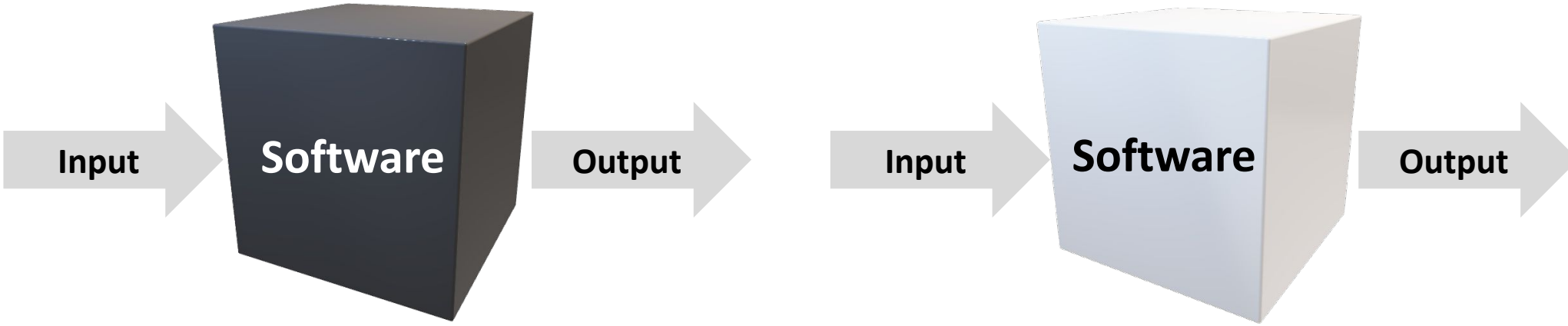
# Testing: levels

- Unit Testing
  - Test each single module in isolation
- Integration Testing
  - Test the interaction between modules
- System Testing
  - Test the system as a whole, by developers
- Acceptance Testing
  - Validate the system against user requirements, by customers with no formal test  cases



# Types of test generation

- Black-box (functional) vs. white-box (structural) testing




- **Black-box test generation**: generates tests based on the functionality of the program
- **White-box test generation**: generates tests based on the source-code structure of the program

# Today's focus

- **Unit testing**: involves testing individual units (e.g., methods or classes) of a software to ensure that each part is correct, typically
  - Unit level
  - White-box
  - Deterministic
  - …

- **Fuzz testing** (fuzzing): involves providing invalid, unexpected, or random data as inputs to a software, typically
  - System level
  - Black-box
  - Non-deterministic
  - …

# This class

- Unit Testing
  - Feedback-directed Random Test Generation (ICSE'07)
- Fuzz Testing
  - Finding and Understanding Bugs in C Compilers (PLDI’11)
  - Fuzzing with Code Fragments (SEC'12)
  - Compiler Validation via Equivalence Modulo Inputs (PLDI’14)
  - AFL: American Fuzzy Lop (https://github.com/google/AFL)
- LLM-based Fuzz Testing
  - Large Language Models are Zero-Shot Fuzzers: Fuzzing Deep-Learning Libraries via Large Language Models (ISSTA’23)

# Problem: unit test generation

**Program under test:**

```
public class Math{
  public static int sum(int a, int b){
    return a+b;
  }
  …
}
```

**Example JUnit test:**

```
public class MathTest{
  @Test
  public void testSum (){
    int a=1;
    int b=1;
    int c=Math.sum(a, b);
    assertEquals(2,c);
  }
  …
}
```

Input values

Execution steps

Test oracle

## Is this an important problem?


**Commons-Math**

84,377 lines of **source code**

86,924 lines of **unit-test code**

# How to perform random white-box test generation?

```
public class HashSet extends Set{
  public boolean add(Object o){…}
  public boolean remove(Object o){…}
  public boolean isEmpty(){…}
  public boolean equals(Object o){…}
  ...
}
```

**Program under test**

Generation

```
Set s = new HashSet();
s.add("hi");
```

**Generated test *t1***

```
Set s = new HashSet();
s.add("hi");
s.remove(null);
```

**Generated test *t2***

```
Set s = new HashSet();
s.isEmpty();
s.remove("no");
s.isEmpty();
s.add("no");
s.isEmpty();
s.isEmpty();
...
```

**Generated test *t3***

…

- Need to generate a random sequence of invocations, where each requires
  - A random method
  - Some random arguments
  - A random receiver object
    - Not required for static methods

# Random method-sequence generation: limitations

- Does not have test oracles
  - E.g., an ideal test oracle for the test below: **assertEquals(1, s.size())**
- Cannot generate complex tests
  - E.g., the arguments of some method invocations can be generated by other method invocations
- Can have many redundant&illegal tests

```
Set s = new HashSet();
s.isEmpty();
s.remove("no");
s.isEmpty();
s.add("no");
s.isEmpty();
s.isEmpty();
```

**A random test**

# Random method-sequence generation: redundant&illegal tests

**1. Useful test:**

```
Set s = new HashSet();
s.add("hi");
```

**2. Redundant test:**

```
Set s = new HashSet();
s.add("hi");
s.isEmpty();
```

Should not output

**3. Useful test:**

```
Date d = new Date(2006, 2, 14);
```

**4. Illegal test:**

```
Date d = new Date(2006, 2, 14);
d.setMonth(-1); // pre: argument >= 0
```

Should not output

**5. Illegal test:**

```
Date d = new Date(2006, 2, 14);
d.setMonth(-1); // pre: argument >= 0
d.setDay(5);
```

Should not even generate

# Randoop: feedback-directed (adaptive) random test generation

- Use code contracts as test oracles
- Build test inputs incrementally
  - New test inputs extend previous ones
  - In this context, a test input is a method sequence
- As soon as a test is created, use its execution results to guide generation
  - away from redundant or illegal method sequences
  - towards sequences that create new object states

# Randoop input/output

- **Input**:
  - Classes under test
  - Time limit
  - Set of contracts
    - Method contracts (e.g. “o.hashCode() throws no exception”)
    - Object invariants (e.g. “o.equals(o) == true”)
- **Output**: contract-violating test cases

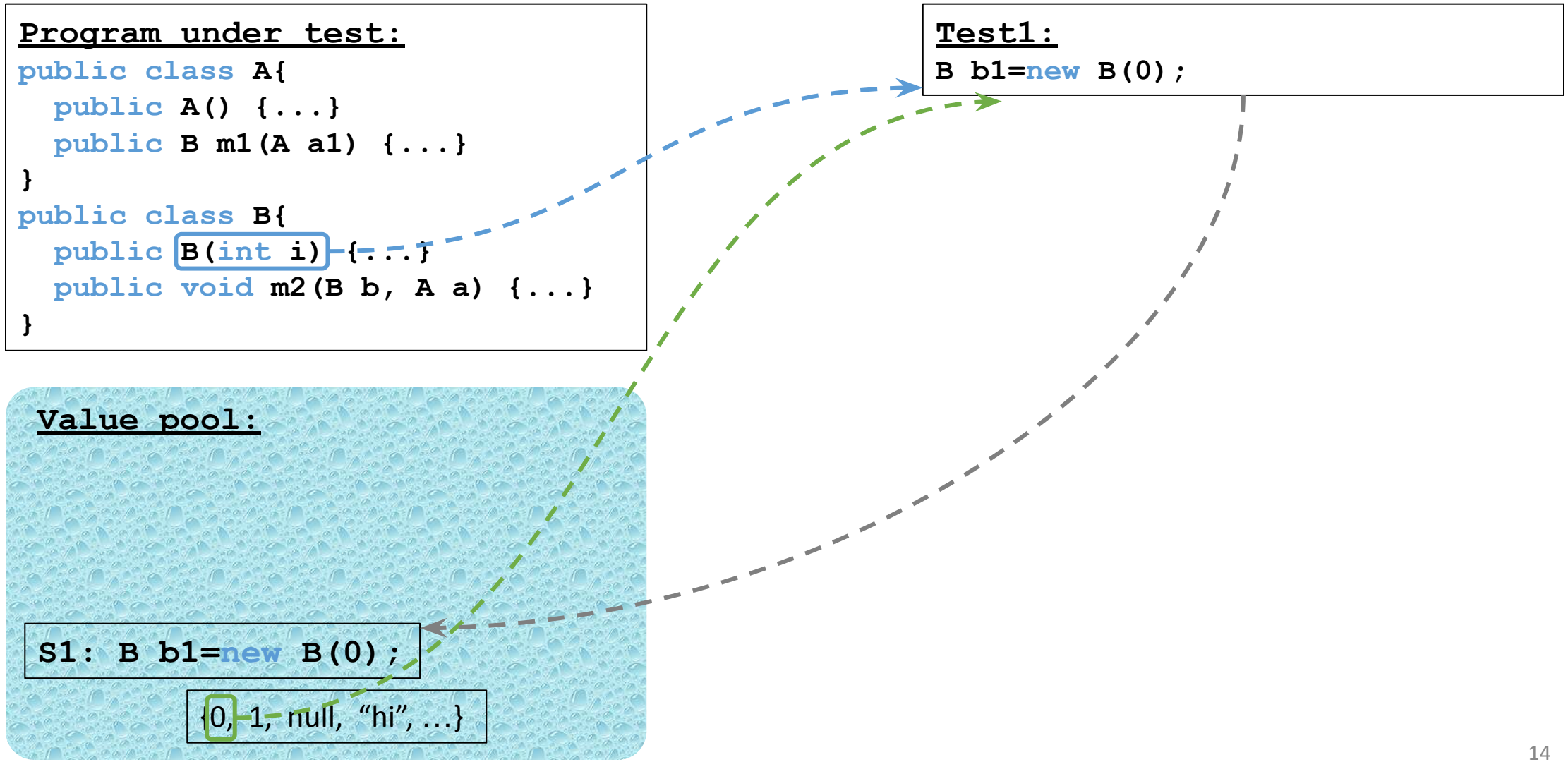
```
HashMap h = new HashMap();
Collection c = h.values();
Object[] a = c.toArray();
LinkedList l = new LinkedList();
l.addFirst(a);
TreeSet t = new TreeSet(l);
Set u = Collections.unmodifiableSet(t);
assertTrue(u.equals(u));
```

fails on Sun’s JDK 1.5/1.6 when executed

# Randoop: algorithm

- Seed value pool for primitive types
  - pool = { **0, 1, true, false, "hi", null** ... }
- Do until time limit expires:
  - Create a new sequence
    - Randomly pick a method call $\mathbf{m}(\mathbf{T_1}...\mathbf{T_k})/\mathbf{T_{ret}}$
    - For each input parameter of type $\mathbf{T_i}$, randomly pick a sequence $\mathbf{S_i}$ from the value pool that constructs an object $\mathbf{v_i}$ of type $\mathbf{T_i}$
    - Create new sequence $\mathbf{S_{new}} = \mathbf{S_1}; ... ; \mathbf{S_k} ; \mathbf{T_{ret}}\ \mathbf{v_{new}} = \mathbf{m}(\mathbf{v_1}...\mathbf{v_k});$
    - if $\mathbf{S_{new}}$ was previously created (lexically), go to first step
  - Classify the new sequence $\mathbf{S_{new}}$
    - May discard, output as test case, or add to pool

# Randoop: example




# Randoop: example

**Program under test:**

```
public class A{
  public A() {...}
  public B m1(A a1) {...}
}
public class B{
  public B(int i) {...}
  public void m2(B b, A a) {...}
}
```

**Test1:**

```
B b1=new B(0);
```

**Test2:**

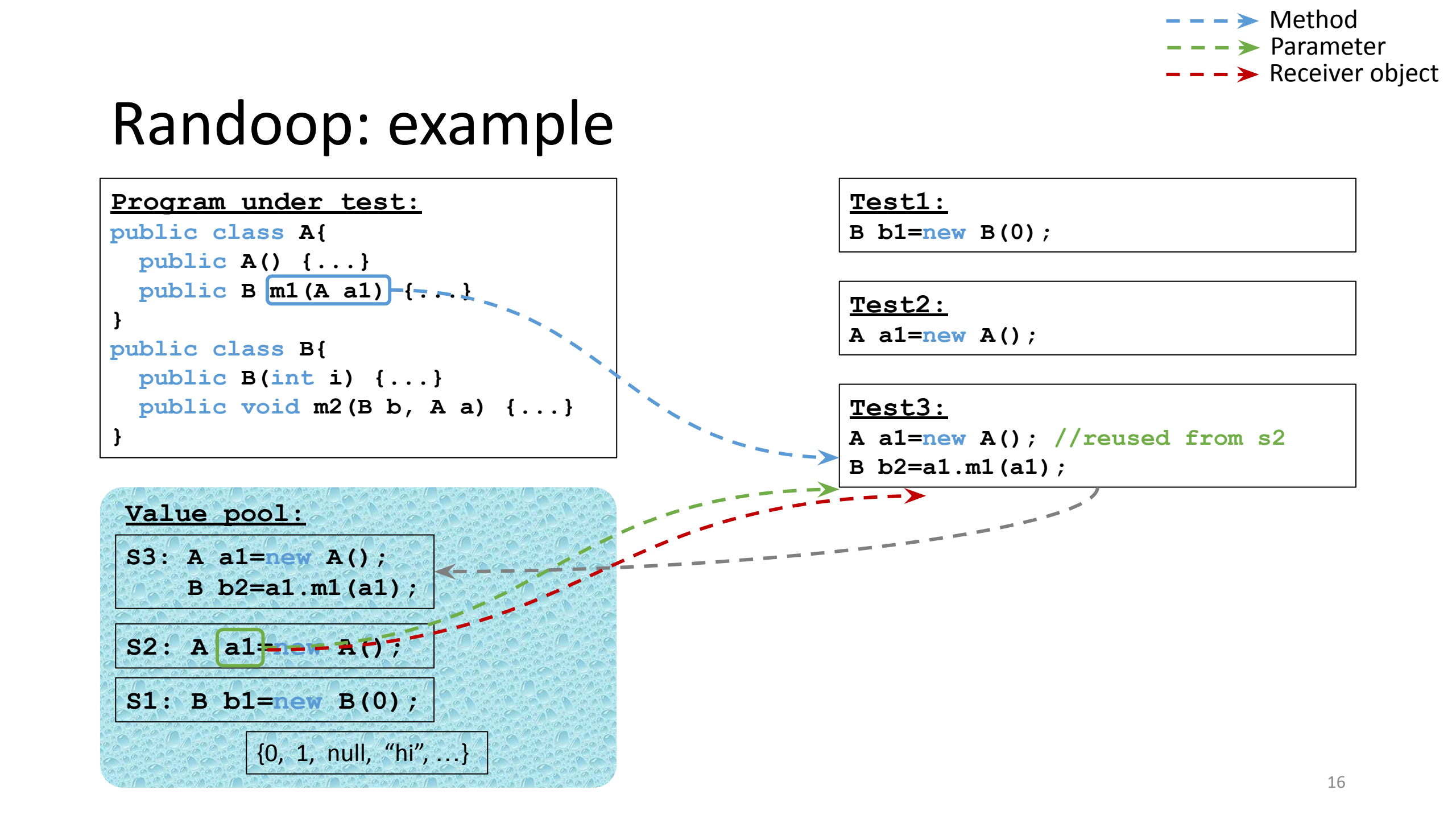
```
A a1=new A();
```

**Value pool:**

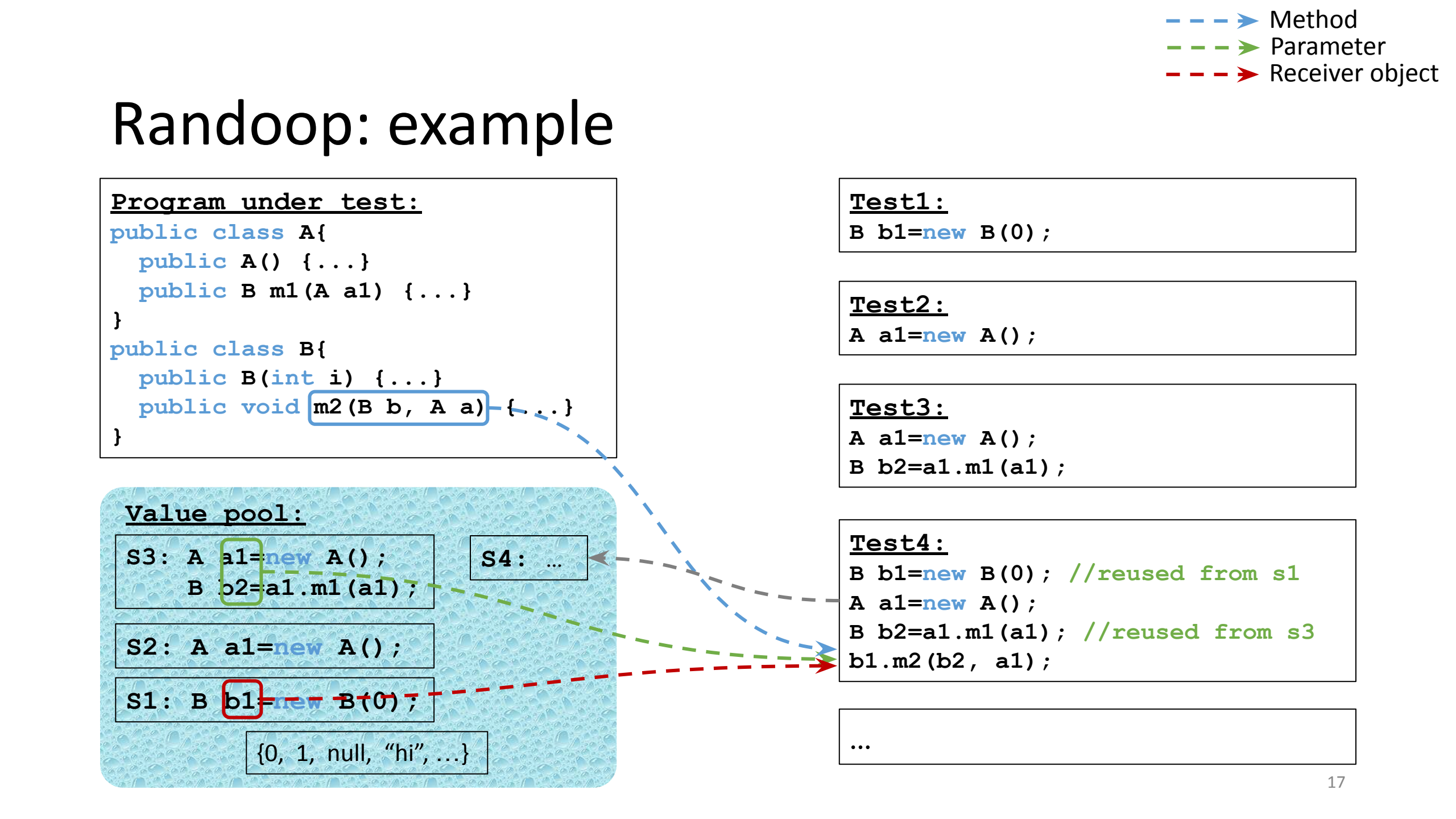
```
S2: A a1=new A();
S1: B b1=new B(0);
```

{0, 1, null, “hi”, …}

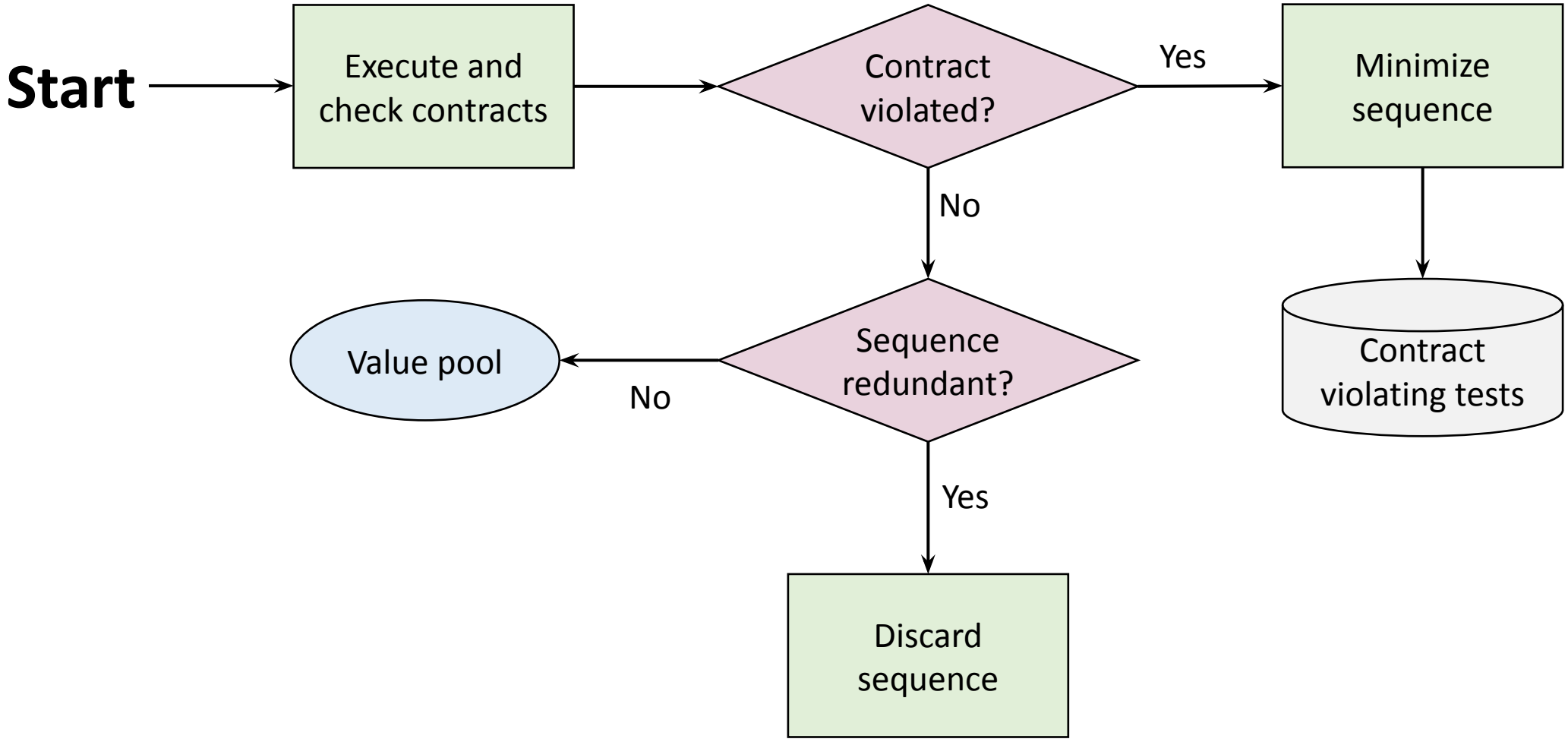
# Randoop: example



# Randoop: example



# Classifying a sequence



# Redundant sequences

- During generation, maintain a set of all objects created
- A sequence is redundant if all the objects created during its execution are members of the above set (using *equals* to compare)
- Could also use more sophisticated state equivalence methods
  - E.g. heap canonicalization used in model checkers

# Tool support

- **Input**:
  - An assembly (for .NET) or a list of classes (for Java)
  - Generation time limit
  - Optional: a set of contracts to augment default contracts
- **Output**: a test suite (JUnit or Nunit) containing
  - Contract-violating test cases
  - Normal-behavior test cases

Randoop

Automatic unit test generation

# Randoop outputs oracles

- Oracle for contract-violating tests:

```
Object o = new Object();
LinkedList l = new LinkedList();
l.addFirst(o);
TreeSet t = new TreeSet(l);
Set u = Collections.unmodifiableSet(t);
assertTrue(u.equals(u));//expected to fail
```

Find current bugs

- Oracle for normal-behavior tests (regression tests):

```
Object o = new Object();
LinkedList l = new LinkedList();
l.addFirst(o);
l.add(o);
assertEquals(2, l.size());//expected to pass
assertEquals(false,l.isEmpty());//expected to pass
```

Find future bugs

# Some Randoop options

- Avoid use of null

**Statically:**

```
Object o = new Object();
LinkedList l = new
LinkedList();
l.add(null);
```

**Dynamically:**

```
Object o = returnNull();
LinkedList l = new
LinkedList();
l.add(o);
```

- Bias random selection
  - Favor shorter sequences
  - Favor methods that have been less covered
  - Use constants mined from source code
- Source code available:
  - https://randoop.github.io/randoop/

# Code coverage by Randoop

| Data structure programs | Time (s) | Branch cov. |
|---|---|---|
| Bounded stack (30 LOC) | 1 | 100% |
| Unbounded stack (59 LOC) | 1 | 100% |
| BS Tree (91 LOC) | 1 | 96% |
| Binomial heap (309 LOC) | 1 | 84% |
| Linked list (253 LOC) | 1 | 100% |
| Tree map (370 LOC) | 1 | 81% |
| Heap array (71 LOC) | 1 | 100% |

# Bug detection by Randoop: subjects

| Subjects | LOC | Classes |
|---|---|---|
| JDK (2 libraries)<br>(java.util, javax.xml) | 53K | 272 |
| Apache commons (6 libraries)<br>(logging, primitives, chain, jelly, math, collections) | 114K | 974 |
| .Net libraries (6 libraries) | 615K | 3455 |

# Bug detection by Randoop: methodology

- Ran Randoop on each library
  - Used default time limit (2 minutes)
- Contracts:
  - **o.equals(o)==true**
  - **o.equals(o)** throws no exception
  - **o.hashCode()** throws no exception
  - **o.toString()** throw no exception
  - No null inputs and:
    - Java: No NPEs
    - .NET: No NPEs, out-of-bounds, of illegal state exceptions

# Bug detection by Randoop: subjects

| Subjects | Failed tests | Unique failed tests | Error-revealing tests | Distinct errors |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| JDK | 613 | 32 | 29 | 8 |
| Apache commons | 3,044 | 187 | 29 | 6 |
| .Net framework | 543 | 205 | 196 | 196 |
| Total | 4,200 | 424 | 254 | 210 |

# Errors found: examples

- JDK Collections classes have 4 methods that create objects violating **o.equals(o)** contract
- Javax.xml creates objects that cause **hashCode** and **toString** to crash, even though objects are well-formed XML constructs
- Apache libraries have constructors that leave fields unset, leading to NPE on calls of **equals**, **hashCode** and **toString** (this only counts as one bug)
- .Net framework has at least 175 methods that throw an exception forbidden by the library specification (NPE, out-of-bounds, of illegal state exception)
- .Net framework has 8 methods that violate **o.equals(o)**
- .Net framework loops forever on a legal but unexpected input

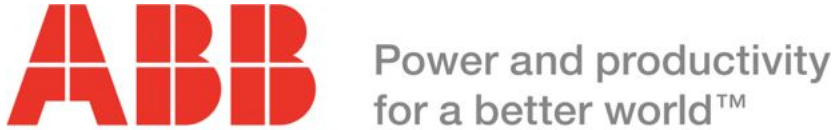
# Regression testing scenario

- Randoop can create regression oracles
- Generated test cases using JDK 1.5
  - Randoop generated 41K regression test cases
- Ran resulting test cases on
  - JDK 1.6 Beta
    - 25 test cases failed
  - Sun's implementation of the JDK
    - 73 test cases failed
  - Failing test cases pointed to 12 distinct errors
  - These errors were not found by the extensive compliance test suite that Sun provides to JDK developers

```
Object o = new Object();
LinkedList l = new LinkedList();
l.addFirst(o);
l.add(o);
assertEquals(2, l.size());//expected to pass
assertEquals(false,l.isEmpty());//expected to pass
```

# Randoop: applications





# This class

- Unit Testing
  - Feedback-directed Random Test Generation (ICSE'07)
- Fuzz Testing
  - Finding and Understanding Bugs in C Compilers (PLDI’11)
  - Fuzzing with Code Fragments (SEC'12)
  - Compiler Validation via Equivalence Modulo Inputs (PLDI’14)
  - AFL: American Fuzzy Lop (https://github.com/google/AFL)
- LLM-based Fuzz Testing
  - Large Language Models are Zero-Shot Fuzzers: Fuzzing Deep-Learning Libraries via Large Language Models (ISSTA’23)

# Fuzz testing

**./Program < /dev/random**


- Fuzzing strategies
  - Mutation-based
  - Generation-based
  - Learning-based

- Feedback guide
  - New coverage?
  - Shorter execution?
  - Valid input?

- Targeted programs
  - Binaries
  - Compilers
  - Browsers
  - DB systems
  - ML systems
  - …

# Generation-based fuzzing

- Create test inputs based on predefined structure/grammar

```
<start> ::= <expr>
<expr> ::= <term> + <expr> | <term> - <expr> | <term>
<term> ::= <term> * <factor> | <term> / <factor> | <factor>
<factor> ::= +<factor> | -<factor> | (<expr>) | <int> | <int>.<int>
<int> ::= <digit><int> | <digit>
<digit> ::= 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9
```

**Arithmetic expression grammar**

Generate

```
(-+++((1 + (+7 - (-1 * (++-+7.7 - -+-4.0))))) * +--4 - -(6) + 64) 8.2 - 27 -
-9 / +((+9 * --2 + --+-+-((-1 * +(8 - 5 - 6)) * (-((-+(((+(4))))) - ++4) /
+(-+---((5.6 - --(3 * -1.8 * +(6 * +-(((-(-6) * ---+6)) / +--(+-+-7 * (-0 *
(+(((((2)) + 8 - 3 - ++9.0 + ---(--+7 / (1 / +++6.37) + (1) / 482) /
+++-+0)))) * -+5 + 7.513)))) - …
```

**Arithmetic expression**

**C grammar**

Csmith

```
void foo (void) {
  int x;
  for (x =0; x < 5; x++){
    if (x) continue;
    if (x) break;
  }
  printf("%d", x);
}
```

**C program triggering an LLVM bug**

**Javascript grammar**

LangFuzz

```
var haystack = "foo";
var re_text = "^foo";
haystack += "x";
re_text += "(x)";
var re = new RegExp(re_text);
re.test(haystack);
RegExp.input = Number();
print(RegExp.$1);
```

**JS program crashing Mozilla**

# Generation-based fuzzing: examples

- Finding and Understanding Bugs in C Compilers (PLDI'11)
  - Targeting C compilers
  - Cited for **1,000+** times
  - **400+** GCC/LLVM bugs found



- Fuzzing with Code Fragments (SEC'12)
  - Targeting JS browsers/engines
  - Cited for **400+** times
  - USD **50,000+** bug bounties in the first month
  - **2,000+** bugs found for Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, and Microsoft Edge to date

# Mutation-based fuzzing

- Apply small mutations on high-quality seed inputs to generate more test inputs

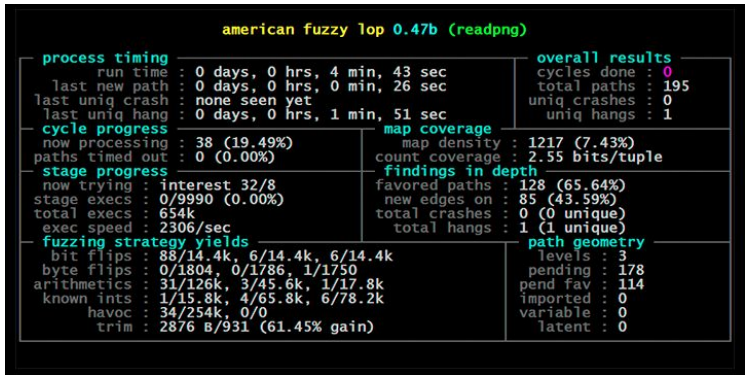
```
int a, b, c, d, e;
int main() {
  for (b = 4; b > -30; b--)
    for (; c;)
      for (;;) {
        b++;
        e = a > 2147483647 - b;
        if (d) break;
      }
  return 0;
}
```

EMI

```
int a, b, c, d, e;
int main() {
  for (b = 4; b > -30; b--)
    for (; c;)
      for (;;) {
        b++;
        e = a > 2147483647 - b;
        if (d) break;
      }
  return 0;
}
```

**: not executed**

- Structured mutation not generalizable?
- Mutation at the binary level!




**AFL**

# Mutation-based fuzzing: examples

- Compiler Validation via Equivalence Modulo Inputs (PLDI'14)
  - Insight: EMI takes existing input programs and generates equivalent variants on a particular set of inputs (by removing unexecuted statements) for compiler fuzzing
  - **147** confirmed bugs found in the paper
  - Found **1,000+** LLVM/GCC bugs together with follow-up work
- AFL: American Fuzzy Lop (https://github.com/google/AFL)
  - The pioneer binary fuzzing tool leveraging coverage feedback
  - Highly scalable and generalizable due to the practical design
  - Found numerous bugs in real-world software systems

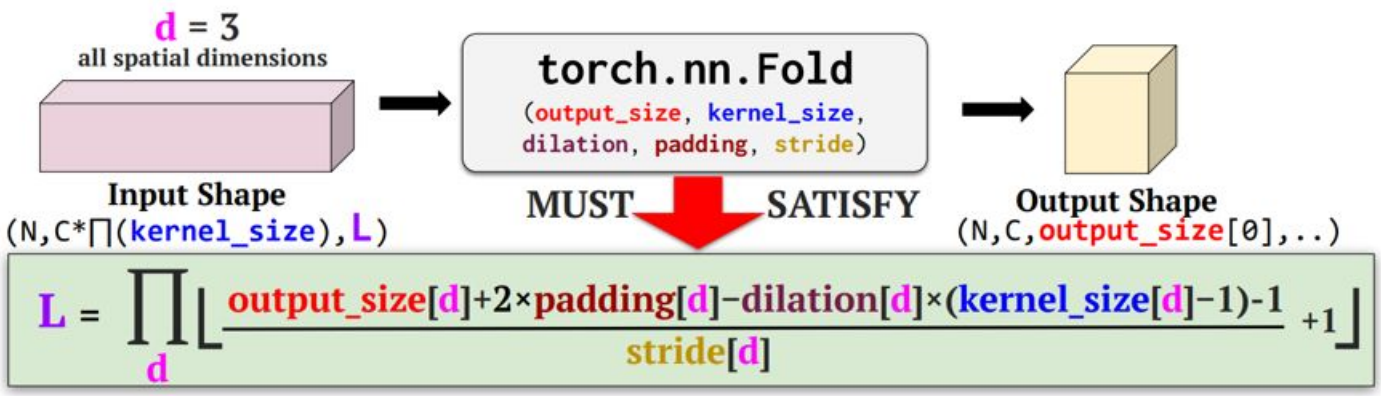
# This class

- Unit Testing
  - Feedback-directed Random Test Generation (ICSE'07)
- Fuzz Testing
  - Finding and Understanding Bugs in C Compilers (PLDI’11)
  - Fuzzing with Code Fragments (SEC'12)
  - Compiler Validation via Equivalence Modulo Inputs (PLDI’14)
  - AFL: American Fuzzy Lop (https://github.com/google/AFL)
- LLM-based Fuzz Testing
  - Large Language Models are Zero-Shot Fuzzers: Fuzzing Deep-Learning Libraries via Large Language Models (ISSTA’23)

# How can we fuzz test Deep Learning libraries?

Deep Learning (DL) libraries serve as the fundamental building block for all DL pipelines

```
fold = nn.Fold(output_size=(4,
5), kernel_size=(2, 2))
input = torch.randn(1, 3 * 2 *
2, 12)
output = fold(input)
```




**Challenges:**

- Python syntax/semantics
- Complex tensor computation constraints
- Other implicit/explicit API constraints

# Large Language Models (LLMs) for fuzzing!

💡 They are trained on **trillions** of open-source code tokens and can autoregressively generate **human-like** code!

**Traditional** fuzzing techniques (**generation-** & **mutation**-based)

***Explicit Modeling*** ❌

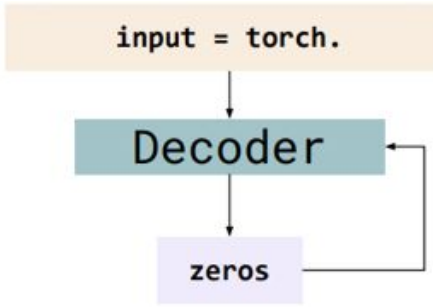
- Language constraints
- Tensor shape constraints
- Other API constraints

***Implicit Learning*** ✅

Trained on **>400K** Tensorflow/PyTorch projects

Directly use LLMs to generate programs satisfying *heterogeneous constraints* for fuzzing DL libraries **and beyond**!

# LLMs for fuzzing: design



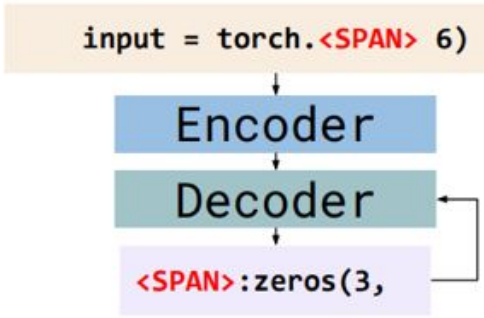

Left-to-right generation

Generation-based Fuzzing

Prompt

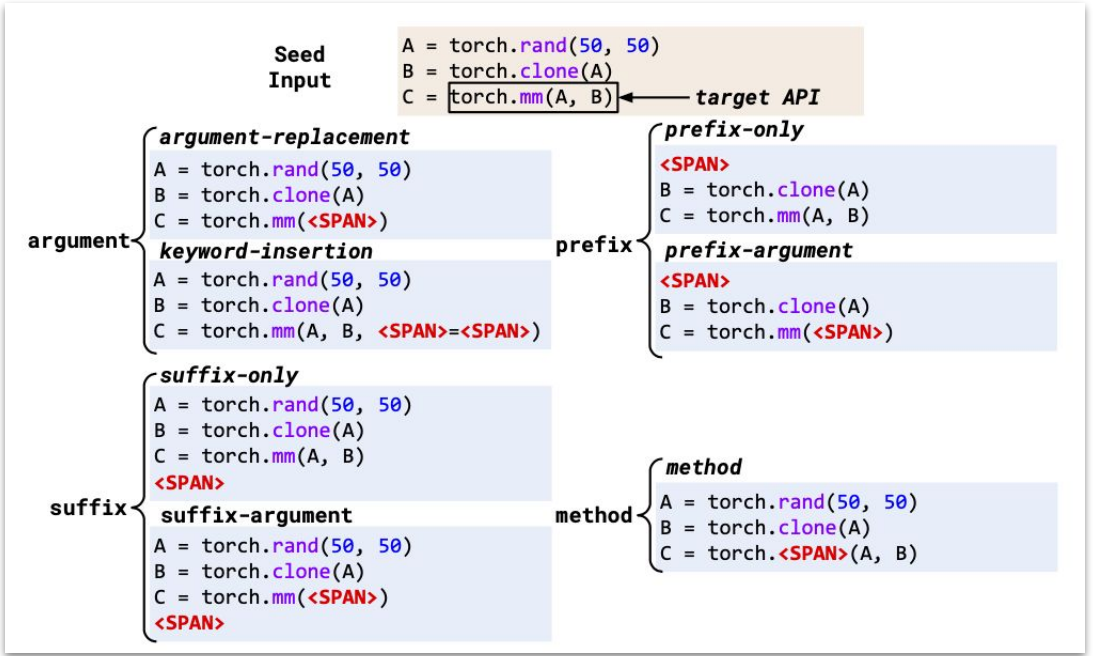
Codex

```
Task 1: Import TensorFlow 2.10.0                    target library
Task 2: Generate input data
Task 3: Call the API tf.nn.conv2d(input,filters,strides,
padding,data_format='NHWC',dilations=None,name=None)
                                                    target API signature
import tensorflow as tf
tf.__version__
input = tf.Variable(tf.random.normal([1, 10, 10, 1]))
filter = tf.Variable(tf.random.normal([3, 3, 1, 1]))
op = tf.nn.conv2d(input, filter, strides=[1, 1, 1, 1], padding='VALID')
```

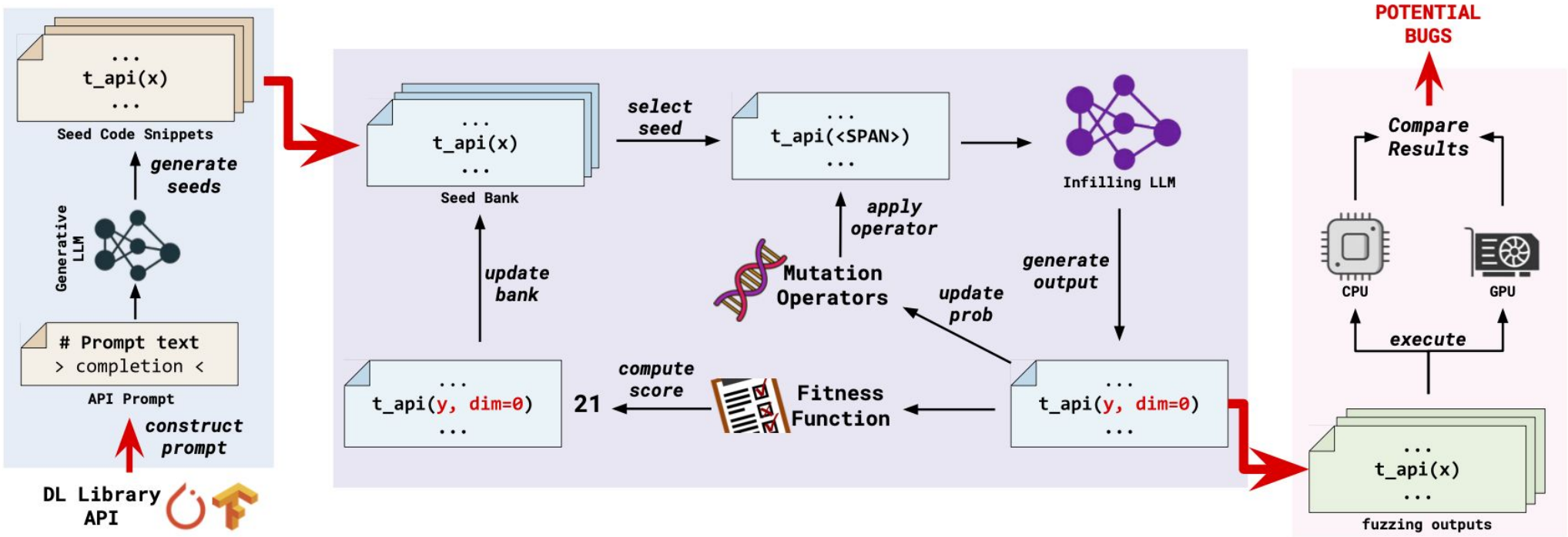



Infilling

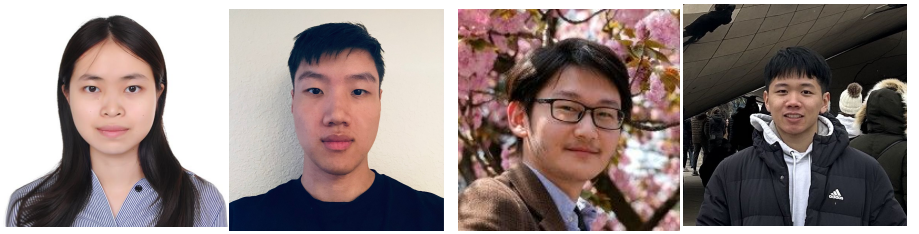
Mutation-based Fuzzing



# TitanFuzz




1. Seed program *generation* using **LLM-based generation**
2. Evolutionary program *mutation* via **LLM-based infilling**
3. **Differential testing** oracle



# **TitanFuzz**: Summary

- The first LLM-based approach for fuzzing (DL libraries and beyond)
  - Seed generation/mutation using generative/infilling LLMs
  - Up to **50.84%** higher coverage than traditional fuzzers
  - Detect **65** bugs, with **44** confirmed
- Implications for LLM-based fuzzing/testing
  - **LLMs can directly perform generation- and mutation-based fuzzing** (with minimal engineering efforts)!
  - Applicable to challenging domains with **heterogeneous constraints**
  - Easily generalizable to **other system domains**!

Our recent studies:
**400+** bugs found
**300+** confirmed

❑ Deng et al., *LLMs are Zero-Shot Fuzzers: Fuzzing Deep-Learning Libraries via LLMs.* **ISSTA 2023.**

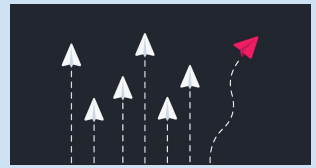
# Recent trends for LLM-based fuzzing

## More application domains

- LaST [ASE'23]
- BusyBoxFuzzer [Security'24]
- Fuzz4All [ICSE'24]
- …

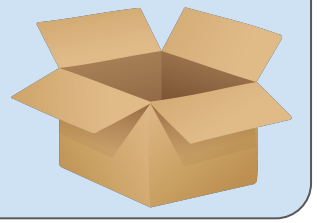
## Edge-case test generation

- FuzzGPT [ICSE'24]
- InputBlaster [ICSE'24]
- Yanhui [ISSTA'24]
- …



## Opening the blackbox

- ChatAFL [NDSS'24]
- WhiteFox [OOPSLA'24]
- CovRL [ISSTA'24]
- LLM4Fuzz [arXiv'24]
- …



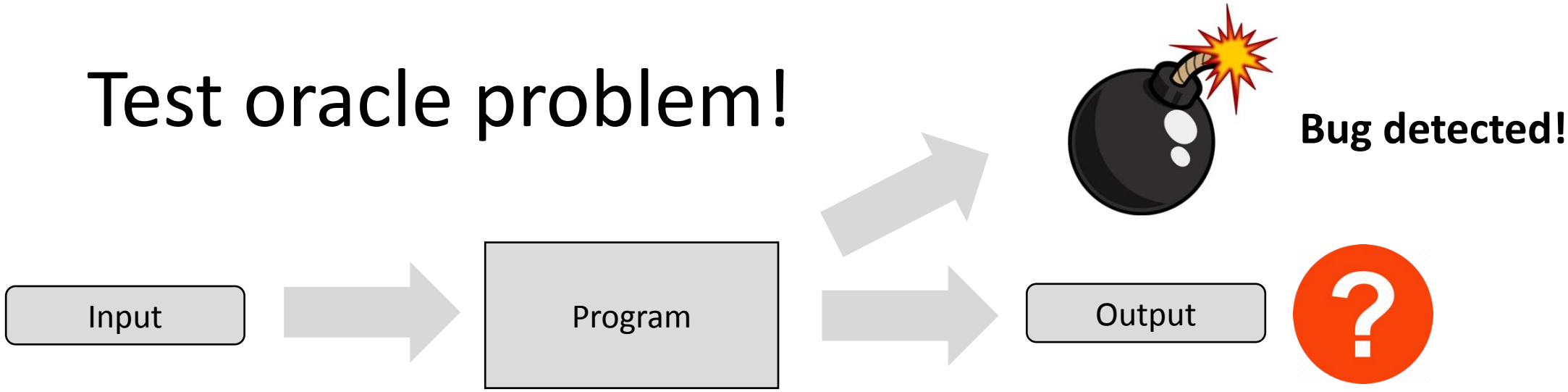
## Fuzzer (not input) generation

- MetaMut [ASPLOS'24]
- PromptFuzz [CCS'24]
- KernelGPT [ASPLOS'25]
- …

# Thanks!

# Backup slides

# Test oracle problem!



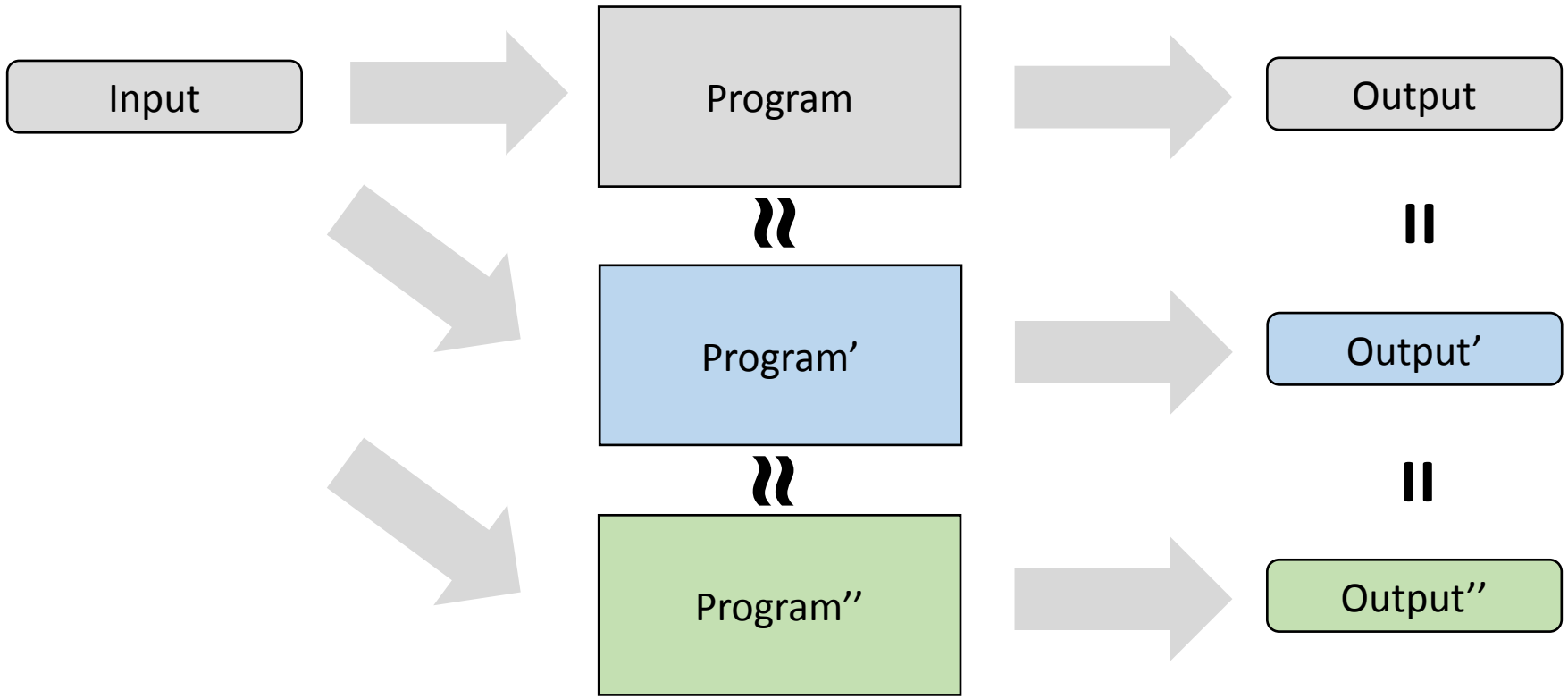

**Test oracle:** a mechanism for determining whether software executed correctly for a test[1].

**One of the hardest problem in Software Engineering!**

**How to mitigate it?**

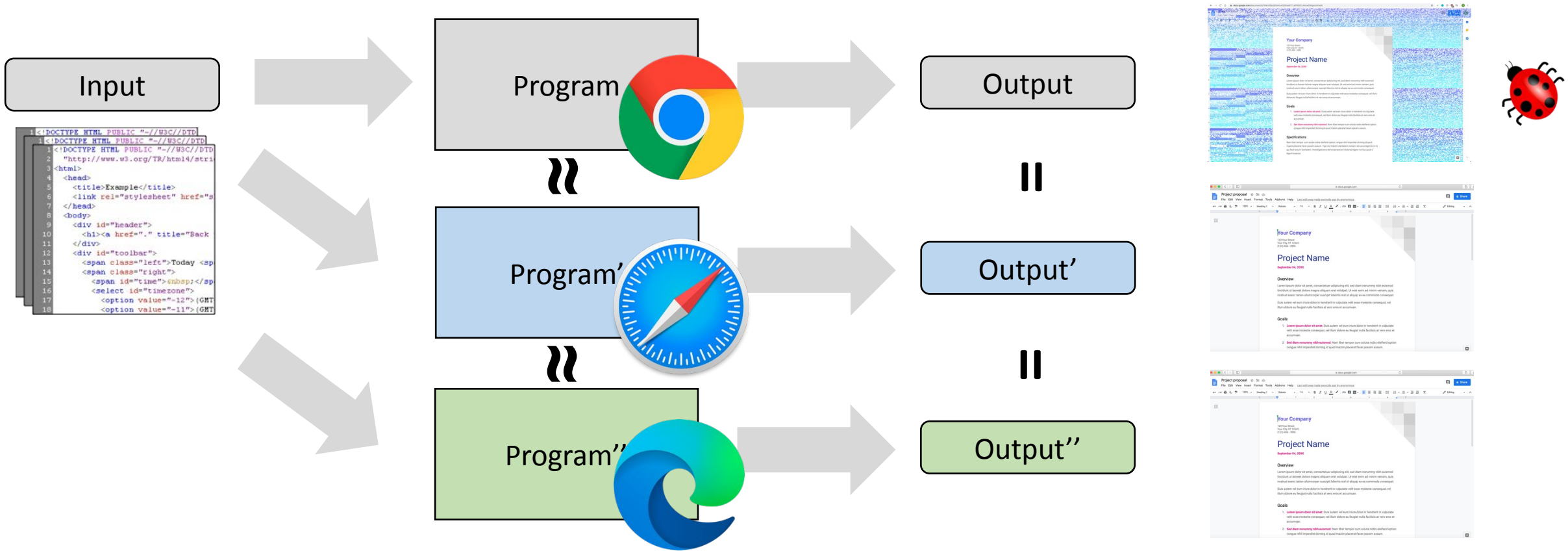
[1]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Test_oracle

# Differential testing



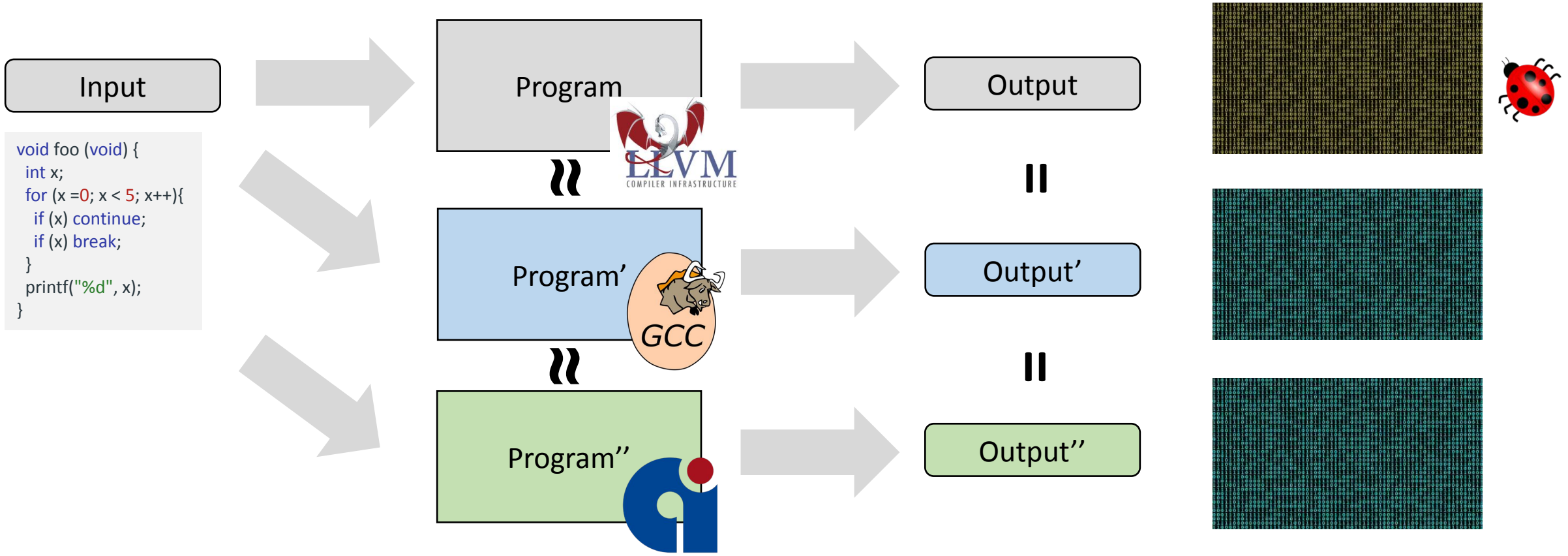

Provide the same input to **similar** applications, and observe output **differences**

# Differential testing: browsers



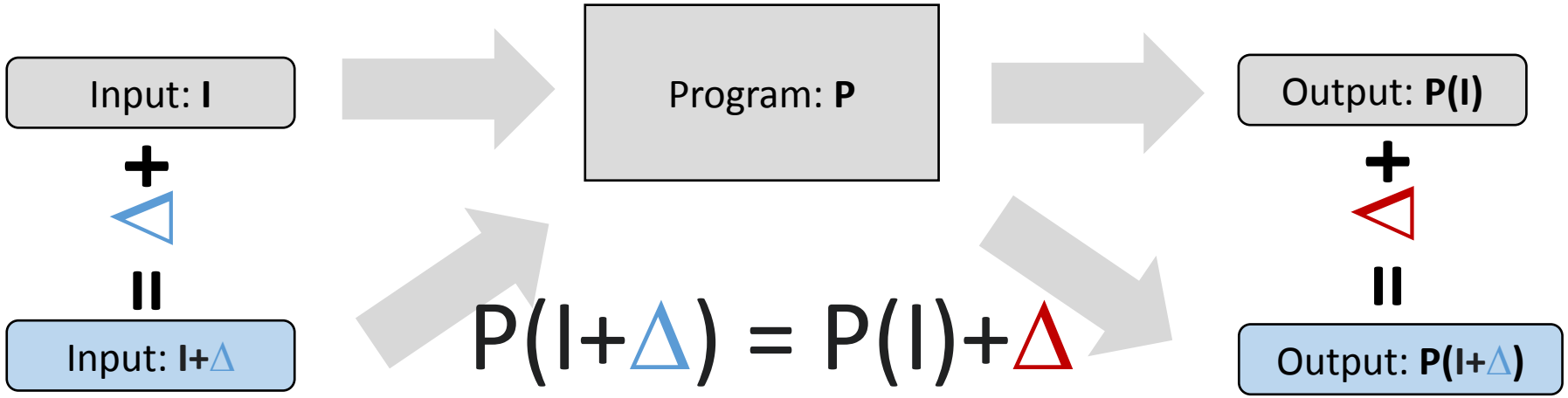

Provide the same input to **similar** applications, and observe output **differences**

# Differential testing: compilers (Csmith)




Provide the same input to **similar** applications, and observe output **differences**

# Metamorphic testing



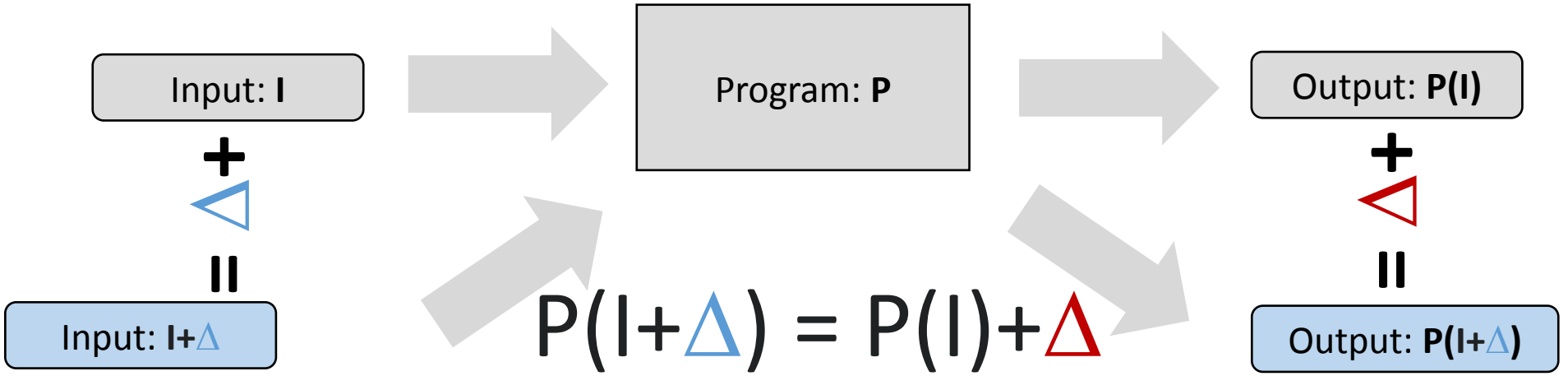

**For example:**

$\sin(x+2\pi) = \sin(x)$

$\sin(-x) = -\sin(x)$

Provide the manipulated inputs to **same** application, and observe if output **differences** are as expected

# Metamorphic testing: compilers (EMI)





Provide the manipulated inputs to **same** application, and observe if output **differences** are as expected