Embedded Profiler - User Manual

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1 Introduction

Embedded Profiler (EProfiler) is a multiplatform low overhead C/C++ profiler designed to measure performance on embedded system targets. Linux, Windows, Windows-CE and Android platforms are supported. On Linux and Android, gcc compiler is supported; on Windows both MinGW (Minimalist GNU for Windows) and MSVC (Microsoft Visual Studio) compilers can be used.

Profiler is implemented as a dynamic (shared) library or as a static library. It is based on automatic instrumentation of functions done by the C/C++ compiler.

Profiling of C/C++ application can be done either automatically or manually. Automatic profiling needs no source code modifications. Manual profiling requires using the API to specify the parts of the source code to be profiled. The resulting log can be opened in Performance Analyzer, a GUI application running on PC with several views designed for comfortable log analysis.

Besides of that, Embedded Profiler has low impact to C/C++ applications, and it also implements unique feature to estimate duration of functions as if they were not profiled.

Embedded Profiler library exports special timer with processor cycles resolution using the API. The timer resolution can be converted to nanoseconds or microseconds as well. This allows C/C++ applications to use Embedded Profiler library also as a multiplatform high resolution timer.

2 Profiling

Profiling can be done in two different ways:

Automatically

This approach does not need any modification of a source code. The whole application is profiled automatically. Even constructors and destructors of static global objects are profiled.

Manually

This approach requires small modification of a source code. The EProfiler API is used to configure embedded profiler and to specify the part of the source code to be profiled.

Embedded profiler supports two different profiling modes:

Call Tree Mode

This mode is the profiler default mode and generates complete function call tree of the profiled application with duration of each function. The resulting log can be analyzed in Performance Analyzer using several views. However, the log can easily become quite huge. This mode has very low overhead which can be measured by special command-line tool (see Profiling overhead correction). Using this measured overhead, Performance Analyzer implements unique feature to estimate duration of functions as if they were not profiled.

Function List Mode

This mode generates only list of profiled functions with number of callings and total duration. The resulting log is very small and can be analyzed in Performance Analyzer using one special view.

Because the profiling is based on instrumentation of functions, it is necessary to compile the profiled application before profiling. The next chapters describe how to do it.

2.1 Project preparation

These steps describe how to compile an application to be prepared for profiling using embedded profiler.



Note

To get the best results, you should profile *release* version of your application (with all compiler optimization flags etc.); no built-in debug information is needed for profiler operation.

2.1.1 GCC and MinGW compilers

1. For all profiled application modules add following compiler switch:

```
-finstrument-functions
```

2. Functions which can be filtered out from profiling:

```
-finstrument-functions-exclude-function-list
-finstrument-functions-exclude-file-list
```

3. For all profiled application modules add the following linker argument:

```
-Wl,-Map=ProjectName.map
```

- 4. Link profiled application with appropriate EProfiler library:
 - Linux 32-bit

EProfiler/linux32-gcc-intel/lib/libEProfiler.so for shared library, EProfiler/linux32-gcc-intel/lib/libEProfilerStatic.a for static library,

Linux 64-bit

EProfiler/linux64-gcc-intel/lib/libEProfiler.so for shared library, EProfiler/linux64-gcc-intel/lib/libEProfilerStatic.so for static library,

• MinGW 32-bit

EProfiler/windows32-mingw-intel/lib/libEProfiler.dll.a for dynamic library, EProfiler/windows32-mingw-intel/lib/libEProfilerStatic.a for static library,

MinGW 64-bit

EProfiler/windows64-mingw-intel/lib/libEProfiler.dll.a for dynamic library, EProfiler/windows64-mingw-intel/lib/libEProfilerStatic.a for static library,

· Android ARM

EProfiler/android-gcc-arm/lib/libEProfiler.so for shared library or EProfiler/android-gcc-arm/lib/libEProfilerStatic.a for static library.



Important

Linux GCC and MinGW When you link against the static library on Linux GCC or MinGW targets, you must link pthread library as well.



Important

Linux GCC and MinGW When you link against the dynamic library on Linux GCC or MinGW targets, make sure that you have on the linker command line the EProfiler library at the end.

Otherwise you can get the linker error that __cyg_profile_func_enter and __cyg_profile_func_exit are undefined references.



Important

Android ARM On Android ARM targets it is required to use kernel module which enables cycle counting.

Make sure that kernel module EProfiler/android-gcc-arm/module/eprofiler_arm_counter.ko is properly loaded in memory (e.g. use insmod).

Android currently does not support RPATH and by default loads system libraries only. Make sure that the environment variable LD_LIBRARY_PATH contains full path to EProfiler/android-gcc-arm/lib/.

2.1.2 MSVC compiler (Windows)

1. For all profiled application modules add the following compiler switches:

/GH /Gh

2. For all profiled application modules add the following linker argument:

```
/MAP:ProjectName.map
```

- 3. Link profiled application with appropriate EProfiler library:
 - · Windows 32-bit

```
EProfiler/windows32-msvc-intel/lib/EProfiler.lib for dynamic library, EProfiler/windows32-msvc-intel/lib/EProfilerStatic.lib for static library,
```

• Windows 64-bit

EProfiler/windows64-msvc-intel/lib/EProfiler.lib for dynamic library or EProfiler/windows64-msvc-intel/lib/EProfilerStatic.lib for static library.

2.1.3 MSVC compiler (Windows CE, SH4 processor)

1. For all profiled application modules add the following compiler switch:

/callcap

2. For all profiled application modules add the following linker argument:

```
/MAP:ProjectName.map
```

3. Link profiled application with appropriate EProfiler library:

```
EProfiler/windowsce-msvc-sh4/lib/EProfiler.lib for dynamic library or EProfiler/windowsce-msvc-sh4/lib/EProfilerStatic.lib for static library.
```

2.2 Automatic profiling

The following steps describe how to use embedded profiler in automatic profiling:

- 1. Set environment variable EPROF_AUTOSTART_ENABLED (or registry value HKLM\SOFTWARE\Eccam\EProfiler\AutostartEnabled for Windows CE build) to 1.
- 2. Select profiling mode by default it is Call Tree Mode, if Function List Mode is required, set environment variable EPROF_FUNCTION_LIST_ENABLED (or registry value HKLM\SOFTWARE\Eccam\EProfiler\FunctionListEnabled for Windows CE build) to 1.
- 3. Optionally set environment variable EPROF_MEMORY_SIZE (or registry value HKLM\SOFTWARE\Eccam\EProfiler\MemorySize for Windows CE build) to set profiler memory size in bytes. Default is 1 MB for *Call Tree Mode* and cca 40 KB (sufficient memory to store 1024 functions) for *Function List Mode*.
- 4. Run application.
- 5. The profiler log can be found in files named in format <code>eprof_thread_XXXX.epl</code> for each thread in the same directory from which the program was launched.



Important

The duration of functions is measured in processor cycles. The measured processor cycles are converted to time using CPU frequency which was set before profiling starts. However the CPU frequency can be changed dynamically on modern processors. Therefore to be sure that converted times are correct, it is necessary to fix processor frequency before profiling. Otherwise the profiling log analysis should be based on processor cycles only.

2.3 Manual profiling

The following steps describe how to use embedded profiler in manual profiling:

- 1. In application sources, add #include "EProfiler/include/EProfiler.h"
- 2. Optionally call EProfilerConfigureFile() or EProfilerConfigureMemory() before profiling (per each thread).
- 3. Call EProfilerStart () to start profiling (per each thread).
- 4. Optionally call EProfilerFlush () to write profiler data stored in memory into the file.
- 5. Call EProfilerStop() to stop profiling (per each thread).
- 6. Make sure that environment variable EPROF_AUTOSTART_ENABLED (or registry value HKLM\SOFTWARE\Eccam\EProfiler\AutostartEnabled for Windows CE build) is not defined or it is set to 0.
- 7. Select profiling mode by default it is Call Tree Mode, if Function List Mode is required, set environment variable EPROF_FUNCTION_LIST_ENABLED (or registry value HKLM\SOFTWARE\Eccam\EProfiler\FunctionListEnabled for Windows CE build) to 1.
- 8. Run application.
- 9. The profiler log can be found in files named in format <code>eprof_thread_XXXX</code>.epl for each thread in current directory, or as configured by <code>EProfiler::ConfigureProfFile()</code> call.

Example code:

Profiling can be started and stopped at different scope, so it is possible to start profiling in a function and stop at anytime after that function has returned. Starting in a function and stopping in any function that is nested in that function is possible as well.



Important

Threads are profiled independently - each has to be explicitly started and stopped and each has its own profiling memory and log file.

2.3.1 EProfiler API

TEProfilerResult EProfilerConfigureFile(const char* p_prof_file_name)

Description

Configure profiler file name for the current thread.

This method can be called only before <code>EProfilerStart()</code> or after <code>EProfilerStop()</code>. If this method is not called, profiler will use default file name.

Parameters

p_prof_file_name - Pointer to the profiler file name to use or NULL to use default file name.

Return Value

EProfilerSuccess - success

EProfilerFailure - failure, the profiler has been already started

TEProfilerResult EProfilerConfigureMemory(size_t prof_memory_size, void* p_prof_memory)

Description

Configure profiler memory for the current thread.

This method can be called only before EProfilerStart () or after EProfilerStop (). If this method is not called, profiler memory will have default size and it will be allocated on heap. Default profiler memory size in call tree mode is 1MB (1048576 bytes). Default profiler memory size in function list mode is 40KB (40960 bytes).

Parameters

prof_memory_size - Profiler memory size in bytes to use or 0 to use default memory size. p_prof_memory - Pointer to memory to use or NULL to allocate memory on heap.

Return Value

EProfilerSuccess - success

EProfilerFailure - failure, the profiler has been already started or given memory size is too small.

void EProfilerStart()

Description

Starts profiling for the current thread.

void EProfilerFlush()

Description

Flushes profiling memory to the profiler file for the current thread.

This method stores entry and exit of virtual function InternalFlushing to measure consumed time by flushing. It can be called only between EProfilerStart() and EProfilerStop().

void EProfilerStop()

Description

Stops profiling for the current thread. This call flushes profiling memory to the profiler file and closes the file.

3 Performance Analysis

This section describes how to analyze logs with profiling data generated by embedded profiler.

3.1 Demangle function names in profiled application

Function names are resolved by the profiler using map files created during project preparation part, and the names are mangled. Performance Analyzer is able to demangle the symbols automatically for map files generated using the same compiler type as was used for Performance Analyzer build. So e.g. Performance Analyzer built using MSVC compiler can demangle map files from MSVC compiler, but not from GCC compiler. If you are unable to run Performance Analyzer built with the target compiler platform, you can convert the mapfile into a special demangled symbol file manually. The conversion utility is supported on all platforms supported by embedded profiler, so it can be done directly on the target platform. The resulting symbol file, together with the log file, are completely self-contained, and as such can be processed and analyzed on any platform, regardless of the platform they come from.

The following sections describe how to manually create this symbol file.

3.1.1 GCC, MinGW and MSVC compilers

Generate single symbol file from all map files generated during compilation by command:

```
PerformanceAnalyzer/'platform-name'/bin/EProfilerSymGen \
module1.map [moduleN.map...] ProjectName.sym
```

3.1.2 MSVC compiler (Windows CE)

Generate symbol file from all map files (if wathunk.map is present, .thunk.lis files are needed too) generated during compilation by command:

```
PerformanceAnalyzer/windows32-msvc-intel/bin/EProfilerSymGen.exe \ module1.map [moduleN.map...] ProjectName.sym
```



qiT

Post-build steps If it is easy enough to set up a post-build step for each project in your building environment, it could make generation even easier. Your post-build step just needs to run:

```
./EProfilerSymGen path_to_project_map_files/*.map ProjectName.sym
```

3.2 Performance Analyzer

Performance Analyzer is a PC GUI application for exploring log files generated by embedded profiler. The following steps describe basic usage of this application:

- The Performance Analyzer can be found in directory PerformanceAnalyzer/platform-name/bin where platform-name can be linux32-gcc-intel, linux64-gcc-intel, windows32-msvc-intel, windows64-msvc-intel, windows32-mingw-intel or windows64-mingw-intel.
- Run PerformanceAnalyzer.
- Select Menu File → Open to open profiler log with mapfile(s) or symbol file corresponding to the profiled application. Optionally, you can provide log file and symbol/map file names as parameters when starting the application. Use -h parameter for exact command syntax.
- There are several view types which can be opened from the menu View:

Call Tree

Displays function call tree of profiled application. This view is default for Call Tree Mode and it is disabled for Function List Mode.

Grouped Call Tree

Similar to Call Tree, but this view groups the same consecutive function calls as a simplification for large logs analysis. This view is disabled for Function List Mode.

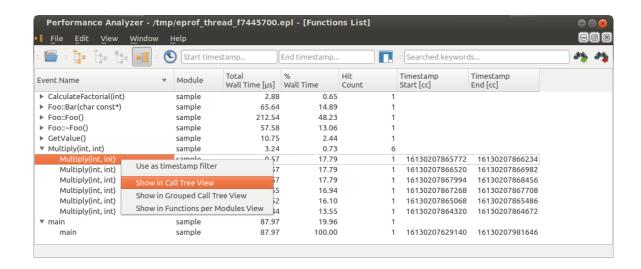
Functions per Modules

Displays all functions calls grouped by modules and function names. This view is disabled for Function List Mode.

Functions List

Displays all functions called by application grouped by function name. This view is default for Function List Mode.

• It is possible to show selected function call in other view using popup menu:





Tip

Suspicious functions can be easily found in the Function List view and then shown in their context using the Call Tree view.

- Search toolbars allows to search recursively in a tree view by function name.
- Opened log can be filtered using a range defined by start and end timestamp in menu Edit → Set filter. Filter can be then turned on/off with menu Edit → Timeline Filter. This function is disabled for Function List Mode.
- Time units can be changed from microseconds to processor cycles by menu item Edit → Set Profiling Parameters → Display cycle count [cc] instead of time [μs].
- Profiling overhead can be corrected using advanced features.



Note

Android and Windows CE Android and Windows CE platforms do not support Performance Analyzer, use Linux or Windows platforms instead.

4 Additional features

4.1 Filtering logs

The EProfilerLogConverter command line tool converts embedded profiler logfile from binary format to text format and vice versa. Therefore if the log contains functions that you are not interested in, it can be easily filtered out using EProfilerLogConverter in pipeline with a filter.

For example filtering log on Linux platform:

```
./EProfilerLogConverter eprof_log -s ProjectName.sym | \
grep -v 'UnwantedFunction()' | ./EProfilerLogConverter - filtered_eprof_log
```

The filter could be a simple grep based on function names or your own filter based on module name, timestamp range, etc.

Filtering can also be useful for reducing size of EProfiler log files.

The EProfilerLogConverter can be found in directory PerformanceAnalyzer/platform-name/bin.

4.2 Profiling overhead correction

Instrumentation comes with certain overhead which differs on each platform. This overhead is injected into measured duration of functions. As an optional feature, this overhead can be measured with EprofilerOverhead command line tool and used in Performance Analyzer to estimate duration of functions as if they were not profiled.

The following steps describe how to measure profiling overhead:

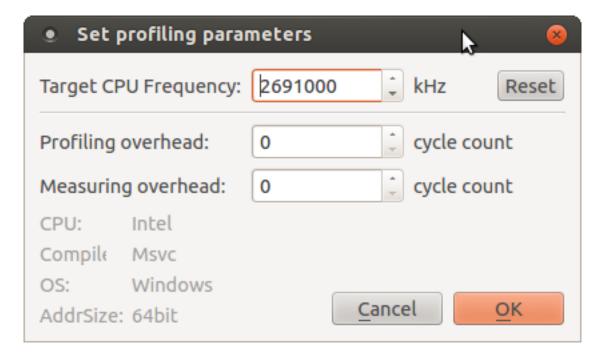
- 1. Find the EProfilerOverhead binary in directory EProfiler/platform-name/bin.
- 2. Run application:

```
./EProfilerOverhead num_of_repetitions num_of_overhead_measurements \
[-l eprofiler_log_file]
```

3. See help for overhead measuring guide:

```
./EProfilerOverhead --help
```

4. Use profiling overhead and measuring overhead in Performance Analyzer $Edit \rightarrow Set\ Profiling\ Parameters$ dialog:



4.3 Using EProfiler timer

EProfiler timer interface can be used as a cpu cycle accurate stopwatch. The following steps describe the usage:

1. In application sources, add:

```
#include "EProfiler/include/EProfilerTimer.h"
```

2. Measure elapsed time in processor cycles according to the following example:

```
EProfilerTimer my_timer;
my_timer.Start();
... // code to measure
const uint64_t duration_in_processor_cycles = my_timer.Stop();
```

3. Link application against appropriate EProfiler dynamic library.

A Step by step tutorial

Example source code for profiling:

```
#include <cstdio>
#include <ctime>

class Foo
{
   public:
      Foo();
      ~Foo();
      void Bar(const char* p_message);
```

```
} ;
Foo::Foo()
{
    printf("Foo initialization.\n");
Foo::~Foo()
    printf("Foo deinitilization.\n");
void Foo::Bar(const char* p_message)
    printf("%s\n", p_message);
int GetValue()
{
    return time(NULL) % 15;
int Multiply(int value1, int value2)
{
    int result = 0;
    for (int i = 0; i < value2; ++i)</pre>
        result += value1;
    return result;
}
int CalculateFactorial(int value)
    int result = 1;
    for (int i = 1; i <= value; ++i)</pre>
        result = Multiply(result, i);
    }
   return result;
}
int main()
{
    Foo foo;
    foo.Bar("FooBar");
    const int value = GetValue();
    const int factorial = CalculateFactorial(value);
    printf("Factorial of %d is %d.\n", value, factorial);
   return 0;
```

Linux/GCC Compile the example with the following command (assuming libEProfiler.so in the current directory):

```
g++ -finstrument-functions -o sample -Wl,-Map=sample.map sample.cpp \ libEProfiler.so
```



Note

Linux 64 When linking 32bit version of EProfiler library, -m32 flag has to be used:

g++ -m32 -finstrument-functions -o sample -Wl,-Map=sample.map sample.cpp \ libEProfiler.so

Generate the symbol file (assuming that EProfilerSymGen is located in current directory) (Optional):

./EProfilerSymGen sample.map sample.sym

For Call Tree Mode, run the example with automatic profiling (assuming libEProfiler.so in the current directory):

LD_LIBRARY_PATH=. EPROF_AUTOSTART_ENABLED=1 ./sample

For Function List Mode, run the example with automatic profiling (assuming libEProfiler.so in the current directory):

LD_LIBRARY_PATH=. EPROF_AUTOSTART_ENABLED=1 EPROF_FUNCTION_LIST_ENABLED=1 ./sample



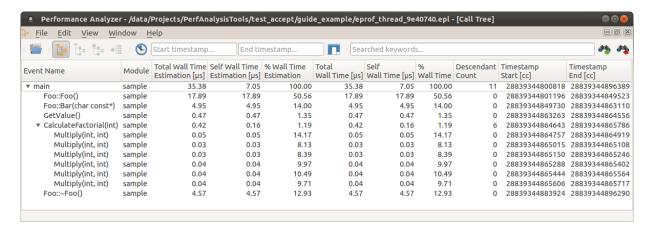
Note

Android ARM Make sure that Android target prerequisites are accomplished.

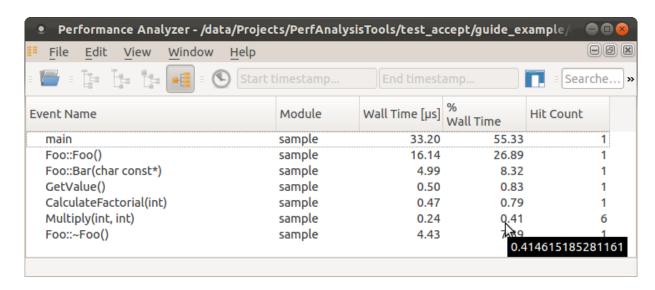
The profiler log will be saved in the current directory with name <code>eprof_thread_id.epl</code>, e.g. <code>eprof_thread_4f4.epl</code>. This profiler log can be analyzed by Performance Analyzer:



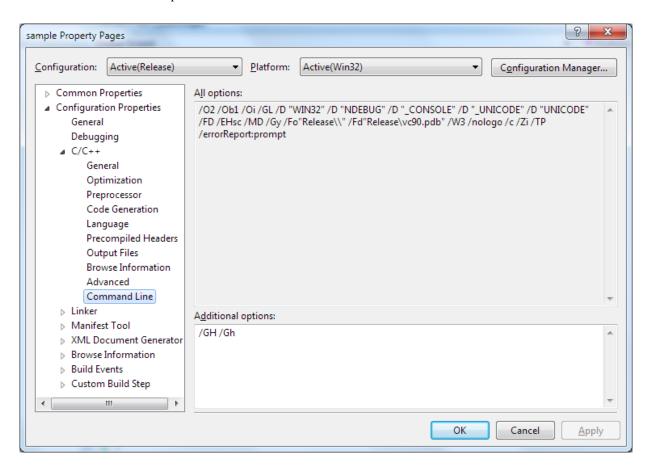
Call Tree Mode:



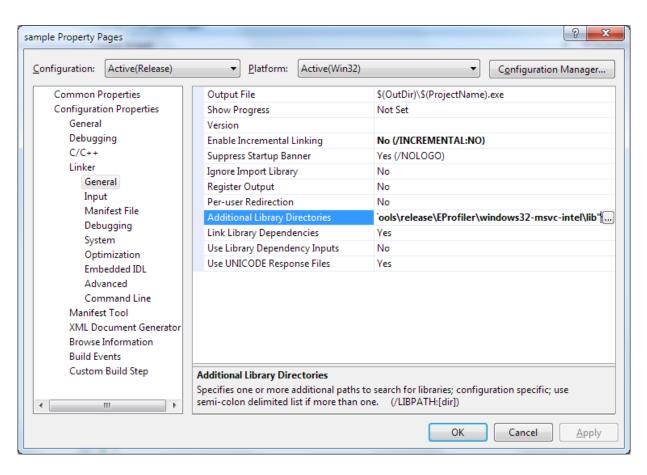
Function List Mode:



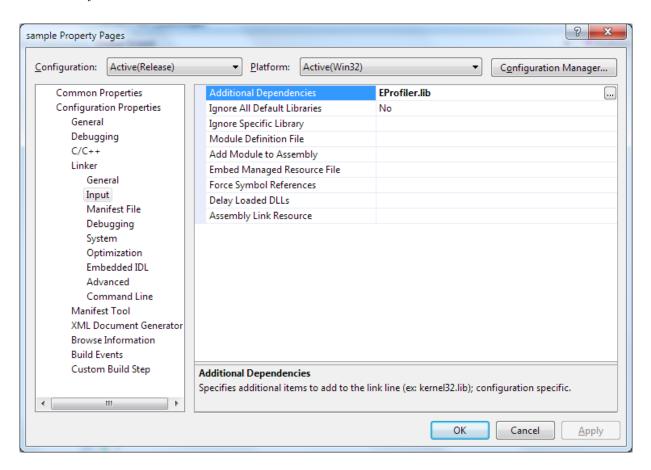
Windows/MSVC Ensure that compiler uses / Gh / GH switches:



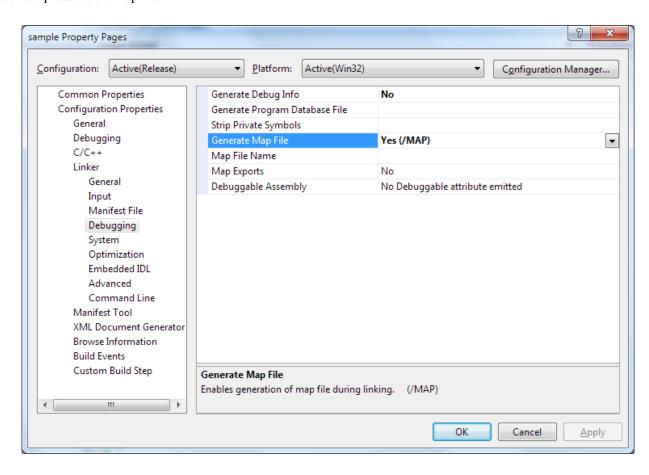
Ensure that linker has access to EProfiler.lib (in Additional Library Directories),



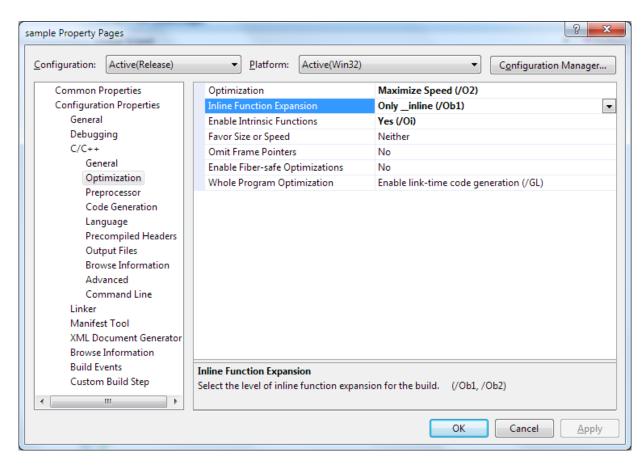
that it links to EProfiler.lib



and that it produces the map file:



This sample is so simple that if you use release mode all functions will be inlined and no call tree will be seen in Performance Analyzer. In this case, don't forget to switch off inlining to see all functions in sample:



Generate the symbol file (assuming that EProfilerSymGen.exe is in current directory) (Optional):

EProfilerSymGen.exe sample.map sample.sym

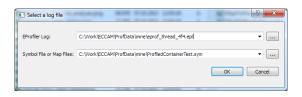
For Call Tree Mode, run the example with automatic profiling (assuming that embedded profiler is installed in F:\Projects\PerfAnalysisTools\release directory):

```
set EPROF_AUTOSTART_ENABLED=1
set PATH=%PATH%;^
F:\Projects\PerfAnalysisTools\release\EProfiler\windows32-msvc-intel\bin
sample.exe
```

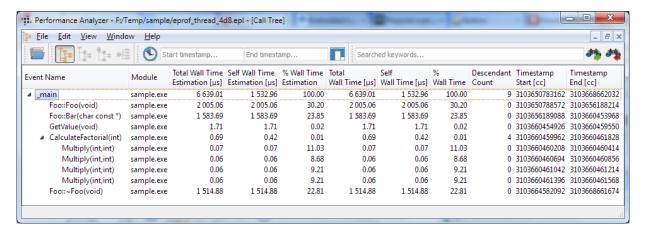
For Function List Mode, run the example with automatic profiling (assuming that embedded profiler is installed in F:\Projects\PerfAnalysisTools\release directory):

```
set EPROF_AUTOSTART_ENABLED=1
set EPROF_FUNCTION_LIST_ENABLED=1
set PATH=%PATH%;^
F:\Projects\PerfAnalysisTools\release\EProfiler\windows32-msvc-intel\bin
sample.exe
```

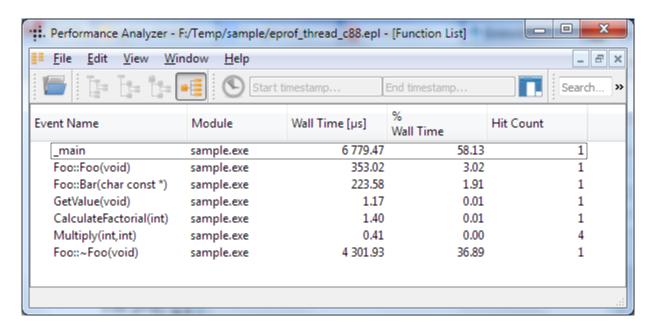
The profiler log will be saved in the current directory with name <code>eprof_thread_id.epl</code>, e.g. <code>eprof_thread_4f4.epl</code>. This profiler log can be analyzed by Performance Analyzer:



Call Tree Mode:



Function List Mode:



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