

Efficiency-Oriented Performance Testing

Covered last time...

What is performance testing?
Service-Oriented vs Efficiency-Oriented perf testing
Details of service-oriented perf testing
Developing a performance test plan

In this lecture...

Performing efficiency-oriented performance testing
→ Measuring throughput
→ Measuring resource utilization

Efficiency-Oriented Performance Testing

Measures how well an application takes advantage of the computational resources available to it

Remember...

Developers tend to care about efficiency-oriented numbers
User and management tend to care about service-oriented numbers
(not in all cases, of course)

Why efficiency-oriented performance testing?

1. More granular results than service-oriented
2. Easier to pin down bottlenecks
3. Able to increase hardware as necessary (or know if that is impossible)
4. Talk in a language developers understand
5. Can be easier to get large amounts of data

Example:

Rent-A-Cat has added a RESTful API showing which cats are available to rent. However, service-oriented testing has shown that it takes five seconds (minimum) to respond to /cats/list (which lists all available cats).

After some testing, you see that after being accessed, network usage is 1%, disk usage is 3%, memory usage is steady, but the CPU is pegged at 89% for five seconds.

Where would you look for solutions to this issue?

Possible Solutions

1. Faster hardware
2. Better page construction
3. Check for bad (e.g., O(n²) for sort) algorithms
4. Lots of malloc/free calls
5. Spread work to other cores/processors
6. Make it a distributed system
7. Cache listings

The service-oriented test can tell us the general idea of what is wrong, but to fix it, we often need to undertake efficiency-oriented testing.

If response time was 40 milliseconds, nobody would have cared, and there would have been little need for the efficiency-oriented testing.

Problems are rarely so cut-and-dry, and often there are good reasons that performance issues occur.

Example: Ruby 23-character limit

```
str = "0123456789012345678901" + "x"  
str = "01234567890123456789012" + "x"  
http://patshaughnessy.net/2012/1/4/never-create-ruby-strings-longer-than-23-characters
```

Also, remember...

"Premature optimization is the root of all evil." -Donald Knuth



Oftentimes, it makes more sense to do service-oriented testing first, then drill down with efficiency-oriented tests to find out where problems lie later.

Example:
Sorting a list of three integers after a kNN algorithm run.

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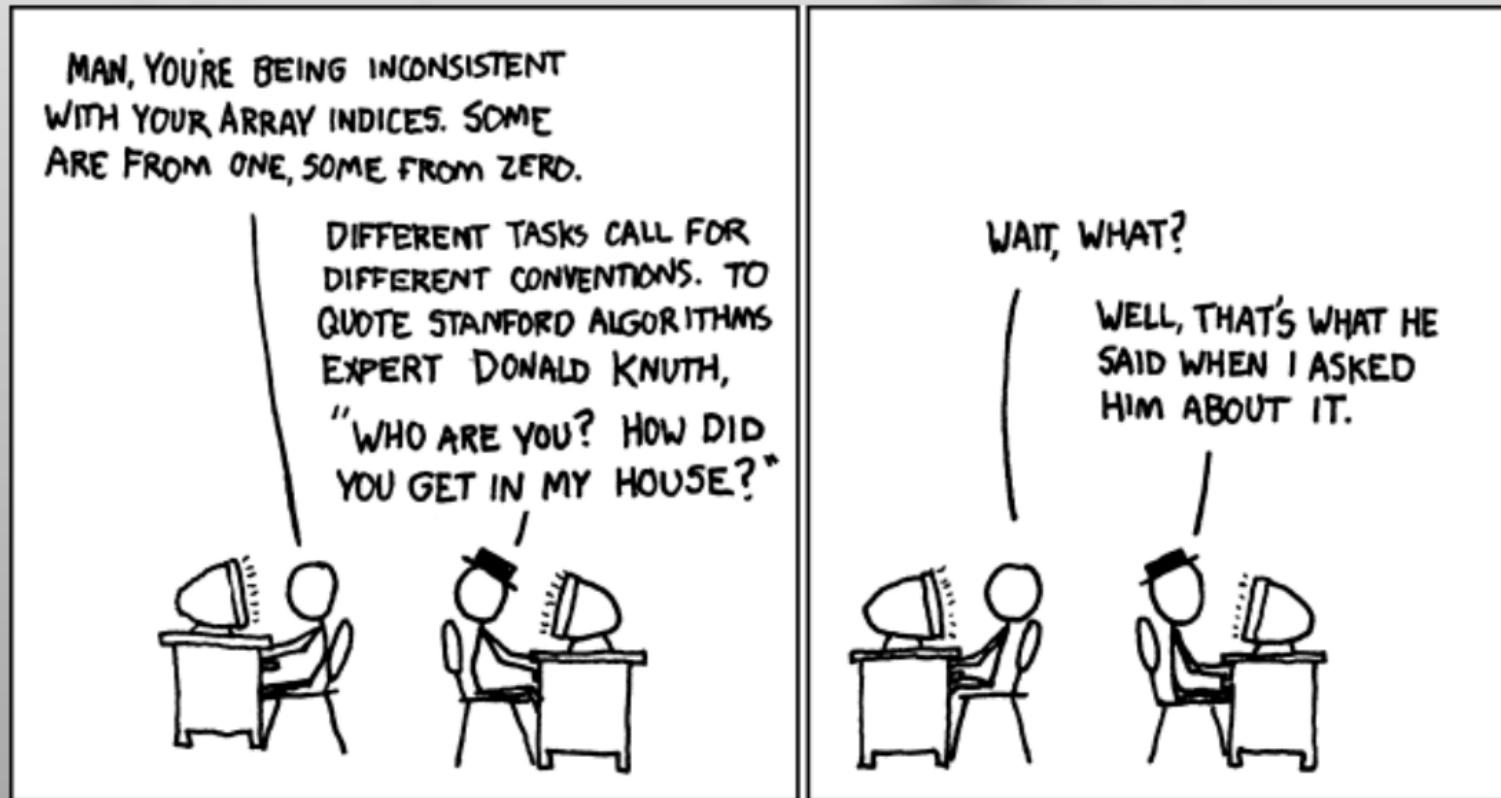
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Throughput Testing

What is throughput testing?

Measuring the maximum number of events possible in a given timeframe.

Examples:

You have a router, and you would like to know how many packets it can handle in one second.

You have a web server, you'd like to know how many static pages of a given size it can serve in one minute.

How is that different from service-oriented testing?

1. A user doesn't care about the number of users who can access a system, just about what it means for him/her
2. Often more granular (users don't care about, e.g., packets)

In modern testing, load testing is often used (remember we also used load testing to test availability?)

Example: JMeter

An open-source Java tool from the Apache Foundation, which simulates load on a network, server, or program.

Remember Selenium?

Imagine n Seleniums running in parallel in order to determine the impact on the web server.

Load testing is just one kind of throughput testing, but at the application level is used most often.

Lower-level throughput testing has its own tools, or you can roll your own with shell scripts.

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Measuring Resource Utilization

You really need tools for this
(unless you can tell by the sound
of your fan how many arithmetic
operations are occurring)

Tools will vary based on OS...
Windows Systems - perfmon
OS X - Activity Monitor or Instruments
Unix systems - top, iostat, sar, etc.

Say what you will about Microsoft
products, their built-in performance
monitor is really good.

A Very Simple Performance Test -
Watch CPU usage while you do something...
say, sync with the Bitcoin network.

Key Resources to Watch:
CPU Usage
Threads
Memory
Virtual Memory
Disk I/O
Network I/O

These are often called "counters".

Sometimes even more specialized data is
needed -

Disk cache misses
File flushes
Destination Unreachable message
IPv6 Fragments Received/Sec
Outbound Network Packets discarded
Print Queue "Out of Paper" messages
ACK msgs received by Distributed
Routing Table
2,194 counters by default!

Some notes on measuring CPU usage:

1. Modern CPUs are COMPLEX.
Understanding utilization is COMPLEX.
2. You really can't compare CPU usage on
different processors.
3. Task Manager will lie to you.
4. Resource sharing between cores will impact
your results.
5. Virtualization will mess you up, big time.
6. "Power-efficient" chips can give you bad
utilization results.
7. CPU utilization only makes sense to measure
over long periods of time.

Tips for measuring memory usage
1. Understand difference between private
bytes, virtual bytes, working set, etc.
Private bytes = What app has asked for
Working set = In physical memory*
Virtual bytes = Total virtual space
allocated
2. Caching can mess you up
3. Really only good for trends (e.g.,
whether or not you have a memory leak,
not where it is)

Performance monitoring of this kind is
VERY broad.

What's taking up CPU? Memory?
Packets? etc.

Figure out what's going on over the
network with a packet analyzer.

Such as... Wireshark!

Figure out what's going on in your program
with a profiler, like...

JProfiler!

Oftentimes, these things are overkill.
But knowing they're available can save
your bacon.

There's a big jump between "is our
app slow?" and "we are leaking
memory by never removing
ConnectionCounter objects, causing
more swaps and GC as a percentage
of CPU time, thus causing response
time to increase monotonically and
exponentially in relationship to
uptime."

The key to fixing performance
problems:

Determine if it is a performance
problem
Track down from top-level to low-
level
Keep track of performance
throughout versions

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***Remember - it's almost
always better to be **RIGHT**
than **FAST**.***



Performance testing is one of the most interesting aspects of testing, if you are interested in the more "developmental" aspect of testing.

Additionally, it's still not very well-researched and is not very formalized as a discipline, so there's quite a bit of room if you want to make a dent in it!

