



“D6.3.1 – Prototype and Evaluation of efficient Run-time Performance Profiler in OpenModelica”

“Sub WP 6.3: Debugging and performance profiling of system models in operation”

“Work Package 6: Modelling and simulation services”

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This document: Evaluation of the Performance Profiler

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Summary

The goal of this task is to investigate and evaluate the performance profiler applied on the development of a boiler model intended for dynamic analysis of Siemens combined cycle power plants.

The conclusion is that the profiler facilitates the work with modeling a lot.

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Glossary

OM Open Modelica

The screen looks like this after a successful execution:

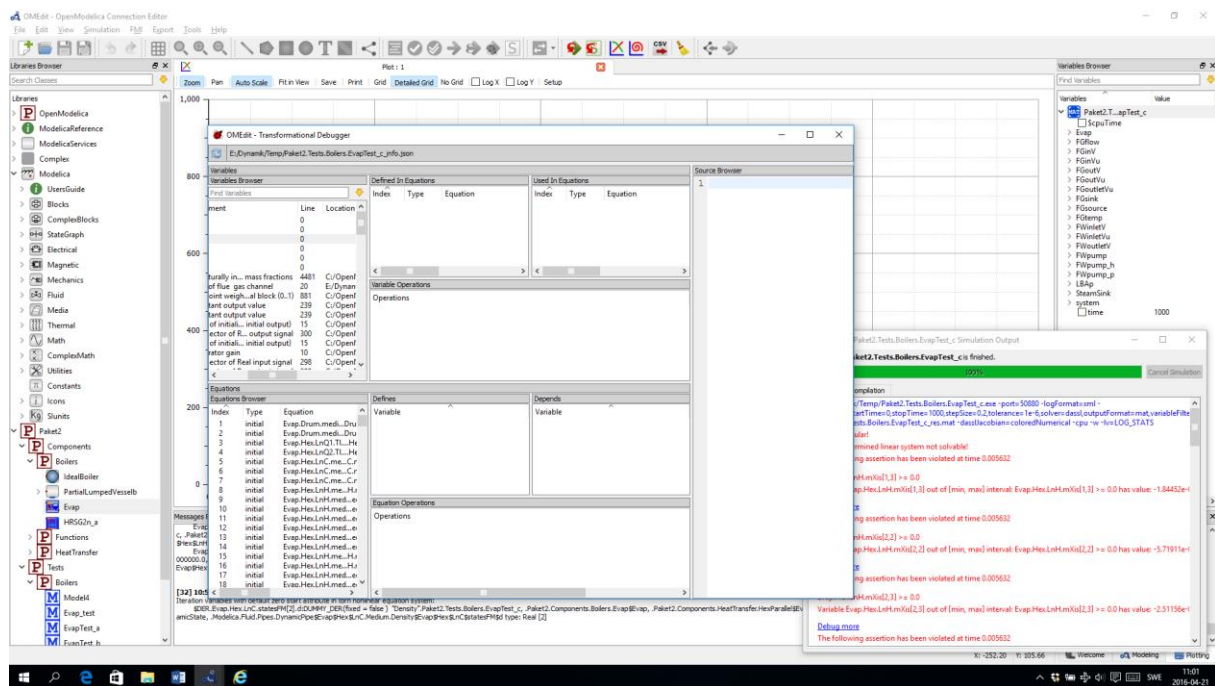


Figure 2 Output on computer screen after a successful execution with profiler activated (option all selected)

In the foreground is the a window Transformational Debugger that invoked by the selection of « Profiler All » in the simulation setup options for simulation flags. Behind that the « Simulation Output » window, giving the important information that 100% of specified simulation time is successfully reached, but also various warnings in red with an option to debug more. (The output window is better always placed in forefront, to see the progress of the simulation, or alternatively the plot window if it plots the progress continuously or at least frequent). In the background is OMEdit's main window, now displaying the plotting interface.

A closer look at the Transformational Debugger window gives following :

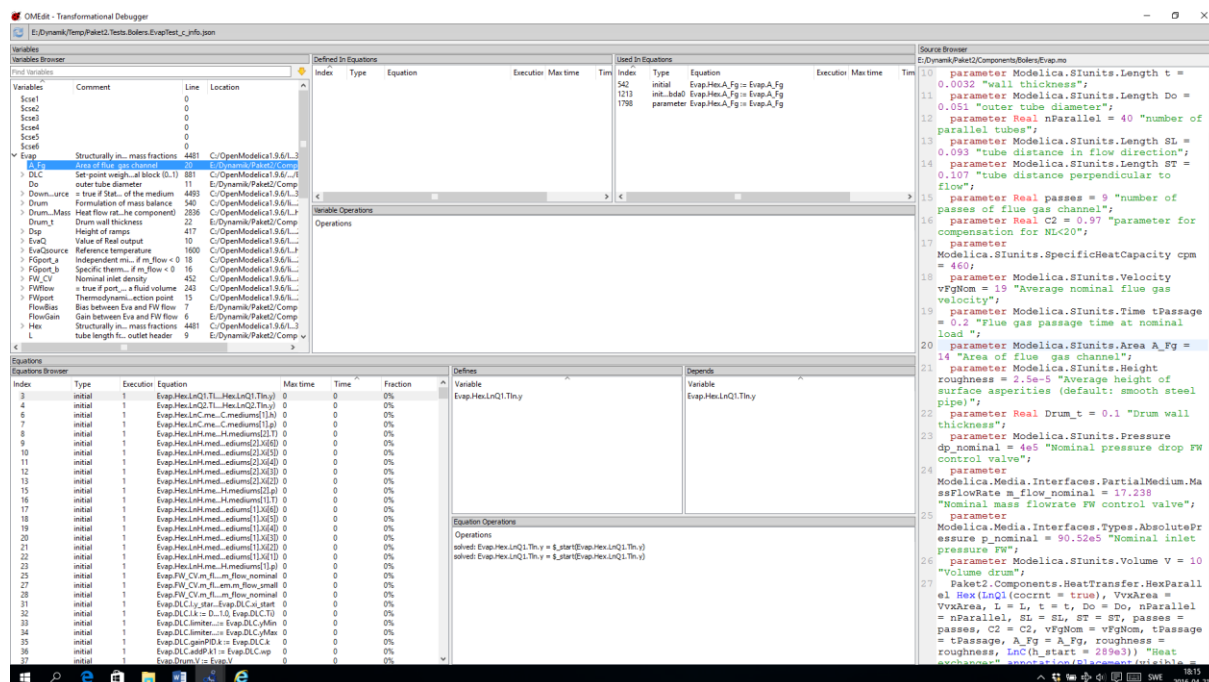


Figure 3 Transformational Debugger

To the left it has two browsers, one for variables and one for equations. Clicking on a variable will show :

1. where it is defined
2. where it is used
3. operations made.
4. the source code line that defines the variable value will be highlighted (source browser to the right)

All lines are truncated to allow all windows above to be seen. Expanding windows and scrolling displays all hidden text. I.e. there is an instant knowledge where a variable is used, which helps a lot to analyze consequences of a change.

The index presented gives the link to the equations used and presented in the equation browser. A clicking on a line in that browser gives

1. which variable the equation defines
2. what variables it depends upon
3. what operations that are made for the equation
4. where in the source code the equation is written

The equation browser gives the link between the C-code equation solved and the source code in the .mo files. This browser also displays columns for execution times, number of executions and total execution time, both as fraction of total simulation time and in seconds. Sorting by fraction or time gives the equation in order of time consumed.

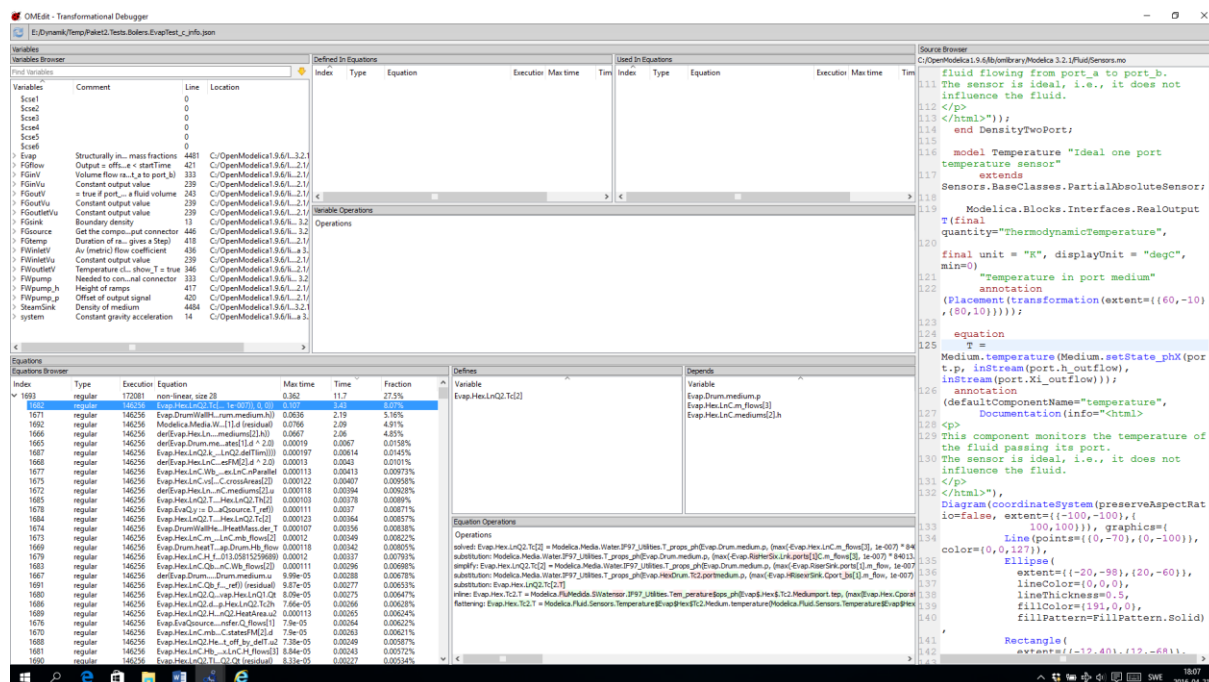


Figure 4 Investigation of heaviest equation after sorting by Time

The profiler gives that Index 1693, that defines the derivative of the enthalpy and pressure of the drum together with the derivative of the enthalpy of the outlet volume of the evaporator pipes ($..LnC[2]$), is by far the equation that takes most of the CPU power, 27.5 % while next equation takes 5 % (not shown in figure above). As there are three variables defined by this equation no equation is pointed out in the mo file (shown in Source Browser is a previous clicked index – a clearing of that window should be considered when selected variables and equations not corresponds to a line in the source code) nor are any dependencies shown.

Index 1693 is constituted of 28 other variables (size 28) and clicking on 1693 reveals indexes from 1665 to 1692 (28 equations). Those are the used equations by the solver and clicking on any of them shows the corresponding source code, and what variables the equation is dependent upon and the operations made.

The conclusion from this is that the Drum is the heaviest part of the model, and improvements of its equations should have the best chance of improving performance and shortening the simulation time.

Exploring the 28 equations reveals only one that is set up by the user (amongst the equations spending 85 % of the calculation time). The rest are equations from the Modelica Fluid library. To see the impact, by that equation on the performance, one of its the parameters where changed. The equation has a parameter `delTlim` that is limiting the heat transfer calculation preventing that the temperature differences becomes equal, thereby causing a simulation crash. Increasing `delTlim` value from 0.1 to 0.5 °C, which deteriorates the accuracy of the heat transfer calculation, gives that equations with index 1693 makes a minor reduction to 27.4 % from 27.5 % of the total time, but the simulation time (major part of the total time) is anyway reduced from 30.0 to 28.5 s (not shown).

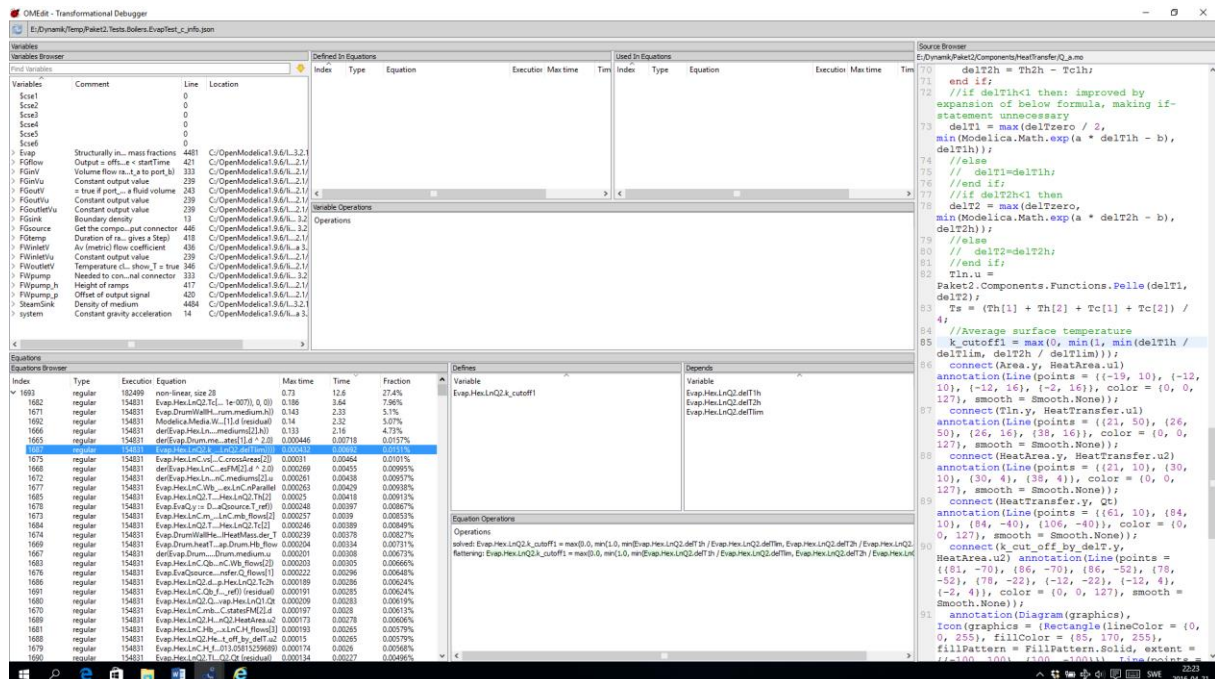


Figure 5 Profiler output after a minor adjustment

From that the user could conclude that changing delTlim , which rather drastically deteriorates the accuracy of the heat transfer, the resulting improvement on the performance for index 1693 is negligible, but the change any way influences the total time a bit more substantial.

2.2 Conclusion

One could conclude that the profiler is a very important tool for model optimization as you could easily see the link between a slow execution and the equations used. Compared to the alternative method where you only have the CPU curve together with plots of all other variables to guide you in the process of finding a good spot to improve, the profiler makes the process of performance optimization radically shorter.