

Dataflow Analysis

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Outline

- ▶ what is dataflow analysis? an intuitive understanding
- ▶ dataflow problems
- ▶ dataflow algorithms
- ▶ dataflow analysis and bug detection

History

1. 1970s, we want to know more about code so we can optimize the code
 - ▶ there exists any re-computation in the code?
 - ▶ there exists any useless computations?
2. Nowadays, we also want to know if the program will run correctly, what computation the legacy code is performing, ...

What is dataflow analysis?

What are the data usage patterns in a program?

- ▶ is this variable always holding a constant value?
- ▶ where a definition of a variable is used?
- ▶ do two variables always hold the same value?
- ▶ is this expression already "available" (computed) at this program point?

What is dataflow analysis

1. *dataflow analysis*: determining variable and expression relationships throughout a function or a program
2. formulated into a mathematical framework
 - ▶ to reason about the termination of dataflow analysis
 - ▶ to generalize a set of dataflow problems so we can use one algorithm to address them all

Dataflow problems

Three classical dataflow analysis problems

- ▶ Reaching definitions (null-pointer dereference): what definitions can reach a given program point
- ▶ Available expressions (performance issue): for each program point, what are the expressions available
- ▶ Live variables (memory leak): which variables are live at a program point

See ppt slides for example details

Generalizing dataflow problems

Defining a dataflow problem:

- ▶ What is the problem? (what are the dataflow facts to compute at each program point?)
- ▶ Applications in compiler optimization and software engineering
- ▶ The properties of dataflow problems:
 - ▶ backward or forward (determine the direction of the dataflow analysis)
 - ▶ may or must (determine how to merge values at the branches)
- ▶ Dataflow equations (local information): Gen, Kill, In, Out

Dataflow analysis

Generalizing dataflow analysis

- ▶ **Goal:** solving dataflow equations and determining dataflow facts/program information for the program points in the entire program
 - ▶ local information can be propagated along program control flow to influence other nodes
 - ▶ the dataflow facts will be stabilized and the analysis can be terminated?
- ▶ **Framework:** a set of dataflow propagation algorithms for a set of dataflow problems
- ▶ **Key of the algorithm:**
 - ▶ dataflow equation computes dataflow facts locally
 - ▶ dataflow algorithms: connect dataflow facts globally, especially stabilizing the dataflow facts/solutions in presence of loops via, e.g., fixpoint


Forward must data flow algorithm

```
Out(s) =  $\top$  for all statements s
W := { all statements }           (worklist)
repeat {
    Take s from W
    In(s) :=  $\bigcap_{s' \in \text{pred}(s)} \text{Out}(s')$ 
    temp := Gen(s)  $\cup$  (In(s) - Kill(s))
    if (temp  $\neq$  Out(s)) {
        Out(s) := temp
        W := W  $\cup$  succ(s)
    }
} until W =  $\emptyset$ 
```

Forward data flow again

```
Out(s) =  $\top$  for all statements s
W := { all statements }
repeat {
  Take s from W
  temp :=  $f_s(\prod_{s' \in \text{pred}(s)} \text{Out}(s'))$ 
  if (temp  $\neq$  Out(s)) {
    Out(s) := temp
    W := W  $\cup$  succ(s)
  }
} until W =  $\emptyset$ 
```

Transfer function for statement s



Further reading after classes

- ▶ backward algorithm
- ▶ worklist algorithm

Iterative Approach

Example - backward problem (live variables)

for $i = 1$ to N do $IN[B_i] = GEN[B_i]$

$OUT[B_{exit}] = \emptyset$

change = true

while change do

 change = false

 for each block B do

$OLDIN = IN[B]$

$OUT[B] = \bigcup_{S \in succ(B)} IN[S]$

$IN[B] = GEN[B] \cup (OUT[B] - KILL[B])$

 If $OLDIN \neq IN[B]$ then change = true

 end for

end while

Alternative Approach - Worklist Algorithm

Example - backward problem (^{very} busy expressions)

for $i=1$ to N do $IN[B_i] = \{ \text{All expressions} \} - KILL[B_i]$

$OUT[B_{exit}] = \emptyset$

Worklist \leftarrow All blocks

while Worklist $\neq \emptyset$ do

 get B from worklist

$OLDIN = IN[B]$

$OUT[B] = \bigcap_{S \in succ(B)} IN[S]$

$IN[B] = GEN(B) \cup (OUT[B] - KILL[B])$

 if $OLDIN \neq IN[B]$ then

 Add $Pred(B)$ to Worklist

endwhile

\cap - start with largest solution &
keep iterating till it stops
shrinking.

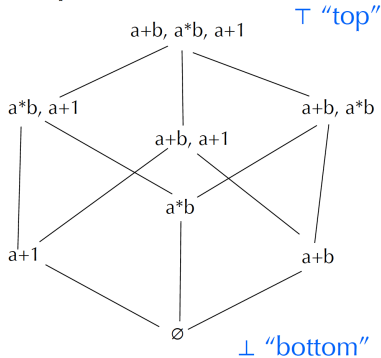
Dataflow analysis and lattice [Kildall:1973] [Kam:1976]

For analyzing termination and for generalizing the algorithms to a set of dataflow problems

- ▶ *Lattice* (L): the set of elements plus the order of these elements, it has a upper bound and a lower bound
- ▶ each dataflow problem has a lattice that describes the domain of the dataflow facts. That is, at each program point, the dataflow fact is an element of a lattice
- ▶ "order" among dataflow facts : element A is a conservative approximation of B , $A < B$, A and B are the set
- ▶ *transfer (flow) function* for dataflow problem: how each edge in lattice affects the dataflow facts $F : L \rightarrow L$
- ▶ *merge function* for dataflow problem: reduce to meet operator \sqcap (\wedge) on lattice

Data flow facts and lattices

- Typically, data flow facts form lattices
- E.g., available expressions

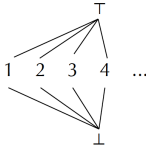


Partial orders and lattices

- A **partial order** is a pair (P, \leq) such that
 - \leq is a relation over P ($\leq \subseteq P \times P$)
 - \leq is reflexive, anti-symmetric, and transitive
- A partial order is a **lattice** if every two elements of P have a unique least upper bound and greatest lower bound.
 - \sqcap is the meet operator: $x \sqcap y$ is the greatest lower bound of x and y
 - $x \sqcap y \leq x$ and $x \sqcap y \leq y$
 - if $z \leq x$ and $z \leq y$ then $z \leq x \sqcap y$
 - \sqcup is the join operator: $x \sqcup y$ is the least upper bound of x and y
 - $x \leq x \sqcup y$ and $y \leq x \sqcup y$
 - if $x \leq z$ and $y \leq z$ then $x \sqcup y \leq z$
- A join semi-lattice (meet semi-lattice) has only the join (meet) operator defined

Useful lattices

- $(2^S, \subseteq)$ forms a lattice for any set S
 - 2^S is powerset of S , the set of all subsets of S .
- If (S, \leq) is a lattice, so is (S, \geq)
 - i.e., can “flip” the lattice
- Lattice for constant propagation



Example: Liveness analysis with 3 variables

$$S = \{v1, v2, v3\}$$

– V: $2^S = \{\{v1, v2, v3\},$
 $\{v1, v2\}, \{v1, v3\}, \{v2, v3\},$
 $\{v1\}, \{v2\}, \{v3\}, \emptyset\}$

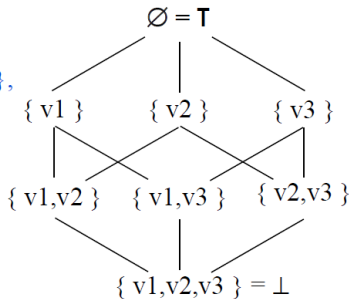
– Meet (\wedge): \cup

– \leq : \supseteq

– Top(T): \emptyset

– Bottom (\perp): \mathbf{v}

– F: $\{f_n(X) = \text{Gen}_n \cup (X - \text{Kill}_n), \forall n\}$



Which lattice to use?

- Available expressions
 - P = sets of expressions
 - Meet operation \sqcap is set intersection \cap
 - \top is set of all expressions
- Reaching definitions
 - P = sets of definitions (assignment statements)
 - Meet operation \sqcap is set union \cup
 - \top is empty set
- Monotonic **transfer function** f_s is defined based on gen and kill sets.

Monotonicity

- A function f on a partial order is **monotonic** if
 - if $x \leq y$ then $f(x) \leq f(y)$
- Functions for computing $\text{In}(s)$ and $\text{Out}(s)$ are monotonic
 - $\text{In}(s) := \bigcap_{s' \in \text{pred}(s)} \text{Out}(s')$
 - $\text{temp} := \text{Gen}(s) \cup (\text{In}(s) - \text{Kill}(s))$ A function f_s of $\text{In}(s)$
- Putting them together: $\text{temp} := f_s(\bigcap_{s' \in \text{pred}(s)} \text{Out}(s'))$

Termination

- We know the algorithm terminates
- In each iteration, either W gets smaller, or $\text{Out}(s)$ decreases for some s
 - Since function is monotonic
- Lattice has only finite height, so for each s , $\text{Out}(s)$ can decrease only finitely often

```
Out(s) =  $\top$  for all statements  $s$ 
W := { all statements }
repeat {
  Take  $s$  from  $W$ 

  In(s) :=  $\bigcap_{s' \in \text{pred}(s)} \text{Out}(s')$ 
  temp := Gen(s)  $\cup$  (In(s) - Kill(s))
  if (temp  $\neq$  Out(s)) {
    Out(s) := temp
    W := W  $\cup$  succ(s)
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} until W =  $\emptyset$ 
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Termination

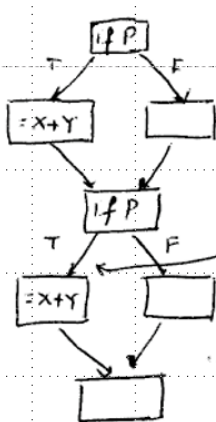
- A **descending chain** in a lattice is a sequence $x_0 < x_1 < \dots$
- The **height of a lattice** is the length of the longest descending chain in the lattice
- Then, dataflow must terminate in $O(nk)$ time
 - n = # of statements in program
 - k = height of lattice
 - assumes meet operation and transfer function takes $O(1)$ time

Dataflow analysis precision - conservative analysis

- ▶ For compiler optimizations, the dataflow facts we compute should definitely be true (not simply possibly true).
- ▶ However, we may miss optimization opportunities (not able to compute a complete and correct solution): two main reasons
 - ▶ Control Flow
 - ▶ Pointers & Aliasing

Dataflow analysis precision- control flow

We assume that all paths are executable; however, some may be infeasible.



$X+Y$ is always available if we exclude infeasible paths.

Dataflow analysis precision- pointer analysis

we may not know what a pointer points to:

1. $X = 5$

2. $*p = \dots$ // p may or may not point to X

3. $\dots = X$

Constant propagation: assume p does point to X (i.e., in statement 3, X cannot be replaced by 5).

Dead Code Elimination: assume p does not point to X (i.e., statement 1 cannot be deleted).

Dataflow analysis implementation

- ▶ Does a definition reach a point ? T or F, each variable definition is a bit, each program point has a bitvector
- ▶ Is an expression available/very busy ? T or F, each expression is a bit, each program point has a bitvector
- ▶ Is a variable live ? T or F, each variable is a bit, each program point has a bitvector

Intersection and union operations in dataflow equations can be implemented using bitwise *and* & *or* operations.

Practical implementation

- Data flow facts are assertions that are true or false at a program point
- Can represent set of facts as bit vector
 - Fact i represented by bit i
 - Intersection=bitwise and, union=bitwise or, etc
- “Only” a constant factor speedup
 - But very useful in practice

Dataflow analysis for bug detection

basic dataflow algorithms: what are the dataflow facts?

- ▶ How to detect uninitialized variables?
- ▶ How to detect memory leaks?

make the analysis more precise and less false positives

- ▶ How to detect infeasible paths
- ▶ How to make it more precise by considering pointer aliasing information
- ▶ How to track inter-procedural bugs?
- ▶ ...

Static analysis for bug detection

- ▶ construct a cfg
- ▶ map to a dataflow problem
- ▶ dataflow analysis
- ▶ extend interprocedurally
- ▶ further improve precision: add pointer analysis and infeasible paths detection

Further Reading

Lattice Theory by Patrick Cousot

Data flow analysis in Principles of Program Analysis