# Problem Description

In order to figure out the mapping relationship between the test cases and the functions in the source code of the target project, an approach is needed to statically or dynamically trace the execution of every function (including inline function or virtual function etc.) and record it.

# Candidate Approaches

## AspectC++ (Aspect-Oriented Programming)

Aspect-oriented programming (AOP) allows modularizing cross-cutting concerns in a single module, an aspect. Aspects can modify existing classes, but most commonly they provide 'advice' that runs before, after, or around existing functionality.

AspectC++ ([http://www.aspectc.org](http://www.aspectc.org/)) is an aspect-oriented extension of C and C++ languages.

For the IUT project, AspectC++ enables us to log the “signature” (type, name and scope) of every function before, after, or around its execution WITHOUT revising the source code of the target project.

### Basic Implementation

#### Coding

There are several concepts in AspectC++ which are essential for writing AspectC++ codes such as *aspect, advice, join* *point and pointcut etc.* (refer to <http://www.aspectc.org/doc/ac-quickref.pdf>).

Aspects are a special AspectC++ language element, which can be used to implement crosscutting concerns in separate modules. Aspect definitions have to be implemented in special “aspect header files”, which normally have the filename extension “.ah”. And in the definition of an *aspect*, we can define *pointcut* to describe where we want our aspect code to be “woven” and define *advice*s that execute aspect code when the target program reaches the *join point*s of the *pointcut*.

#### Compiling (Weaving)

AspectC++ requires an specific compiler to “weave” the code we write in the “.ah” file to the target program – ac++/ag++.

The program ac++ is a compiler for the AspectC++ programming language. It is implemented as a preprocessor that transforms AspectC++ code into ordinary C++ code. After the code transformation the output of ac++ can be compiled to executable code with ordinary C++ compilers like GNU g++.

The ag++ program provides a more intuitive frontend to ac++ in a GNU environment. It basically wraps the functionality of the aspect weaver and the c++ compiler into one single program.

The usage of ac++/ag++ is similar to g++, a simple example (assume “.ah” files share the same directory of the “main.cc” file) is

“ag++ main.cc –o main”

### Pros and Cons

#### Pros

1. Based on AspectC++ APIs, simple to implement.

This method is based on AspectC++, a well-built extension for C/C++, which provides rich APIs for us to use to solve our problem. The idea of AOP has been popular for years and has been widely known and accepted. It’s very simple for us to follow the AspectC++ reference to write aspect code and compile it.

1. No change of source code the target project.

AspectC++ allows us to weave our aspect code into the target program without modifying its code. It simply uses *advice* which runs before, after, or around existing functionality. Therefore, there is no need to make an extra copy of the target project and modify it.

1. Few LoC, reduce the possibility of error.

With appropriate uses of AspectC++ APIs, it’s easy for us to achieve our goal with few lines of code. The *match expression*s provided by AspectC++ allows us to easily match certain functions or variables with a given pattern. With less code comes less possibility of error of the program we write, which enhances robustness of the program.

#### Cons

1. Require a specific compiler to compile.

As is mentioned above, AspectC++ needs specific compiler to compile the aspect code, weaving it to the target program. Nevertheless, the usage of the specific compiler is quite similar to GNU g++. Actually, ag++ basically wraps the functionality of the aspect weaver and the c++ compiler into one single program.

1. Need to learn AspectC++.

It takes time to get familiar with the AspectC++ language elements and their usage. And There isn’t much support to find online for asking about issues that we may encounter during AspectC++ development.

1. Might have performance problem.

We’ve applied AspectC++ on some very simple C++ programs, add compared the time cost of compilation between ag++ and g++. It can be known from the result that the “weaving” process can cost some overhead. However, the time of compilation using ag++ seems to be nearly the same. The factors that affect the performance cannot be sure until we try some larger projects with more source code and more files.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Name* | #source file | #aspect file | Time for g++  (s) | Time for ag++  (s) |
| Helloworld | 2 | 1 | 0.267 | 1.210 |
| Modules | 2 | 4 | 0.030 | 1.173 |
| Coverage | 1 | 2 | 0.030 | 1.894 |
| Profiling | 1 | 2 | 0.032 | 1.204 |
| Singleton | 3 | 2 | 0.034 | 1.173 |
| Another\_demo | 5 | 1 | 0.272 | 1.188 |

# Decision