

The vw+ Debugging system

Introduction

This describes a lightweight tool for debugging a tcl/tk program. It has several features and benefits.

- ◆ Simple to install and use.
- ◆ Uses only core tcl/tk 8.6+ functions and optionally Bwidgets, works with 8.7a4 also
- ◆ Small footprint: 1000 lines of tcl/tk, 6 procedures and 1 global variable in 1 file
- ◆ Inserted into a program at any time with a single source statement
- ◆ Can instrument code dynamically and remove it as well
- ◆ Can view global and namespace variables and locals in a procedure
- ◆ Very script-able naturally – it is Tcl after all
- ◆ Can add debugging to only a select set of procedures
- ◆ With careful use, can have little or no impact on performance

This pdf describes a small self contained variable browser and debugger with breakpoints. It is all in a single file that is sourced into a program, usually as startup, but can be also be attached to a running program if it has the ability to open a console, either on windows or linux systems.

The single file defines 6 procedures:

- ◆ vw+ The viewer for global/namespace variables and arrays
- ◆ bp+ A low level breakpoint command that is called by the user's program
- ◆ lbp+ The same but for procedures with local variables
- ◆ go+ The command to resume from a breakpoint
- ◆ util+ Utility commands
- ◆ instrument+ The command to insert breakpoints into a procedure. (OO not supported yet)

There is only one global (array) variable used, and the file includes a section at the top where this array is initialized. A few of these initialization statements provide a way to configure certain options. Just edit the one file at the top to customize a handful of parameters. It will try to use the BWidgets package to add scrolling to frames, but can work without it, And of course it also needs Tk.

There is also 3 aliases that can be used (or comment out to not use) that provide 3 single letter abbreviations (v, g, and u, for vw+, go+, and util+) for the 3 commands typed in by the user.

When the file is sourced, it only sets values in its global array variable and defines the 6 procedures. It takes no other actions until some of the above commands are used. The vw+ command can modify the console (on it's first call) to make a null command be a repeat of the previous command. This lets one use the go+ command by holding down the enter key to repeat for rapid single stepping. This is one of the options that can be user configured by editing the file in the top section.

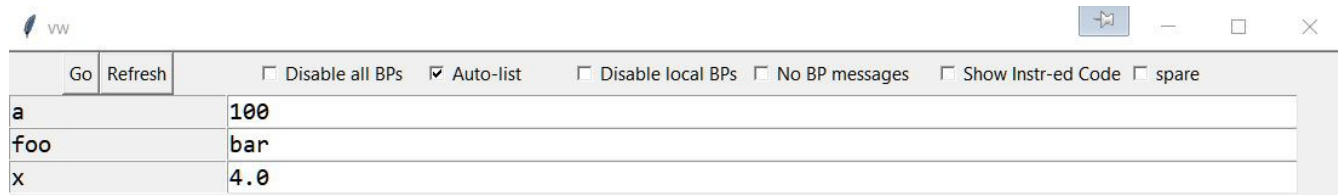
In TclOO class variables are stored in namespaces. If you know the namespace for an object, you can use the vw+ procedure to monitor those variables. When you create a new object, the TclOO system returns to you the namespace that the new object will use and And the bp+ lower level break-point can be used in OO methods as well. That's the extent of support for TclOO at present.

There are two ways to use this tool. The first is for small programs with code that is simply down the page outside of all procedures that makes use of global variables, perhaps including some in a namespace. This is also appropriate for TclOO, which can use globals and its object variables are stored in namespaces as well. The variables can be viewed in toplevel windows that are created by the vw+ command (aliased as v). This command creates a 2 column, spreadsheet like grid, with the variables in the left column and their values in the right (wider) column. The tool is designed to work with the console (including the console for linux) where commands may be entered and data is output to it by the debugger (and the user program).

Suppose we have some code at the beginning of our own tcl file, where we have added the code in red:

```
source {path/to/vw+source.tcl} ;# loads the vw+ debugger
console show
set a 100 ;# sets up some variables
set foo bar
set x 4.0
vw+ ;# show the global variables window
```

When we run this with wish we will get the following window plus a console (I suggest using one even on linux, where there's a wiki page on this and a TIP to include one on linux in the future) and one empty tk main window (the one called .)



The screenshot shows a window titled 'vw+' with a toolbar containing 'Go', 'Refresh', and several checkboxes: 'Disable all BPs' (unchecked), 'Auto-list' (checked), 'Disable local BPs' (unchecked), 'No BP messages' (unchecked), 'Show Instr-ed Code' (unchecked), and 'spare' (unchecked). Below the toolbar is a table with two columns. The first column lists variables: 'a', 'foo', and 'x'. The second column lists their values: '100', 'bar', and '4.0'.

a	100
foo	bar
x	4.0

Above we see our 3 global variables. There are, of course, several others used by the system which did not show. This is accomplished by one of the statements near the top of the source'd file which gets a list of all the initial global variables and so only shows the ones added since then. If you want a window to include all of them, you would enter a (string match like) pattern:

```
vw+ *
```

This parameter always has another * added at the end, so if you want only the global variables that begin with "err" you could enter,

```
vw+ err
```

Note that in these forms of the command, each vw+ command would reuse the window with the default name of .vw and you can see that in the title (less the dot). If you want multiple windows with different names one adds a second parameter. For example, if you want 3 windows,

```
vw+
vw+ * allglobals
vw+ err errorvars
```

Note, that you can either put these commands in your program file or type them into the console. This is where the alias comes in handy, and the command reduces to “v”.

```
v
v * allglobals
v err errorvars
```

We will use the full name in this document unless we are typing into the console, where we will use the alias for brevity.

This vw+ command takes several forms. Interactively, from a console, one can get help:

```
vw+ ?      (or v ? with the alias)
```

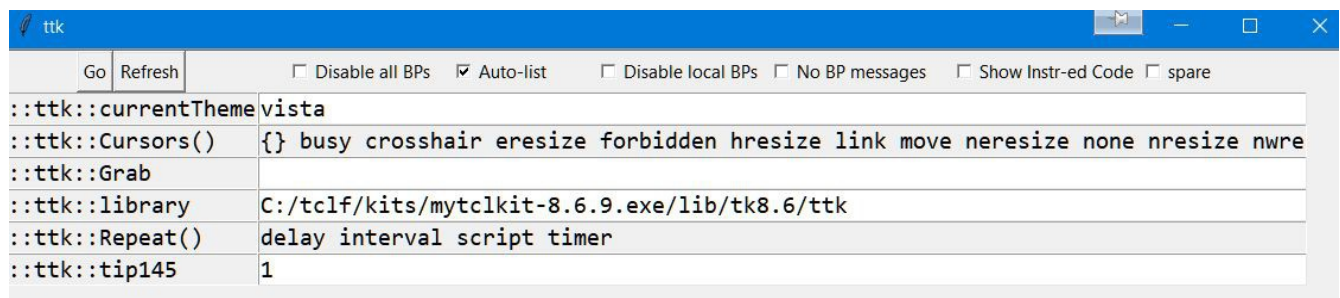
vw+ can take a list of variables or a pattern in the first argument. If a list, it must be 2 or more and be placed in {}'s.

```
v {foo bar baz} fooey
```

If you want to work with variables defined in a namespace, you enter the namespace name followed by two colons. For example, if you want to see the variables in the ::ttk namespace you would enter,

```
v ttk:: ttk
```

and you would get this: (you can also supply a pattern after the :: to see fewer variables, default is *):



The screenshot shows a window titled 'ttk' with a toolbar containing 'Go', 'Refresh', and several checkboxes: 'Disable all BPs' (unchecked), 'Auto-list' (checked), 'Disable local BPs' (unchecked), 'No BP messages' (unchecked), 'Show Instr-ed Code' (unchecked), and 'spare' (unchecked). Below the toolbar is a table of variables and their values.

::ttk::currentTheme	vista
::ttk::Cursors()	{ } busy crosshair eresize forbidden hresize link move neresize none nresize nwre
::ttk::Grab	
::ttk::library	C:/tclf/kits/mytclkit-8.6.9.exe/lib/tk8.6/ttk
::ttk::Repeat()	delay interval script timer
::ttk::tip145	1

With the variable names on the left and their values on the right we can see the variable *currentTheme* has the value *vista*. If the variable is an array, then the value (s) shown above are not the data, but rather

```
-----
The array ::ttk::Cursors()
-----
:::ttk::Cursors()      =
:::ttk::Cursors(busy)  = wait
:::ttk::Cursors(crosshair) = crosshair
:::ttk::Cursors(eresize) = size_we
:::ttk::Cursors(forbidden) = no
:::ttk::Cursors(hresize) = size_we
:::ttk::Cursors(link)    = hand2
:::ttk::Cursors(move)    = fleur
:::ttk::Cursors(neresize) = size_ne_sw
:::ttk::Cursors(none)    =
:::ttk::Cursors(nresize) = size_ns
:::ttk::Cursors(nwresize) = size_nw_se
:::ttk::Cursors(sresize) = size_nw_se
:::ttk::Cursors(sresize) = size_ns
:::ttk::Cursors(standard) = arrow
:::ttk::Cursors(swresize) = size_ne_sw
:::ttk::Cursors(text)     = ibeam
:::ttk::Cursors(vresize)  = size_ns
:::ttk::Cursors(wresize) = size_we
```

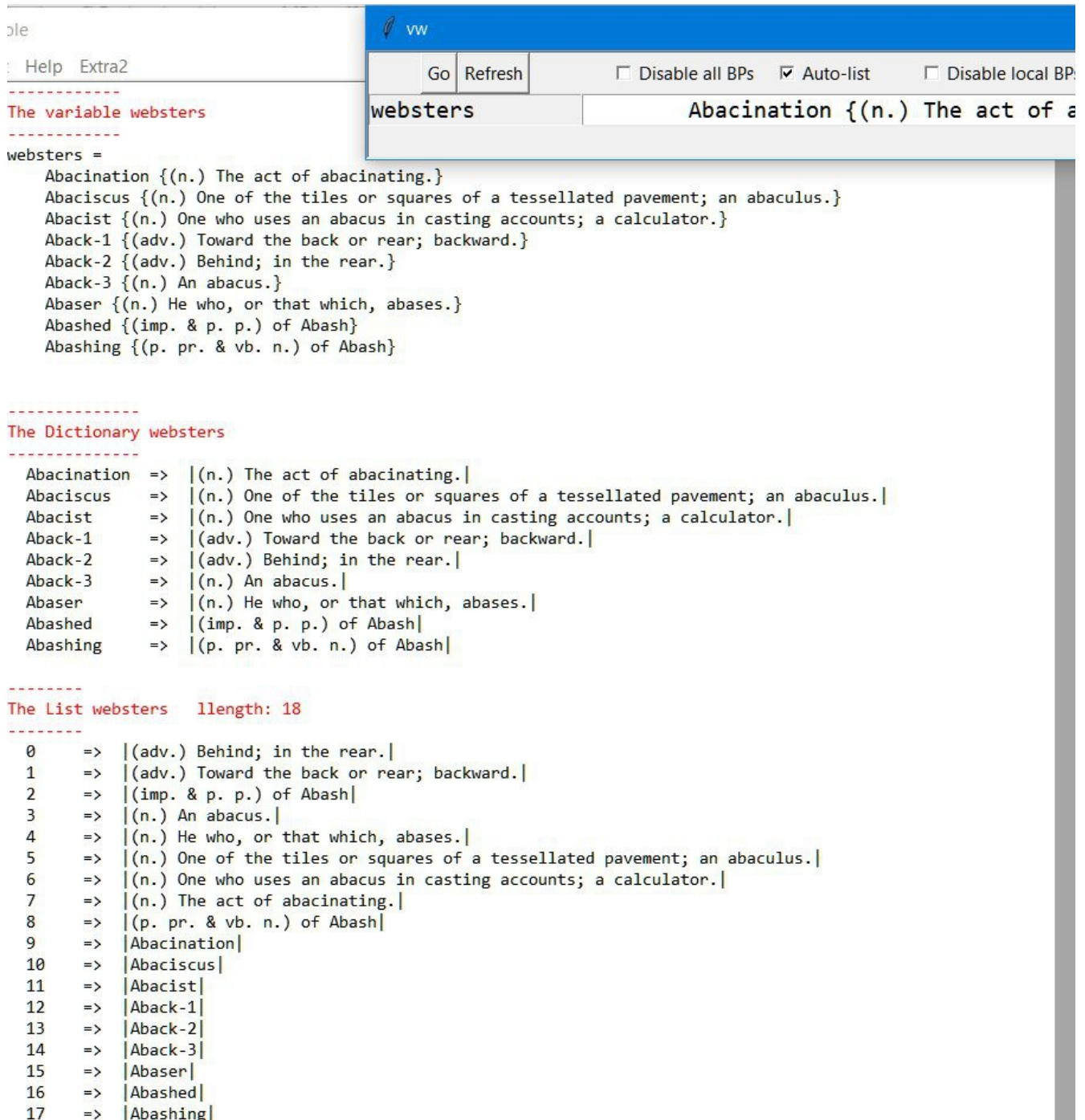
the indices. If you want to see the values of an array, you would *left click on the variable name*. For

example, the *Cursors* array produced the above on my windows 10 system (onto the console):

If you are not using a console on linux, this output would go to the terminal window (stdout). It uses the tcl supplied [parray] command to do the output. Note, some output goes to *stderr*, since with a console, this produces output in *red text*.

List and dictionary display

A *shifted left click* on a variable will attempt to format the output as a dictionary variable. For example



The screenshot shows a Tcl console window with the following output:

```
-----
The variable websters
-----
websters =
  Abacination {(n.) The act of abacinating.}
  Abaciscus {(n.) One of the tiles or squares of a tessellated pavement; an abacus.}
  Abacist {(n.) One who uses an abacus in casting accounts; a calculator.}
  Aback-1 {(adv.) Toward the back or rear; backward.}
  Aback-2 {(adv.) Behind; in the rear.}
  Aback-3 {(n.) An abacus.}
  Abaser {(n.) He who, or that which, abases.}
  Abashed {(imp. & p. p.) of Abash}
  Abashing {(p. pr. & vb. n.) of Abash}

-----
The Dictionary websters
-----
Abacination => |(n.) The act of abacinating.|
Abaciscus   => |(n.) One of the tiles or squares of a tessellated pavement; an abacus.|
Abacist     => |(n.) One who uses an abacus in casting accounts; a calculator.|
Aback-1     => |(adv.) Toward the back or rear; backward.|
Aback-2     => |(adv.) Behind; in the rear.|
Aback-3     => |(n.) An abacus.|
Abaser      => |(n.) He who, or that which, abases.|
Abashed     => |(imp. & p. p.) of Abash|
Abashing    => |(p. pr. & vb. n.) of Abash|

-----
The List websters    llength: 18
-----
0 => |(adv.) Behind; in the rear.|
1 => |(adv.) Toward the back or rear; backward.|
2 => |(imp. & p. p.) of Abash|
3 => |(n.) An abacus.|
4 => |(n.) He who, or that which, abases.|
5 => |(n.) One of the tiles or squares of a tessellated pavement; an abacus.|
6 => |(n.) One who uses an abacus in casting accounts; a calculator.|
7 => |(n.) The act of abacinating.|
8 => |(p. pr. & vb. n.) of Abash|
9 => |Abacination|
10 => |Abaciscus|
11 => |Abacist|
12 => |Aback-1|
13 => |Aback-2|
14 => |Aback-3|
15 => |Abaser|
16 => |Abashed|
17 => |Abashing|
```

The 'vw' window shows the variable 'websters' and its value: 'Abacination {(n.) The act of abacinating.}'

Also *a control left click* will format as a simple list, but in a single column and unsorted, so in the order in the list, while *an alt left click* will output the list sorted using -dictionary as the lsort option. | bars | are added so if there are any trailing or leading spaces, they are easier to see.

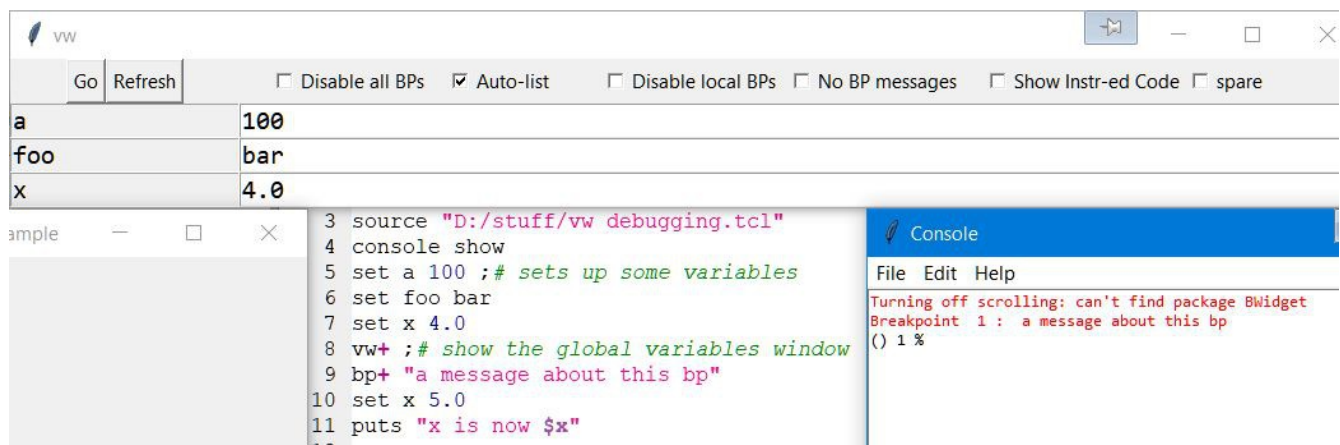
The window also has a few buttons and check-boxes. They are for use with break-points. Two of the procedures used for break-points are **bp+** and **lbp+**. The bp+ command uses the vwait tcl command to wait until a variable is set which is part of the event system that most gui programs use. It is while the program is waiting at the point where the bp+ or lbp+ commands are made that one can view the several windows that might be open. The global or namespace variables will all be up to date as of the point of the breakpoint call. The console will be available to type further commands including adding more variable windows using the vw+ command.

Globals and Namespace variables can be changed by typing into the section on the right, except for arrays. They are grey'd out and are readonly. You can copy the indices, but you can't change their values. Of course, you can change the array's values in the console with a set statement or any thing else that you might run, such as calling some command or a procedure you have written.

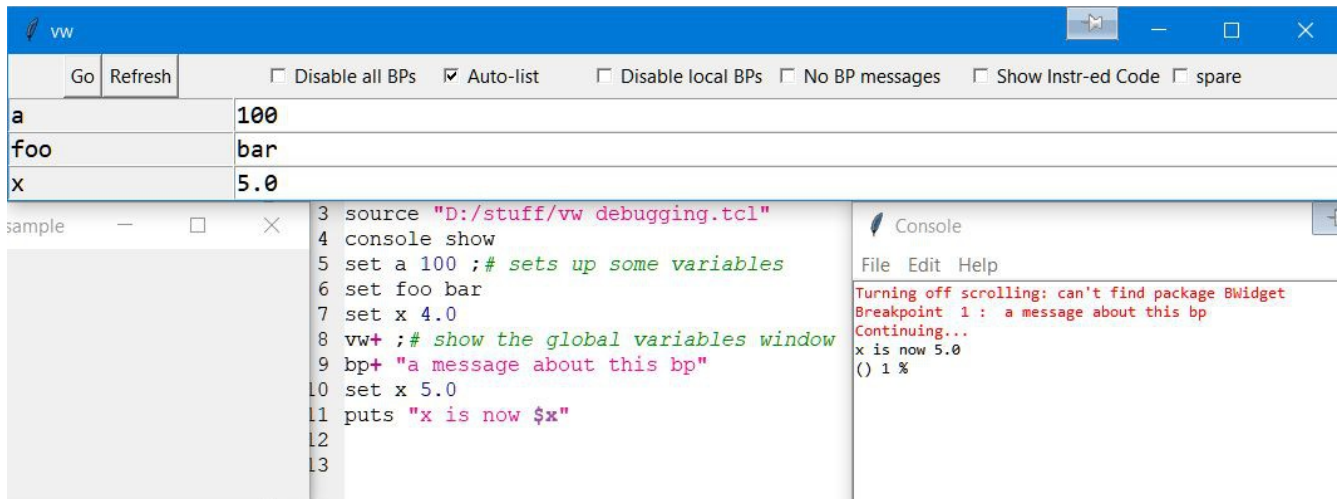
The button called “**Go**” is used to continue from a breakpoint. Suppose we add a break-point to the program (shown in **red**), which is followed by a change to the variable x.

```
source {path/to/vw+source.tcl} ;# loads the vw+ debugger
set a 100 ;# sets up some variables
set foo bar
set x 4.0
vw+ ;# show the global variables window
bp+ "a message about this bp"
set x 5.0
puts "x is now $x"
```

Running this program will result in a pause and the message in the first parameter (optional) would be shown on stdout (or the console). It might look like so (shown on top of a text editor window):



At this point you can continue by clicking the go button. This would set the value of x to 5.0 which you will see in the variable window called vw since the vw+ command did not enter a window name. The puts statement will also have run, outputting its data to the console:



At this point, the program will have reached the end of the file, but will not exit, since it's a tk event program and it will pause in the event loop. You can check the variable windows to see the final values of the variables. The only other actions at this time would be to exit by closing the tk main window or you could type in commands to the console. You could also type exit to quit.

That is the simple method where there are no procedures. For procedures, with dynamic data it gets a bit more interesting.

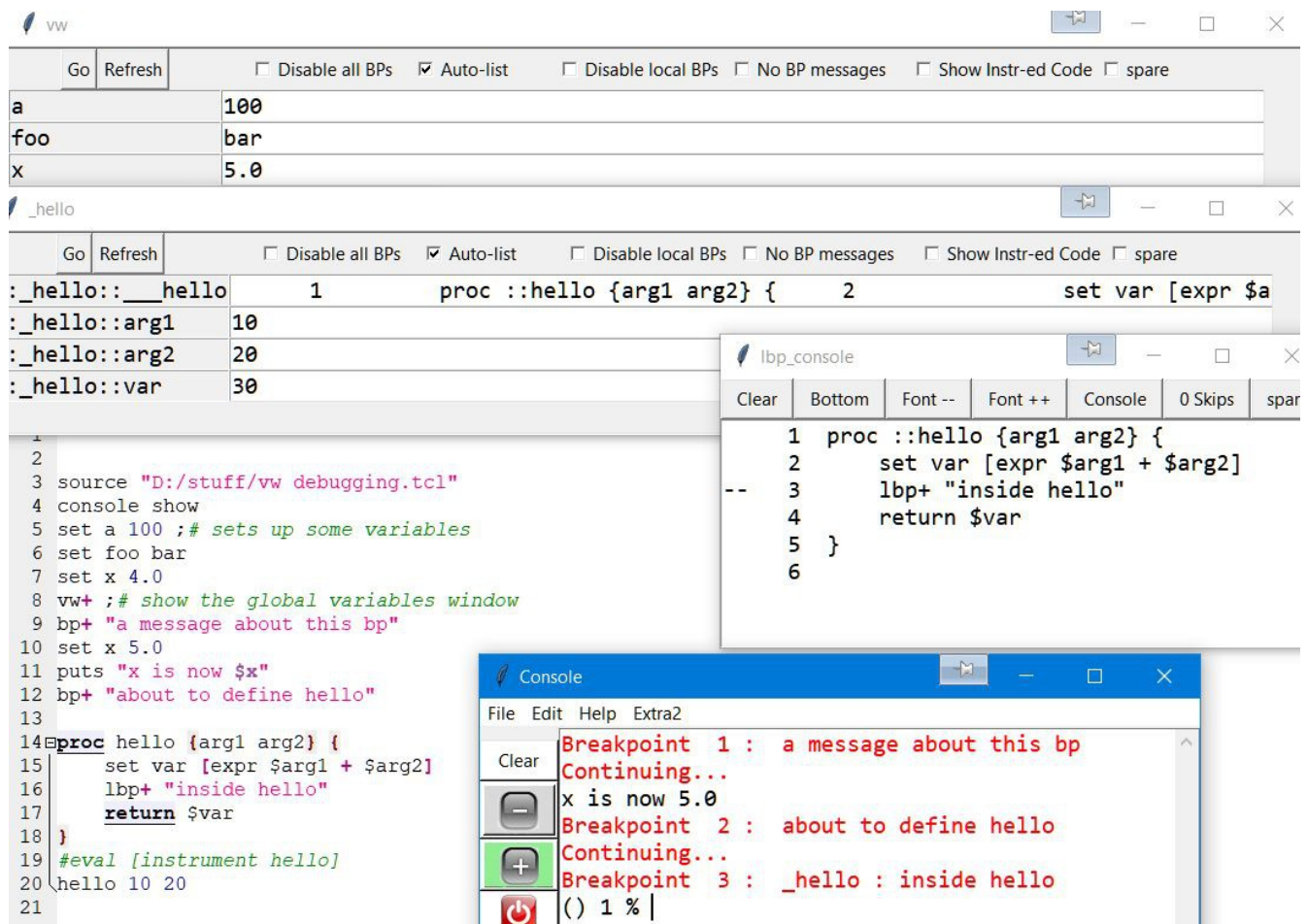
Working with Procedures

Procedures are handled a bit differently. In that case, you would use the **lbp+** command for a breakpoint instead. Suppose we now have defined a procedure "hello" like so,

```
source "D:/stuff/vw debugging.tcl"
console show
set a 100      ;# sets up some variables
set foo bar
set x 4.0
vw+           ;# show the global variables window
bp+ "a message about this bp"
set x 5.0
puts "x is now $x"
bp+ "about to define hello"

proc hello {arg1 arg2} {
    set var [expr $arg1 + $arg2]
    lbp+ "inside hello"
    return $var
}
hello 10 20
```

and when we run this, we click go 2 times. We would then see these windows:



* Note this is just a modified console, but otherwise its just the same. I didn't run with the regular tcl console for the screenshot. Ignore for now the commented `eval` command, it will be discussed below.

What we see now, is that on reaching the `lbp+` command with the label “inside hello” 2 more windows have appeared. One is called `_hello` (the `_` is added by the debugger, explained later) and the other is called `lbp_console`. This method doesn't actually display the local variables, but rather it copies them into a namespace and then uses the namespace viewer command from `vw+`. The `_` is added in case the user might want to have a namespace which is the same as the procedure.

Care should be taken modifying the namespace copies as there new values are now copied back to the local variables in the procedure `hello`. But not arrays and not the variable args.

The second window that shows up is used to list the current source code for the `hello` procedure. The “`__`” points to where the program has stopped on the breakpoint.

Note that the `lbp+` procedure will need a unique comment, since that is how the debugger finds the current line to display the “`--`”. There can be a 3rd parameter to the `lbp+` which would be used instead and should be a unique text string as well. This is also used when we get to the next section on instrumentation. **NOTE:** break-points are NOT recursive, do not call a procedure from the console that invokes a break-point when the program is waiting at a break-point. `bp+` break-points keep a level count and will ignore any recursive calls. `lbp+` recursive break-points might even crash.

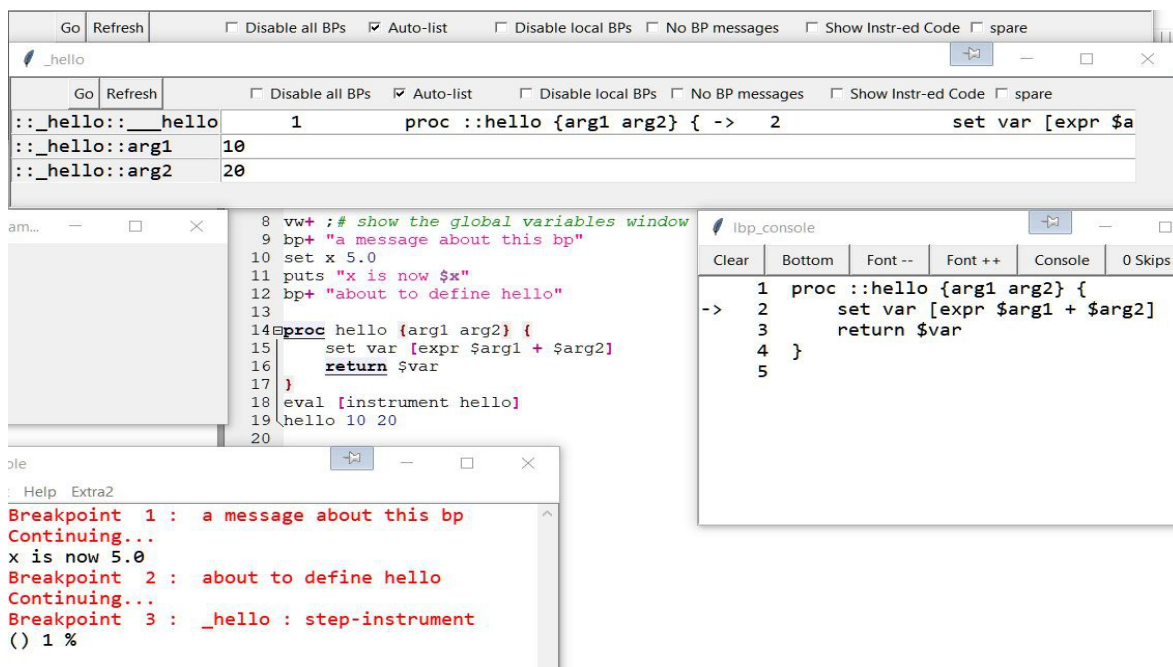
Instrumentation

Since it is sometimes useful to also single step a program, there is an experimental work in progress that can redefine a procedure by adding calls to lbp+ with a fixed comment but a unique id. The command `[instrument+ <proc> ?options?]` takes one argument, the name of a procedure, and using tcl introspection will add the breakpoints and produce a new procedure text that can be `[eval]`'d to replace the current definition. One uses this after the proc is defined, of course. The commented line in the above is how one would go about that.

Note there is one additional variable in the window, the first line `__hello` which holds the text of the procedure, with line numbers and the current position indicator. This can be clicked on and it will be written to stdout (console). If more than one proc are instrumented, and one calls the other, the last position in the procedure will be saved in that text. So, if you are stepping through a lower level proc, you can go back to the caller data window and click on the proc name and it will show you where you came from. There is only one window with the source code.

When the program is being debugged, the normal case is to hide the instrumentation, but there's a checkbox that can enable it's display, in case the instrumentation was faulty. When you click on that checkbox (show instr-ed code) you will have to step at least once for the extra code to display.

With instrumentation, one does not need to manually add breakpoints to the code. And when stepping, one will see a different indicator for the instrumented lines `"->"`. The lbp+ command will call the debugger's `vw+` command on each step. It will update variables but otherwise reuse the window. If the window is closed, the next step will create another one.



Here we see the `lbp_console` with a `->` instead of `-` and it stopped on the first statement. We also removed the manual break-point from previously, since we no longer needed it. In the text editor window, we see that the `[eval]` statement has been enabled, and `hello` is called with 2 parameters. The window reflects those values, of 10 and 20. The reason the variables show up as `::_hello::arg1` and

similarly for `arg2`, is that they have been copied to those namespace variables. It is those variables that are actually being displayed. Currently, if one types into those entry boxes, the values will appear to change, and they are reflected back to the locals they came from in the `hello` proc. As mentioned previously, that's only for scalars at present, and `args` seems special so it's not sent back.

Since single stepping can be tedious, the `go+` command (abbreviated `g`) takes an argument, a number of steps to go. So,

```
g 100
```

will run the program until 100 breakpoints have been reached. This is the total count and not just specific to the proc which was paused when you entered the command. There's no gui way to do this at present, you need a console to type into.

While it is automatically stepping, it delays updating the windows for performance reasons. The globals windows should remain updated, however.

The checkbuttons are,

disable all bps – this will cause all breakpoints to be ignored. The one checkbutton is linked to all the others in any other data window.

Auto-list is on by default and causes the proc code window to be updated. If this is off, it will not, which might make the program run a bit faster. It's specific to that procedure only.

Disable all local bp's is a window and procedure specific option. It's a way to step out of a procedure. Windows that are not proc windows have no effect if that checkbutton is clicked.

No bp messages will suppress the message at a breakpoint as well as the continuing messages. Also window specific.

Show instr-d code will (after at least one step) show the code in the text window along with the instrumentation. Window specific.

The Instrumentation process

The `instrument+` procedure uses several `[info]` calls to reconstruct the procedures. For the most part, the same text is returned; however, there are some differences. The most important one is that line continuation is removed. This affects the look, but more importantly the line numbers. This is good and bad. The good is that the `instrument+` proc doesn't need to worry about them, and the line numbers that are shown by the debugger will agree with line numbers in an error traceback report.

The bad thing is, well, it's not the true source code. But maybe that's not so important.

There is one other issue which is on-the-line comments. The `instrument` proc will generally append statements using a `;lbp+ step-instrument id#####` with a long number so it doesn't accidentally appear in the code somewhere else. When there's a `;` at the end of a statement, appending to that will have no affect when the program is run. To counter that, the `instrument` proc has a regular expression in a

regsub command that looks for ;# (or ;## or any number of #'s) with space or tab around it. But it also specified negative look-ahead for a following double quote, which would indicate that the ;# is likely inside a pair of quotes. So, if there's a double quote on the line following the ;# then the instrumentation will not be done for that line. Also, if there's no white-space before and after or between the ; and the # it won't work. All that really means is that there will be some statements that don't stop on the stepping. The show instrument code option can be used to see if that's the case or not. The user might add a manual lbp+ break-point if one really needs to stop there.

Also, this instrument-er assumes a certain coding style. Control structures all expect to look like a style that is popular with tcl developers. For example, a foreach loop and a multi-way if would look like so,

```
proc {} {
  foreach item list {
    ...
  }

  if {condition} {
    ...
  } elseif {condition} {
    ...
  } else {
    ...
  }

  # comment

  puts "this is a test ;# of a string"
  puts "this has a comment on line" ;# comment
}
```

← instrument here
 ← instrument here
 ← instrument here for mostly all simple statements completely on 1 line
 ← instrument here
 ← instrument here
 ← instrument here
 ← instrument here
 ← instrument here
 ← instrument here
 ← do not instrument here on a blank line
 ← do not instrument here on a comment (trims on left)
 ← do not instrument ;# followed by a "
 ← instrument before this → ;#

So, the open braces are at the end of the line, rather than on, say, the next line. However, to do that would cause a tcl error, so maybe it doesn't really matter, as the opening brace, if on the next line, would require that a backslash were placed on the line with the foreach or if statements. Then the introspection would return the proc body as though the newline (and the \) were not really there. But it's worth mentioning, since it's not that easy to parse a tcl program. It does use [info complete] however.

There is a problem with switch statements and if used, one cannot instrument them between the cases in the switch, since they get interpreted as another case in the switch, and worse, one that has no body. So, the code can't attach a breakpoint at the end of a } which is normally the case. For that, there is one option, so one can call the instrument as follows:

instrument+ procedure ?-norb

which is short for no right brace. If this must be used, then one can manually add breakpoints at the places they won't occur. For example,

In the below proc , the only possibility is to manually add breakpoints and set the -norb option. It's ok if a manual breakpoint is appended with another breakpoint, it will just take 2 go's to continue and you will be able to tell since the current line indicator will change from → to – . If a switch statement is found while processing, the -norb switch will be automatically turned on from that point on.

```

proc range {cmd {arg {}}} {
    global RANGE
    switch -- $cmd {
        "max" {
            set RANGE(max)      $arg
            set RANGE(current) -1
        } ← cannot have a statement here, it will be considered the next case
        "next" {
            upvar $arg var
            incr RANGE(current)
            set var $RANGE(current)
            if { $var < $RANGE(max) } {
                return 1
            } else {
                return 0
            }
        } ← nor have one one here
    } ← this is the end of the switch, you can have one here, but we can't tell
}

```

There are some bugs in the instrumentation. If it finds code like this,

```

if {.....
    || ....
    && ...
} { ...
}

```

Where there are no \ continuation escapes, the debugger will crash. So, if this happens, the only workaround at present is to add the \ to the lines. In the debugger, and in tracebacks, the escapes are removed and the the code appears different, but it is still functionally the same.

I

Conclusion

This has described a tool that is intended to be a small and simple debugger. It's roots began with a short snippet of about 12 lines of tcl code written by RS (Mr. Wiki). It's obviously grown some, but the core idea of using labels and entry widgets with an associated variable is still the core of the vw+ system.

Well, that's it for this tutorial introduction to the vw+ debugger. Hopefully you will find it useful.

Appendix

Command parameters

vw+ pattern/list window width

The vp+ command has built in help using the “?” option, as shown below:

```
% v ?
vw+ pattern  window  width  - patterns are [string match] type
vw+ {a list} window  width  - alternate form, with list of >1 variable names
  pattern  * => all globals  ** => only user globals (the default)
           text => text* can also use glob with [abc] etc. * always added to end
           foo:: => foo::* vars, not globals but namespace variables only
  width    width of entry widget with variable data, defaults to 80
  window   default to .vw, can use several windows at same time
  {a list} a list of specific variables, can be undefined

Any parameter can be a . = shorthand for default, none are required
Note: the patten parameter cannot look like a list of > 1 element
      it must be in {}'s to use the [ab] string pattern

On first call to vw+, BWidget's is loaded if possible to support scrolling
if it's not available, will fall back to a single window which could be too large
```

bp+ message nobreak nomessage

This is not designed to be typed into a console. It is only to be placed in the user program where one wishes the program to pause. It is the lowest level break-point command. It does the waiting, but also checks to see if there are any windows to be refreshed when it is reached. The refresh is to update array variable indices that are displayed in a global or namespace display window.

It has 3 parameters. Only the first one is expected to be used when this statement is placed in the user program. The 2nd and 3rd parameters are for use when called by the lbp+ procedure.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| message | This is a text message that will appear when this break-point is reached
If there's no message, * will be displayed |
| nobreak | A flag used to indicate don't pause, but it will do some other work. 0 by default |
| nomessage | A flag to suppress messages, used when the checkbox to suppress BP messages is checked and is 0 by default |

lbp+ message ID

This is not designed to be typed into a console. It is only to be placed in the user program where one wishes the program to pause.

It has 2 parameters. Both are optional; however, the code window will very likely get confused as to what line this break-point was on, and could display many such indicators. Best to have something.

message	This is a text message that will appear when this break-point is reached If there's no message, * will be displayed
ID	An identifier to be used that must be a fixed string (not a variable) that is used by the single stepping to display an indicator of the current line. If not present, will use the message in the first argument. These are generated uniquely by the instrument+ procedure

go+ skip window

This is used to continue from a breakpoint.

Skip	This is the number of breakpoints to skip over, it defaults to 0
window	for future use, internal only

instrument+ procedure -norb -revert...

This is used to create an instrumented version of a proc.

procedure	This is the name of the proc to instrument or to revert to if previously instrumented
options:	
-norb	Do not instrument at right braces (has no effect if -revert is used)
-revert	Revert to a non-instrumented procedure

This command returns the source code of the specified procedure such that it can be **eval'd** to replace the procedure. Obviously, care must be taken when to do this. The statement would look like,

```
eval [instrument+ hello]
```


To revert is the similar, and you supply the same proc name:

```
eval [instrument+ hello -revert]
```

It does not keep more than one copy of the original code, so you can't run it twice (and will check for that now), since that would add many extra break-points to the code. While you can type this into the console, you would more likely include it in the program.

The most recent version now checks for manual lbp+ statements and does not instrument them. But this is only for those at the beginning of a line.

util+ sub-command args...

This is a utility procedure that has several ensemble sub-commands. The args depend on the particular sub-command used.

subcommands:

- lp <proc> This can be used to view the current source code, it takes on argument which is the name of a proc to show the source code for. It can be used to see the results of a call to instrument+
- smod N Set the modulo on how often to output skip remaining counts, also in config
- clean closes all the data windows
- ? show little help message

Configuration

Since this is all just one single .tcl file, and this is for programmers, editing text is no biggy, so all options are simply changed in this section at the top of the file.

```
# -----
# C O N N F I G U R A T I O N begin
# -----

set ::__zz__(proc_wid) 15           ;# the number of lines to show on either side of a breakpoint line
set ::__zz__(auto_list_default) 1  ;# this sets the auto list checkbox to this value at first creation of checkbox
set ::__zz__(console_hack) 1       ;# if 1, modifies console: empty <cr> line on console, repeats last command
set ::__zz__(use_ttk) 0             ;# if 1, some of the windows use the themed ttk
set ::__zz__(max_size) 3000         ;# the maximum size of a variable to monitor
set ::__zz__(skip_modulo) 100       ;# when using a large skip count on go+ how often to update skip messages
#set ::__zz__(bwidget) 0           ;# uncomment this if BWidgets are not wanted, leave undefined and it will
                                   ;# try to use it (do not set to 1 here)

interp alias {} v {} vw+ ;# shorthands since we might be typing these, optional
interp alias {} g {} go+
interp alias {} u {} util+

# -----
# C O N N F I G U R A T I O N end
# -----
```

Performance Considerations

As with any debugger, especially one where extra statements are added to the source code, there is the potential for a performance hit. Here are some tips.

Don't display too many variable windows

The biggest performance cost is likely to be from the variable display windows. They monitor changes to variables by using the Tk -variable option to cause the entry widgets to be updated when the variable in the left column (either a global or a *variable* from a namespace) is modified. Careful use of the pattern matching argument to vw+ can be used to reduce the variables being watched. However, in a procedure, this is not an option as all local variables will be displayed (hence the name **lbp+**).

Only instrument procedures you want to single step

The instrument+ procedure is completely dynamic. It can be used at any time, so if you don't want or need to single step a procedure, don't use it until it's needed. And it can be removed also.

Use the disable all break-points toggle

There is much less overhead when this is set. It will check for this at the beginning of a call to both bp+ and lbp+ and do an immediate return. While it's not documented explicitly, the variable that is being checked for is,

```
set ::__zz__(cb1) 1 ;# 1 to turn off all break-point code, 0 to re-enable
```

So, one can turn this on and off from the user program if desired. It's the same variable that is used to monitor the first checkbox in each of the data windows. It's a 0/1 where 1 means don't break.

Use only bp+ and not lbp+

lbp+ is for breakpoints in a proc where you want to see the code in a window, and have it update when you reach another lbp+ breakpoint. The instrument+ procedure places lbp+ break-points into the program and is intended for when one is interactively single stepping, where performance should not be an issue. bp+ break-points are more efficient, but only pause the program and don't show any source text in a window.

Close variable display windows when not needed

When you close a variable window, since it's a toplevel, all widgets and -variable associations are removed by the Tk system. You can always add them again if you are using a console.

Add a console show button to your program

Make use of the console. On Linux, you can get the console.tcl file from the Wiki and use it to give you the console command. I've TIpEd this for linux so it would become part of the core, but that has not yet been approved. If you have a gui program, add a button or a menu item to do a “console show” so you can make adjustments. The debugger is designed to take advantage of the console. After all, it really just another text widget. And it allows for interactive execution of commands and procedures.

Use go+ with a large skip count

When this command is used, it will only update every N steps. The “u smod” command can be used to set the modulo on when to show a message which will also affect how often the data displays are updated. There's a button 0-skip, that can clear the remaining steps to stop the program at the next step.

(the end – ignore these extra paragraphs – just there to aid adding more)

vw+ pattern/list window width

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