Fuzzing with AFL++

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Introduction to AFL++

- American Fuzzy Lop plus plus (AFL++)
 - Most actively maintained greybox fuzzing tool (i.e., coverage-guided fuzzing tool)
 - A fork of Google's American Fuzzy Lop (AFL is not updated since 2017)
 - https://github.com/AFLplusplus/AFLplusplus

Compile target source code

Write and compile harness

- Supports C, C++ and Objective C
- Fuzzing with AFL++
 - 1. Instrumenting target
 - 2. Collect input testcases
 - 3. Run fuzzing
 - 4. Triage the result

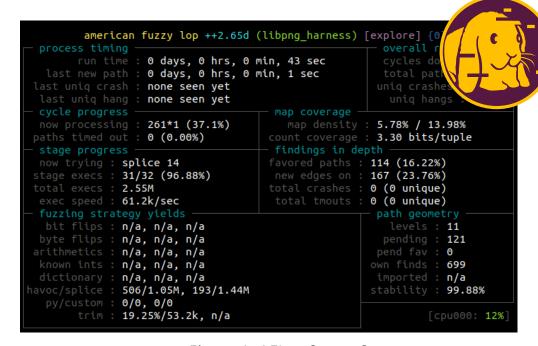


Figure 1. AFL++ Status Screen

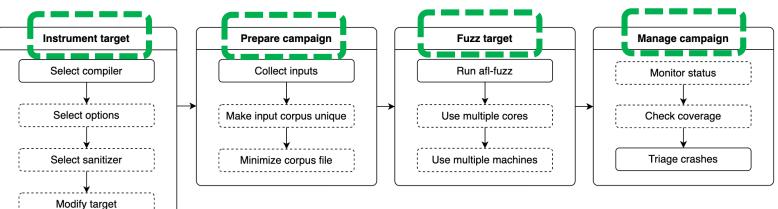


Figure 2. Required Steps for Fuzzing (from AFL++ doc.)

Required task Optional task





- AFL++ inserts probes to capture (approximate) branch coverage by obtaining branch hit-counts
 - Tuple := (from basic block, to basic block), equivalent to a branch.
 - Tuples in A -> B -> C -> D -> E : {(A, B), (B, C), (C, D), (D, E)}
- At each branch point, AFL++ compiler injects:
 - shared_mem[branch_id] Branch hit count map
 - 64KB shared memory region, fits in L2 cache (more entries in AFL++)
 - Every byte indicates hit counts for (branch src, branch dst)
 - branch_id is obtained by bitwise operation on information on basic_blocks
- (new) Path := It covers a new tuple, or a branch's hit count is in a new range of hit counts
 - Recall that AFL uses eight buckets [1, 2, 3, 4-7, 8-15, 16-31, 32-127, 128+].

Branch cnt	Colliding tuples	Example targets
1,000	0.75%	giflib, lzo
2,000	1.5%	zlib, tar, xz
5,000	3.5%	libpng, libwebp
10,000	7%	libxml
20,000	14%	sqlite
50,000	30%	•

Figure 3. Hit count map collision in AFL

Step 1. Target Instrumentation



- AFL++ provides several compilers to instrument target.
 - afl-clang-lto / afl-clang-lto++ (Link Time Optimization mode, available for LLVM ver. >13)
 - afl-clang-fast / afl-clang-fast++ (LLVM mode)
 - afl-gcc-fast / afl-gcc-fast++ (GCC_PLUGIN mode)
 - afl-gcc / afl-g++ (GCC mode)
- afl-clang-lto is fastest (<u>reference</u>)

Examples

- grep (Homework)
 afl-clang-lto grep.c -o grep
- Applying AFL++ in Makefile CC=afl-clang-lto CXX=afl-clang-lto++ ./configure -disable-shared
- Applying ALF++ in CMake
 mkdir build; cd build; \
 cmake -DCMAKE_C_COMPILER=afl-clang-lto -DCMAKE_CXX_COMPILER=afl-clang-lto++ ...

Step 2. Input Preparation and Fuzzing



- AFL++ fuzzer explores input file space by mutating an input file.
 - "@@" for input file placeholder
 - If there is no "@@", AFL++ fuzzer explores standard input.

```
afl-fuzz -i ./input_seeds -o ./out -- pdftotext @@ out.txt

input file directory output directory command line input
```

- In this case, input_seeds should contain pdf files as initial seed input files.
- Fuzzer runs pdftotext <input_file> out.txt with various <input_file>, starting with the files in ./input_seeds.





- To see the full list of options for fuzzing, check afl-fuzz --help.
 - -s seed: use a fixed seed for the RNG
 - -V seconds: fuzz for a specified time then terminate
 - -g minlength, -G maxlength: set min/max length of generated fuzz input in bytes
 - -x dict_file: dictionary input (optional)
 - and more...
- Ctrl + c (SIGINT) for stop fuzzing
- Hint: run afl-fuzz in screen or tmux shell to prepare unexpected logoff during long fuzzing process (~24 hours)

Step 3. Fuzz Target (env. variables)

LD_BIND_LAZY: do not set LD_BIND_NOW env var for target

ASAN_OPTIONS: custom settings for ASAN

(must contain abort_on_error=1 and symbolize=0)

MSAN_OPTIONS: custom settings for MSAN

(must contain exitcode=86 and symbolize=0)

AFL_AUTORESUME: resume fuzzing if directory specified by -o already exists

AFL_BENCH_JUST_ONE: run the target just once

AFL_BENCH_UNTIL_CRASH: exit soon when the first crashing input has been found

AFL_CMPLOG_ONLY_NEW: do not run cmplog on initial testcases (good for resumes!)

AFL_CRASH_EXITCODE: optional child exit code to be interpreted as crash

AFL_CUSTOM_MUTATOR_LIBRARY: lib with afl_custom_fuzz() to mutate inputs

AFL CUSTOM MUTATOR ONLY: avoid AFL++'s internal mutators

AFL CYCLE SCHEDULES: after completing a cycle, switch to a different -p schedule

AFL_DEBUG: extra debugging output for Python mode trimming

AFL_DEBUG_CHILD: do not suppress stdout/stderr from target

AFL DISABLE TRIM: disable the trimming of test cases

AFL DUMB FORKSRV: use fork server without feedback from target

AFL EXIT WHEN DONE: exit when all inputs are run and no new finds are found

AFL EXIT ON TIME: exit when no new coverage is found within the specified time

AFL_EXPAND_HAVOC_NOW: immediately enable expand havoc mode (default: after 60 minutes and a cycle without finds)

AFL_FAST_CAL: limit the calibration stage to three cycles for speedup

AFL FORCE UI: force showing the status screen (for virtual consoles)

AFL FORKSRV INIT TMOUT: time spent waiting for forkserver during startup (in ms)

AFL_HANG_TMOUT: override timeout value (in milliseconds)

AFL I DONT CARE ABOUT MISSING CRASHES: don't warn about core dump handlers

AFL IGNORE PROBLEMS: do not abort fuzzing if an incorrect setup is detected

AFL_IGNORE_TIMEOUTS: do not process or save any timeouts

AFL_IGNORE_UNKNOWN_ENVS: don't warn on unknown env vars

AFL IMPORT FIRST: sync and import test cases from other fuzzer instances first

AFL_INPUT_LEN_MIN/AFL_INPUT_LEN_MAX: like -g/-G set min/max fuzz length produced

AFL_PIZZA_MODE: 1 - enforce pizza mode, 0 - disable for April 1st

 $\label{lem:aff_KILL_SIGNAL: Signal ID delivered to child processes on timeout, etc. \\$

(default: SIGKILL)

AFL_FORK_SERVER_KILL_SIGNAL: Kill signal for the fork server on termination

(default: SIGTERM). If unset and AFL_KILL_SIGNAL is set, that value will be used.

AFL_MAP_SIZE: the shared memory size for that target. must be >= the size the target was compiled for

AFL_MAX_DET_EXTRAS: if more entries are in the dictionary list than this value then they are randomly selected instead all of them being used. Defaults to 200.

AFL_NO_AFFINITY: do not check for an unused cpu core to use for fuzzing

AFL_TRY_AFFINITY: try to bind to an unused core, but don't fail if unsuccessful

AFL_NO_ARITH: skip arithmetic mutations in deterministic stage

AFL_NO_AUTODICT: do not load an offered auto dictionary compiled into a target

AFL_NO_CPU_RED: avoid red color for showing very high cpu usage

AFL_NO_FORKSRV: run target via execve instead of using the forkserver

AFL_NO_SNAPSHOT: do not use the snapshot feature (if the snapshot lkm is loaded)

AFL_NO_STARTUP_CALIBRATION: no initial seed calibration, start fuzzing at once

AFL NO UI: switch status screen off

AFL PATH: path to AFL support binaries

AFL PYTHON MODULE: mutate and trim inputs with the specified Python module

AFL QUIET: suppress forkserver status messages

AFL PRELOAD: LD PRELOAD / DYLD INSERT LIBRARIES settings for target

AFL TARGET ENV: pass extra environment variables to target

AFL_SHUFFLE_QUEUE: reorder the input queue randomly on startup

AFL_SKIP_BIN_CHECK: skip afl compatibility checks, also disables auto map size

AFL_SKIP_CPUFREQ: do not warn about variable cpu clocking

AFL_STATSD: enables StatsD metrics collection

AFL_STATSD_HOST: change default statsd host (default 127.0.0.1)

AFL_STATSD_PORT: change default statsd port (default: 8125)

AFL_STATSD_TAGS_FLAVOR: set statsd tags format (default: disable tags)

Supported formats are: 'dogstatsd', 'librato',

'signalfx' and 'influxdb'

AFL_SYNC_TIME: sync time between fuzzing instances (in minutes)

AFL_NO_CRASH_README: do not create a README in the crashes directory

AFL_TESTCACHE_SIZE: use a cache for testcases, improves performance (in MB)

AFL_TMPDIR: directory to use for input file generation (ramdisk recommended)

AFL_EARLY_FORKSERVER: force an early forkserver in an afl-clang-fast/ afl-clang-lto/afl-gcc-fast target

AFL_PERSISTENT: enforce persistent mode (if __AFL_LOOP is in a shared lib AFL DEFER FORKSRV: enforced deferred forkserver (AFL INIT is in a .so)

Compiled with Python 3.6.9 module support, see docs/custom_mutator.md Compiled without AFL PERSISTENT RECORD support.

Compiled with shmat support.

For additional help please consult /usr/local/share/doc/afl/README.md:)



AFL++ Status Screen (1/5)



```
american fuzzy lop ++4.06a {default} (...install_afl++/bin/pdftotext) [fast]
 process timing
                                                        overall results
                                                        cycles done : 0
                   0 days, 0 hrs, 1 min, 7 sec
                                                       corpus count : 1125
                  0 days, 0 hrs, 0 min, 0 sec
 ast saved crash : 0 days, 0 hrs, 0 min, 23 sec
 last saved hang ; none seen yet
                                                        saved hangs: 0
 cycle progress
                                         map coverage
  now processing: 897.0 (79.7%)
                                           map density : 5.87% / 12.10%
  runs timed out : 0 (0.00%)
                                        count coverage : 3.74 bits/tuple
  stage progress
                                         findings in depth
                                        favored items : 192 (17.07%)
                                         new edges on : 288 (25.60%)
              4794/25.6k (18.73%)
                                        total crashes : 3 (3 saved)
               112k
  exec speed: 1703/sec
                                         total tmouts : 1 (0 saved)
  fuzzing strategy yields
                                                       item geometry
               disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                         levels: 4
  byte flips : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                        pending: 1120
 arithmetics : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                       pend fav : 190
  known ints : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                      own finds : 1122
                                                       imported: 0
  dictionary: havoc mode
 navoc/splice : 986/77.1k, 108/11.3k
                                                      stability : 100.00%
 by/custom/rq : unused, unused, unused, unused
    trim/eff: 2.69%/11.7k, disabled
                                                               [cpu000: 8%
```

1) Process timing

- run time: running time
- last new find: how much time has elapsed since its most recent path finds
 - something wrong if no new path is found for several minutes after start
- last saved crash: how much time has elapsed since most recent crash finds.
- last saved hang: how much time has elapsed since most recent hang finds (default timeout: 1 sec)

AFL++ Status Screen (2/5)



```
american fuzzy lop ++4.06a {default} (...install_afl++/bin/pdftotext) [fast]
 process timina
                                                       overall results
                                                        cycles done : 0
                  0 days, 0 hrs, 1 min, 7 sec
                  0 days, 0 hrs, 0 min, 0 sec
                                                       corpus count : 1125
 ast saved crash : 0 days, 0 hrs, 0 min, 23 sec
 last saved hana :
                  none seen yet
                                                       saved hangs : 0
 cycle progress
                                         map coverage
                                          map density : 5.87% / 12.10%
 now processing: 897.0 (79.7%)
 runs timed out : 0 (0.00%)
                                        count coverage : 3.74 bits/tuple
  stage progress
                                         findings in depth
                                        favored items : 192 (17.07%)
                                        new edges on: 288 (25.60%)
              4794/25.6k (18.73%)
                                        total crashes : 3 (3 saved)
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              disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                        levels : 4
 byte flips : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                        pendina: 1120
 arithmetics : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                       pend fav : 190
 known ints : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                      own finds : 1122
                                                       imported: 0
 dictionary: havoc mode
navoc/splice : 986/77.1k, 108/11.3k
                                                      stability : 100.00%
by/custom/rq : unused, unused, unused, unused
   trim/eff: 2.69%/11.7k, disabled
                                                               [cpu000: 8%
```

2) Overall results

- cycles done: the count of an entire pass through the queue so far.
- corpus count: # of unique test cases discovered so far
- saved crashes: # of unique crashes discovered so far
- saved hangs: # of hangs discovered so far

Crashes and hangs are considered "unique" if the associated execution paths (represented in the branch map) involve any state transitions not seen in previously-recorded faults.

AFL++ Status Screen (3/5)



```
american fuzzy lop ++4.06a {default} (...install_afl++/bin/pdftotext) [fast]
 process timing
                                                       overall results
                  0 days, 0 hrs, 1 min, 7 sec
                                                       cycles done : 0
  last new find: 0 days, 0 hrs, 0 min, 0 sec
                                                       corpus count : 1125
last saved crash : 0 days, 0 hrs, 0 min, 23 sec
 last saved hang :
                  none seen yet
                                                       saved hangs : 0
 cycle progress
                                        map coverage⊥
 now processing: 897.0 (79.7%)
                                          map density : 5.87% / 12.10%
 runs timed out : 0 (0.00%)
                                       count coverage : 3.74 bits/tuple
 stage progress
                                        findings in depth
                                        favored items : 192 (17.07%)
 now trvina : havoc
              4794/25.6k (18.73%)
                                        new edges on: 288 (25.60%)
              112k
                                        total crashes: 3 (3 saved)
 exec speed : 1703/sec
                                        total tmouts : 1 (0 saved)
 fuzzing strategy yields
                                                       item geometry
              disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                        levels: 4
 byte flips : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                       pending: 1120
 arithmetics : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                       pend fav : 190
 known ints : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                      own finds : 1122
                                                       imported: 0
 dictionary : havoc mode
navoc/splice : 986/77.1k, 108/11.3k
                                                      stability : 100.00%
py/custom/rq : unused, unused, unused, unused
   trim/eff: 2.69%/11.7k, disabled
                                                               [cpu000: 8%]
```

3) Map coverage

- map density: branch coverage of the current input / accumulated branch coverage of the entire inputs
- **count coverage**: the variability in tuple hit counts
 - 1~8 bits/tuple

AFL++ Status Screen (4/5)



```
american fuzzy lop ++4.06a {default} (...install_afl++/bin/pdftotext) [fast]
 process timina
                                                       overall results
                                                       cycles done : 0
                  0 days, 0 hrs, 1 min, 7 sec
                  0 days, 0 hrs, 0 min, 0 sec
                                                       corpus count : 1125
ast saved crash : 0 days, 0 hrs, 0 min, 23 sec
                  none seen yet
                                                       saved hangs : 0
 cycle progress
                                        map coverage
                                          map density : 5.87% / 12.10%
 now processing: 897.0 (79.7%)
                                        count coverage : 3.74 bits/tuple
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 stage progress
                                        findings in depth
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                                        favored items : 192 (17.07%)
                                        new edges on: 288 (25.60%)
 stage execs : 4794/25.6k (18.73%)
                                        total crashes : 3 (3 saved)
 exec speed: 1703/sec
                                        total tmouts : 1 (0 saved)
                                                      item geometry
 fuzzing strategy yields
              disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                        levels : 4
 byte flips : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                       pending: 1120
 arithmetics : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                       pend fav : 190
 known ints : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                      own finds : 1122
                                                       imported: 0
 dictionary: havoc mode
navoc/splice : 986/77.1k, 108/11.3k
                                                      stability : 100.00%
by/custom/rq : unused, unused, unused, unused
   trim/eff: 2.69%/11.7k, disabled
                                                               [cpu000: 8%
```

4) Stage process

- now trying: current fuzzing stage [stages]
 - havoc = mutation with random tweaks
- total execs: a global exec counter
- exec speed: current program execution speed

5) Findings in depth

- favored items: # of favored paths (% of favored paths/corpus count)
- new edges on: # of test inputs that reached higher edge coverage (% of such paths/corpus count)
- total crashes, total timeouts

AFL++ Status Screen (5/5)



```
american fuzzy lop ++4.06a {default} (...install_afl++/bin/pdftotext) [fast]
 process timina
                                                        overall results
                                                        cycles done : 0
                  0 days, 0 hrs, 1 min, 7 sec
                  0 days, 0 hrs, 0 min, 0 sec
                                                       corpus count : 1125
ast saved crash : 0 days, 0 hrs, 0 min, 23 sec
                  none seen yet
                                                        saved hangs: 0
 cycle progress
                                        map coverage
                  897.0 (79.7%)
                                          map density : 5.87% / 12.10%
 runs timed out : 0 (0.00%)
                                        count coverage : 3.74 bits/tuple
 stage progress
                                        findings in depth
                                        favored items : 192 (17.07%)
              4794/25.6k (18.73%)
                                        new edges on : 288 (25.60%)
                                        total crashes : 3 (3 saved)
                                        total tmouts : 1 (0 saved)
 exec speed: 1703/sec
 fuzzing strategy yields
                                                      item geometry
              disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                         levels: 4
 byte flips : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                        pending: 1120
 arithmetics : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                                 190
 known ints : disabled (default, enable with -D)
                                                      own finds : 1122
                                                       imported: 0
 dictionary : havoc mode
navoc/splice : 986/77.1k, 108/11.3k
                                                      stability : 100.00%
by/custom/rq : unused, unused, unused, unused
   trim/eff: 2.69%/11.7k, disabled
```

6) Path geometry

- levels: reached path depth
 - level 1: Initial test inputs supplied by a user
 - level 2: The test inputs that can be derived from the level 1 test inputs through fuzzing
 - level 3: The ones derived from the level 2 inputs
- pending: # of inputs that have not gone through any fuzzing yet.
- pend fav: # of favored inputs that have not gone through any fuzzing yet.
- own finds: # of new paths found
- stability: Consistency of observed traces
 - If a program always behaves the same for the same input data, it will earn a score of 100%.

Interpreting Output



```
afl-fuzz -i ./input_seeds -o ./out -- pdftotext @@ out.txt

output directory
```

- queue/ Input files for every distinct execution path + all the seeds given by the user.
- crashes/ Unique crashing test cases.
- hangs/ Unique timeout test cases. The default time limit is 1s.
- cmdline The command line input executed
- fuzz_bitmap Internal bitmap data used in AFL++
- fuzzer_setup The full afl-fuzz command used for fuzzing
- fuzzer_stats Overall fuzzing stats seen in status screen
- plot_data Stats for each testcase

Interpreting Output



• The generated input files are stored in queue/, hang/ crashes/

```
id:004728,src:004510,time:1540784,execs:8407259,op:havoc,rep:4,+cov
```

testcase id

mutation source testcase id

accumulated time spent

nth executed. (similar to time spent)

mutation stage

Reached new branch

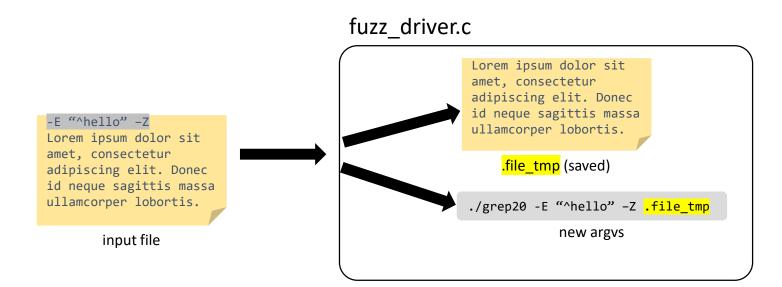
• Example. Running test case in crashes directory:

```
→ exercise01 ./pdftotext ./out/default/crashes/id:000000.sig:11,src:000000.time:20402.execs:32502.op:havoc.rep:16 out.txt
Error: PDF file is damaged - attempting to reconstruct xref table...
Error (469): Illegal character <29> in hex string
Error (470): Illegal character <5d> in hex string
Error (471): Illegal character <2f> in hex string
Error (472): Illegal character <50> in hex string
Error (473): Illegal character <72> in hex string
Error (475): Illegal character <76> in hex string
Error (482): Illegal character '>'
Error (736): Dictionary key must be a name object
Error (738): Dictionary key must be a name object
Error (744): Dictionary key must be a name object
Error: Unterminated string
Error: End of file inside array
Error: End of file inside dictionary
Error (736): Dictionary key must be a name object
Error (738): Dictionary key must be a name object
Error (744): Dictionary key must be a name object
       1875293 segmentation fault ./pdftotext out.txt
```

Necessity of a Cumtomized Fuzzing Driver



- By default, AFL++ does not mutate command line arguements
 - ex. AFL++ does not generate diverse executions on grep such as "grep apple abc.txt" or "grep orange abc.txt"
- You need to build a fuzzing driver to combine inputs of various types (e.g., command line arguments, network packets, GUI events, etc.) to an input file
 - ex. for grep, you should write a fuzzing driver to utilize a single input file that has both command-line arguments and the input file
- Fuzzing driver is widely used in various domain like library fuzzing.



grep.c::main (argc, argv) =>
grep.c::grep_main (argc, argv)

(renamed main to grep_main) 15

Target Instrumentation

- Captures (approximate) branch coverage along with branch hitcounts.
 - Tuple := (from basic block, to basic block), equivalent to a branch.
 - Tuples in A -> B -> C -> D -> E : {(A, B), (B, C), (C, D), (D, E)}
- At each branch point, AFL++ compiler injects:
 - shared mem[branch id] Branch hit count map
 - 64KB shared memory region, fits in L2 cache (more entries in AFL++)
 - Every byte indicates hit counts for (branch_src, branch_dst)
 - (Assumption) cur location ^ prev location is unique for each tuple.
 - However, this assumption does not hold in general. (Figure 3)
 - Therefore, branch coverage in AFL++ ≠ Actual branch coverage using gcov
 - Why prev location is shifted by 1?
 - Preserve directionability of tuples (without this, (A, B) is indistinguishable from (B, A))
 - Collision avoidence for tight loops (without this, (A, A) is indistinguishable form (B, B))
- (new) Path := It covers a new tuple, or a branch's hit count is in a new range of hit counts
 - Recall that AFL uses eight buckets [1, 2, 3, 4-7, 8-15, 16-31, 32-127, 128+].

```
prev = None
while(...) {
 (current, prev logic)
 prev = current
[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]
```



```
cur_location = <COMPILE_TIME_RANDOM>;
shared_mem[cur_location ^ prev_locati
prev_location = cur_location >> 1;
```

```
cur location = random();
shared_mem[cur_location ^ (prev_loca
```

Branch cnt	Colliding tuples	Example targets
1,000	0.75%	giflib, lzo
2,000	1.5%	zlib, tar, xz
5,000	3.5%	libpng, libwebp
10,000	7%	libxml
20,000	14%	sqlite
50,000	30%	•

Figure 3. Hit count map collision in AFL