

DE LA RECHERCHE À L'INDUSTRIE



Recovering high-level conditions from binary programs

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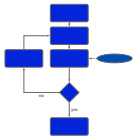


digiteo

list

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Standard solutions and drawbacks
- 3 Template-based conditions recovery
- 4 Experiments
- 5 Conclusion

Binary code analysis : Why ?



source analysis

- ✗ Proprietary software
- ✗ Analysis of malware
- ✗ Compiler independent
- ✗ Multi-languages progs



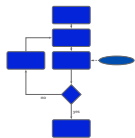
```
001011010101
100010101101
010110101010
001011010101
100010101101
100010101101
010110101010
```



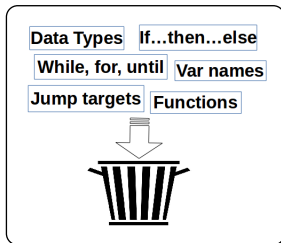
binary analysis

- ✓ Proprietary software
- ✓ Analysis of malware
- ✓ Compiler independent
- ✓ Multi-languages progs

Binary code analysis : Why ?



```
001011010101
100010101101
010110101010
001011010101
100010101101
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```



source analysis

- ✗ Proprietary software
- ✗ Analysis of malware
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binary analysis

- ✓ Proprietary software
- ✓ Analysis of malware
- ✓ Compiler independent
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Challenges of binary code analysis (1)

00b8 5400 0000 5dc3 5589 e5c7 0540 bf0e
 0812 0000 00b8 4800 0000 5dc3 5589 e5c7
 0540 bf0e 0820 0000 00b8 4500 0000 5dc3
 5589 e5c7 0540 bf0e 0821 0000 00b8 5800
 0000 5dc3 5589 e5c7 0540 bf0e 0822 0000
 00b8 4900 0000 5dc3 5589 e583 ec10 c705
 48bf 0e08 0100 0000 a148 bf0e 0883 f809
 0f87 0002 0000 8b04 8548 e10b 08ff e9c6
 45f7 00c6 45f8 00c6 45f9 00c6 45fa 00c7
 0548 bf0e 0802 0000 00e9 d901 0000 c645
 f701 c645 f800 c645 f900 c645 fa01 807d
 fb00 750a c705 48bf 0e08 0100 00e9 0901 0000 c645
 fd00 750f c705 48bf 0e08 0400 0000 e9e4
 0000 00e9 df00 0000 c645 f701 c645 f800

push ebp
 mov ebp,esp
 mov ds:0x80ebf48,0x1
 mov eax,ds:0x80ebf48
 cmp eax,0x9
 ja 80490f6
 mov eax,[eax*4+0x80be148]
jmp eax
 ?

Code or Data ?

Challenges of binary code analysis (2)

- Low-level semantics of data
 - Machine arithmetic, bit-level operations
 - Systematic usage of untyped memory [big array]
Difficult for current formal techniques

- Low-level semantics of control
 - No clear distinction data/instructions
 - Dynamic jumps (jump eax)
No easy syntactic recovery of CFG

- Diversity of architectures and instruction sets
 - Too many instructions (ex. X86, ≥ 900 instructions)
 - Modeling issues : side effect, addressing mode, ...
No platform independent concise formalism

Challenges of binary code analysis (2)

- Low-level semantics of data
 - Machine arithmetic, bit-level operations
 - Systematic usage of untyped memory [big array]
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 - Too many instructions (ex. X86, ≥ 900 instructions)
 - Modeling issues : side effect, addressing mode, ...
 No platform independent concise formalism

Nice progress since 2004

Intermediate languages

REIL [Zynamics]
 BIL [CMU]
 DBA [CEA, LaBRI]
 RREIL [TUM] ...

CFG recovery

CodeSurfer/x86 [GrammaTech]
 Jakstab [TU München]
 CFGBuilder [CEA]
 ...

Tests generation

SAGE [Microsoft]
 OSMOSE [CEA]
 Mayhem [ForAllSecure]
 ...

Challenge : High-level condition recovery



- High-level conditions translated into low-level flag predicates
- Conditional jumps depend on flags and not directly on registers
- Serious problem for formal analysis
 - abstract interpretation : precision
 - symb exec : solving cost

PowerPC translation example

```
if (ax > bx) X = -1;
else X = 1;
```

compilation



```
      cmpd   ax, bx
      bg     l1
      li     X, 1
      b     l2
11:    li     X, -1
12:
```

```
CR.L := (ax < bx)
CR.G := (ax > bx)
CR.E := (ax = bx)
if (CR.G) goto l1
X := 1
goto l2
11:  X := -1
12:
```

disassembly



Easy with relation propagation [folklore]

X86 translation example

```
if (ax > bx) X = -1;
else X = 1;
```

compilation



```
    cmp    ax, bx
    jg     l1
    mov    X, 1
    jmp   l2
11:  mov    X, -1
12:
```

```
OF := ((ax{31,31}#bx{31,31}) &
      (ax{31,31}#(ax-bx){31,31}));
SF := (ax-bx) < 0;
ZF := (ax-bx) = 0;
if (¬ ZF ^ (OF = SF)) goto l1
X := 1
goto l2
11:  X := -1
12:
```

disassembly



The real difficulty

Problem with formal approaches

4: <code>cmp x 100;</code>	ZF := (x=100)	$x \mapsto T$
5: <code>je a;</code>	if (ZF) then goto a	$x, ZF \mapsto T, [0, 1]$
....		
a:...		$x, ZF \mapsto T, [1, 1]$

Condition evaluation does not allow operand refinement

Problem with symbolic execution also

Goal : Source-level like reasoning

- ➔ through high-level condition recovery
- ➔ what we want : sound, generic, precise in practice

Achievements

- ➔ template-based condition recovery
- ➔ implementation in BINSEC/VA
- ➔ other binary-level tricks [see the paper]

Applications

- ➔ formal methods : abstract interpretation, symbolic execution
- ➔ help the reverse engineering

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Logic-based recovery (1)

4: <code>cmp x 100;</code>	ZF := (x=100)	$x \mapsto T$
5: <code>je a;</code>	if (x=100) then goto a	$x \mapsto T$
...		
a:		$x \mapsto [100, 100]$

- Idea : flag predicate \Rightarrow operand predicate
- Problem : flag predicate $\stackrel{?}{\iff}$ operand predicate
- Solution :
 - use abstract interpretation to propagate flag expressions
 - substitute flags by corresponding expressions at conditions
 - simplify conditions to recover operand predicates

[folklore] solution

Generic & sound in simple cases **only**

Logic-based recovery (2)

4: cmp x 100;	ZF := (x=100)	$x \mapsto T$	$ZF \mapsto T$
5: je a;	if (x=100) then goto a	$x \mapsto T$	$ZF \mapsto (x = 100)$
...			
a:		$x \mapsto [100, 100]$	$ZF \mapsto (x = 100)$



Abstract domain

$$D^\# \triangleq Flag \rightarrow Expr$$

Logic-based recovery (2)

4: <code>cmp x 100;</code>	<code>ZF := (x=100)</code>	$x \mapsto T$	$ZF \mapsto T$
5: <code>je a;</code>	<code>if (x=100) then goto a</code>	$x \mapsto T$	$ZF \mapsto (x = 100)$
...			
a:		$x \mapsto [100, 100]$	$ZF \mapsto (x = 100)$

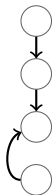


Abstract domain

$$D^\# \triangleq Flag \rightarrow Expr$$



Propagation

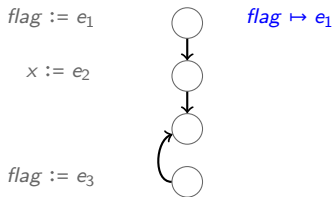
`flag := e1``x := e2``flag := e3`

Logic-based recovery (2)

4: <code>cmp x 100;</code>	<code>ZF := (x=100)</code>	$x \mapsto T$	$ZF \mapsto T$
5: <code>je a;</code>	<code>if (x=100) then goto a</code>	$x \mapsto T$	$ZF \mapsto (x = 100)$
...			
a:		$x \mapsto [100, 100]$	$ZF \mapsto (x = 100)$

○ Abstract domain $D^\# \triangleq Flag \rightarrow Expr$

○ Propagation

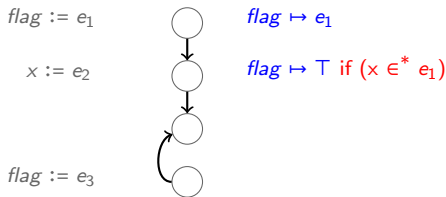


Logic-based recovery (2)

4: <code>cmp x 100;</code>	<code>ZF := (x=100)</code>	$x \mapsto T$	$ZF \mapsto T$
5: <code>je a;</code>	<code>if (x=100) then goto a</code>	$x \mapsto T$	$ZF \mapsto (x = 100)$
...			
a:		$x \mapsto [100, 100]$	$ZF \mapsto (x = 100)$

○ Abstract domain $D^\# \triangleq Flag \rightarrow Expr$

○ Propagation



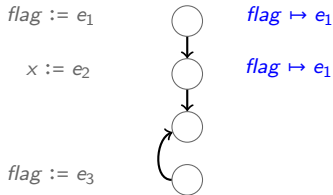
Logic-based recovery (2)

4: <code>cmp x 100;</code>	<code>ZF := (x=100)</code>	$x \mapsto T$	$ZF \mapsto T$
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...			
a:		$x \mapsto [100, 100]$	$ZF \mapsto (x = 100)$

○ Abstract domain

$$D^\# \triangleq Flag \rightarrow Expr$$

○ Propagation



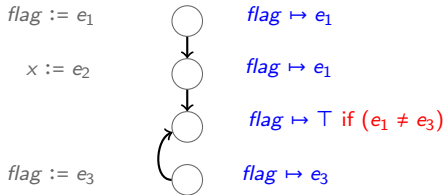
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$$D^\# \triangleq Flag \rightarrow Expr$$

○ Propagation



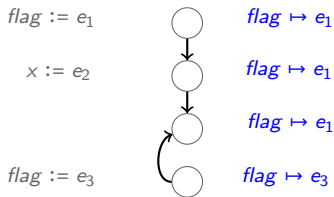
Logic-based recovery (2)

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○ Abstract domain

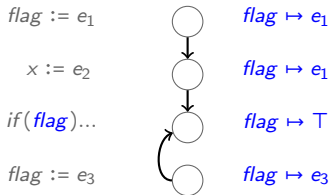
$$D^\# \triangleq Flag \rightarrow Expr$$

○ Propagation



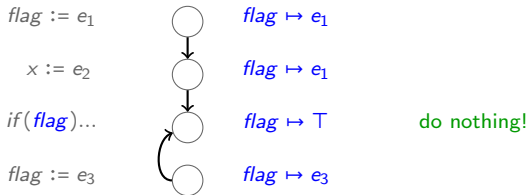
Logic-based recovery (3)

○ Usage (at conditional instruction)



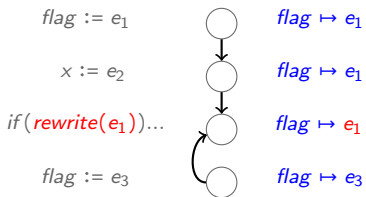
Logic-based recovery (3)

○ Usage (at conditional instruction)



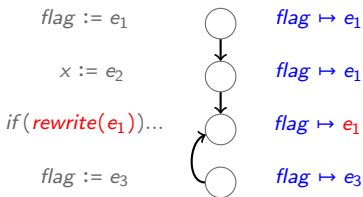
Logic-based recovery (3)

○ Usage (at conditional instruction)



Logic-based recovery (3)

○ Usage (at conditional instruction)



Problem solved ! Not yet...

Example

4: cmp x y;	$OF := ((x_{\{31,31\}} \neq y_{\{31,31\}}) \& (x_{\{31,31\}} \neq (x-y)_{\{31,31\}}));$ $SF := (x-y) < 0;$ $ZF := (x-y) = 0;$	$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$
5: jg a;	if ($\neg ZF \wedge (OF = SF)$) then goto a	$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$
...		
a:...		$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$

$$\neg(x-y = 0) \wedge ((x_{\{31,31\}} = y_{\{31,31\}}) \& (x_{\{31,31\}} = (x-y)_{\{31,31\}})) = (x-y < 0) \stackrel{?}{\iff} x > y$$

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5: <code>jg a;</code>	<code>if ($\neg ZF \wedge (OF = SF)$) then goto a</code>	$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$
...		
a:...		$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$

Relation propagation does not help

$$\neg(x-y = 0) \wedge ((x_{\{31,31\}} = y_{\{31,31\}}) \& (x_{\{31,31\}} = (x-y)_{\{31,31\}})) = (x-y < 0) \stackrel{?}{\iff} x > y$$

Natural high-level predicate

4: cmp x y;	$DF := ((x\{31,31\} \neq y\{31,31\}) \& (x\{31,31\} \neq (x-y)\{31,31\}));$ $SF := (x-y) < 0;$ $ZF := (x-y) = 0;$	$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$
5: jg a;	if (x > y) then goto a	$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$
...		
a:...		$x, y \mapsto [11, 11], [10, 10]$

- Idea : flag predicate \Rightarrow natural operands predicate
- Problem :
 - only simple high-level predicates can be handled by non-relational abstract domains
 - complex flag predicates can hide simple high-level predicates

Natural high-level predicate

4: cmp x y;	$OF := ((x\{31,31\} \neq y\{31,31\}) \& (x\{31,31\} \neq (x-y)\{31,31\}));$ $SF := (x-y) < 0;$ $ZF := (x-y) = 0;$	$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$
5: jg a;	if (x > y) then goto a	$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$
...		
a:...		$x, y \mapsto [11, 11], [10, 10]$

○ Idea : flag predicate \Rightarrow natural operands predicate

○ Problem :

- only simple non-relational
- complex

Existing solutions

Flag patterns

Virtual flags

are handled by

high-level predicates

Pattern-based recovery (1)

- Depend on operations cmp / sub / test and their use
- Possible to ensure soundness
- Rely on decoding information

Sound, precise but architecture specific

Compilers may use their own patterns

Pattern-based recovery (2)

High level predicates for conditional jump instructions (x86) ¹

	flag predicate	cmp x y predicate	sub x y predicate ²	test x y predicate
ja, jnbe	$\neg CF \wedge \neg ZF$	$x >_u y$	$x' \neq 0$	$x \& y \neq 0$
jae, jnb, jnc	$\neg CF$	$x \geq_u y$	true	true
jb, jnae, jc	CF	$x <_u y$	$x' \neq 0$	false
jbe, jna	$CF \vee ZF$	$x \leq_u y$	true	$x \& y = 0$
je, jz	ZF	$x = y$	$x' = 0$	$x \& y = 0$
jne, jnz	$\neg ZF$	$x \neq y$	$x' \neq 0$	$x \& y \neq 0$
jg, jnle	$\neg ZF \wedge (OF = SF)$	$x > y$	$x' > 0$	$(x \& y \neq 0) \wedge$ $(x \geq 0 \vee y \geq 0)$
jge, jnl	$(OF = SF)$	$x \geq y$	true	$(x \geq 0 \vee y \geq 0)$
jl, jnge	$(OF \neq SF)$	$x < y$	$x' < 0$	$(x < 0 \wedge y < 0)$
jle, jng	$ZF \vee (OF \neq SF)$	$x \leq y$	true	$(x \& y = 0) \vee$ $(x < 0 \wedge y < 0)$

1. G. Balakrishnan, T. Reps : WYSINWYX : What You See Is Not What You eXecute
2. $x' = x - y$
3. $CF = OF = \text{False}$

Non-standard examples

example	retrieved condition	patterns
<pre>or eax, 0 je ...</pre>	if (<code>eax = 0</code>) then goto ...	✗
<pre>cmp eax, 0 jns ...</pre>	if (<code>eax ≥ 0</code>) then goto ...	✗
<pre>sar ebp, 1 je ...</pre>	if (<code>ebp = 0</code>) then goto ...	✗
<pre>dec ecx jg ...</pre>	if (<code>ecx ≥ 0</code>) then goto ...	✗

How many necessary patterns?

Summary & proposal

Approach	archi. independent	Sound	Complete enough
Patterns	×	✓/×	✓/×
Logic-based	✓	✓	×

Summary & proposal

Approach	archi. independent	Sound	Complete enough
Patterns	×	✓/×	✓/×
Logic-based	✓	✓	×
Template-based	✓	✓	✓

Template-based approach

- direct **extension of logic-based** approach
- may **combine with patterns** (better recovery, speed)

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Example

<pre>4: cmp x y;</pre>	<pre>OF := ((x{31,31}≠y{31,31}) & (x{31,31}≠(x-y){31,31})); SF := (x-y) < 0; ZF := (x-y) = 0;</pre>	$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$
<pre>5: jg a; ... a:...</pre>	<pre>if (\neg ZF \wedge (OF = SF)) then goto a</pre>	$x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$ $x, y \mapsto [0, 11], [10, 20]$

$$\neg(x-y = 0) \wedge ((x_{\{31,31\}}=y_{\{31,31\}}) \& (x_{\{31,31\}}=(x-y)_{\{31,31\}})) = (x-y < 0) \stackrel{?}{\iff} x > y$$

Template-based recovery (1)

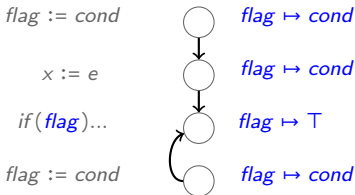
- Abstract domain $D^\# \triangleq \text{Flag} \rightarrow \text{Expr}$
- Propagation : same as in logic-based approach

Insights

- Complex predicates often hide simple predicates
- Only a few templates : $>_{u,s}, <_{u,s}, \geq_{u,s}, \leq_{u,s}, =, \neq$
- Try to find the appropriate one through equivalence checking
- Optimization :
 - Do it only once per loc (cache)
 - Cheap pruning through filtering

Template-based recovery (2)

- Usage at condition : `cond`
- Retrieve potential operands : `x` and `y` from `cond`



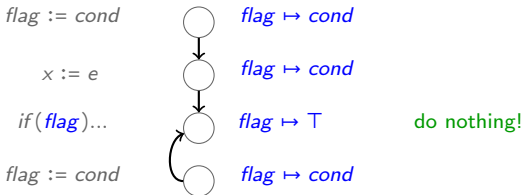
- Assert the equivalence of `cond` with :

$cond \Leftrightarrow x >_u y$	$cond \Leftrightarrow x <_u y$	$cond \Leftrightarrow x \geq_u y$	$cond \Leftrightarrow x \leq_u y$
$cond \Leftrightarrow x > y$	$cond \Leftrightarrow x < y$	$cond \Leftrightarrow x \geq y$	$cond \Leftrightarrow x \leq y$
$cond \Leftrightarrow x = y$	$cond \Leftrightarrow x \neq y$	s.t. $x, y \in_{syntax} cond$	

- If no assertion is satisfied then do nothing

Template-based recovery (2)

- Usage at condition : `cond`
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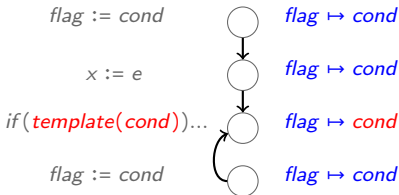
- Assert the equivalence of `cond` with :

<code>cond ⇔ x >_u y</code>	<code>cond ⇔ x <_u y</code>	<code>cond ⇔ x ≥_u y</code>	<code>cond ⇔ x ≤_u y</code>
<code>cond ⇔ x > y</code>	<code>cond ⇔ x < y</code>	<code>cond ⇔ x ≥ y</code>	<code>cond ⇔ x ≤ y</code>
<code>cond ⇔ x = y</code>	<code>cond ⇔ x ≠ y</code>	<small>s.t. $x, y \in_{syntax} cond$</small>	

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Template-based recovery (2)

- Usage at condition : `cond`
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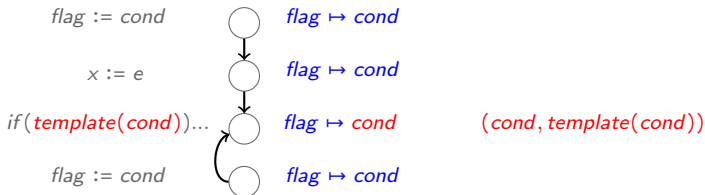
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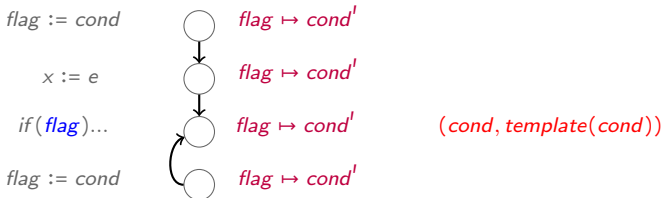
Optimization 1 : Normalization cache

- Low-level condition saved in the cache at address a together with the retrieved high-level condition
- If the same condition at the same address a is met later in the analysis, the saved high-level condition can be safely reused



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If $cond = cond'$

Optimization 1 : Normalization cache

- Low-level condition saved in the cache at address a together with the retrieved high-level condition
- If the same condition at the same address a is met later in the analysis, the saved high-level condition can be safely reused



Optimization 2 : Templates filtering

- Substitute operands in `cond` with special values
- Evaluate `cond` to eliminate obvious impossible predicates

$$\neg(x-y = 0) \wedge ((x_{\{31,31\}}=y_{\{31,31\}}) \& (x_{\{31,31\}}=(x-y)_{\{31,31\}})) = (x-y < 0) \stackrel{?}{\Leftrightarrow} x \diamond y$$

Eval 1 : `cond[0/x, 0/y]` = 0 $\Rightarrow \diamond \notin \{=, \leq, \leq_u, \geq, \geq_u\}$

Eval 2 : `cond[0/x, 1/y]` = 0 $\Rightarrow \diamond \notin \{\neq, <, <_u\}$

Eval 3 : `cond[0/x, -1/y]` = 1 $\Rightarrow \diamond \notin \{>_u\}$

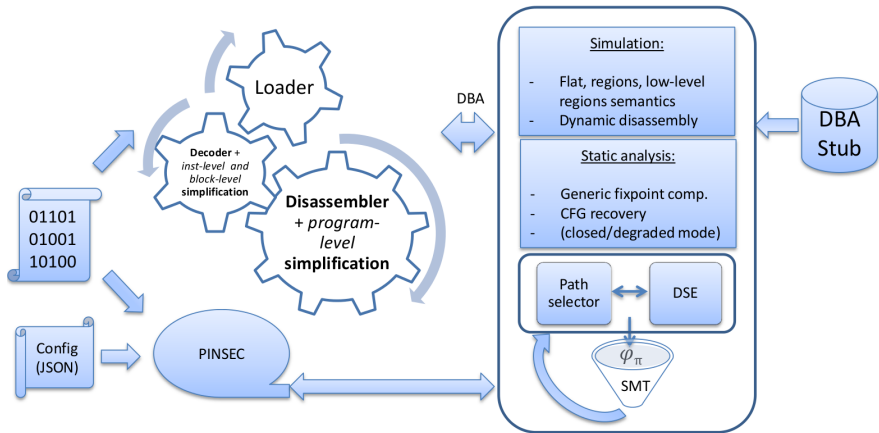
$$\diamond \in \{>\}$$

Tricky examples

example	retrieved condition	patterns	templates
or eax, 0 je ...	if (eax = 0) then goto ...	×	✓
cmp eax, 0 jns ...	if (eax ≥ 0) then goto ...	×	✓
sar ebp, 1 je ...	if (ebp = 0) then goto ...	×	✓
dec ecx jg ...	if (ecx ≥ 0) then goto ...	×	✓
add ecx, 0xffffefef jae ...	if (ecx ≥ 0xffffefef) goto ...	×	✓
test al, 0x8 jne ...	if ((al & 0x8) ≠ 0) goto ...	✓	×
stos [edi],eax	if(DF) goto ...	×	×
and edx, eax jp ...	if (PF) goto ...	×	×
shr ecx, 1 jae ...	if (-CF) goto ...	×	×
cmp [esp+0x64],eax mov eax, [esp+0x24] jg ...	if (-ZF ∧ (OF = SF)) goto ...	×	×

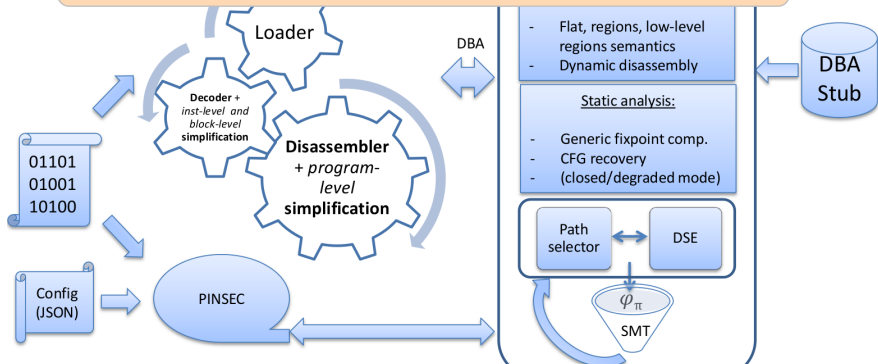
- ① Introduction
- ② Standard solutions and drawbacks
- ③ Template-based conditions recovery
- ④ Experiments
- ⑤ Conclusion

BINSEC Platform Overview



BINSEC Platform Overview

- Front-end [loader, decoder, disassembly, simplifications]
- Simulator
- **Generic static analyzer**
- Dynamic Symbolic Execution [ISSTA16, SANER16, BlackHatEU16]

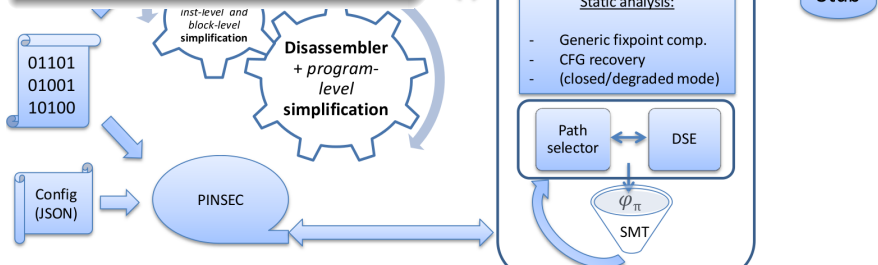


- Developed in OCaml [$\approx 50\,000$ loc] [TACAS 2015]
- Within the BINSEC project [CEA, IRISA, LORIA, Univ-Genoble]

BINSEC Platform Overview

Static analysis

- Generic fixpoint computation
- Sound CFG recovery
- Precision recovery via SMT solvers
- Dedicated domains to binary code
- High-level condition recovery



Open source and available at : <http://binsec.gforge.inria.fr/tools.html>

Experiments (1)

progs	#loc [†]	#cond [‡]	#success [*]	#fail	time (s)	time _{all} (s)
firefox	21488	150 (137)	134 89% (98%)	16	1.40	55.91
cat	6490	132 (125)	116 88% (92%)	16	1.08	259.24
chmod	8954	183 (172)	159 87% (92%)	24	1.44	313.17
cp	67199	174 (162)	152 87% (94%)	22	4.79	346.84
cut	7358	148 (138)	132 89% (96%)	16	1.16	211.73
dir	9732	137 (126)	118 86% (94%)	19	1.26	201.67
echo	8016	190 (182)	168 88% (92%)	22	1.43	274.60
kill	6911	142 (133)	125 88% (94%)	17	1.17	209.79
ln	88837	203 (185)	177 87% (96%)	26	4.88	531.58
mkdir	6347	125 (117)	109 87% (93%)	16	1.01	235.80
Verisec	11552	394 (370)	370 87% (100%)	24	3.31	34.48
total	242884	1978 (1847)	1760 89% (95%)	218	22.93	2674.81

† : number of analysed instructions only

‡ : total number of conditions (resp. high-level conditions). DF, PF and x&y = 0 are not considered high-level.

* : total number of successfully recovered conditions, ratio w.r.t. total number of conditions (resp. high-level conditions)

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echo						74.60
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mkdir						35.80
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Conclusion

- Low overhead, 1% in average (column time vs time_{all})
- Large part of high-level conditions recovered
- Templates are generic, sound and fully automatic

† : number of analysed instructions only

‡ : total number of conditions (resp. high-level conditions). DF, PF and x&y = 0 are not considered high-level.

* : total number of successfully recovered conditions, ratio w.r.t. total number of conditions (resp. high-level conditions)

Experiments (2)

method	#loc	#cond	#success	#fail	time	time _{all}
templates	242884	1978	1760 (89%)	218	22.93	2674.81
logic-based	247894	2260	694 (31%)	1566	0.003	2561.64
patterns	229255	1987	1357 (68%)	630	0.014	2373.33
templates+patterns	242884	1978	1838 (92%)	140	9.17	2659.95
templates w/o cache	242884	1978	1760 (89%)	218	29.76	2697.67
templates w/o filtering	242884	1978	1760 (89%)	218	51.13	2726.45
templates w/o cache, filtering	242884	1978	1760 (89%)	218	66.52	2752.73

Conclusion

- Templates achieve significantly **better results**
- Templates have **affordable extra cost**
- **Optimizations** allow to win a factor 3x on average
- Templates can be **fruitfully combined** with patterns

Fun application!

cmp eax ebx	CF := (eax < _u ebx)
cmc	CF := ¬CF
jae ...	if (¬CF) goto ...

- Standard pattern :
`cmp eax ebx` → `if(eax ≥u ebx) goto ...`
`jae ...`
- The true semantic : `if (eax <u ebx) goto ...`

patterns	templates
×	✓

- ① Introduction
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- ③ Template-based conditions recovery
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Conclusion

- Template-based recovery : a sound and generic technique
- Performs significantly better than state-of-the-art approaches
- Helps to adapt analyses from source-level to binary-level
- Can be useful for reverse engineering
- Implemented in BINSEC : [<http://binsec.gforge.inria.fr/tools.html>]

Questions ?