Property Testing with QuickCheck

Functional Programming

Why testing?

- Gain confidence in the correctness of your program
- Show that common cases work correctly
- Show that corner cases work correctly

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Testing cannot prove the absence of bugs

When is a program correct?

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- When it satisfies the specification

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- When it satisfies the specification

- What is a specification?
- How to establish a relation between the specification and the implementation?
- What about bugs in the specification?

More in Software Testing and Verification, period 4

Property Testing using QuickCheck

QuickCheck, an automated testing library/tool for Haskell

- Describe properties as Haskell programs using an embedded domain-specific language (EDSL)
- Automatic datatype-driven random test case generation
- Extensible, e.g. test case generators can be adapted
  - A default generator for list generates any list, but you may want only sorted lists

Case study: insertion sort

A buggy insertion sort

```
sort :: [Int] -> [Int]
sort []       =  []
sort (x:xs)   =  insert x xs

insert :: Int -> [Int] -> [Int]
insert x []                          =  [x]
insert x (y:ys)   | x <= y           =  x : ys
                  | otherwise        =  y : insert x ys
```

Let’s try to debug it using QuickCheck

How to write a specification?

A good specification is

- as precise as necessary
- but no more precise than necessary

A good specification for a particular problem, such as sorting, should:

1. distinguish sorting from all other operations on lists,
2. without forcing us to use a particular sorting algorithm

A first approximation

Certainly, sorting a list should not change its length

```
sortPreservesLength :: [Int] -> Bool
sortPreservesLength xs =
  length (sort xs) == length xs
```

We can test by invoking the function:

```
> quickCheck sortPreservesLength
Failed! Falsifiable, after 4 tests:
[0,3]
```

QuickCheck gives back a counterexample

Correcting the bug

```
sort :: [Int] -> [Int]
sort []       =  []
sort (x:xs)   =  insert x xs

insert :: Int -> [Int] -> [Int]
insert x []                         =  [x]
insert x (y:ys)  | x <= y           =  x :  ys
                 | otherwise        =  y : insert x ys
```

Which branch does not preserve the list length?

A new attempt

```
> quickCheck sortPreservesLength
OK, passed 100 tests.
```

Looks better. But have we tested enough?

A different “sorting” algorithm….

```
preserves :: Eq b => (a -> a) -> (a -> b)
          -> a -> Bool
(algo `preserves` prop) x = prop (algo x) == prop x

sortPreservesLength  =  sort `preserves` length
```

A different “sorting” algorithm....

```
preserves :: Eq b => (a -> a) -> (a -> b)
          -> a -> Bool
(algo `preserves` prop) x = prop (algo x) == prop x

sortPreservesLength  =  sort `preserves` length

idPreservesLength    =  id `preserves` length
```

`id` also preserves the lists length:

```
> quickCheck idPreservesLength
OK, passed 100 tests.
```

So we need to refine our specification

When is a list sorted?

We can define a predicate that checks if a list is sorted:

```
isSorted              :: [Int] -> Bool
isSorted []           = True
isSorted [x]          = True
isSorted (x:y:xs)     = x < y && isSorted (y:xs)
```

And use this to check that sorting a list produces a list that `isSorted`

Testing again

```
sortEnsuresSorted    :: [Int] -> Bool
sortEnsuresSorted xs = isSorted (sort xs)
```

```
> quickCheck sortEnsuresSorted
Falsifiable, after 5 tests:
[5,0,-2]
> sort [5,0,-2]
[0,-2,5]
```

We're still not quite there…

Debugging `sort`

What's wrong now?

```
sort          :: [Int] -> [Int]
sort []       =  []
sort (x:xs)   =  insert x xs

insert :: Int -> [Int] -> [Int]
```

Debugging sort

What's wrong now?

```
sort          :: [Int] -> [Int]
sort []       =  []
sort (x:xs)   =  insert x xs

insert :: Int -> [Int] -> [Int]
```

We are not recursively sorting the tail in `sort`!

Another bug

```
> quickCheck sortEnsuresSorted
Falsifiable, after 7 tests:
[4,2,2]
> sort [4,2,2]
[2,2,4]
```

This is correct. What is wrong?

Another bug

```
> quickCheck sortEnsuresSorted
Falsifiable, after 7 tests:
[4,2,2]
> sort [4,2,2]
[2,2,4]
```

This is correct. What is wrong?

```
> isSorted [2,2,4]
False
```

Fixing the specification

The `isSorted` specification reads:

```
sorted            :: [Int] -> Bool
sorted []          =  True
sorted (x:[])      =  True
sorted (x:y:ys)    =  x < y && sorted (y : ys)
```

Why does it return `False`? How can we fix it?

Are we done yet?

Is sorting specified completely by saying that

- sorting preserves the length of the input list,
- the resulting list is sorted?

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- the resulting list is sorted?

Not really...

```
evilNoSort :: [Int] -> [Int]
evilNoSort xs = replicate (length xs) 1
```

This function fulfills both specifications, but does not sort

Specifying sorting

```
permutes :: ([Int] -> [Int]) -> [Int] -> Bool
permutes f xs = f xs `elem` permutations xs

sortPermutes :: [Int] -> Bool
sortPermutes xs = sort `permutes` xs
```

This completely specifies sorting and our algorithm passes the corresponding tests:

```
sorts          :: ([Int] -> [Int]) -> [Int] -> Bool
sorts alg xs = and [ alg `permutes` xs
                   , alg `preserves` length
                   , sorted (alg xs)
                   ]
```

QuickCheck in general

The type of `quickCheck`

The type of is an overloaded type:

```
quickCheck :: Testable prop => prop -> IO ()
```

- The argument of is a property of type `prop`
- The only restriction on the type is that it is in the `Testable` type class.
- When executed, prints the results of the test to the screen – hence the `IO ()` result type.

Which properties are `Testable`?

So far, all our properties have been of type:

```
sortPreservesLength :: [Int] -> Bool
sortEnsuresSorted :: [Int] -> Bool
sortPermutes :: [Int] -> Bool
```

When used on such properties, QuickCheck generates random integer lists:

- If the result is `True` for 100 cases, this success is reported in a message
- If the result is `False` for a test case, the input triggering the failure is printed

Other example properties

```
appendLength :: [Int] -> [Int] -> Bool
appendLength xs ys =
  length xs + length ys == length (xs ++ ys)

plusIsCommutative :: Int -> Int -> Bool
plusIsCommutative m n = m + n == n + m

takeDrop :: Int -> [Int] -> Bool
takeDrop n xs = take n xs ++ drop n xs == xs

dropTwice :: Int -> Int -> [Int] -> Bool
dropTwice m n xs =
  drop m (drop n xs) == drop (m + n) xs
```

Nullary properties

A property without arguments is also possible:

```
lengthEmpty :: Bool
lengthEmpty = length [] == 0
wrong :: Bool
wrong = False
```

```
> quickCheck lengthEmpty
OK, passed 100 tests.
> quickCheck wrong
Falsifiable, after 0 tests.
```

QuickCheck subsumes unit tests

Other forms of properties – contd.

```
> quickCheck takeDrop
OK, passed 100 tests.

> quickCheck dropTwice
Falsifiable after 7 tests.
1
-1
[0]

> drop (-1) [0]
[0]

> drop 1 (drop (-1) [0])
[]
```

Properties

Recall the type of `quickCheck`:

```
quickCheck :: Testable prop => prop -> IO ()
```

We can now say more about when types are `Testable`:

- testable properties usually are functions (with any number of arguments) resulting in a `Bool`

What argument types are admissible?

- QuickCheck has to know how to produce random test cases of such types

Properties – continued

A `Testable` thing is something which can be turned into a `Property`:

```
class Testable prop where
  property :: prop -> Property
```

A `Bool` is testable:

```
instance Testable Bool where ...
```

If a type is testable, we can add a function argument, as long as we know how to generate and print test cases:

```
instance (Arbitrary a, Show a, Testable b) =>
         Testable (a -> b) where
```

Information about test data

We can show the actual data that is tested:

```
> quickCheck (\xs -> collect xs (sorts sort xs))
OK, passed 100 tests:
6% []
1% [9,4,-6,7]
1% [9,-1,0,-22,25,32,32,0,9,...
...
```

Why is it important to have access to the test data?

Implications

The function insert preserves an ordered list:

```
implies :: Bool -> Bool -> Bool
implies x y = not x || y

insertPreservesOrdered :: Int -> [Int] -> Bool
insertPreservesOrdered x xs =
  sorted xs `implies` sorted (insert x xs)
```

Implications – contd.

```
> quickCheck insertPreservesOrdered
OK, passed 100 tests.
```

But:

```
> let iPO = insertPreservesOrdered
> quickCheck (\x xs -> collect (sorted xs)
                               (iPO x xs))
OK, passed 100 tests.
88% False
12% True
```

For **88** test cases, `insert` has not actually been relevant!

Implications – contd.

The solution is to use the QuickCheck implication operator:

```
(==>) :: Testable prop => Bool -> prop -> Property
```

```
iPO :: Int -> [Int] -> Property
iPO x xs = sorted xs ==> sorted (insert x xs)
```

Now, lists that are not sorted are discarded and do not contribute towards the goal of 100 test cases

Implications – contd.

We can now easily run into a new problem:

```
iPO :: Int -> [Int] -> Property
iPO x xs = length xs > 2 && sorted xs ==>
             sorted (insert x xs)
```

We try to ensure that lists are not too short, but:

```
> quickCheck (\x xs -> collect (sorted xs)
                               (iPO x xs))
Arguments exhausted after 20 tests (100% True).
```

The chance that a random list is sorted is extremely small

Custom generators

Generators

- Generators belong to an abstract data type `Gen`
  - The only effect available to us is access to random numbers
  - Think of as a restricted version of `IO`
- We can define our own generators using another domain-specific language
  - The default generators for datatypes are specified by defining instances of class `Arbitrary`

```
class Arbitrary a where
  arbitrary :: Gen a
  ...
```

Generator combinators

```
choose      ::  Random a => (a,a) -> Gen a
oneof       ::  [Gen a] -> Gen a
frequency   ::  [(Int, Gen a)] -> Gen a
elements    ::  [a] -> Gen a
sized       ::  (Int -> Gen a) -> Gen a
```

Simple generators

```haskell
instance Arbitrary Bool where
  arbitrary = choose (False, True)

instance (Arbitrary a, Arbitrary b)
      => Arbitrary (a,b) where
  arbitrary =  do x <- arbitrary
                  y <- arbitrary
                  return (x,y)
  -- arbitrary = (,) <$> arbitrary <*> arbitrary

data Dir = North | East | South | West
instance Arbitrary Dir where
  arbitrary = elements [North, East, South, West]
```

Generating random numbers

- A simple possibility:

```
instance Arbitrary Int where
  arbitrary = choose (-20,20)
```

- Better:

```
instance Arbitrary Int where
  arbitrary = sized (\n -> choose (-n,n))
```

- QuickCheck automatically increases the size gradually

How to generate sorted lists

Idea: Adapt the default generator for lists

The following function turns a list of integers into a sorted list of integers:

```
mkSorted :: [Int] -> [Int]
mkSorted []       = []
mkSorted [x]      = [x]
mkSorted (x:y:ys) = x : mkSorted ((x + abs y : ys))
```

For example:

```
> mkSorted [1,2,-3,4]
[1,3,6,10]
```

Random generator

The generator can be adapted as follows:

```
genSorted :: Gen [Int]
genSorted =  do xs <- arbitrary
                return (mkSorted xs)
-- genSorted = mkSorted <$> arbitrary
```

Using a custom generator

There is another function to construct properties provided by QuickCheck, passing an explicit generator:

```
forAll :: (Show a, Testable b)
       => Gen a -> (a -> b) -> Property
```

This is how we use it:

```
iPO :: Int -> Property
iPO x = forAll genSorted
          (\xs -> length xs > 2 && sorted xs ==>
                  sorted (insert x xs))
```

Shrinking

The other method in `Arbitrary` is:

```
shrink :: (Arbitrary a) => a -> [a]
```

- Maps each value to structurally smaller values
  - `[2,3]` is structurally smaller than `[1,2,3]`
- When a failing test case is discovered, QuickCheck shrinks repeatedly until no smaller failing test case can be obtained

Loose ends

- Haskell can deal with infinite values, and so can QuickCheck
  - Properties must not inspect infinitely many values
  - Solution: only inspect finite parts
- QuickCheck can also generate functional values
  - Tequires defining an instance of another class `Coarbitrary`
  - Showing functional values is still problematic
- QuickCheck has facilities for testing properties that involve `IO`

Summary

QuickCheck is a great tool:

- A domain-specific language for writing properties
- Test data is generated automatically and randomly
- Another domain-specific language to write custom generators

However, keep in mind that writing good tests still requires practice, and that tests can have bugs, too

Correctness

Correctness as a goal

Testing can**not** prove the absence of bugs

- Only point at failing cases

Are there ways to prove your code correct?

Equational reasoning

1. Write a bunch of properties that specify your algorithm
2. Prove that they hold using equational reasoning
3. You are done!

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Caveats

- Time-consuming, needs lots of manual work
- Laziness and exceptions are not taken care of
  - Proofs only work for finite values

Interactive theorem proving

Help you proving properties about your program

- Check that every inference step is correct
- Fill in boring and obvious proofs

Some interactive theorem provers:

- Coq (blame the French for the name!)
- Isabelle/HOL

More expressive types

Define the type of your function in such a way that only correct implementations are allowed

```
append :: List n a -> List m a -> List (n + m) a
```

1. Dependent types
   - Allow values to appear in types
   - Examples: Agda, Idris, Coq
2. Refinement types
   - Attach predicates to types
   - Example: LiquidHaskell

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Learn about them in Advanced FP!

Theorems for free

How many implementations are of these signatures?

```
f :: a -> a
g :: (a, b) -> (b, a)
```

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f :: a -> a
g :: (a, b) -> (b, a)
```

Only one!

```
f x       = x        -- identity function
g (x, y) = (y, x)   -- swap pair
```

Types are enough to determine many properties of the implementation

- We call those free theorems