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Theoretical Aspects of Computing – ICTAC 2018

15th International Colloquium Stellenbosch, South Africa, October 16–19, 2018 Proceedings



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ISSN 0302-9743 ISSN 1611-3349 (electronic) Lecture Notes in Computer Science ISBN 978-3-030-02507-6 ISBN 978-3-030-02508-3 (eBook) https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-02508-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018957486

LNCS Sublibrary: SL1 - Theoretical Computer Science and General Issues

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Preface

This volume is the proceedings of the 15th International Colloquium on Theoretical Aspects of Computing, ICTAC 2018, which was held in Stellenbosch, South Africa, during October 16–19, 2018, in colocation with the 14th African Conference on Research in Computer Science and Applied Mathematics, CARI 2018, October 14–16, and a jointly organized CARI/ICTAC spring school, October 12–15.

Established in 2004 by the International Institute for Software Technology of the United Nations University (UNU-IIST), the ICTAC conference series aims at bringing together researchers and practitioners from academia, industry, and government to present research and exchange ideas and experience addressing challenges in both theoretical aspects of computing and the exploitation of theory through methods and tools for system development. ICTAC also specifically aims to promote research cooperation between developing and industrial countries.

The topics of the conference include, but are not limited to, languages and automata; semantics of programming languages; logic in computer science; lambda calculus, type theory and category theory; domain-specific languages; theories of concurrency and mobility; theories of distributed, grid and cloud computing; models of objects and components; coordination models; models of software architectures; timed, hybrid, embedded, and cyber-physical systems; static analysis; software verification; software testing; program generation and transformation; model checking and automated theorem proving; interactive theorem proving; certified software, formalized programming theory.

Previous editions of ICTAC were held in Guiyang, China (2004), Hanoi, Vietnam (2005 and 2017), Tunis, Tunisia (2006), Macau (2007), Istanbul, Turkey (2008), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2009), Natal, Brazil (2010), Johannesburg, South Africa (2011), Bangalore, India (2012), Shanghai, China (2013), Bucharest, Romania (2014), Cali, Colombia (2015), Taipei, Taiwan (2016). The proceedings of all these events were published in the LNCS series.

The program of ICTAC 2018 consisted of four invited talks and 25 contributed papers. We were proud to have as invited speakers Yves Bertot (Inria, France), Thomas Meyer (University of Cape Town, South Africa), Gennaro Parlato (University of Southampton, UK), and Peter Thiemann (Universität Freiburg, Germany). The talks of Meyer and Parlato are represented in this volume by abstracts, those by Bertot and Thiemann by an extended abstract and a paper.

The contributed papers were selected from among the 59 full submissions that we received in response to our call. Each of those was reviewed by at least three, and on average 3.4, Program Committee members or external reviewers. The Program Committee consisted of 28 researchers from academia and industry and from every continent.

The CARI/ICTAC spring school program consisted of seven half-day tutorials, taught by Yves Bertot, Vincent Cheval (Inria, France), Martin Leucker (Universität zu Lübeck, Germany), Thomas Meyer, Ina Schaefer (Technische Universität Braunschweig, Germany) with Loek Cleophas (Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, The Netherlands), Peter Thiemann, and Willem Visser (Stellenbosch University, South Africa).

We are grateful to all our invited speakers, submission authors, Program Committee members, and external reviewers for their contributions to the program, to the Steering Committee and especially its chair, Ana Cavalcanti, for advice, to Easychair for the platform for Program Committee work, and to the LNCS editorial team for producing this volume and for donating the best paper award money. We are thankful to the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) for lending the premises, and to Hayley Du Plessis and Andrew Collett for administrative and technical support. Stellenbosch University, IFIP TC6 and DEC, Inria, and their partnering French agencies provided financial support toward the costs of the invited speakers and tutorialists.

August 2018

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Invited Talks (Abstracts)

What Is Knowledge Representation and Reasoning?

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is receiving lots of attention at the moment, with all kinds of wild speculation in the media about its potential benefits. The excitement is mostly about recent successes in the subarea of AI known as Machine Learning. The current hype is reminiscent of the scenario about 20 years ago when logic-based AI, and more specifically, the subarea known as Knowledge Representation, had everyone in a state of euphoria about the future of AI.

My focus in this talk is on Knowledge Representation. I first provide an overview of the field as a whole, followed up by a more detailed presentation about some of the successful Knowledge Representation techniques and tools. The presentation is augmented with a discussion on the strengths and limitations of the Knowledge Representation approach to AI. Finally, I offer some thoughts on the recently revitalised suggestion that a combination of Knowledge Representation and Machine Learning techniques can lead to further advances in AI.

Finding Rare Concurrent Programming Bugs: An Automatic, Symbolic, Randomized, and Parallelizable Approach

Gennaro Parlato 💿

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Developing correct, scalable and efficient concurrent programs is a complex and difficult task, due to the large number of possible concurrent executions that need to be taken into account. Modern multi-core processors with weak memory models and lock-free algorithms make this task even more difficult, as they introduce additional executions that confound the developers' reasoning. Because of these complex interactions, concurrent programs often contain bugs that are difficult to find, reproduce, and fix. Stress testing is known to be very ineffective in detecting rare concurrency bugs as all possible executions of the programs have to be explored explicitly. Consequently, testing by itself is often inadequate for concurrent programs and needs to be complemented by automated analysis tools that enable detection of bugs in a systematic and symbolic way.

In the first part of the talk, I provide an overview of Lazy-CSeq, a symbolic method based on Bounded Model Checking (BMC) and Sequentialization. Lazy-CSeq first translates a multi-threaded C program into a nondeterministic sequential C program that preserves reachability for all round-robin schedules with a given bound on the number of rounds. It then reuses existing high-performance BMC tools as backends for the sequential verification problem. This translation is carefully designed to introduce very small memory overheads and very few sources of nondeterminism, so that it produces tight SAT/SMT formulae, and is thus very effective in practice.

In the second part of the talk, I present Swarm-CSeq, which extends Lazy-CSeq with a swarm-based bug-finding method. The key idea is to generate a set of simpler program instances, each capturing a reduced set of the original programs interleavings. These instances can then be verified independently in parallel. Our approach is parametrizable and allows us to fine-tune the nondeterminism and randomness used for the analysis. In our experiments, by using parallel analysis, we show that this approach is able, even with a small number of cores, to find bugs in the hardest known concurrency benchmarks in a matter of minutes, whereas other dynamic and static tools fail to do so in hours.

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