

# Static Analysis for PHP

Semester Project  
Fall 2009

Etienne Kneuss  
EPFL

# PHP

- Weak & Dynamic Typing
- Compiler optimized for speed, not safety
- Large internal API (> 2500 functions)
- All kinds of dynamic features
  - “If it can be done, it usually can be done dynamically”

# The problem

- Lot of room for run-time errors
  - Nearly all possible errors happen at run-time
- Most of those errors will be non-fatal
- Until recently, PHP was shipped to ignore lots of errors by default
  - Lots of broken or badly written scripts

# Previous Work

- **PHP-Sat**
  - Mostly (only?) structure based
- **PHPMD** (PHP Mess Detector)
  - Program metrics
  - Some semantic checks
- **Pixy**
  - Taint-analysis, inter-procedural, for PHP4

# This solution

- Structural checks
- Semantic checks
- Data/Type flow analysis
- Based on the grammar of PHP5.3

# Why do types matter?

- PHP does type juggling

- switch

- What about ctype\_digit ?

→ Relying on it is a problem waiting to happen:

[#50696](#), [#49057](#), [#34772](#), [#25763](#), [#24905](#), ...

```
<?php
switch(0) {
    case "true":
        ...
```

- Non-scalar types

# Analysis phases

- *Lexing (Jflex)*
- *Parsing (modified CUP)*
- *ST → AST*
- **AST Transformations**
- **Structural checks**
- **API**
- **Semantic analysis**
- *AST → CFG*
- **Flow analysis**

# AST Transformations

- Allows to freely transform the AST
- Used for:
  - Include resolver
  - Annotations

# Include Resolver

- Link ASTs
- Support some expressions:
  - `dirname()`, constants, string literals, concatenation

```
include dirname(__DIR__).'./path/to/file.php';
```

- One problem: `include` is an expression!

# Annotations

- Comments preceding declarations
- Compatible with phpDocumentor

```
/**
 * My super concat function
 * @param string $foo
 * @param string $bar
 * @return string
 */
function concat ($foo, $bar) {
    return $foo.$bar;
}
```

# Structural Checks

- Looks for common mistakes
  - Conditional class/functions declarations
  - Call-time pass by reference
  - Variable variables (\$\$a)

```
function foo($a) {  
    return ++$a;  
}  
$b = 2;  
foo(&$b);  
echo $b;
```

# API

- Support for API importation
  - e.g. `defined(name: String): Boolean`

```
<function name="defined">  
  <return><type name="bool"></type></return>  
  <args>  
    <arg opt="0"><type name="string"></type></arg>  
  </args>  
</function>
```

# Semantic analysis

- Attaches symbols to identifiers
  - Double declarations
  - Inheritance cycles
- Define variable scopes

# Data types flow analysis

- Model the flow of types for each values in a series of statements
- The result is a model of the possible types for each values at each program point
  - We can typecheck the result

# Examples

# Multiple verbosity

```
<?php  
$a = 2;
```

```
if ($a = 3) {  
    $b = 2;  
}
```



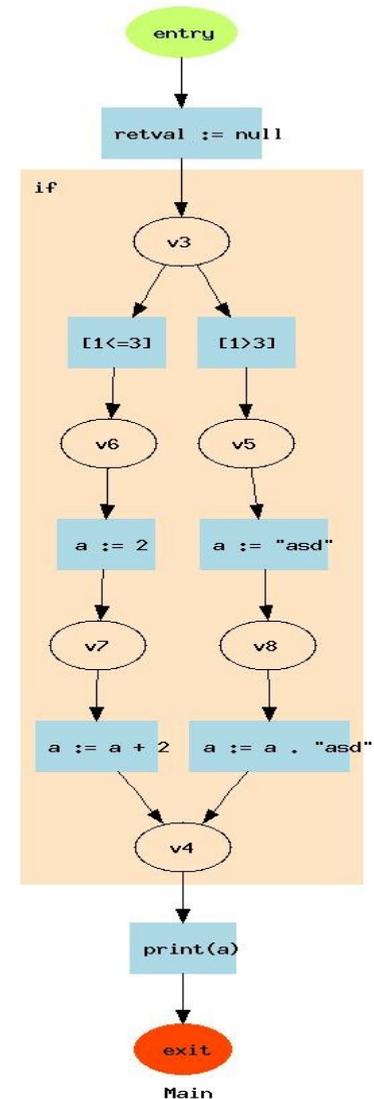
```
colder@nig9 ~/git/phpanalysis $ ./phpanalysis test.php  
colder@nig9 ~/git/phpanalysis $ ./phpanalysis --verbose test.php  
test.php:4 Notice: Potential mistake: assignation used in an if condition  
if ($a = 3) {  
    ^  
  
1 notice occurred.
```

# Branches

```
<?php
```

```
if (1 > 3) {  
    $a = "asd";  
    $a = $a."asd";  
} else {  
    $a = 2;  
    $a = $a+2;  
}
```

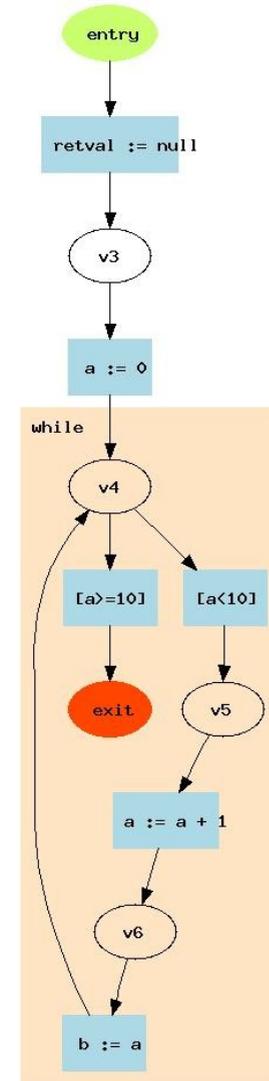
```
echo $a;
```



```
colder@mig9 ~/git/phpanalysis $ ./phpanalysis --debug test.php  
node entry has env [ ]  
node exit has env [ retval => TNull; a => {TString,TInt} ]  
node v3 has env [ retval => TNull ]  
node v4 has env [ retval => TNull; a => {TString,TInt} ]  
node v5 has env [ retval => TNull ]  
node v6 has env [ retval => TNull ]  
node v7 has env [ retval => TNull; a => TInt ]  
node v8 has env [ retval => TNull; a => TString ]
```

# Loops

```
<?php
$a = 0;
while($a < 10) {
    $a = $a + 1;
    $b = $a;
}
```

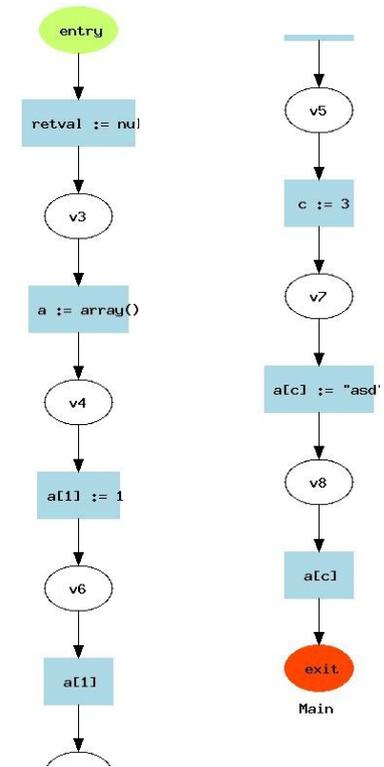


Main

```
colder@mig9 ~/git/phpanalysis $ ./phpanalysis --debug test.php
node entry has env [ ]
node exit has env [ b => {TNull,TInt}; retval => TNull; a => TInt ]
node v3 has env [ retval => TNull ]
node v4 has env [ b => {TNull,TInt}; retval => TNull; a => TInt ]
node v5 has env [ b => {TNull,TInt}; retval => TNull; a => TInt ]
node v6 has env [ b => {TNull,TInt}; retval => TNull; a => TInt ]
```

# Array types

```
<?php  
$a = array();  
$a[1] = 1;  
$c = 3;  
$a[$c] = "asd";
```



```
colder@vpn-a-183-154 ~/Documents/git/phpanalysis $ ./phpanalysis --debug test.php  
node entry has env [ ]  
node exit has env [ a => Array[1 => {TInt,TString} (TString)]; c => TInt; retval => TNull ]  
node v3 has env [ retval => TNull ]  
node v4 has env [ a => Array[]; retval => TNull ]  
node v5 has env [ a => Array[1 => TInt]; retval => TNull ]  
node v6 has env [ a => Array[1 => TInt]; retval => TNull ]  
node v7 has env [ a => Array[1 => TInt]; c => TInt; retval => TNull ]  
node v8 has env [ a => Array[1 => {TInt,TString} (TString)]; c => TInt; retval => TNull ]
```

# Object Types

```
<?php  
class A {  
    public $foo = 2;  
}
```

```
$a = new A;  
$b = $a;
```



```
colder@mig9 ~/git/phpanalysis $ ./phpanalysis --debug test.php  
node entry has env [ ]  
node exit has env [ retval => TNull; a => (#7->Object(A)[foo => TInt]); b => (#7->Object(A)[foo => TInt] ]  
node v4 has env [ retval => TNull ]  
node v5 has env [ a => (#7->Object(A)[foo => TInt]); retval => TNull ]
```

# Conditional types filtering

- “remembering” checks
- Every values have a boolean value:

TRUE	FALSE
Arrays, integers, floats, strings, <b>resources</b> , <b>objects</b> , <b>true</b>	Arrays, integers, floats, strings, <b>false</b> , <b>null</b>

- Lots of functions possibly return *false* on error
- We don't want *false* to pollute our results, if properly checked!

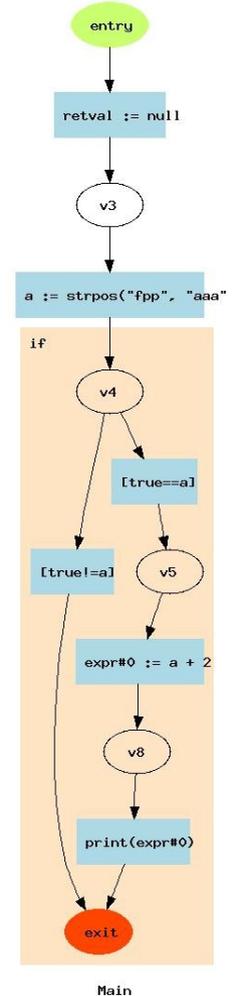
# Conditional type filtering

```
<?php
$a = strpos("fpp", "aaa");

if ($a) {
    echo $a+2;
}
```



```
colder@mig9 ~/git/phpanalysis $ ./phpanalysis --debug test.php
node entry has env [ ]
node exit has env [ retval => TNull; a => {TFalse,TInt}; expr#0 => {TInt,TNull} ]
node v3 has env [ retval => TNull ]
node v4 has env [ a => {TFalse,TInt}; retval => TNull ]
node v5 has env [ a => TInt; retval => TNull ]
node v8 has env [ retval => TNull; a => TInt; expr#0 => TInt ]
```



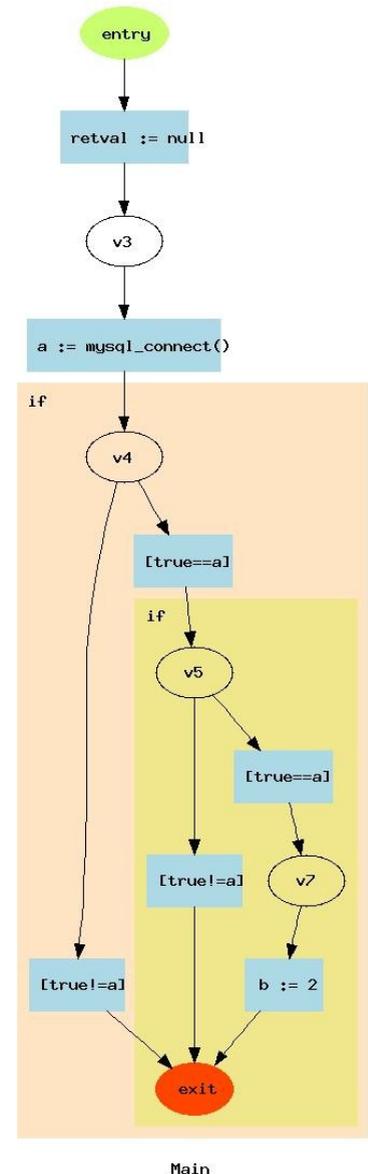
# Redundant tests

```
<?php
$a = mysql_connect();

if ($a) {
    if ($a) {
        $b = 2;
    }
}
```



```
colder@mig9 ~/git/phpanalysis $ ./phpanalysis --debug test.php
node entry has env [ ]
node exit has env [ b => {TNull,TInt}; retval => TNull; a => {TResource,TFalse} ]
node v3 has env [ retval => TNull ]
node v4 has env [ retval => TNull; a => {TResource,TFalse} ]
node v5 has env [ retval => TNull; a => TResource ]
node v7 has env [ retval => TNull; a => TResource ]
test.php:5 Notice: Redundant or incompatible check
    if ($a) {
        ^
1 notice occurred.
```



# Tests on real code

- Used to find 4 mistakes in 2 scripts written by a colleague!
- Too many false positives in complex, modular, OOP code.
  - **134** false notices found in a 370 lines class containing 9 methods
    - Increasing the signal-to-noise ratio is the next challenge!

# Future Work

- Stabilize the support for every PHP5.3 features
- Provide a decent model for references
- Improve annotations for complex arrays
- Add support for in-code annotations?
- ...