# RDBG: a Reactive Programs Extensible Debugger

Erwan Jahier
Univ. Grenoble Alpes/CNRS, VERIMAG
F-38000 Grenoble, France

## ABSTRACT

Debugging reactive programs requires to provide a lot of inputs – at each reaction step. Moreover, because a reactive system reacts to an environment it tries to control, providing realistic inputs can be hard. The same considerations apply for automatic testing. This work take advantage on previous work on automated testing of reactive programs that close this feedback loop.

This article demonstrates how to implement opportunistically such a debugging commands interpreter by taking advantage of an existing (ocaml) toplevel Read-Eval-Print Loop (REPL). Then it shows how a small kernel is enough to build a full-featured debugger with little effort. The given examples provide a tutorial for end-users that wish to write their own debugging primitives, fitting to their needs, or to tune existing ones.

An orthogonal contribution of this article is to present an efficient way to implement the debugger coroutining using continuations.

The Reactive programs DeBuGger (RDBG) prototype aims at being versatile and general enough to be able to deal with any reactive languages. We have experimented it on 2 synchronous programming: Lustre and Lutin.

## Keywords

Programmable Debuggers; Dynamic Analysis; Monitor; Reactive systems; Synchronous languages; Interpreter; Compiler; Code Instrumentation; Continuations.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**Reactive systems and synchronous languages**. A reactive system is an assembly of hardware and software that continuously interacts with its environment, typically via sensors and actuators. Because reactive systems are often critical, dedicated languages that offer strong guaranties on the software behavior were designed. Synchronous languages [1, 2, 11], for instance, ensure that the generated code uses a bounded amount of memory and execution time. A lot of efforts has also been put on formal verification and automated testing, but almost no work on debugging. Of course, for programs which by construction, contain no loop, no memory leak, and no segmentation fault, a debugger seems less necessary. Nonetheless, the remaining errors, revealed by testing or formal verification, can still be difficult to spot.

**Debugging reactive programs : closing the feedback loop**. One difficulty when debugging reactive programs is that they often require a lot of inputs – at each activation step. Moreover, those inputs are not always easy to provide, as they can depend on past values of the program inputs and outputs. Actually, we face exactly the same problem when performing automated testing: to provide realistic input sequences, we need to take into account the following feedback loop: the program influences its environment, which it turn influences (reacts to) the program. The testing tool of reactive programs LURETTE tackles this problem by providing a language dedicated to the modeling/simulation of program environments [12]. This language, named Lutin [24], is an extension of Lustre [11] designed to model non-deterministic reactive systems. To test automatically a program, this idea is therefore to write in Lutin the program environment model, and then to execute the program under test inside this simulated environment.

Since we have the same problem for debugging than for testing, the idea is to re-use the LURETTE infrastructure to close feedback loop. This is all the more natural to use the same framework that it is precisely the objective of a testing tool to detect bugs that a debugger would then help to track. In order words, to debug a reactive program, one can reuse the simulated environment used for the tests, which revealed the error that require the use of a debugger. Note that in this framework, the environment model is also a reactive program (written in Lutin), which therefore can also contain bugs, and also necessitates a debugger. Our debugger is actually able to debug Lutin programs too.

**RDBG, an extensible debugger for reactive programs**. In this article, we present RDBG, a debugger for reactive programs that re-use the LURETTE plumbing and its ability to plug various kinds of reactive programs together in closed loop. RDBG has a plugin mechanism to connect to reactive program runtime systems. Two language plugins are currently implemented: one for Lustre V6, and one for Lutin. RDBG is extensible in a second manner: it provides a language which allows programmers to write their own debugging and monitoring commands. This language is based on a kernel made of 2 primitives that allow one to inspect the debuggee entrails, and to navigate through its runtime events list (observation points). The sequence of events comes from a pre-defined instrumentation of the target language runtime system that is provided via the language plugin.

**The RDBG command interpreter**. A debugger is a program that runs in coroutine with a program to be debugged, and that observes and controls its execution. It interacts with the debuggee by interpreting in loop commands, possibly coming from a Graphical User

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Interface. For a debugger to be extensible, we need this commands interpreter to be able to interpret programs. An opportunistic way of obtaining such a commands and programs interpreter is to rely on an existing host language equipped with a good set of libraries, and an interactive Read-Eval-Print Loop (REPL); in this work, we use OCAML as the host language, which has both a REPL and a rich set of libraries. One drawback to rely on OCAML is of course that it requires to know OCAML to program debugging extensions. However, if one just wants to use RDBG, or maybe just wants to tune existing commands, knowing OCAML is not necessary. Likewise, the examples in this article are given in OCAML, but no deep knowledge of ml should be needed to understand them.

**A continuation-based kernel**. Finally, we propose an original and efficient way of implementing coroutine using continuations. Indeed, continuations allow to execute arbitrarily complex user code in debuggee process, which avoid costly context switches and communications between the 2 processes.

**Debuggers and academic languages**. Debuggers are fastidious to implement. From an academic perspective, working on debuggers is time-consuming and difficult to bring out. Nevertheless, debuggers are useful. This is the reason why:

- we have chosen to rely on existing REPL and libraries;
- we have paid a particular attention to re-usability by defining a language agnostic interface and by providing to compiler developers a simple plugin API;
- we have focused on separation of concerns by providing debugger users an API that allows them to implement their own debugging and monitoring programs with no need to look under the hood of the runtime system.

Another claim we try to argue in this article is that, once you have a carefully crafted programmable kernel, extending it with new debugging commands is easy and entertaining.

**Plan**. While RDBG aims at being versatile enough to debug any kind of reactive programs, it currently works with 2 synchronous languages. We therefore first briefly review them in Section 2 – albeit a deep understanding of synchronous languages is not necessary to grasp the debugging commands we show. Section 3 presents the RDBG user interface, and demonstrate how to build a full-featured debugger on top of a small kernel. Section 4 presents the RDBG plugin mechanism, that is the API for language developers that would wish to use it. Section 5 describes the design choices and the prototype implementation. Section 6 briefly discusses the 2 current language plugins. Section 7 presents related work.

# 2. SYNCHRONOUS LANGUAGES

RDBG is (currently) plugged onto 2 synchronous languages, Lustre and Lutin [16]. The examples we give in the forthcoming sections refer to Lutin, and even though a deep understanding of it is not necessary, we recap its main characteristics now. We first outline the Lustre main characteristics, as Lutin is based on Lustre.

**Lustre**. A reactive system interacts continuously with its environment, at a speed imposed by the environment. Typically, it first acquires inputs via sensors, performs a computation step, and then sets its outputs through actuators. This cyclic behavior can be periodic (time-triggered) or sporadic (event-triggered).

Because reactive systems are often critical, dedicated languages that offer strong guaranties on the software behavior were designed. Synchronous languages [1, 2, 11] such as Lustre were successful in this respect as they make reasoning about time easier, thanks to the notions of logical time and deterministic concurrency. Synchronous languages generate code with known bounds on their memory usage and execution time.

The Lustre compiler (as well as Scade, its industrial version) generates a C step function, that is meant to be embedded in systems with no operating system. In Lustre, one defines reactive programs via sets of data-flow equations that are executed in parallel. Equations are structured into nodes. Nodes transform input sequences (or streams) into output sequences.

**Lutin**. In order to be able to test Lustre programs (or programs written in other reactive languages) automatically, we need to simulate the System Under Test (SUT) environment. To generate realistic input sequences, such simulated environment needs to take into account the SUT outputs. This simulated environment is therefore itself a reactive program which environment is the SUT. The Lutin language [24] was designed to program stochastic reactive programs, that can model reactive system environments [12, 14].

Lutin is a probabilistic extension of Lustre with an explicit control structure based on regular operators: sequence (`fby`, for "followed by"), Kleene star (`loop`), and choice (`|`). At each step, the Lutin interpreter (1) computes the set of reachable constraints, which depends on the current control state; (2) removes from it unsatisfiable constraints, which depends on the current data-state (input and memories); (3) draws a constraint among the satisfiable ones (control-level non-determinism); (4) draws a point in the solution set of the constraint (data-level non-determinism). This chosen point defines the output for the current reaction. The solver of the current Lutin interpreter uses Binary Decision Diagrams (BDD) and convex polyhedron libraries. It is thus able to deal with any combination of logical operators and linear constraints. Unlike Lustre, Lutin programs are not meant to be embedded, and only an interpreter is available.

## 2.1 A debugger-based Lutin tutorial

One benefit of a debugger is to allow programming language learners to discover its operational semantics. Maybe because language programming environments don't always come with a debugger, language introductory tutorials are seldom based on them. Here, we propose to describe the semantics of Lutin on a trace produced the Lutin debugger we present later. The objective is actually less to present the semantics of Lutin (which is not the topic of the article) than to motivate the use of debuggers and to introduce some of our debugger concepts step by step.

```
let between(x, min, max : int) : bool =
    ((min < x) and (x < max))

node sut(T:int)  returns (b:bool) = loop true

node env(b:bool) returns (T:int)  =
   T = 4 fby
   loop {
    | { b and T = pre T } fby { T = 1 + pre T }
    | not b and between(T,5,10) }
```

**Figure 1: A Lutin program made of one macro, and two nodes**

Figure 1 contains a Lutin program made of two nodes, `sut` and `env`. The `sut` node produces a Boolean output `b` out of a integer input `T`, while `env` produces `T` out of `b`. As the names of those 2 nodes suggest, `sut` plays the role of the system under test (or program under debug), and `env` plays the role of its environment. Therefore RDBG (as LURETTE would do) executes them by plug-

ging the output of `sut` onto the input of `env`, and the output of `env` onto the input of `sut`; Figure 2 contains a trace of such an execution.

We propose now to base the explanation of the operational behavior of those two nodes by describing this trace representing 5 RDBG steps, i.e., 5 reaction steps of the program plus 5 reaction steps of the environment. This trace is made of 6 columns. The first two columns contain the event and the step numbers. The third column contains the event kind: `call` events are generated when a node is called, and `exit` events when a node is exited; a `try` event is generated when the Lutin solver tries to solve a constraint. If the constraint is satisfiable (resp. unsatisfiable), a `sat` event (resp. `usat`) is emitted. `top` events are generated at the end of a global step. The fourth column contains the node name. The fifth column contains the node variables instantiation. The last column contains the source code corresponding to the event.

```
 1  1  call env  []
 2  1  try  env  []          "T = 4"
 3  1  sat  env  []          "T = 4"
 4  1  exit env  [T=4]       "T = 4"
 5  1  call sut  [T=4]
 6  1  try  sut  [T=4]       "true"
 7  1  sat  sut  [T=4]       "true"
 8  1  exit sut  [T=4,b=f]"true"
 9  1 top  -    [T=4,b=f]
10  2  call env  [b=f]
11  2  try  env  [b=f]       "b and T = pre T"
12  2  usat env  [b=f]       "b and T = pre T"
13  2  try  env  [b=f]       "not b and between(T,5,10)"
14  2  sat  env  [b=f]       "not b and between(T,5,10)"
15  2  exit env  [b=f,T=6]"not b and between(T,5,10)"
16  2  call sut  [T=6]
17  2  try  sut  [T=6]       "true"
18  2  sat  sut  [T=6]       "true"
19  2  exit sut  [T=6,b=t]"true"
20  2 top  -    [T=6,b=t]
21  3  call env  [b=t]
22  3  try  env  [b=t]       "b and T = pre T"
23  3  sat  env  [b=t]       "b and T = pre T"
24  3  exit env  [b=t,T=6]"b and T = pre T"
25  3  call sut  [T=6]
26  3  try  sut  [T=6]       "true"
26  3  sat  sut  [T=6]       "true"
28  3  exit sut  [T=6,b=t]"true"
29  3 top  -    [T=6,b=t]
30  4  call env  [b=t]
31  4  try  env  [b=t]       "T = 1 + pre T"
32  4  sat  env  [b=t]       "T = 1 + pre T"
33  4  exit env  [b=t,T=7]"T = 1 + pre T"
34  4  call sut  [T=7]
35  4  try  sut  [T=7]       "true"
36  4  sat  sut  [T=7]       "true"
37  4  exit sut  [T=7,b=f]"true"
38  4 top  -    [T=7,b=f]
39  5  call env  [b=f]
40  5  try  env  [b=f]       "not b and between(T,5,10)"
41  5  sat  env  [b=f]       "not b and between(T,5,10)"
42  5  exit env  [b=f,T=9]"not b and between(T,5,10)"
43  5  call sut  [T=9]
44  5  try  sut  [T=9]       "true"
45  5  sat  sut  [T=9]       "true"
46  5  exit sut  [T=9,b=t]"true"
47  5 top  -    [T=9,b=t]
```

**Figure 2: An execution trace of the Lutin program of Figure 1**

Each row in this trace corresponds to a particular observation point in the execution. The first event indicates that the `env` node is called first (which was specified to RDBG at some point). Events 2 to 4 inform that the constraint `"T=4"`, is tried; obviously, this constraint is satisfiable and bounds the variable `T` to 4. Then comes the turn of `sut`; events 4 to 8 inform that the elected constraint it `"true"`, which is actually is the only one in this node. The Lutin semantics says that when there is no constraint, the output are generated at (pseudo-)random. Here the value `f` (false) is chosen.

At event 10 starts the second step. This time the elected constraint in `env` is `"b and T=pre T"` (the `pre` operator gives access to the value of a variable at the previous step). The Lutin semantics states that when a constraint is elected, inputs and memories are replaced by their values (constant propagation). Hence, this expression is evaluated to `"false and T=4"`, which is equivalent to `"false"`, which is unsatisfiable. This appears in the `usat` event 12. Since this branch of the alternative failed to produce a solution, the other branch is tried (event 13); `"not b and between(T,5,10)"` evaluates to `"true and between(T,5,10)"`, and then after expansion of the `between` macro to `"5<T and T<10"`. This constraint has 4 solutions, and event 15 shows that the random generator has chosen the value 6. For the `sut` node, it has chosen `t` (true) at event 19.

For the third step, the only satisfiable alternative for `env` is the first one (`"b and T=pre T"`). By chance it is the one that is tried first (at event 22); after input and memory values propagation, it evaluates to `"T=6"`, which has a unique solution. At step 4, there is no alternative, and the elected constraint is `"T = 1 + pre T"`, which also has a unique solution (T=7) (cf event 33). The trace events for step 5 are similar to the ones of step 2, except that the only satisfiable constraint is chosen in the first place this time.

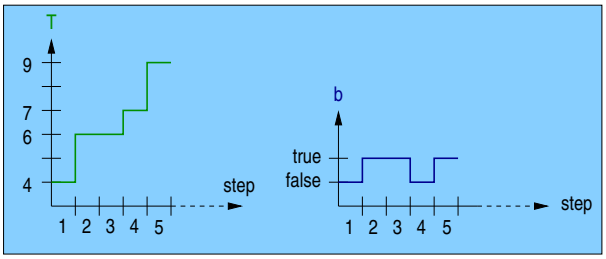



**Figure 3: The chronograms of the trace of Figure 2**

This execution is represented graphically in Figure 3 by chronograms representing the values taken by `T` and `b` at each step during the execution.

# 3. A REACTIVE PROGRAMS DEBUGGER

RDBG targets reactive languages. New languages can be added via a plugin mechanism described in Section 4. RDBG REPL relies on the OCAML one. RDBG is based on a small kernel, that can be extended by standard OCAML programs. In this section, we present this kernel (3.1), and how it can be adapted to various target languages (3.2). Then we demonstrate how it can be extended (3.3).

In order to ease the work of eventual plugins contributors, and to encourage programmers to contribute to the RDBG libraries of debugging commands, the code has been licensed under GPL. Everything related to this free software project can be found at http://rdbg.forge.imag.fr/.

## 3.1 The RDBG User Interface

The RDBG User Interface is made of one data type (`Event.t`) and one function `run`, that starts the debugging session and returns the first event:

```
val run : params -> Event.t
```

where `params` holds the set of the debug session parameters (file names, number of steps to perform, interpreter options, etc.), and where `Event.t` is a structure defined as follows (in ml syntax):

```
type t = {
 name    : string;
 lang    : string;
 depth   : int;
 nb      : int;
 step    : int;
 inputs  : var list;
 outputs: var list;
 data    : (string * Data.v) list;
 next    : unit -> t;
 terminate: unit -> unit;
 sinfo   : (unit -> src_info) option;
 kind    : kind;
}
```

The field `name` holds the name of the node instance associated to the current event; `lang` holds its programming language name, and `depth` its depth in the call tree; `nb` and `step` respectively hold a counter that is incremented at each event, and at each step; `inputs` and `outputs` hold the node interface variable names and types; `data` holds the node variable values (interface and local variables). `Data.v` is a data type provided by RDBG that holds debuggee variable values (Boolean, integer, real, structure, array, enum); `next` holds a frozen function that, when called with the unit value, returns the next event; `terminate` holds a function that allows to terminate the execution cleanly; `kind` and `sinfo` hold the `src_info` and the `kind` data types, that are defined below.

```
type src_info = {
 expr : Expr.t ; (* current ctrl point *)
 atoms: src_info_atom list;(* atoms expr is made of *)
}
```

The `src_info` data type holds source-level information. Its `expr` field holds an expression that represents the current control point; it explains how the outputs are computed from the inputs at the current step. The `Expr.t` data type is standard expression type that is supposed to be versatile enough to be able to represent all supported languages constructions. The `atoms` field `holds` a finer-grained representation of this expression; this information is split into a list of atoms, because the parallelism is a constitutive characteristic of synchronous languages, and thus the current control-point is often distributed in all over the source code.

```
type src_info_atom = {
 file : string ;
 line : int * int ; (* line nb begin/end in file *)
 char : int * int ; (* char nb begin/end in file *)
 stack: src_info_atom list; (* call stack *)
}
```

The `src_info_atom` is a structure made of a file name (`file`), the beginning/ending character and line numbers of the atom in the source code (`char` and `line` fields). The `stack` field holds the call stack.

```
type kind = Top | Call | Exit | MicroStep of string
```

The `kind` data type is used to classify the various kinds of events. `Top` events are generated at the top-level of the cyclic process, and before a new round of reactive program steps is started (it is therefore where the `step` counter is incremented). `Call` events are generated when a node is called, and `Exit` events when it is exited. `MicroStep` events are generated during the execution of the node. The various kinds of `MicroStep` depend on the node language. We give examples of possible `MicroStep` kind sets for the Lutin language below (3.2).

This interface aims at being general and versatile enough to represent runtime information of any reactive languages. At least it is able to represent the information of `Lustre` and `Lutin`. Now we present a few Lutin specificities.

## 3.2 The Lutin Micro-steps

The `MicroStep` variant of the event kind data type of Section 3.1 is meant to hold language specific event kinds. Choosing a good set of event kinds is a delicate task: it defines the granularity of the instrumentation, and is the result of a trade-off between precision and efficiency. Too many events would slow-down the execution, but missing events could prevent to understand what's going on with a buggy program. Discussing the current instrumentation granularity we made for Lutin is out of the scope of this article, which aims at presenting the debugger language. However, we have chosen to briefly present it because we use them in some examples we give in Section 3.3. Moreover, it illustrates the RDBG API versatility.

In order to report faithfully what happens during a Lutin program execution, stopping at call or exit time is not enough. We need a finer-grained observation of the execution, that indicates which expressions contribute to the computation of the outputs of the current step. Lutin expressions are made of constraints that may or may not be satisfiable, depending on the inputs, and on the past (memory values). Hence we have defined, specifically for the Lutin plugin, 3 new kinds of events: `try` events, when a constraint is elected; `sat` events, when the selected constraint is satisfiable and (hence) is used to compute the outputs; `usat` events, when the selected constraint is not satisfiable.

```
type lut_evt =
| Top  | Call | Exit
| Try  (* Try a constraint to compute the step    *)
| Sat  (* The tried constraint is satisfiable     *)
| Usat (* The tried constraint is Not satisfiable *)

val to_lut_evt: Event.kind -> lut_evt
val from_lut_evt: lut_evt  -> Event.kind
```

## 3.3 What can be done with this small kernel

We now demonstrate by examples how such a minimalist kernel can be used to implement classic and advanced debugging features. Some of them might not be the more efficient solution, but the longest is about 20 lines long. Indeed, the emphasis here is put on readability and conciseness, rather that on efficiency. For example, each time we use linear-time lists, logarithmic-time association tables (a.k.a. maps) would have been more efficient but less readable.

All programs described below are part of the standard RDBG library module `RdbgStdLib`, available in the RDBG git repository.

### *3.3.1 Forward Moves*

Moving to the next event (`next`) just requires to unfreeze the `next` field function of the current event. Moving several events forward (`nexti`) can be done using a counter (`i`) that is decremented until it becomes equal to 0:

```
type e = Event.t (* a type alias for brevity *)
let rec (next: e -> e) = fun e -> e.next()
let rec (nexti : e -> int -> e) =
 fun e i -> if i > 0 then nexti (next e) (i-1) else e
```

Similarly, we can implement commands that go to a specific event number (`goto_i`), or step number (`goto_si`):

```
let rec (goto_i : e -> int -> e) =
 fun e i -> if e.nb < i then goto_i (next e) i else e
let rec (goto_si : e -> int -> e) =
 fun e i -> if e.step<i then goto_si (next e) i else e
```

Note that here and in the following, we present purely functional commands. Equivalent commands using side-effects are easy to define (and sometimes easier to use) like this:

```
(rdbg) let e = ref (run  params);;
(rdbg) let ni i = (e := nexti !e i);;
(rdbg) ni 42;; (* moves 42 events forward *)
```

`e` is now a reference to an event. `ni` only takes as argument the number of forward steps to perform, and modifies the event reference through a side-effect.

### 3.3.2 Conditional Breakpoints

The `next_cond` command below takes as argument a predicate (`cond`) over events which states when to stop moving forward.

```
let rec (next_cond:e -> (e -> bool) -> e) =
 fun e cond ->
  let ne = next e in
  if cond ne then ne else next_cond ne cond
```

The criterion to decide when to stop going forward can of course be arbitrarily complex. The only limitation on what can be done comes from the information contained in the event itself. For example, suppose you notice that your program violates some invariant (or test oracle); one can then move forward up to the first event where the invariant is violated to inspect the state of your program. More specifically, suppose that this invariant consists of an `alarm` that should be set to true when a numeric variable "T" overcomes a threshold. One could write the following interactive query at the RDBG prompt:

```
(rdbg) let stop_here e =
 let val_T = vi "T" e and val_alarm = vb "alarm" e in
   not ((val_T > 42.0) => val_alarm);;
(rdbg) let e = next_cond stop_here e;;
```

The invariant, encoded into the `stop_here` predicate, is then provided to the `next_cond` command. `vi` and `vb` (which code is straightforward and part of `RdbgStdLib`) respectively extract from the `data` field of an event the value of an integer and a Boolean variable .

### 3.3.3 Forward Moves (cont)

As we have mentioned before, several events can have the same step number. When navigating into the trace history of cyclic nodes, it is sometimes interesting to go to the next step of the current node. To implement such a command, we can again take advantage of the `next_cond` command:

```
let rec (step : e -> e) =
 fun e -> next_cond e
  (fun ne -> e.name = ne.name && e.depth = ne.depth &&
             e.kind = ne.kind && e.step  = ne.step-1)
```

We can define a `stepi` command using `step` in exactly the same manner we have defined `nexti` using `next`. By using this `step` command instead of `next` in the definition of `goto_si` (Section 3.3.1), we obtain a new behavior that some users might prefer over the initial one. It is the whole purpose of a programmable debugger to provide a tool that makes it is easy to fit one's specific needs or preferences.

### 3.3.4 Hooks

Hooks are another very useful mechanism to let users tune their environment. They can be implemented, for example using hash tables, as follows:

```
let (hooks: (string, (Event.t -> unit)) Hashtbl.t) =
  let ht = Hashtbl.create 1 in
  Hashtbl.add ht "print_event" print_event; ht
let add_hook = Hashtbl.replace hooks
let del_hook = Hashtbl.remove hooks
```

Hook functions are stored into a table that maps a string identifier to functions over events. This string can be used to remove or update the associated function. Here, we initialize the hooks association table with a single hook that contains an event printer. The idea then is to modify the `next` function of Section 3.3.1 and apply hook functions at each event.

```
let rec (next : e -> e) =
  fun e ->
   let ne = e.next () in
     Hashtbl.iter (fun  _ f -> f ne) hooks; ne
```

The trace of Figure 2 in Section 2.1 has been produced calling in loop this `next` function.

### 3.3.5 Custom Traces

Depending of the debugging context, customizing the trace that is printed by the debugger is useful. For instance, not all events are of interest, and for events that are printed, different information might give more insights. Suppose for example that one wants to modify the trace of Figure 2 in two manners. Firstly, by focusing on events that occur in the `env` node (indeed the `sut` ones are boring). Secondly, by printing constraints expressions where input and memory values are propagated. To do that, one can get the expression (`Expr.t`) contained in the `expr` field of the `sinfo` field, as well as the variable values in the `data` field, and program an expression pretty-printer that instantiates bound variables.

```
(rdbg) let (my_pp_event:e -> unit) = fun e ->
  if e.name = "sut" then () elsesinfo2str
  let cstr = match LutinRdbg.to_lut_evt e.kind with
   | Top  | Call | Exit -> ""
   | Try -> (" \""^(sinfo2str e)^"\"")
   | Sat | Usat ->
     (match e.sinfo with None->"" | Some si ->
        " \""^(Expr.pp si.expr e.data )^"\"")
  in
   Printf.printf "%2i %2i %s %s [%s] %s\n" e.nb e.step
    (kind2str e.kind) e.name (data2str e.data) cstr;
   flush stdout ;;
```

In addition to the expression printer, this event printer uses 4 straightforward functions that we don't show the code of either: `to_lut_evt`, that translates `MicroStep` event kinds into Lutin event (`lut_evt`) for type safety; `sinfo2str`, `kind2str`, and `data2str`, are used by the default event printer, translate `sinfo`, `kind`, and `Data.v` to strings. Once the new printer is defined, one just needs to update the `print_event` hook, as illustrated in the RDBG interactive session below:

```
(rdbg) del_hook "print_event";;
(rdbg) add_hook "print_event" my_pp_event;;
(rdbg) let e = stepi (run()) 4;;
```

The last line which calls the `stepi` command of Section 3.3.3 produces the following trace:

```
 1   1   call env   []
 2   1   try  env   []        "T = 4"
 3   1   sat  env   []        "T = 4"
 4   1   exit env   [T=4]
 9   1   top   -    [T=4,b=f]
10   2   call env   [b=f]
11   2   try  env   [b=f]     "b and T = pre T"
12   2   usat env   [b=f]     "false and T=4"
13   2   try  env   [b=f]     "not b and between(T,5,10)"
14   2   sat  env   [b=f]     "true and between(T,5,10)"
15   2   exit env   [b=f,T=6]
20   2   top   -    [T=6,b=t]
21   3   call env   [b=t]
22   3   try  env   [b=t]     "b and T = pre T"
23   3   sat  env   [b=t]     "true and T = 6"
24   3   exit env   [b=t,T=6]
29   3   top   -    [T=6,b=t]
30   4   call env   [b=t]
31   4   try  env   [b=t]     "T = 1 + pre T"
32   4   sat  env   [b=t]     "T = 1 + 6"
33   4   exit env   [b=t,T=7]
38   4   top   -    [T=7,b=f]
39   5   call env   [b=f]
40   5   try  env   [b=f]     "not b and between(T,5,10)"
41   5   sat  env   [b=f]     "true and between(T,5,10)"
42   5   exit env   [b=f,T=9]
47   5   top   -    [T=9,b=t]
```

This is trace of exactly the same execution as the one that generated the trace of Figure 2. To obtain the same execution, one needs to provide the same seed the Lutin pseudo-random generator. Such expression printers or evaluators are good examples of code that can be written once for all, leveraging the work of plugins writers.

### 3.3.6 `gdb`-*like Breakpoints*

Another classic feature of debuggers consists in moving forward in the event history by setting *breakpoints*. We show a possible implementation of breakpoints that uses a syntax reminiscent to the `gdb` one. Basically, one can set a breakpoint on a node (`break "a_node_id"`) or on a particular line of a particular file (`break "[[file::line][file::line]]"`). We store each breakpoint in a table indexed by a global counter `bc`. This index can then be used to remove a specific breakpoint:

```
let bc = ref 0
let (brkpts: (int * string) list ref) = ref []
let (break : string -> unit)=
  fun str -> brkpts := (!bc,str)::!brkpts; incr bc
let (del: int -> unit) =
  fun i -> brkpts := List.remove_assoc i
let (del_all:unit->unit) = fun () -> brkpts:=[]; bc:=0
```

Now, the only non-trivial part consists in digging into the event data structure for the file name and line number. This work is done by the `brk_matches` event predicate below, that returns true if and only if the event argument matches the breakpoint string. This time the code is a bit tedious. Nevertheless, we report it here to justify the fact it fits into a few lines of code.

```
let (brk_matches : e -> string -> bool) =
 fun e b ->
  match e.sinfo, Str.split (Str.regexp "::") b with
   | _,  [] -> false (* no more breakpoint *)
   | None, _ -> false (* no src info at current evt *)
   | Some _  , [node] -> e.name = node
   | Some src, [file;line] ->
     let i,atoms = int_of_string line,(src()).atoms in
     List.exists (fun { line=(debut,fin) ; file=f } ->
                  f=file && debut <= i && i <= fin) atoms
   | _, _::_::_ -> failwith "syntax error in brkpts"
```

Readers that want to check that code, and that are non-familiar with the `Str` module of the OCAML standard library, just need to know that a call to "`Str.split (Str.regexp "::")`" on the string "`"fn::42"`" returns the list of strings "`["fn";"42"]`". Notice here the advantage of having a rich existing library to ease the engineering a set of debugging commands on top of this small kernel. Now, implementing the (classic) `continue` command that moves forward until a breakpoint is reached is a simple as:

```
let (continue : e -> e) = fun e ->
  let stop e = List.exists (brk_matches e) !brkpts in
  next_cond e stop
```

We could refine this command and take into account the character numbers. We could also have a better handling of errors in breakpoint syntax.

### 3.3.7 *Profilers*

Now we illustrate how to implement a simple counting profiler. For purely data-flow languages like Lustre, such a profiler is completely useless, as every equation is used at each step. Therefore we present now a command that work for Lutin. It is specific to Lutin as it uses the micro-events presented in Section 3.2. The idea is simply to stop at `try` events and to associate in a table constraints and counters. Each counter is initialized to 1 when a constraint is elected for the first time, and incremented the following times.

```
let prof_tbl = Hashtbl.create 50
let (incr_prof:Event.src_info_atom -> unit)=fun si ->
 try let cpt = Hashtbl.find prof_tbl si in
     Hashtbl.replace prof_tbl si (cpt+1)
 with Not_found -> Hashtbl.add prof_tbl si 1
let (prof_add: e -> unit) = fun e ->
 match to_lut_evt e.kind, e.sinfo with
 |Try,Some si->List.iter incr_prof(si()).atoms
 | _ -> ()
```

This profiler could be enhanced (using `sat` and `usat` events) by computing 2 counters per constraint, to count the number of times an elected constraint is satisfiable.

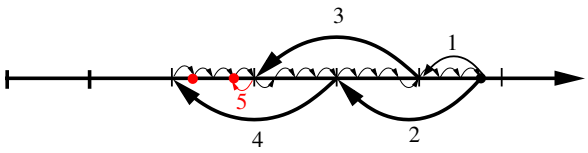
Then we can rely again on the hook mechanism of Section 3.3.4 to implement a command that sets on and off the profiler mode:

```
let (profiler : bool -> unit) = fun on ->
  if on then add_hook "profile" prof_add
        else del_hook "profile"
```

At this stage, the only remaining work is to write a `prof_tbl` pretty-printer. One could also implement a coarse-grained time-profiler using the `Unix.time()` function at `call` and `exit` events for instance.

### 3.3.8 *Backward Moves (Time-travel)*

Efficient reversible debuggers [9, 28] store periodically (at `ckpt_rate` rate) events in a table. Then, in order to move backward, it suffices to move to the lastly stored event, and then to move forward until an event that satisfies the event predicate is found, as illustrated by the arrows labeled by 1 in the drawing below.



When no satisfying event is found, we start again with the previously stored event (cf the arrows 2, 3, and 4). When a satisfying event is found, we still need to go forward up to the last backward jump source, to make sure that no more recent event satisfies the event predicate (cf the 2 bullets representing satisfiable events, and the arrow 5). Of course this only works with programs with no side-effect.

```
val rev_cond : e -> (e -> bool) -> e
 let rec rev_aux e i =
(* Search for ce in ]e.nb;i[ s.t. p ce holds *)
 let e = if p e then e
         else next_cond e (fun e -> p e||e.nb=i)
 in
   if p e then
    rev_aux_last e e i (* search for a more recent *)
   else (* e.nb = i *)
 let x = (e.nb / !ckpt_rate - 1) in
   if x < 0 then
    (print_string "No suitable event found.";
    Event.set_nb 1;
    Hashtbl.find ckpt_tbl 0)
   else
     let e = Hashtbl.find ckpt_tbl x in
     Event.set_nb e.nb;
     rev_aux e ((x+1) * !ckpt_rate -1)
 and rev_aux_last e e_good i =
(* Search for e in ]e_good.n;i[ s.t. p e holds *)
    if e.nb = i then e_good else
     let e = next_cond e (fun e -> p e || e.nb = i) in
     let e_good = if p e then e else e_good in
       rev_aux_last e e_good i
 in
 if e.nb = 1 then
  failwith "Cannot move backward from event 1."
 else
   let x = ((e.nb - 1)/ !ckpt_rate) in
   let last_e = Hashtbl.find ckpt_tbl x in
   Event.set_nb last_e.nb;
   rev_aux last_e (e.nb-1)
```

### 3.3.9 *Dynamic code modifications*

A simple thing we could do to allow dynamic code modification from RDBG would be to change slightly the type of the `next` field of `Event.t`, and replace the unit type by an event. Although it might looks a bit dangerous, such kinds of features can, in some circumstances, be useful, for instance to test quickly (without modifying the source code) an hypothesis over the debuggee behavior.

## 4. THE PLUGIN API

We now present the plugin Application Programming Interface, that is the API for developers that would wish to plug their runtime system (compiler or interpreter) to RDBG. In order to do so, one needs to provide an OCAML library that implements the following interface:

```
type sl = (string * Data.v) list (* substitutions *)
type e = Event.t (* a useful alias *)
type plugin = {
  inputs:  (string * string) list; (* name and type *)
  outputs: (string * string) list; (* name and type *)
  init_inputs  : sl;
  init_outputs : sl;
  step    : sl -> sl;
  step_dbg: sl -> e -> (sl -> e -> e) -> e;
}
val make: string array -> plugin
```

The `sl` alias type (substitution list) is used to hold variables instantiation. The `plugin` data type holds the list of interface variable names and types in its `inputs` and `outputs` fields. It also contains two fields, `init_inputs`, and `init_outputs`, to provide initial values to interface variables (i.e., the value of their memories before the first step). Then there are 2 step functions. One simple step function computes an output substitution out of an input one; this function is used to run program as LURETTE would. RDBG can then be used as testing tool[1]. The `step_dbg` function is more complex, and holds the instrumented version of the runtime system; `step_dbg` exposes its depths to RDBG via events. Its first parameter is an input variable substitution (the same one as `step`). The second parameter is the event of the current step (the initial event is built by RDBG). The third parameter is the continuation function. It holds the code that has to be executed after; it is used to fill the `next` field of `Event.t`. Notice that the output substitution is not returned by `step_dbg`, but it should be used in the continuation function instead.

In order to be used with the RDBG interactive command interpreter, plugin modules implementing this interface must be provided under the form of a byte-code library (`.cma`). RDBG commands can also be executed in batch using ocaml native compiler. In that case one also has to provide a dynamic native code library (`.cmxs`) version of the plugin.

We have currently implemented 4 such plugins. We have already mentioned the 2 language plugins for Lutin (`LutinRun`) and for Lustre (`Lus2licRun`). We also have an OCAML plugin (`OCamlRun`) that allows to plug programs that are executed via a compiler that uses ocaml as a back-end (cf the `examples/ocaml/` directory of the RDBG git repository). We also have a plugin based on standard input and standard output reading and writing (`StdioRun`). This one is useful to enter inputs manually, via the keyboard or a GUI. It can also be used to plug any kind of systems via TCP/IP sockets. Of course this plugin provides no `step_dbg` function.

A few additional details about the Lustre and the Lutin plugins are given in Section 6.

## 5. COROUTINE VIA CONTINUATIONS

The debugger works in coroutine with the debuggee, and navigates through the event sequence generated by the program execution. Alternative manners of implementing coroutine are discussed in Section 5.4. In RDBG, as the plugin interface suggests, the coroutine relies on continuations. The idea is the following. Transforming a function into Continuation Passing Style (CPS) leads to a function that never returns. It never returns because each function is supposed to call, at its last breath, another function (its continuation), that itself never returns. Once all functions are in CPS, instead of calling the continuation, we can return a data structure (`Event.t`) that contains a frozen function, which allows to return the control back to the calling function (`next` field). This calling function (the debugger) hence runs in coroutine with the continuation function (the debuggee). Using this technique, it is easy to execute user code in the debuggee process, which avoids costly context switches and inter-process communications.

In the following, we illustrate this idea by describing how we have transformed the LURETTE top-level command interpreter to implement RDBG.

### 5.1 From LURETTE to RDBG via CPS

We illustrate the old idea of transforming a function into CPS on a vanilla LURETTE top-level function. Once all the administrative work has been done (parsing the various test parameters such as the test length, the name of the SUT, the name of its environment,

[1]The LURETTE tool is now an alias for `rdbg -lurette`

the name of the file where to save generated data, etc.), LURETTE basically performs: (1) a step of the environment; (2) a step of the SUT to which LURETTE provides the environment outputs of the previous step; (3) a step of the environment to which LURETTE provides the SUT outputs of the previous step; (4) a step of the test oracle, that checks if some property is violated; (5) a test to check if the required number of steps is reached, and if it is not the case, loop back to item 2.

Here is a Vanilla implementation of the LURETTE process, with a SUT that increments its input by one, and an environment that increments its input by 2, and this during 42 steps (we skip the oracle step).

```
-- The lurette toplevel
let p a b = a + b
let step_env a = p a 1
let step_sut a = p a 2
let rec loop i a =
 if i > 42 then
  raise (End a) else
  let b = step_env a in
  let c = step_sut b in
   loop (i+1) c
```

```
-- A CPS version of it
let p a b ct = ct(a + b)
let step_env a ct = ct(p a 1)
let step_sut a ct = ct(p a 2)
let rec loop i a =
if i > 42 then
  raise (End a) else
  step_env a (loop2 i)
and loop2 i b = step_sut b
                    (loop (i+1))
```

The initial version is at the left, and the CPS version at the right.

## 5.2 Instrument the runtime system with events

For the sake of simplicity, we consider here a simplified event type. Doing the same on the event type defined in Section 3.1 is not more difficult.

```
type event = { msg : string ; next : unit -> event }
```

Once the LURETTE interpreter is in CPS, instrumenting it with event is straightforward. Here is our CPS Vanilla LURETTE toplevel instrumented with events:

```
let plus a b cont = {
   msg = Printf.sprintf "%i+%i" a b;next=fun() -> cont (a+b) }
let step_env a cont = {
   msg = "step_env" ; next = fun () ->  plus a 1 cont }
let step_sut a cont = {
   msg = "step_sut" ; next = fun () ->  plus a 2 cont }
let rec loop2 i b = step_sut b (loop (i+1))
and loop i a =
  if a > 42 then failwith "the end"
  else { msg = "top"; next = fun () -> step_env a (loop2 i)}
```

Readers of the pdf version of this article are encouraged to try to copy/paste this code out into an OCAML top-level. Then, for example, to launch a 42-steps test session, one just need to do this:

```
let e = ref(loop 42 0) in while(true)
do print_string (!e.msg^"\n");e:=!e.next() done ;;
```

## 5.3 Handling lists of steps

Most of the modifications in the LURETTE code to transform it into CPS were as straightforward as what is described in Section 5.1. The only convoluted one is the following.

The real implementation of LURETTE is able to run concurrently several programs under test, using several environments (and several oracles to assess the test result). LURETTE therefore iterates over a list of step functions, to compute a list of outputs from a list of inputs. More precisely, we need a function that take as input 2 parameters : a list of variable substitution (holding the global step input values), a list of step functions, that generate some output values. And this function computes from this the substitution holding the global step output values. Here is a possible ml implementation of such a function.

```
let (step_sl: 's list -> ('s list -> 's list) list ->
              's list) =
 fun sl sut_step_sl_l ->
 List.flatten (List.map (fun f -> f sl) sut_step_sl_l)
```

Now we need a CPS version of it. Here is a possible solution that works (and that is used by RDBG):

```
let (step_dbg_sl :
 ('s list -> 'e -> ('s list -> 'e -> 'e) -> 'e) list ->
  's list -> 'e  -> ('e -> 's list -> 'e) -> 'e) =
 fun step_dbg_sl_l sl e cont =
  let rec iter_step stepl (ctx,res_stepl) sl =
   match stepl with
    | [] -> cont ctx (List.flatten (res_stepl))
    | step::stepl ->
       step sl ctx (fun res_sl ctx ->
        iter_step stepl (ctx,(res_sl::res_stepl)) sl)
  in
   iter_step step_dbg_sl_l (ctx,[]) sl
```

## 5.4 Other debugger technologies

One contribution of this article is to base the coroutine between the debugger and the debuggee on the use of continuations. Hence we review here what other debuggers do in this respect.

**Code Instrumentation**. In order to implement debuggers, some code instrumentation is required for the coroutine with the debuggee. Typically, a test is added before each event site to decide whether the control should remain in the debuggee, or should go the debugger. This test can be added via a source to source transformation [8, 28], or at compile time via a compiler option that will add those tests in the generated code. The granularity of this instrumentation influences the performance.

Another option is to modify the executable program at run time (e.g., using `ptrace`) and to add instructions to jump into the debugger [27]. The advantage is of course at the performance side, as one doesn't need to perform additional tests at all. But of course such debuggers depend on the target platform. This (mainstream) family of debuggers even often exploits dedicated processor instructions to deal with memory modifications, which is particularly important for low-level languages with no automatic memory management.

Some debuggers (e.g., `Caml` and `java`) adopt a intermediate solution, which consists in modifying the byte-code on the fly. The resulting debuggers remain platform independent, and save tests. But going though a byte-code interpreter has a performance impact. Another (minor) disadvantage is that the native and the byte-code backends might sometimes behaves differently.

Another very popular way of designing debuggers is to instrument a source code interpreter (as we do here). In that case the tests are embedded in the interpretation algorithm. Is is certainly the easiest method to implement debuggers when an interpreter exists. But developing interpreters on purpose duplicates the development and the maintenance effort when a compiler exists. Moreover, such interpreters generally run slower than the compiler equivalent, and may behave differently.

In the Lustre RDBG plugin (Lutin has no compiler), we minimize that problem as the instrumented interpreter operates over a data structure obtained at the very last pass of the compiler: the one that is pretty-printed to perform the code generation. Errors in this pretty-printing would lead to bugs that would be hided in the debugger indeed. An alternative would have been to instrument an OCAML Lustre code generator.

**Coroutine**. Most debuggers live in a separate process, and communicate with debuggees through sockets, pipes, or signals. The advantages of having two distinct processes are: (1) to be more robust to memory leaks, and program crashes; (2) to have a better separation of concerns; (3) to allow remote debugging; (4) to allow to debug several programs at the same time.

On the other hand, having the 2 routines in the same process (1) permits a direct access to the runtime system depths; (2) avoids costly context switches (which are less costly than using threads); (3) avoids costly messages writing/parsing (for sockets and pipes).

# 6. ABOUT THE CURRENT PLUGINS

Describing in detail how we have implemented the Lustre and the Lutin RDBG Plugins is out of the scope of this article. A few remarks still.

**Plugins Design**. The `step_sut` and the `step_env` functions of Section 5.2 typically (but not necessarily) comes from a Lustre and a Lutin program respectively. In the corresponding plugins, step functions have been transformed into CPS and instrumented in a similar manner. The fact that OCAML is the language used to program LURETTE/RDBG as well as the Lutin and the Lustre interpreters makes the work easier, when it comes to provide an OCAML library that implement the RDBG plugin interface.

The important and difficult work is actually to define a good set of event kinds, so that the operational semantics of the underlying language is usefully depicted by the generated events. Some information can be reconstructed inside the RDBG process, but not all. Nevertheless, it is always possible to control the granularity of the instrumentation when compiling the plugin, and use different granularity for different runtime analysis.

For Lutin, the choices we made with respect to event granularity are described in Section 3.2. For Lustre, our current RDBG-plugin prototype has no micro-step event; each equation generates at most 2 events. It generates a call and an exit event if the equation is a node call, and it generates no event if for variable assignments (wires). This choice only makes sense because the Lustre V6 compiler [15] does not inline all the nodes (unlike the previous versions of Lustre compilers).

**Plugins Performance**. We have performed a few timing measurements on a simple Lutin program that performs 4 node calls made of trivial constraints (equalities). Then we have compared the execution time of that node executed with the `step` function, and with the `step_dbg` function executed via the RDBG command below:

```
let rec loop e = loop (e.next()) in loop(run());;
```

and have observed a penalty smaller than 1%. When executed with the profiler of Section 3.3.7, the slowdown is of 30%. A Lutin node with more complex constraints would exhibit a negligible slowdown, as the constraint resolution would dominate the whole execution time. To give an order of idea, the number of events that are generated per second is around 4000 (on a PC running at 3.6GHz, with 8Mo of RAM) and of 8000 on a Lustre equivalent one. Even though the Lustre plugin has no internal events, it generates more events per second, because equations are easier to compute than constraints. More systematic benchmarks should definitely be done on the language plugins.

Note that actually, one source of inefficiency is due to the use of the ocaml top-level, which implies the use of the byte-code compiler. Indeed, the Lutin interpreter is compiled with the ocaml native code compiler (`ocamlopt`). The performance ratio between the byte-code and the native code compilers is reputed to be of 5 in average (it was 2 on our small program). Nevertheless, this drawback only concerns interactive sessions. It is still possible to run RDBG scripts in batch mode, and to benefit from the native code compiler performances. For efficient interactive sessions, a solution would be to use a native code top-level [10].

# 7. RELATED WORK

**Debugging reactive programs**. Ludic is a debugger of Lustre programs [19]. It features standard step-by-step backward and forward execution and conditional breakpoints using a dedicated Lustre interpreter. It also provides an algorithmic debugging engine. Algorithmic debugging consists in exploring a tree (here, a dataflow network) by asking yes/no questions to the user until the bug is found [26]. Implementing on top of RDBG the Ludic exploration algorithm, that fits into one page, should be straightforward. The advantage would be to take advantage of the modular compilation capabilities of the Lustre V6 compiler. Indeed, the embedded Ludic Lustre interpreter inlines the whole Lustre program, and only the toplevel node is observable. The Lustre V6 compiler generates "synchronous objects" that are either interpreted (by the RDBG plugin or the Lustre V6 interpreter) or pretty-printed into a C function. The questions asked by the exploration engine might thus be much more precise and easier to answer than it is on inlined code.

Sabry and Sparud performs dataflow reactive programming on top of Haskell using streams and lazy computations. They designed a debugger [25] that gives insights on the behavior of such programs at the level of recursive equations and abstract away from the underlying Haskell semantics, in order to provide better error messages in case of instantaneous dependency – which are statically detected by all synchronous language compilers.

Elm is a functional language that targets non-critical reactive systems such as web services and GUIs [5]. The Elm's debugger [21] thus focuses on interactions with the GUIs. Such a neat GUI integration is complementary to the program-based stochastic stimuli generation we propose.

**Programmable debuggers**. Several debuggers offer the possibility of defining debugging commands, taking advantage of existing programming environments and relying on an execution trace view as a sequence of runtime events.

The Prolog's debugger Opium [7] and its derivatives (Coca [6] for C, Morphine [13] for Mercury) are based on a Prolog REPL. The debugger and the debuggee communicates via sockets, but some primitives perform as much event filtering as possible in the debuggee process to avoid context switches and inter-process communications. In Morphine, non-interactive commands (monitors) can be compiled and executed entirely in the debuggee process using dynamic linking.

`MzTake`[20] is programmable debugger for Java based on the FrTime [4], a functional reactive programming language based on Scheme. It communicates with the JVM via sockets (Java Debug Wire Protocol) and pays the price of 2 context switches per event.

Expositor [22] is a programmable debugger for C, based on GDB and `UndoDB`, a commercial replay debugger. The tool provides a Python API to program debugging commands. Typical Expositor program performs an initial query that computes a sub-trace of a complete execution trace. Then other queries can perform further filtering, merge several traces, or fold them. For efficiency, they use a mixture of lazy computations and replay debugging.

The moldable debugger [3] is a framework for smalltalk, that eases the development of domain-specific debuggers, and orchestrate their use. Such domain-specific debuggers are not really meant to be developed by end-users though.

## 8. CONCLUSION

We have presented RDBG, the first debugger for reactive programs that takes into account the feedback loop. We have demonstrated how to implement a full-featured debugger on top of a small kernel plugged onto 2 existing execution systems. This debugger is based on 4 simple and orthogonal ideas: (1) take advantage of existing languages (for the read-eval-print loop and the libraries); (2) provide users a pre-defined instrumentation and a simple API that allow them to implement their own debugging or monitoring commands; (3) provide compiler designers a plugin API; (4) use continuations to implement coroutine efficiently.

The advantages are multiple: a lightweight implementation (although, there remains technical work in the plugin implementation), which allow to program (or tune) efficient commands (no context switches nor inter process communications). This architecture offers a good separation of concerns, as debugging commands are implemented separately, and can serve for several language plugins. Besides, having the same infrastructure for testing and debugging is very handy; when the test exhibits a bug, everything is ready to launch a debug session.

RDBG has been designed for debugging reactive programs, that interact continuously with their environments. But RDBG can be used with non-reactive programs, which can be seen as degenerated kind of reactive programs that perform only step and that don't interact with their environment (no input/output). More generally, part of the proposed infrastructure does not depend on the target language characteristics (Lustre or Lutin). It depends on the other hand on the host interpreter language (ocaml). However, any language equipped with a REPL and good libraries could be used as host language. In our implementation however, the fact that the host language, is also the language used to compile and interpret the targeted languages (`Lustre` and `Lutin`) facilitates the task.

The use of continuations to implement coroutine is not specific to any host or target language either. It might be easier with language where functions are first class citizens though.

RDBG can be used by any execution system that can be interfaced with ocaml. RDBG could therefore be a good starting point to provide to synchronous programs that do not have a debugger yet, in particular for languages which runtime system is already based on OCAML such as Lucid synchrone [23], ReactiveML [18], or Stimulus [17] – Stimulus is an industrial version of Lutin that is developed by the Argosim company.

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