Introduction to JML

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Outline of this talk

What this set of slides aims to do

- **introduction to JML**
- **provide overview of tool support for JML (jmlrac, jmlunit, escjava)**
- **explain idea of extended static checking and difference with runtime assertion checking**
- **some more ESC/Java2 tips**

The Java Modeling Language JML

www.jmlspecs.org

JML by Gary Leavens et al.

Formal specification language for Java

- to specify behaviour of Java classes
- to record design &implementation decisions

by adding **assertions** to Java source code, eg

- **preconditions**
- **postconditions**
- **invariants**

as in Eiffel (Design by Contract), but more expressive.

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Goal: JML should be easy to use for any Java programmer.

JML

To make JML easy to use:

- **JML assertions are added as comments in .java file, between `/*@ ... @*/`, or after `//@`,**
- **Properties are specified as Java boolean expressions, extended with a few operators (`\old`, `\forall`, `\result`, `...`).**
- **using a few keywords (`requires`, `ensures`, `signals`, `assignable`, `pure`, `invariant`, `non_null`, `...`)**

requires, ensures

Pre- and post-conditions for method can be specified.

```
/*@ requires amount >= 0;
    ensures  balance == \old(balance)-amount &&
             \result == balance;
 @*/
public int debit(int amount) {
   ...
}
```

Here `\old(balance)` refers to the value of `balance` before execution of the method.

requires, ensures

JML specs can be as strong or as weak as you want.

```
/*@ requires amount >= 0;
    ensures  true;
  @*/
 public int debit(int amount) {
   ...
 }
```

This default postcondition "`ensures true`" can be omitted.

Design-by-Contract

Pre- and postconditions define a contract between a class and its clients:

- **Client must ensure precondition and may assume postcondition**
- **Method may assume precondition and must ensure postcondition**

Eg, in the example specs for `debit`, it is the obligation of the client to ensure that `amount` is positive. The `requires` clause makes this explicit.

signals

Exceptional postconditions can also be specified.

```
/*@ requires amount >= 0;
    ensures  true;
    signals (ISOException e)
               amount > balance          &&
               balance == \old(balance) &&
               e.getReason()==AMOUNT_TOO_BIG;
 @*/
public int debit(int amount) {
 ...
}
```

signals

Exceptions are allowed by default, i.e. the default signals clause is

```
signals (Exception) true;
```

To rule them out, add an explicit

```
signals (Exception) false;
```

or use the keyword normal_behavior

```
/*@ normal_behavior
      requires ...
      ensures  ...
  @*/
```

invariant

Invariants (aka *class* invariants) are properties that must be maintained by all methods, e.g.,

```
public class  Wallet {
  public static final short MAX_BAL = 1000;
  private short balance;
   /*@ invariant 0 <= balance &&
                  balance <= MAX_BAL;
     @*/
  ...
```

Invariants are implicitly included in all pre- and postconditions.

Invariants must *also* be preserved if exception is thrown!

invariant

Invariants document design decisions, e.g.,

```
public class Directory {
private File[] files;
/*@ invariant
    files != null
    &&
    (\forall int i; 0 <= i && i < files.length;
                  ; files[i] != null &&
                    files[i].getParent() == this);
  @*/
```

Making them explicit helps in understanding the code.

non_null

Many invariants, pre- and postconditions are about references not being `null`. non_null is a convenient short-hand for these.

```
public class Directory {

  private /*@ non_null @*/ File[] files;

  void createSubdir(/*@ non_null @*/ String name){
    ...
  Directory /*@ non_null @*/ getParent(){
    ...
```

assert

An `assert` clause specifies a property that should hold at some point in the code, e.g.,

```
if (i <= 0 || j < 0) {
      ...
} else if (j < 5) {
      //@ assert i > 0 && 0 < j && j < 5;
      ...
} else {
      //@ assert i > 0 && j > 5;
      ...
}
```

assert

JML keyword `assert` now also in Java (since Java 1.4).

Still, assert in JML is more expressive, for example in

```
  ...
  for (n = 0; n < a.length; n++)
       if (a[n]==null) break;
/*@ assert (\forall int i; 0 <= i && i < n;
                           a[i] != null);
  @*/
```

assignable

Frame properties limit possible side-effects of methods.

```
/*@   requires amount >= 0;
     assignable balance;
        ensures balance == \old(balance)-amount;
 @*/
public int debit(int amount) {
   ...
```

E.g., `debit` can *only* assign to the field `balance`.
NB this does *not* follow from the post-condition.

Default assignable clause: `assignable \everything`.

pure

A method without side-effects is called pure.

```
public /*@ pure @*/ int getBalance(){...

Directory /*@ pure non_null @*/ getParent(){...
```

Pure method are implicitly `assignable \nothing`.

Only pure methods can be used *in* specifications.

visibility

JML supports the standard Java visibilities:

```
public int pub;  private int priv;

//@ requires i <= pub;
public void pub1 (int i) { ... }

//@ requires i <= pub && i <= priv;
private void priv1 (int i)  ...

//@ requires i <= pub && i <= priv; // WRONG !!
public void pub2(int i) { ... }
```

Specs of public methods may not refer to private fields.

visibility: spec_public

Keyword `spec_public` loosens visibility for specs.
Private `spec_public` fields are allowed in public specs, e.g.:

```
public int pub;
private /*@ spec_public @*/ int priv;

//@ requires i <= pub && i <= priv; // OK
public void pub2(int i) { ... }
```

Exposing private details is ugly, of course. A nicer, but more advanced alternative in JML is to use public **`model`** fields to represent (abstract away from) private implementation details.

Tools for JML

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  test for violations of assertions during execution
  jmlrac

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- **parsing** and **typechecking**
- **runtime assertion checking**:
  test for violations of assertions **during execution**
  jmlrac
- **extended static checking**:
  prove that contracts are never violated **at compile-time**
  ESC/Java2
  This is program verification, not just testing.

runtime assertion checking

jmlrac compiler by Gary Leavens et al. at Iowa State Univ.

- **translates JML assertions into runtime checks:**

  during execution, *all* assertions are tested and any violation of an assertion produces an Error.

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The jmlunit tool combines jmlrac and unit testing.

runtime assertion checking

jmlrac can generate complicated test-code for free. E.g., for

```
/*@ ...
    signals (Exception)
                balance == \old(balance);
  @*/
 public int debit(int amount) { ... }
```

it will test that if `debit` throws an exception, the balance hasn't changed, and all invariants still hold.

jmlrac even checks `\forall` if the domain of quantification is finite.

extended static checking

ESC/Java(2)

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- *tries* to *prove* correctness of specifications, at compile-time, fully automatically
- *not sound*: ESC/Java may miss an error that is actually present
- *not complete*: ESC/Java may warn of errors that are impossible
- but finds lots of potential bugs quickly
- good at proving absence of runtime exceptions (eg Null-, ArrayIndexOutOfBounds-, ClassCast-) and verifying relatively simple properties.

static checking vs runtime checking

Important differences:

- **ESC/Java2 checks specs at compile-time,**
  jmlrac checks specs at run-time
- **ESC/Java2 proves correctness of specs,**
  jml only tests correctness of specs.
  Hence
  - **ESC/Java2 independent of any test suite,**
    results of runtime testing only as good as the test suite,
  - **ESC/Java2 provides higher degree of confidence.**

static checking vs runtime checking

One of the assertions below is wrong:

```
if (i <= 0 || j < 0) {
    ...
} else if (j < 5) {
    //@ assert i > 0 && 0 < j && j < 5;
    ...
} else {
    //@ assert i > 0 && j > 5;
    ...
}
```

Runtime assertion checking *may* detect this with a comprehensive test suite.
ESC/Java2 *will* detect this at compile-time.

modular reasoning (1)

ESC/Java2 reasons about every method individually. So in

```
class A{
 byte[] b;
 public void n() { b = new byte[20]; }
 public void m() { n();
                   b[0] = 2;
                   ...          }
```

ESC/Java2 warns that `b[0]` may be a null dereference here,

even though you can see that it won't be.

modular reasoning (1)

To stop ESC/Java2 complaining: add a postcondition

```
class A{
  byte[] b;
  //@ ensures b != null && b.length = 20;
  public void n() { a = new byte[20]; }
  public void m() { n();
                    b[0] = 2;
                    ...          }
```

So: property of method that is relied on has to be made explicit.
And: subclasses that override methods have to preserve these.

modular reasoning (2)

Similarly, ESC/Java will complain about `b[0] = 2` in

```
class A{
 byte[] b;
 public void A() { b = new byte[20]; }
 public void m() { b[0] = 2;
                   ...  }
```

Maybe you can see that this is a spurious warning, though this will be harder than in the previous example: you'll have to inspect *all* constructors and *all* methods.

modular reasoning (2)

To stop ESC/Java2 complaining here: add an invariant

```
class A{
 byte[] b;
  //@ invariant b != null && b.length == 20;
      // or weaker property for b.length ?
 public void A() { b = new byte[20]; }
 public void m() { b[0] = 2;
                   ...  }
```

So again: properties you rely on have to be made explicit.

And again: subclasses have to preserve these properties.

assume

Alternative to stop ESC/Java2 complaining: add an assumption:

```
...
//@ assume b != null && b.length > 0;
b[0] = 2;
...
```

Especially useful during development, when you're still trying to discover hidden assumptions, or when ESC/Java2's reasoning power is too weak.

(`requires` can be understood as a form of `assume`.)

more JML tools

- javadoc-style documentation: jmldoc
- Other red verification tools:
  - LOOP tool + PVS (Nijmegen)
  - JACK (Gemplus/INRIA)
  - Krakatoa tool + Coq (INRIA)

  These tools (also) aim at interactive verification of complex properties, whereas ESC/Java2 aims at automatic verification of relatively simple properties.
- runtime detection of invariants: Daikon (Michael Ernst, MIT)
- model-checking multi-threaded programs: Bogor (Kansas State)

See `www.jmlspecs.org`

Acknowledgements

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- **David Cok is a primary contributor to JML and ESC/Java2.**

More information

These websites and mailing lists can provide more information (and have links to even more):

- **JML: www.jmlspecs.org**
- **mailing lists: jmlspecs-interest@lists.sourceforge.net jmlspecs-developers@lists.sourceforge.net**

- **ESC/Java2: www.cs.kun.nl/sos/research/escjava**
- **ESC/Java: www.research.compaq.com/SRC/esc/**
- **mailing list: jmlspecs-escjava@lists.sourceforge.net**