Subject: Re: FOR loops and efficiency
Posted by Christopher Thom on Fri, 22 May 2009 18:24:21 GMT
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Quoth Craig Markwardt:

> A FOR loop will only be slow(er) when the time spent executing the
> loop overhead is much more than the time spent doing the computations
> in one loop iteration. A simple test would be to execute a dummy
> loop:
> NMAX = 100000L
> FOR I = 0L, NMAX do begin & dummy = 1
> Keep raising the value of NMAX until the execute time of the loop is
> perceptible. Don't bother trying to optimize loops smaller than this.
>
> In your case, you are only doing ten iterations, and each iteration
> does a lot of work, so you won't gain by removing the loop.

I've heard this description about FOR loops a lot, but one general question I've never been able to answer is, "how do i know when my loops are doing enough work?". How do I know when my loop overhead is a large fraction of the time spent on an iteration?

I guess the real underlying question here is recognising when to optimise, and when to simply move on to more important things. Does anyone have any rules of thumb to help guide this recognition?

cheers
chris

ps -- Also...I'm aware that "premature optimisation is the root of all evil", according to knuth...