Subject: Re: object reference destroy
Posted by BlackMage on Wed, 24 Jun 2009 18:33:39 GMT

An alternative is to implement reference counting. I have implemented this for my own code and found it very effective, all my classes have the reference counting class as the root of their inheritance. When the reference-counting object is created or another object tells it that it 'owns' a reference to it, the count increases. Once other objects no longer need the owning reference, they tell the reference-counting object and the count decreases. Once the count hits zero, the reference-counting object destroys itself. If the reference-counting object is destroyed with a non-zero count, it complains and this assists debugging.

This approach has been very effective for me in object management as I am no longer trying to work out exactly what part of my code holds the final reference to any given object so I can destroy it when, and only when, it is no longer needed. It's especially useful if you have multiple collections of the same object references e.g. search trees or linked lists.