



Software Analyzers

# Metrics







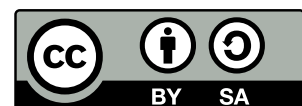
**list**

# Frama-C's metrics plug-in

25.0 (Manganese)

Richard Bonichon & Boris Yakobowski

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CEA-List, Université Paris-Saclay  
Software Safety and Security Lab



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# Chapter 1

## Quick overview

The Metrics plug-in computes complexity measures on C source code. It can operate either on Frama-C's normalized abstract syntax tree (AST) or on the original source code.

### 1.1 Description

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#### 1.1.1 Command-line options

The complete list of command-line options can be obtained by:

```
| % frama-c -metrics-help
```

Let us now detail some of them:

- metrics** is a necessary switch to activate the plug-in. It also triggers the computation of syntactic metrics (slocs, number of statements of certain types, ...) on the normalized AST.
- metrics-by-function** also computes (and displays) the above metrics, but this time on a per-function basis.
- metrics-ast** is used to choose the AST the metrics should be computed on. It can be either Frama-C's normalized AST or the original AST. Section 1.1.2 covers this topic in some more details. How this affects the availability of metrics is discussed in Section 1.2 and 1.3.
- metrics-output** redirects metrics' calculations to a file. The selection of the output is automatically detected from the extension of the output file. As of now, only `.html` or `.txt` outputs are supported.
- metrics-cover** specifies a set of functions from which to compute a coverage estimate. This item is detailed in Section 1.2.4.
- metrics-eva-cover** activates the Eva coverage estimation. This item is detailed in Section 1.2.4.
- metrics-libc** controls whether functions from Frama-C's standard library are shown within the results. By default, this option is not set, and those functions are hidden.

### 1.1.2 Metrics and abstract syntax trees

Frama-C analyses usually operate on its own internal *normalized* abstract syntax tree<sup>1</sup>. The normalization process adds for example missing return statements, transforms all loops into `while(1) { ... }` statements, introduces some temporary variables... Although this normalization process does not affect the semantic contents of the code, its syntactic counterpart is indeed changed. It can therefore affect metrics computed from the source code.

However, Frama-C also keeps the original abstract syntax tree of the source as is. Even though Frama-C's analyses are usually centered around the normalized representation, some facilities do exist to manipulate the other original AST.

Users of the Metrics plug-in can specify the nature of the AST from which the metrics should be computed. Some metrics are available only for one AST representation.

The default behavior, as enabled by the `-metrics` switch, is to calculate syntactic metrics on the normalized AST. Metrics available for each AST are the objects of Sections 1.2 and 1.3.

## 1.2 Metrics on the normalized abstract syntax tree

---

### 1.2.1 Syntactic metrics

Only cyclomatic numbers are available for the normalized AST. These are also available through Frama-C's graphical user interface (GUI) (see Section 1.2.2).

Let us calculate the cyclomatic complexity of the program of Figure 1.1 using the following command <sup>2</sup>.

```
| % frama-c -metrics -metrics-by-function reach.c
```

The results are detailed in Figures 1.2 and 1.3. The output contains a summary, for each function, of the number of assignments, function calls, exit points, declared functions (it should always be 1), goto instructions, if statements, pointer dereferencings and lines of code. The cyclomatic number of the function is also computed. Per-function results are available only if the option `-metrics-by-function` is specified; otherwise only the "Syntactic metrics" part of the output is shown (Figure 1.3). Note that these results can be printed to a text or html file using the `-metrics-output` option.

### 1.2.2 Graphical User interface

Metrics on the normalized AST are also accessible through Frama-C's GUI. Cyclomatic complexity numbers are shown either globally on the left-hand side pane of the GUI, after left-clicking the **Measure** button (see Figure 1.4), or for a chosen function (see Figure 1.5). To access this functionality, you must right-click on the line where the function is defined to make a menu appear, then left-click on **Metrics** as shown in the figure.

<sup>1</sup>Note that the parsing machinery and the production of the abstract syntax trees originally come from CIL (<http://cil.sourceforge.net/>).

<sup>2</sup>`frama-c -metrics -metrics-by-function -metrics-ast cil reach.c` is also a valid command for this purpose.



```
void (*bar) (int); void (*t[2])(int);

void baz (int j) { return; }

void (*t[2])(int)= {
    baz,
    0};

void foo (int k) {
    int i = 0;
    return;
}

/* foo is unreachable since j is always 0; baz is not called */
int main() {
    int j = 0;
    void ((*pt)[2])(int) = &t;
    if (!j) {
        return 1;
    }
    else {
        bar = foo;
        bar (1);
        return 0;
    }
}
```

Figure 1.1: Source code for reach.c

```

[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-eva': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Server
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-aorai': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-callgraph': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-constant_propagation': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-studia': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-dive': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-postdominators': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-from': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Callgraph
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-inout': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Callgraph
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-pdg': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Callgraph
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-users': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Callgraph
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-sparecode': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-slicing': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Callgraph
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-impact': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-loopanalysis': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-metrics': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-nonterm': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-occurrence': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-reduc': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-scope': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-security_slicing': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-wp': cannot load module
  Details: interface mismatch on Why3
[kernel] User Error: Deferred error message was emitted during execution. See above messages for
[kernel] Frama-C aborted: invalid user input.

```

Figure 1.2: Output of by-function syntactic metrics for the normalized AST of reach.c

Figure 1.3: Output of global syntactic metrics for the normalized AST of reach.c

## 1.2. METRICS ON THE NORMALIZED ABSTRACT SYNTAX TREE

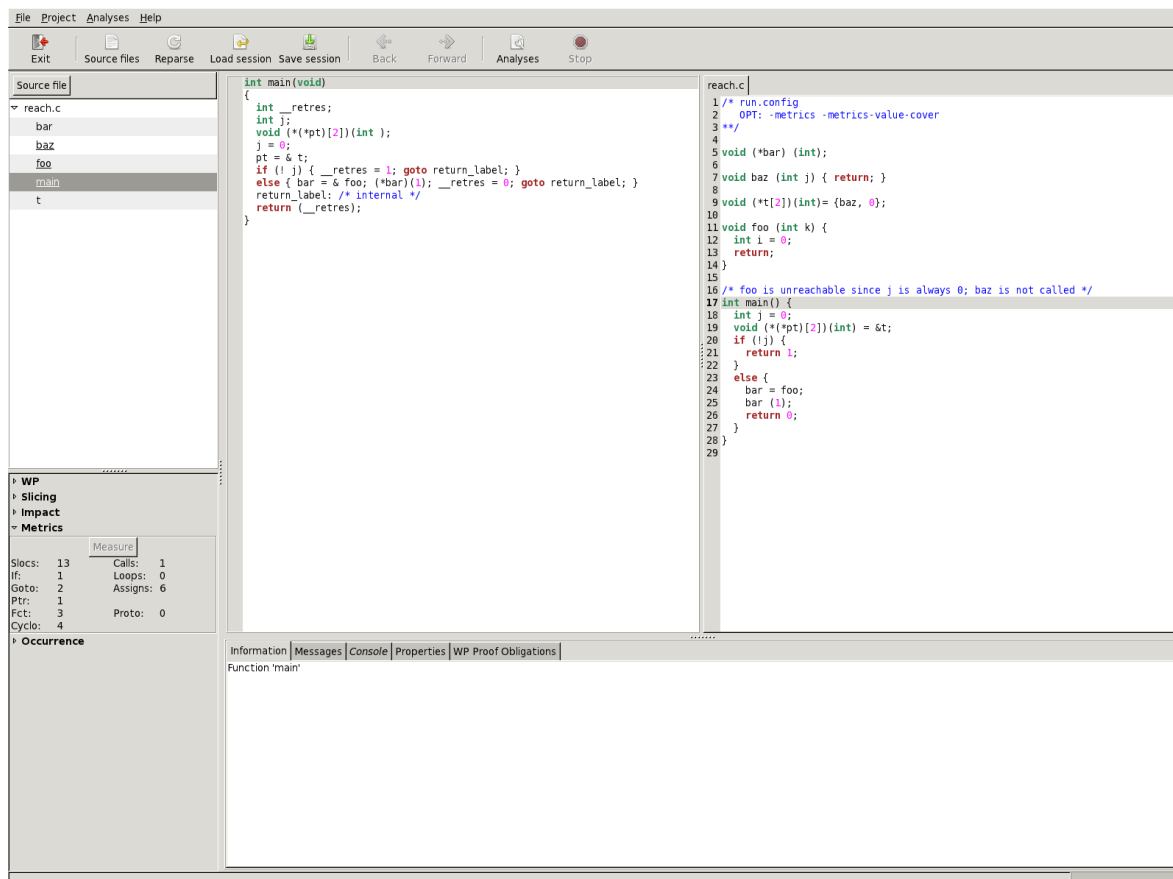


Figure 1.4: Metrics GUI: calculate global metrics

### 1.2.3 Reachability coverage

Given a function  $f$ , the reachability coverage analysis over-approximates the functions of the program that can be called from  $f$ . On our example, to activate it on the functions `main` and `foo`, one can use:

```
| % frama-c -metrics -metrics-cover main,foo reach.c
```

The results are displayed in Figure 1.6. The reachability coverage analysis is conservative. For example, it considers that all function whose addresses are referenced within a reachable function may be called. This explains why it considers that `baz` and `foo` are reachable from the `main` function.

### 1.2.4 Eva coverage

The `-metrics-eva-cover` option can be used to compare the code effectively analyzed by Eva with what Metrics considers reachable from the `main` function (wrt. the criterion described in Section 1.2.3). The results of this option on our example are given in Figure 1.7. This particular feature is activated by the following command:

```
| % frama-c -metrics -metrics-eva-cover reach.c
```

Syntactic reachability is an over-approximation of what is actually reachable by Eva. Thus, the coverage estimation will always be equal to or less than 100%, especially if the source

## CHAPTER 1. QUICK OVERVIEW

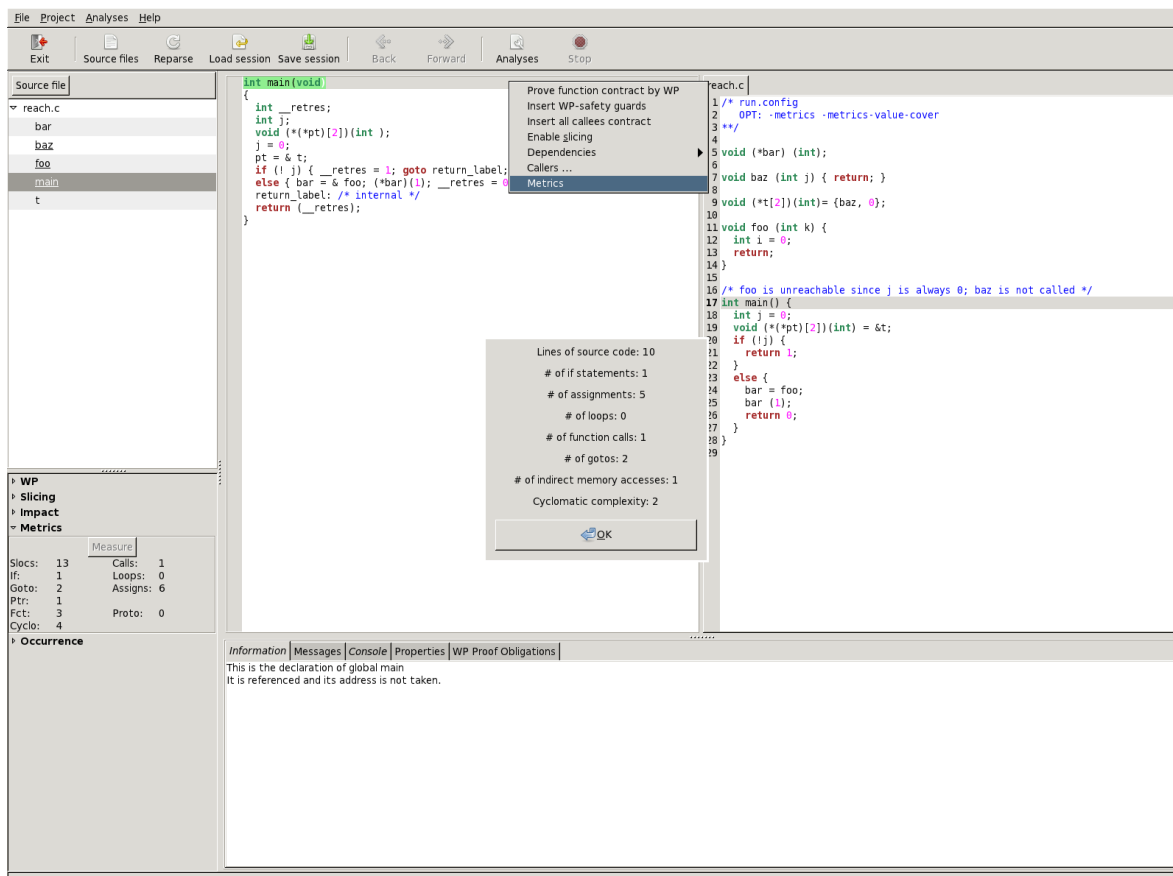


Figure 1.5: Metrics GUI: calculate metrics for a function

```
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-metrics': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-nonterm': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-occurrence': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-reduc': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-scope': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-security_slicing': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-wp': cannot load module
  Details: interface mismatch on Why3
[kernel] User Error: Deferred error message was emitted during execution. See above messages for
[kernel] Frama-C aborted: invalid user input.
```

Figure 1.6: Reachability coverage for reach.c

code relies a lot on the use of function pointers.

For all functions that are considered syntactically reachable, but that are not analyzed by Eva, the plug-in indicates the locations in the code where a call *might* have been analyzed. In our example, this consists in the call to foo at ligne 24. Also, since the address of baz

is contained in the initializer of the array `t` (itself referenced in `main`), `baz` is considered as callable; thus the plug-in signals the initializer of `t` as a possible calling point. Finally, the plug-in displays the percentage of statements analyzed by Eva for each function.

```

  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-security_slicing': cannot load module
  Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-wp': cannot load module
  Details: interface mismatch on Why3
[kernel] User Error: Deferred error message was emitted during execution. See above messages f
[kernel] Frama-C aborted: invalid user input.

```

Figure 1.7: Eva coverage estimate for `reach.c`

### 1.3 Metrics on the original abstract syntax tree

---

Only syntactic metrics are available on the original AST. Both Halstead and cyclomatic complexity are computed. Note that this part of the plug-in cannot be used through the GUI.

```
| % frama-c -metrics -metrics-by-function -metrics-ast cabs reach.c
```

The effect is to calculate both cyclomatic and Halstead complexities for the argument files, as shown in Figures 1.8 and 1.9 . The results for Halstead measures are only global while cyclomatic numbers can be done on a per-function basis. Halstead measures also produce a detailed account of the syntactic elements of the files.

```

Details: interface mismatch on Zmq
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-eva': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Server
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-aorai': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-callgraph': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-constant_propagation': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-studia': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-dive': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-postdominators': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-from': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Callgraph
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-inout': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Callgraph
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-pdg': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Callgraph
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[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-sparescode': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-slicing': cannot load module
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Details: no implementation available for Eva
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Details: no implementation available for Eva
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Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-occurrence': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-reduc': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-scope': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva
[kernel] User Error: cannot load plug-in 'frama-c-security_slicing': cannot load module
Details: no implementation available for Eva

```

Figure 1.8: Cyclomatic metrics on the original AST for reach.c

Figure 1.9: Halstead metrics on the original AST for reach.c

# Practical notes and comments

## 2.1 Cyclomatic complexity

---

Cyclomatic complexity, also called conditional complexity was introduced by Thomas McCabe [2] in 1976. It is a measure of the number of paths through a source code and represent the complexity of the control-flow of the program.

The cyclomatic number of a source code has been shown to be weakly correlated to its number of defects.

### 2.1.1 Calculation

Cyclomatic complexity is a notion defined on a directed graph. It can therefore be defined on a program taken as its control-flow graph. For a directed graph, the cyclomatic complexity  $C$  is defined as

$$C = E - N + 2P$$

where  $E$  is the number of edges of the graph,  $N$  the number of nodes and  $P$  the number of (strongly) connected components.

This notion of complexity is extended to deal with programs using the following formula

$$C = \pi - s + 2$$

where  $\pi$  is the number of decision points in the program and  $s$  the number of exit points.

### 2.1.2 Practical notes

Cyclomatic complexity can be computed on all abstract syntax trees in Frama-C. The resulting complexity will nonetheless stay the same in both AST representations, as Frama-C's normalized AST does not add control-flow directives to the source code.

Prior to the computation of cyclomatic complexity, the plug-in gathers the following syntactic information from the source code:

- Number of lines of code (assuming one C statement equals one line of code);
- Number of if statements;
- Number of loops;

- Number of function calls;
- Number of gotos;
- Number of assignments;
- Numbers of exit points (return statements);
- Number of functions declared;
- Number of pointer dereferencings.
- Number of decision points (conditional statements (if) and expressions (? :), switch cases, lazy logical operators, loops).

These informations are computed both for the complete source code, and on a per-function basis – except for the number of functions declared.

Cyclomatic complexity is then derived from these informations, both for the full code and for each defined function.

## 2.2 Halstead complexity

---

Halstead complexity is as set of software metrics introduced by Maurice Halstead [1] in 1977. The goal is to identify measurable properties of the code and to go beyond pure complexity measures.

### 2.2.1 Calculation

Halstead complexity measures first need the following informations from the source code:

- $\eta_1$  is the number of distinct operators;
- $\eta_2$  is the number of distinct operands;
- $N_1$  is the total number of operators;
- $N_2$  is the total number of operands;

From the above informations, Halstead defines the following measures:

Program vocabulary	$\eta$	$\eta_1 + \eta_2$
Program length	$N$	$N_1 + N_2$
Calculated program length	$\hat{N}$	$n_1 \times \log_2 \eta_1 + \eta_2 \times \log_2 \eta_2$
Volume	$V$	$N \times \log_2 \eta$
Difficulty	$D$	$(\eta_1/2) \times N_2/\eta_2$
Effort	$E$	$D \times V$
Time required to program	$T$	$E/18$
Bugs	$B$	$E^{2/3}/3000$

Note that “Time required to program” is an estimate given in seconds.



### 2.2.2 Practical notes

To implement the measures defined in Section 2.2.1, it is necessary to define what the operands and operators of the language are. For Frama-C, the target language is C and we define its operands and operators as follows:

**Distinct operands** Identifiers and constants are operands, as well as type names and type specification keywords.

**Distinct operators** Storage class specifiers, type qualifiers, reserved keywords of C and other operators (+, ++, + =, ...) are considered as operators.

It is important to note that the measure of bugs delivered is considered under-approximated for programs written in C.

## 2.3 Eva coverage

---

This part of the Metrics plug-in is thought of as a help for new code exploration with Frama-C's Eva plug-in. The first steps into a new code can be quite complicated and, more often than not, Eva stops due to too much imprecision. This imprecision can have a lot of different causes (body of library functions missing, imprecisions of reads in memory, ...).

The graphical user interface helps visualizing where Eva has stopped. The penetration estimate of Metrics aims to complement that by giving a rough approximate of the percentage of code that Eva has seen. This is especially interesting when comparing two runs of Eva on the same code, after performing some tweaks and improvements to help Eva: one can thusly quantify the added penetration due to the tweaks.



# Bibliography

- [1] Maurice H. Halstead. *Elements of Software Science*. Elsevier North-Holland, 1977.
- [2] Thomas J. McCabe. A complexity measure. *IEEE Trans. Software Eng.*, 2(4):308–320, 1976.