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- For immediate release -

Igor! Go fetch bugs!

Your program does not work? The „AskIgor" Web service automatically finds out why.

Researchers of Saarland University, Germany, have started a Web service that automatically finds out the causes for program failures – automatically, quickly, and for free. At *www.AskIgor.org,* programmers may submit buggy Linux programs; Diagnosis tools for Java and Windows programs are underway.

Bugs in computer programs cause damages in the billions of dollars. According to a 2002 study of the US National Institute of Standards and Technology, improvements in testing and debugging could save users and vendors costs of 22.5 billion US$ per year.

Andreas Zeller, professor of computer science at Saarland University, Germany, and his research group have launched a **web service** that automatically determines the causes of program failures. At **www.AskIgor.org** (Ask Igor), users may submit buggy programs; the diagnosis only takes a few minutes.

Igor is the first tool to determine failure causes automatically. This is how it works: *Igor* compares two program runs – a working run and a failing run. Using a number of tests, the process narrows down the failure-inducing difference to the actual failure cause. Initially, Igor focuses on **Linux** programs; next year, the technique will be extended to **Windows** and **Java** programs. In the long term, Zeller's tools will not only automatically create diagnoses, but also **suggestions for fixes**.

A year ago, Prof. Zeller presented his first research results at the ACM SIGSOFT conference in Charleston, SC. At **www.AskIgor.org,** his prototype is now available for everyone. Why did he name the system *Igor?* „Igor is the lab assistant in several Frankenstein movies", Prof. Zeller says: „Frankenstein plans, and Igor does the dirty work – Igor! Go fetch bugs!"

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Andreas Zeller is a full professor for software engineering at Saarland University, Saarbruecken, Germany. His research focuses on novel techniques for analyzing programs and processes. Zeller got his PhD in 1997 at Technical University of Braunschweig, Germany. He is professor in Saarbruecken since 2001.

Zeller's works on automated debugging have received numerous awards, including the *Ernst-Denert Award for Software Engineering*, the *ACM SIGSOFT Distinguished Paper Award* and IBM's *Eclipse Innovation Award*. Besides automated debugging, his group works on experimental program analysis, data-mining version archives, self-rescuing programs and the detection of security leaks.

The Software Engineering chair on the Web:
http://www.st.cs.uni-sb.de/

Questions or comments?
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Visit www.AskIgor.org/press to find pictures and further information.