Counting Iterator
abstract: How would you fill up a vector with the numbers zero through one hundred using `std::copy()`? The only iterator operation missing from built-in integer types is an `operator*()` that returns the current value of the integer. The counting iterator adaptor adds this crucial piece of functionality to whatever type it wraps. One can use the counting iterator adaptor not only with integer types, but with any incrementable type.

counting_iterator adapts an object by adding an `operator*()` that returns the current value of the object. All other iterator operations are forwarded to the adapted object.

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counting_iterator synopsis

template <
  class Incrementable
  , class CategoryOrTraversal = use_default
  , class Difference = use_default
>
class counting_iterator
{
public:
  typedef Incrementable value_type;
  typedef const Incrementable& reference;
  typedef const Incrementable* pointer;
  typedef /* see below */ difference_type;
  typedef /* see below */ iterator_category;

  counting_iterator();
  counting_iterator(counting_iterator const& rhs);
  explicit counting_iterator(Incrementable x);
  Incrementable const& base() const;
  reference operator*() const;
  counting_iterator& operator++();
counting_iterator& operator--();
private:
  Incrementable m_inc; // exposition
};

If the Difference argument is use_default then difference_type is an unspecified signed integral type. Otherwise difference_type is Difference.

iterator_category is determined according to the following algorithm:

if (CategoryOrTraversal is not use_default)
  return CategoryOrTraversal
else if (numeric_limits<Incrementable>::is_specialized)
  return iterator-category(
    random_access_traversal_tag, Incrementable, const Incrementable&)
else
  return iterator-category(
    iterator_traversal<Incrementable>::type,
    Incrementable, const Incrementable&)

[Note: implementers are encouraged to provide an implementation of operator--
  and a difference_type that avoids overflows in the cases where
  std::numeric_limits<Incrementable>::is_specialized is true.]

counting_iterator requirements

The Incrementable argument shall be Copy Constructible and Assignable.

If iterator_category is convertible to forward_iterator_tag or forward_traversal_tag, the following must be well-formed:

Incrementable i, j;
++i;       // pre-increment
i == j;    // operator equal

If iterator_category is convertible to bidirectional_iterator_tag or bidirectional_traversal_tag, the following expression must also be well-formed:

--i

If iterator_category is convertible to random_access_iterator_tag or random_access_traversal_tag, the following must also be valid:

counting_iterator::difference_type n;
i += n;
n = i - j;
i < j;
**counting_iterator models**

Specializations of `counting_iterator` model Readable Lvalue Iterator. In addition, they model the concepts corresponding to the iterator tags to which their `iterator_category` is convertible. Also, if `CategoryOrTraversal` is not `use_default` then `counting_iterator` models the concept corresponding to the iterator tag `CategoryOrTraversal`. Otherwise, if `numeric_limits<Incrementable>::is_specialized`, then `counting_iterator` models Random Access Traversal Iterator. Otherwise, `counting_iterator` models the same iterator traversal concepts modeled by `Incrementable`.

`counting_iterator<X,C1,D1>` is interoperable with `counting_iterator<Y,C2,D2>` if and only if `X` is interoperable with `Y`.

**counting_iterator operations**

In addition to the operations required by the concepts modeled by `counting_iterator`, `counting_iterator` provides the following operations.

```cpp
counting_iterator();
```

*Requires:* `Incrementable` is Default Constructible.

*Effects:* Default construct the member `m_inc`.

```cpp
counting_iterator(counting_iterator const& rhs);
```

*Effects:* Construct member `m_inc` from `rhs.m_inc`.

```cpp
explicit counting_iterator(Incrementable x);
```

*Effects:* Construct member `m_inc` from `x`.

```cpp
reference operator*() const;
```

*Returns:* `m_inc`

```cpp
counting_iterator& operator++();
```

*Effects:* `++m_inc`

*Returns:* `*this`

```cpp
counting_iterator& operator--();
```

*Effects:* `--m_inc`

*Returns:* `*this`

```cpp
Incrementable const& base() const;
```

*Returns:* `m_inc`

```cpp
template <class Incrementable>
counting_iterator<Incrementable> make_counting_iterator(Incrementable x);
```

*Returns:* An instance of `counting_iterator<Incrementable>` with current constructed from `x`.  

Example

This example fills an array with numbers and a second array with pointers into the first array, using counting_iterator for both tasks. Finally indirect_iterator is used to print out the numbers into the first array via indirection through the second array.

```cpp
int N = 7;
std::vector<int> numbers;
typedef std::vector<int>::iterator n_iter;
std::copy(boost::counting_iterator<int>(0),
          boost::counting_iterator<int>(N),
          std::back_inserter(numbers));

std::vector<std::vector<int>::iterator> pointers;
std::copy(boost::make_counting_iterator(numbers.begin()),
          boost::make_counting_iterator(numbers.end()),
          std::back_inserter(pointers));

std::cout << "indirectly printing out the numbers from 0 to "
          << N << std::endl;
std::copy(boost::make_indirect_iterator(pointers.begin()),
          boost::make_indirect_iterator(pointers.end()),
          std::ostream_iterator<int>(std::cout, " "));
std::cout << std::endl;
```

The output is:

```
indirectly printing out the numbers from 0 to 7
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
```

The source code for this example can be found [here](#).