abstract: indirect_iterator adapts an iterator by applying an extra dereference inside of operator*(). For example, this iterator adaptor makes it possible to view a container of pointers (e.g. list<foo*>) as if it were a container of the pointed-to type (e.g. list<foo>). indirect_iterator depends on two auxiliary traits, pointee and indirect_reference, to provide support for underlying iterators whose value_type is not an iterator.
indirect_iterator();
indirect_iterator(Iterator x);

template <
class Iterator2, class Value2, class Category2
, class Reference2, class Difference2
>
indirect_iterator(
    indirect_iterator<
        Iterator2, Value2, Category2, Reference2, Difference2
    > const& y
, typename enable_if_convertible<Iterator2, Iterator>::type* = 0 // exposition
    );

Iterator const& base() const;
reference operator*() const;
indirect_iterator& operator++();
indirect_iterator& operator--();

private:
    Iterator m_iterator; // exposition
    
The member types of indirect_iterator are defined according to the following pseudo-code, where V is iterator_traits<Iterator>::value_type

    if (Value is use_default) then
        typedef remove_const<pointee<V>::type>::type value_type;
    else
        typedef remove_const<Value>::type value_type;

    if (Reference is use_default) then
        if (Value is use_default) then
            typedef indirect_reference<V>::type reference;
        else
            typedef Value& reference;
    else
        typedef Reference reference;

    if (Value is use_default) then
        typedef pointee<V>::type* pointer;
    else
        typedef Value* pointer;

    if (Difference is use_default)
        typedef iterator_traits<Iterator>::difference_type difference_type;
    else
        typedef Difference difference_type;

    if (CategoryOrTraversal is use_default)
        typedef iterator_category ( iterator_traversal<Iterator>::type,'reference','value_type'
                             ) iterator_category;
    else
        
2
typedef iterator_category (  
    CategoryOrTraversal, 'reference', 'value_type'  
) iterator_category;

indirect_iterator requirements

The expression *v, where v is an object of iterator_traits<Iterator>::value_type, shall be valid expression and convertible to reference. Iterator shall model the traversal concept indicated by iterator_category. Value, Reference, and Difference shall be chosen so that value_type, reference, and difference_type meet the requirements indicated by iterator_category.

[Note: there are further requirements on the iterator_traits<Iterator>::value_type if the Value parameter is not use_default, as implied by the algorithm for deducing the default for the value_type member.]

indirect_iterator models

In addition to the concepts indicated by iterator_category and by iterator_traversal<indirect_iterator>::type, a specialization of indirect_iterator models the following concepts, Where v is an object of iterator_traits<Iterator>::value_type:

• Readable Iterator if reference(*v) is convertible to value_type.
• Writable Iterator if reference(*v) = t is a valid expression (where t is an object of type indirect_iterator::value_type)
• Lvalue Iterator if reference is a reference type.

indirect_iterator<X,V1,C1,R1,D1> is interoperable with indirect_iterator<Y,V2,C2,R2,D2> if and only if X is interoperable with Y.

indirect_iterator operations

In addition to the operations required by the concepts described above, specializations of indirect_iterator provide the following operations.

indirect_iterator();

Requires: Iterator must be Default Constructible.

Effects: Constructs an instance of indirect_iterator with a default-constructed m_iterator.

indirect_iterator(Iterator x);

Effects: Constructs an instance of indirect_iterator with m_iterator copy constructed from x.

template <  
    class Iterator2, class Value2, unsigned Access, class Traversal  
    , class Reference2, class Difference2  
>  
indirect_iterator(  
    indirect_iterator<  
        Iterator2, Value2, Access, Traversal, Reference2, Difference2  
    > const& y  
    , typename enable_if_convertible<Iterator2, Iterator>::type* = 0 // exposition  
);
Requires: `Iterator2` is implicitly convertible to `Iterator`.

Effects: Constructs an instance of `indirect_iterator` whose `m_iterator` subobject is constructed from `y.base()`.

Example

This example prints an array of characters, using `indirect_iterator` to access the array of characters through an array of pointers. Next `indirect_iterator` is used with the `transform` algorithm to copy the characters (incremented by one) to another array. A constant indirect iterator is used for the source and a mutable indirect iterator is used for the destination. The last part of the example prints the original array of characters, but this time using the `make_indirect_iterator` helper function.

```cpp
char characters[] = "abcdefg";
const int N = sizeof(characters)/sizeof(char) - 1; // -1 since characters has a null char
char* pointers_to_chars[N]; // at the end.
for (int i = 0; i < N; ++i)
    pointers_to_chars[i] = &characters[i];

// Example of using indirect_iterator
boost::indirect_iterator<char**, char>
    indirect_first(pointers_to_chars),
    indirect_last(pointers_to_chars + N);

std::copy(indirect_first, indirect_last, std::ostream_iterator<char>(std::cout, ","));
std::cout << std::endl;

// Example of making mutable and constant indirect iterators

char mutable_characters[N];
char* pointers_to_mutable_chars[N];
for (int j = 0; j < N; ++j)
    pointers_to_mutable_chars[j] = &mutable_characters[j];
```
boost::indirect_iterator<char* const*> mutable_indirect_first(pointers_to_mutable_chars),
    mutable_indirect_last(pointers_to_mutable_chars + N);
boost::indirect_iterator<char* const*, char const> const_indirect_first(pointers_to_chars),
    const_indirect_last(pointers_to_chars + N);

std::transform(const_indirect_first, const_indirect_last,
    mutable_indirect_first, std::bind1st(std::plus<char>(), 1));

std::copy(mutable_indirect_first, mutable_indirect_last,
    std::ostream_iterator<char>(std::cout, "", "));
std::cout << std::endl;

// Example of using make_indirect_iterator()

std::copy(boost::make_indirect_iterator(pointers_to_chars),
    boost::make_indirect_iterator(pointers_to_chars + N),
    std::ostream_iterator<char>(std::cout, ","));
std::cout << std::endl;

The output is:

a,b,c,d,e,f,g,
b,c,d,e,f,g,h,
a,b,c,d,e,f,g,

The source code for this example can be found here.