

Clause 24 (Iterators) Issues List

David Dodgson
dsd@tr.unisys.com
UNISYS

The following list contains the issues for Clause 24 on Iterators. The list is divided based upon the status of the issues. The status is either *active* - under discussion, *resolved* - resolution accepted but not yet in the working paper, *closed* - working paper updated, or *withdrawn* - issue withdrawn or rejected. They are numbered chronologically as entered in the list. Only the active and resolved issues are presented here. Those wishing a complete list may request one.

The proposed resolutions are my understanding of the consensus on the reflector.

1. Active Issues

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-012
Title: Addition operators added to iterators
Section: 24.1
Status: active
Description:
 24.1.3-24.1.5 p24-3 to 24-6:
 Add addition and subtraction operators to forward, bidirectional and reverse iterators.

Alex Stepanov in lib-3611:

And if you reconsider the iterator requirements, you might as well reconsider the exclusion of + (and related operators) for non-random iterator categories. I really hate advance and distance templates. They are such a pain to use and they are really ugly. (To see what I mean, take a look at what we now need to do to implement, say, lower_bound algorithm. It is in algo.h in our implementation.)

Later discussions show that this should not include output iterators, and at most only - operations for input iterators.

Discussion at Monterey meeting:

The library subgroup was in favor of this change. It was felt that the added convenience of this is worthwhile. The cost is in making it unclear that '+' can be a linear operation. If operator+ is added to the base forward iterator in terms of using the advance template it should add little cost to existing implementations.

Proposed Resolution:

See paper N0739R1 in the post-Monterey mailing.

Requestor: Alex Stepanov
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails: lib 3611-3613
Papers: Operator+ and Operator- for Iterators, 95-0139/N0739R1,
David Dodgson, post-Monterey

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-015
Title: Char-oriented stream iterators
Section: 24.4.3 [lib.istreambuf.iterator]
Status: active
Description:
 24.4.3 p24-23: [Box 118]
 The `istream_iterator` and `ostream_iterator` are defined only for the
 char-oriented, but not the `wchar_t`-oriented or parameterized
 streams.
Resolution:
Requestor: Editorial Box
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails:
Papers:

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-017
Title: Exceptions in `ostreambuf_iterator`
Section: 24.4.4 [lib.ostreambuf.iterator]
Status: active
Description:
 24.4.4.1 and 24.4.4.3:

Nathan Myers in message lib-3812:

As Plauger noted in some previous mail relating to locale, the `ostreambuf_iterator` used to decouple `iostream` from the locale facet interface provides no mechanism for reporting output errors. Changing the interface to allow the iterator to be compared against an "end" iterator doesn't help; again (as Plauger points out) the Output Iterator abstraction doesn't support comparison, and standard algorithms don't assume it.

**** Discussion**

Failures of abstraction in C++ are handled by throwing an exception. Output Iterators are, in general, allowed to throw if they cannot perform an operation; it is necessary only to specify that this is what `ostream_iterator` does.

`ostream` and locale need to have specified what happens in the event of an output error, so the failure can be handled according to `ostream`'s policy without imposing knowledge of it upon all locale facets.

Proposed Resolution

1. Specify that `operator=(charT c)` throws an exception catchable as type `runtime_error` if `sbuf_->sputc(c)` returns `traits::eof()`.
2. Eliminate `ostreambuf_iterator` members `equal()` and global operators `==` and `!=`. No function that takes an iterator can use them anyway, so they only add clutter. (This does not imply any corresponding changes to `istreambuf_iterator`.)

Requestor: Nathan Myers
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails: lib-3809,3812
Papers:

```
-----
Work Group:      Library Clause 24
Issue Number:    24-018
Title:           Cleanups in [io]streambuf_iterator
Section:         24.4.3 and 24.4.4
Status:          active
Description:
    24.4.3 [lib.istreambuf.iterator] and
    24.4.4 [lib ostreambuf.iterator]:
```

1. The typedefs declared in the streambuf iterators can lead to confusion because they have the same names as global typedefs. While this does not confuse compilers, it confuses readers, and is easily fixed.
2. The description of semantics of istreambuf_iterator member operators is too vague: "Advances the iterator" and "Extract one character" are subject to interpretation.

Proposed Resolution

1. In both 24.4.3 and 24.4.4, change the typedefs "streambuf", "istream", and "ostream" to "streambuf_type", "istream_type", and "ostream_type", respectively, to prevent confusion. (The declarations of the constructors and the private members "sbuf_" should be changed to match.)
2. In 24.4.3.2 and 24.4.3.3, the descriptions of istreambuf_iterator operators have become unfortunately vague:
 - operator*() should be documented to return (specifically) the result of calling (the equivalent of) sbuf_->sgetc().
 - operator++() should be documented to perform (the equivalent of) sbuf_->snextc().
 - operator++(int) should be documented to return a proxy object constructed from (the equivalent of) the expression proxy(sbuf_->sbumpc(), sbuf_).

```
Requestor:      Nathan Myers
Owner:          David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails:         lib-3812
Papers:
```

```
Work Group:      Library Clause 24
Issue Number:    24-021
Title:           Separate Header for Stream Iterators
Section:         24.4
Status:          active
Description:
```

```
    24.4:
From public review:
    Drawing iostream into an implementation that just needs iterators
    is most unfortunate.
```

The current iterator header includes headers `<ios>` and `<streambuf>` to handle the stream iterators in 24.4. This requires all of I/O to be included in the iterators header. Yet I/O only needs this if the iterators are used.

If a new header is used should it be in clause 24 or in clause 27?
Is <iositer> a good name for the new header?

Proposed Resolution:

Move the stream iterators into a separate header.

Update Table 55 (pg 24-1) to include header <iositer> in 24.4.

Remove #include's for iosfwd, ios, and streambuf from 24.1.6
[lib.iterator.tags] Header <iterator> synopsis and tags for
subclause 24.4. Create new header <iositer> in section 24.4 with
#include's for iterator, iosfwd, ios, and streambuf and tags for
section 24.4 from the <iterator> header.

Requestor: Public Review & Library WG
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails:
Papers:

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-022
Title: Input Iterator Semantics
Section: 24.1.1
Status: active

Description:

24.1.1 p24-2:

What are the semantics of input iterators in the following:

```
input_iterator i;
cout << *i;           // Object "a"
cout << *i;           // Continues to return object "a"?
/* This seems to be implied by requirement a == b implies *a == *b.
   Therefore *a == *a should be true.
   This implies the input object is 'saved' in some fashion. */
```

```
input_iterator j = i;
cout << *j;           // Object "a"
++i;
cout << *i;           // Object "b"
cout << *j;           // Object "a", "b", or undefined?
/* Returning "b" implies that all input iterators remain in
   lockstep and all point to the same item. This is not how
   other iterators work.
```

Undefined implies that changing a different iterator can
affect the value of this iterator, even though no change
has been made to this iterator.

Returning "a" is how other iterators work. It implies that
the 'saved' object is not destroyed when an input occurs.
Bill Plauger states that several STL algorithms depend on
this behaviour.

```
*/
++j;                 // What is the effect on j after i has been
                    // incremented; object "b", "c", or undefined?
```

Nathan Myers proposes a change to semantics of copying in 3943:
Copying an input iterator should invalidate the previous version
of the iterator. This ensures that there is only one current
version of the iterator usable for ++. It would prevent
dereferencing of the copied version of the iterator. [See 3943
for a complete description].

Andy Koenig proposes a simplified scheme in 4114:

Copying an input iterator does not invalidate the previous version. Both may be dereferenced until one is incremented. It is undefined to dereference any copy other than the one incremented.

Summary

Various other messages discuss the relative merits of different semantics. There are three proposed methods.

-- Local Copy

This method requires the iterator to retain a separate copy of the object. Any copy of the iterator has a distinct copy of the object.

After a copy (b) is made of an iterator (a) then both `a == b` and `*a == *b` return true.

If a copy is incremented, the value returned by dereferencing a previous copy is well-defined and unchanged.

`*a++` is valid and probably implemented by returning a temporary copy of the iterator for `operator++`.

-- Global Copy

This method allows the iterator to point to one particular copy of the object. Any copy of the iterator may point to the same copy of the object.

After a copy (b) is made of an iterator (a) then both `a == b` and `*a == *b` return true.

If a copy is incremented, it is undefined behaviour to dereference a previous copy.

`*a++` is valid and probably implemented by returning a temporary instance of a proxy class (although an iterator implemented with local copy semantics will conform to global copy requirements).

-- Unique Copy

This method allows only one valid copy of an iterator to be dereferenced at a time.

After a copy (b) is made of an iterator (a) then `a == b` returns true but `*a == *b` is undefined, because `*a` is undefined.

It is undefined behaviour to increment any iterator other than the one which may be dereferenced.

`*a++` is valid is probably implemented by returning a temporary instance of a proxy class.

Resolution:

Local copy is the status quo. Global copy has been proposed by Andy Koenig, unique copy by Nathan Myers. One specific method must be chosen. Consensus seems to be towards global copy but the issue is controversial.

Requestor: Library WG
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails: lib-3938,3941-3950,3956-3959,4013-4050,4055-4059,
4068-4070,4074,4081,4084,4086-4088,4114-4118,
4122-4127,4132-4138,4141

Papers:

Work Group: Library Clause 24
 Issue Number: 24-023
 Title: Bad description for istreambuf_iterator constructors
 Section: 24.4.3.2 [lib.istreambuf.iterator.cons]
 Status: active
 Description:

24.4.3:
 The header for istreambuf_iterator contains the constructor
 istreambuf_iterator(streambuf* s);
 but there is no description for this constructor in section
 24.4.3.2 [lib.istreambuf.iterator.cons].

The description for constructor istreambuf_iterator(istream) states
 the effect as constructing 'istream_iterator' not
 'istreambuf_iterator'.

Proposed Resolution:

Add the description for constructor istreambuf_iterator(streambuf* s)
 in section 24.4.3.2 [lib.istreambuf.iterator.cons] with effects of
 constructs the istreambuf_iterator pointing to s.

Change 'istream_iterator' on line 4 to 'istreambuf_iterator'.

Requestor: Library WG
 Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
 Emails:
 Papers:

Work Group: Library Clause 24
 Issue Number: 24-024
 Title: Operator -> Issues for Iterators
 Section: 24.1.3, 24.1.1
 Status: active
 Description:

24.1.1, 24.1.3 p24-2,4:
 Should operator->* be added for iterators?
 Section 14.3.3 [temp.opref] specifically allows operator-> to
 appear in a template where its return type cannot be dereferenced
 if it is not used. No such guarantee is made for operator->*.
 If operator->* is desired, the same guarantee should be made.

Does operator-> work correctly for input iterators? (*a can
 return an rvalue).

Resolution:
 Requestor: Library WG
 Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
 Emails:
 Papers:

Work Group: Library Clause 24
 Issue Number: 24-025
 Title: Input Iterator Assignment
 Sections: [lib.stream.iterators], [lib.istreambuf.iterator],

Status: Active
 Description:
 24.1.1 p24-2 [lib.input.iterators]

From Nathan Myers:

This is what I want to say:

```
template <class T> void f(const T&);

// with assignment:
template <class InputIterator, class Pred>
void grab(InputIterator begin, InputIterator end, Pred const& pred)
{
    while ((begin = find(begin, end, pred)) != end)
        f(*begin++);
}
```

But without assignment, I can't.

Proposed Resolution:

Add the following to table 57-'Input Iterator requirements' and table 58-'Output iterator requirements' in sections 24.1.1 [lib.input.iterators] and 24.1.2 [lib.output.iterators]:

```
u = a      X&                post: u is a copy of a
```

Requestor: Nathan Myers
 Owner: David Dodgson
 Emails: lib-3936,3939-3940,3942-3943,4114,4116-4118
 Papers:

Work Group: Library Clause 24
 Issue Number: 24-026
 Title: Istream Iterator Interactive Input
 Section: 24.4.1
 Status: active
 Description:
 24.4.1 p24-22:

Bernd Eggink in lib-4007

```
> No, it does not. The code in HP implementation is:
>
> class istream_iterator : public input_iterator<T, Distance> {
> friend bool operator==(const istream_iterator<T, Distance>& x,
>     const istream_iterator<T, Distance>& y);
> protected:
>     istream* stream;
>     T value;
>     bool end_marker;
>     void read() {
> end_marker = (*stream) ? true : false;
> if (end_marker) *stream >> value;
> end_marker = (*stream) ? true : false;
>     }
> public:
>     istream_iterator() : stream(&cin), end_marker(false) {}
>     istream_iterator(istream& s) : stream(&s) { read(); }
>     const T& operator*() const { return value; }
>     istream_iterator<T, Distance>& operator++() {
> read();
> return *this;
```

```

>     }
>     istream_iterator<T, Distance> operator++(int) {
>     istream_iterator<T, Distance> tmp = *this;
>     read();
>     return tmp;
>     }
> };
>

```

BTW, this implementation is practically unusable for interactive input because of the `read()` in the constructor (which could be easily eliminated by introducing a `bool` member which tells whether or not the current element has been read).

Nathan Myers in lib-4010

I agree that the above change should be made. Who will write up the WP changes? (The delta in the WP would be quite small: I believe it would involve two paragraphs.) This would not break code.

Resolution:

Requestor: Bernd Eggink
 Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
 Emails: lib-4007,4010
 Papers:

Work Group: Library Clause 24
 Issue Number: 24-027
 Title: Istream Iterator Semantics
 Section: 24.4
 Status: active
 Description:
 24.4.3:

24.4.3.5 `equal` seems at variance with the standard definition. If `istreambuf_iterator i = j`; Then `i == j` should be true even if not at end-of-stream.

In general, the semantics of `istream_iterator` should conform to the semantics of input iterators in general. See issue 22 for a resolution to input iterator semantics. Once input iterator semantics are resolved, the semantics for `istream` iterators must be examined.

Also, the level of detail specified for `istream` iterators in the standard must be determined. To what extent should the details of `istream_iterator` be defined? Should specific `iostream` calls be mandated? Must further explanation of items already defined by input iterator semantics be given. For example, does the 'proxy' class need to be specified or should that be left up to the individual implementation of input iterator?

Resolution: Dependent on issue 22
 Requestor: David Dodgson
 Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
 Emails: lib-4065-4069
 Papers:

2. Resolved Issues

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-003
Title: const operation for iterators
Section: 24.3
Status: resolved
Description:
 24.3.1 p24-13 Box 116
 Suggest that the operator *() for STL iterators be made into a const operation.

The function

```
void fn (const ReverseIterator & x) {
    ...
    y = x*;
    ...
}
```

shows that the operation * is not defined as const in the reverse_iterator (DRAFT 20 Sept 1994, 24.2.1.2). However, the body of the function does not modify the iterator object.

Of course, const Iterator is different from const_iterator and from const const_iterator.

Proposed Resolution:
Both base() and operator*() should be const.
Accepted in Monterey - N740

Requestor: Bob Fraley <fraley@porter.hpl.hp.com>
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails: c++std-lib-3135
Papers: N740 - Small Changes

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-006
Title: Relaxing Requirement on Iterator++ Result
Section: 24.4.3
Status: resolved
Description:
 24.4.3 p24-23
 The return type of operator++ for istreambuf_iterator is listed as 'proxy'. This suggestion is to make the return type an object which is "convertible to const X&" rather than "X&".

Resolution: accepted in Austin
Requestor: Nathan Myers
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails:
Papers: 95-0021/N0621 (Pre-Austin mailing)

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-007
Title: Fixing istreambuf_iterator
Section: 24.4.3

Status: resolved
 Description: 24.4.3 p24-23:
 Proposes the addition to istreambuf_iterator of

```
inline istreambuf::proxy::operator istreambuf_iterator()
{ return sbuf_; }
```

 to better conform to the Forward Iterator specification.
 Resolution: accepted in Austin
 Requestor: Nathan Myers
 Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
 Emails:
 Papers: 95-0022/N0622 (Pre-Austin mailing)

Work Group: Library Clause 24
 Issue Number: 24-008
 Title: Iterator Requirements
 Section: 24.1.3 and 24.1.4
 Status: resolved
 Description: 24.1.3 Table 59 and 24.1.4 Table 60
 The requirement `r == s` and `r` is dereferenceable implies `++r == ++r` should read `++r == ++s` in table 59. Similarly in table 60, `--r == --r` implies `r == s` should read `--r == --s`.
 Resolution:
 Table 59 for forward iterators was updated.
 Table 60 for bidirectional iterators is not updated.
 It should read: `--r == --s` implies `r == s`.
 Requestor: Nathan Myers
 Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
 Emails: c++std-lib-3543
 Papers: N740 - Small Changes

Work Group: Library Clause 24
 Issue Number: 24-010
 Title: Operator-> in Iterators
 Section: 24.
 Status: resolved
 Description: Throughout clause 24:

The suggestion is for inclusion of operator-> in iterators.

Sean Corfield asks in c++std-lib-3596:

Each iterator has operator*() defined to return T& (or const T& as appropriate). Builtin pointer types also have this.

However, builtin pointer types also have operator->() when the underlying type is a struct/class/union. Is there any reason why iterators don't have T* operator->() defined? Did we ever decide to delay checking of the return type of -> to the point of use? I remember we discussed it... Without this, we have the slightly unpalatable:

```
StructThing* p1 = &v1[0];
StructThing* e1 = &v1[SIZE];
while (p1 != e1) { process(p1->member); ++p1; }

vector<StructThing>::iterator p2 = v2.begin();
vector<StructThing>::iterator e2 = v2.end();
```

```
while (p2 != e2) { process((*p2).member); ++p2; } // ugh!
```

Bob Fraley and Richard Minner offer agreement, stating that it is an obvious need and would be extremely confusing otherwise.

Nathan Myers and Jerry Schwarz dissent, stating that there are objects for which `->` may be meaningless and that the current interface for iterators is minimal.

John Max Skaller in message `c++std-lib-3602` points out that

So I think the question is whether the Standard Library iterators should, or should not, mandate `operator->()`. This is not the same question as whether STL should require `operator->()`.

John Bruns and Fergus Henderson argue in favor of adding `operator ->`.

Alex Stepanov (and others) argues that `operator->` should be provided for all iterators or none. Anything else would be too confusing. Note that this would apply only to iterators over class type.

Unresolved questions:

Given an output iterator `o` what are the semantics of `o->member`?
Since `insert` iterators and `ostream_iterator` derive from output iterator, should they define `operator->`?

These questions are discussed in `lib-3817` and `3818`.

Proposed Resolution:

A.

Add the following row in Table 59-Forward iterator requirements in `lib.forward.iterators` [24.1.3] after the row describing `*a`:

Expression: `a->m`
Semantics: `(a->m == (*a).m)`
Conditions: `pre: (*a)` refers to a class object and `m` is a member of that class

B.

Update the predefined iterators to include `operator->`. Specifically:
`lib.reverse.bidir.iter` [24.3.1.1]
include `operator->` after `lib.reverse.bidir.iter.op.star` [24.3.1.2.3]
`lib.reverse.iterator` [24.3.1.3]
after `lib.reverse.iter.op.star` [24.3.1.4.3]

Resolution: Accepted in Monterey - N738

Requestor: Sean Corfield

Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)

Emails: `lib 3596-3603`, `lib 3607-3620`, `3624`, `3636-3629`, `3817-3818`

Papers: `Iterators and operator->()`, `95-0119/N0719`, Sean Corfield
`operator->` for iterators, `95-0138/N0738`, David Dodgson

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-011
Title: Small Issues in Austin
Section: 24.
Status: resolved
Description:

Throughout clause 24
Numerous small issues as specified in `N0614/95-0014` in pre-Austin mailing.

Resolution: Accepted in Austin
Sections 2.4.6 and 2.4.13 of N0614 regarding the inclusion of friend declarations are not included in the April 95 WP (intentional?)

Sections 2.4.9 and 2.4.10 of N0614 regarding the return type of operator++(int) being a reference are not included in the April 95 WP (intentional?)

Requestor: Larry Podmolik
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails: none
Papers: N0614/95-0014 in pre-Austin mailing

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-013
Title: Const declaration of operator[]
Section: 24.3.1.3 [lib.reverse.iterator]
Status: resolved
Description:
24..3.1.3 p24-15.16: [Box 117]
Should operator[] of reverse_iterator be specified as const?
Proposed Resolution:
Same resolution as issue 3 (Box 116 in lib.reverse.bidir.iter section 24.3.1.1 for reverse_bidirectional_iterator)
Resolution: specified as const - See N740
Requestor: Editorial box
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails:
Papers: Small Changes, 95-0140/N0740, David Dodgson, post-Monterey

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-014
Title: Typo
Section: 24.4.3 [lib.istreambuf.iterator]
Status: resolved
Description:
24.4.3 p24-23
The closing braces for class istreambuf_iterator are in italic bold. They should be in normal font.
Resolution: Use normal font
Requestor: David Dodgson
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails:
Papers: Small Changes, 95-0140/N0740, David Dodgson, post-Monterey

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-016
Title: Typo
Section: 24.2 [lib.iterator.primitives]
Status: resolved
Description:
24.2 p24-11:
The word definable is spelled as 'def inable'
Resolution:
Requestor: David Dodgson
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails:
Papers: Small Changes, 95-0140/N0740, David Dodgson, post-Monterey

```
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Work Group:      Library Clause 24
Issue Number:    24-019
Title:           Comments from German WG member Carsten Bormann
Section:         24.
Status:          resolved
Description:
```

54. 24.1.4-Table 60

Explain ``--r == --r implies r == s''.

[Note: this is included as issue 24-008]

55. 24.1.6-2

``can be defined'', i.e., it is the user's responsibility? Explain that this is part of <iterator>.

56. 24.1.6-5

``may define''? Repeat language from 20, ``for all memory models, ...''

57. 24.1.6-11

Header <iterator>: Drawing iostream into an implementation that just needs iterators is most unfortunate. The contents of the header <iterator> should be confined to those operations that do not need iostream; the rest should be put into a separate header.

58. 24.4

This should be part of the iostream library clause. In this context, it should be decided whether this subclass needs to be templatized together with the rest of iostream.

59. 24.3.1.2.5

Returns: *this

60. 24.3.1.2.6

Returns: x.base() == y.base(); (There is no conversion from a reverse iterator to its base.)

61. 24.3.1.3-1

The note seems misplaced, but does also apply here analogously.

62. 24.3.1.4.5

Returns: *this

63. 24.4.3.5

Change ``iterator over'' to ``iterate over''.

Resolution:

Comments 54,59,61-63 accepted

Comment 60 accepted as "x.current == y.current;"

Comments 57-58 opened as issue 21

Items accepted in N0740

Requestor: Roland Hartinger
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails: lib-3829
Papers: Small Changes, 95-0140/N0740, David Dodgson, post-Monterey

Work Group: Library Clause 24
Issue Number: 24-020
Title: Clause 24.3.1 Effects and Returns
Section: 24.3.1.2 & 24.3.1.4
Status: resolved
Description:
 24.3.1.2 & 24.3.1.4:
 Review the Effects and Returns clauses for correctness
Resolution: Updates in N0740
Requestor: Library WG
Owner: David Dodgson (Iterators)
Emails:
Papers: Small Changes, 95-0140/N0740, David Dodgson, post-Monterey