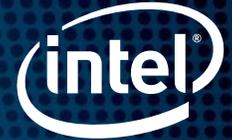


# Optimize an Existing Program by Introducing Parallelism

Parallelism has the potential to significantly increase the performance and expand the possibilities of many compute-intensive applications. However, threading commercial software is never as simplistic as an instructional sample.

The components of Intel® Parallel Studio are designed to reduce the complexity of threading, debugging, and tuning real-world applications and help focus optimization efforts to where they will be most effective. Follow this step-by-step guide to try it out, and review six steps for achieving parallelism with your own code.





## Introduction

This guide will help you add parallelism to your application using Intel® Parallel Studio. You will get hands-on experience with our sample code in a 15-minute exercise that will show you the power of Intel® Threading Building Blocks (Intel® TBB). You can then explore the Intel Parallel Studio components on your own by using the six-step process to add parallelism to your own application. The final section is packed with resources to help you in the process of threading.

**Figure 1.** Serial Version (before applying Intel TBB `parallel_for`)

```
void change_array(){  
  //Instructional example - serial version  
  for (int i=0; i < list_count; i++){  
    data[i] = busyfunc(data[i]);  
  }  
}
```

```
void parallel_change_array(){  
  //Instructional example - parallel version  
  parallel_for (blocked_range<int>(0, list_count),  
    [=](const blocked_range<int>& r) {  
    for (int i=r.begin(); i < r.end(); i++){  
      data[i] = busyfunc(data[i]);  
    }  
  });  
}
```

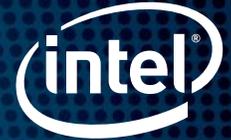
Parallel Version (after applying Intel TBB `parallel_for`)

With the `parallel_for` building block, in just a few lines of code you can increase performance by up to 1.99x (from one thread to two threads in the provided `Adding_Parallelism` sample code). Here is an example of a function before and after converting it from serial to parallel:

### Figure 1

Intel Parallel Studio is a tool suite that provides Microsoft® Visual Studio® C++ developers a simplified approach and faster ramp to building future-proof, high-performance parallel applications for multicore processors. Intel Parallel Studio includes:

- > **Intel® Threading Building Blocks**—an award-winning C++ template library that abstracts threads to tasks to create reliable, portable, and scalable parallel applications
- > **Intel® Parallel Composer**—a comprehensive set of Intel® C++ compilers, libraries, and debugging capabilities for developers bringing parallelism to their Windows®-based client applications
- > **Intel® Parallel Amplifier**—a performance analyzer and tuning solution that easily and quickly finds multicore performance bottlenecks without needing to know the processor architecture or assembly code
- > **Intel® Parallel Inspector**—a dynamic memory and thread analysis tool for serial and parallel code that makes it easier and faster to find errors and software defects



## Interactive Demonstration: The Power of Parallelism

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Using Intel TBB simplifies the process of adding parallelism to an existing serial application. Intel TBB is a set of “building blocks” for going parallel. It uses C++ templates to provide powerful parallel functionality that works with common programming patterns. For example, Intel TBB’s `parallel_for` construct can be used to convert the work of a standard serial “for” loop into a parallel one. `Parallel_for` is the easiest and most commonly used building block in Intel TBB, so developers new to parallelism should start with it.

### Why Intel® Threading Building Blocks—Portable, Reliable, Scalable, Simple

- Portability—Thread API works across 32-bit and 64-bit Windows\*, Linux\*, and Mac OS\* platforms and open-source versions of FreeBSD\*, IA Solaris\*, QNX, and Xbox\* 360
- Open Design—Compiler, operating system, and processor independent
- Forward Scaling—Automatically scales to more cores as they become available without changing code or recompiling
- Comprehensive Solution—Includes primitives and threads, scalable memory allocation and tasking, parallel algorithms, and concurrent containers
- Licensing Options—Commercial and open-source versions available and fully supported
- Packaging—Available with Intel Parallel Studio, Intel® Compiler Professional Edition, single package, and in open source

For more information, please visit: [Intel TBB](#)

## Try It Yourself

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Here is a simple example using Intel TBB `parallel_for`. You can read it here or try it yourself using the steps below and the `Adding_Parallelism` sample code.

### Step 1. Install and Set Up Intel® Parallel Studio

1. [Download](#) an evaluation copy of Intel Parallel Studio.
2. Install Intel Parallel Studio by clicking on the `parallel_studio_setup.exe` (can take 15 to 30 minutes depending on your system).

# Optimize an Existing Program by Introducing Parallelism



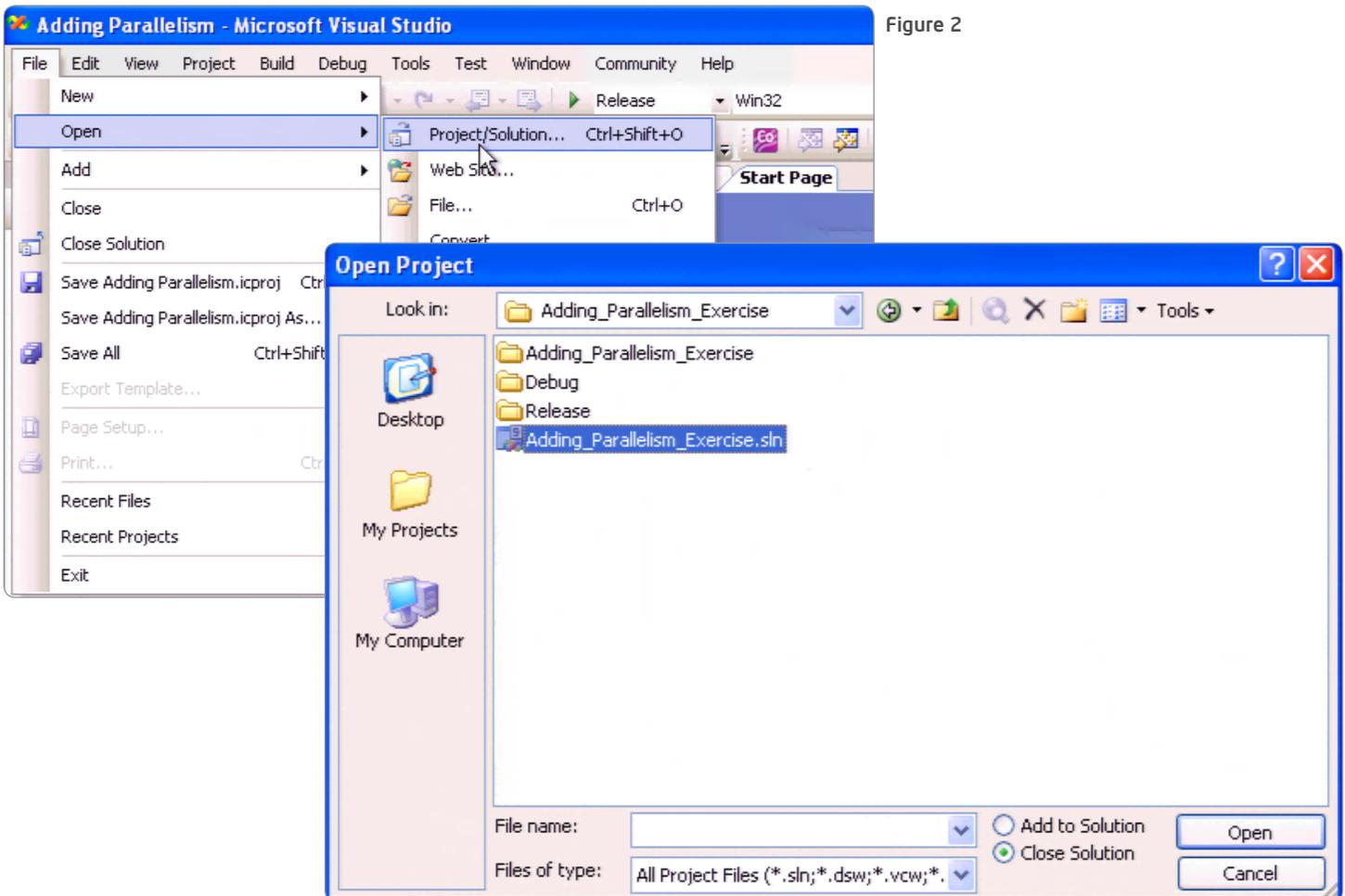
## Step 2. Install and View the Adding\_Parallelism Sample Application

Install the sample application:

1. Download the [Adding\\_Parallelism\\_Exercise.zip](#) sample file to your local machine.  
This is a C++ console application created with Microsoft\* Visual Studio\* 2005.
2. Extract the files from the Adding\_Parallelism\_Exercise.zip file to a writable directory or share on your system, such as My Documents\Visual Studio 200x\Intel\samples folder.

View the sample:

1. Load the solution into Microsoft Visual Studio by selecting **File > Open > Project/Solution**.  
Navigate to the PiSolver.sln file in the directory that contains the .zip file you extracted it from: [Figure 2](#)



# Optimize an Existing Program by Introducing Parallelism



2. Notice this solution contains two projects. The first is the serial sample code and an Intel TBB example. The second, **Adding\_Parallelism\_Solution**, contains the serial sample code converted to use Intel TBB. Both projects have been configured to use Intel® Parallel Composer.

Figure 3

3. These projects have also been configured to use Intel TBB with support for lambda expressions. You can view the settings by right-clicking each project in the **Solution Explorer** pane and choosing **Properties**. The relevant changes are shown below. See the comments at the top of Adding\_Parallelism.cpp for more information. **Figure 4**

4. View the code in Adding\_Parallelism.cpp or read a brief description of it below.

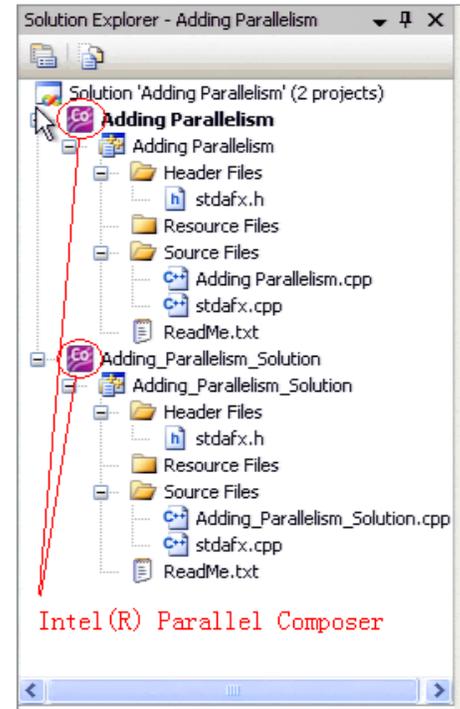


Figure 3

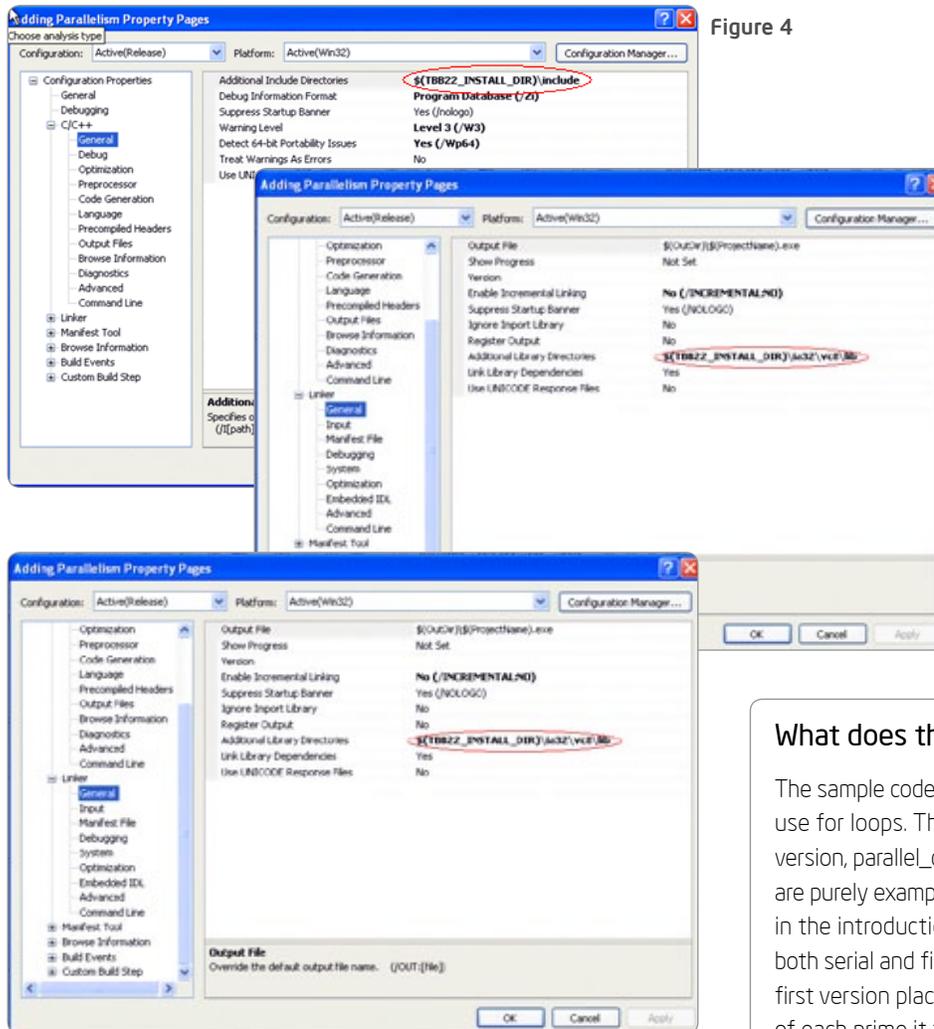


Figure 4

### What does the Adding\_Parallelism code sample do?

The sample code includes four instructional functions, all of which use for loops. The first two are change\_array and its parallel version, parallel\_change\_array. This function and its parallel version are purely examples of how to use parallel\_for; they are also shown in the introduction of this guide. The second two functions are both serial and find primes in an array of random numbers. The first version places a 1 into a companion array in the position of each prime it finds. The second version increments a counter when a prime is found and returns a value. This guide walks you through converting the first version of find\_primes to be parallel. The second function is only slightly more complex to convert, and it is left as an optional exercise. The solution code is included in the sample for both functions.

# Optimize an Existing Program by Introducing Parallelism



## Step 3. Convert the find\_primes Function Using Intel TBB parallel\_for

1. Notice that the proper includes have been added to the code already. To use Intel TBB `parallel_for`, you must include `"tbb/parallel_for.h"` and `"tbb/blocked_range.h"`.
2. Begin by making a copy of the `find_primes` function and renaming it `"parallel_find_primes."` No changes need to be made to the function's return type or parameter list. Here is the original (serial) `find_primes` function: [Figure 5](#)
3. Inside `parallel_find_primes`, call `parallel_for`. You can model this call on the one in the `parallel_change_array` function, or you can use the code provided here or in the `Adding_Parallelism_Solution` project. `parallel_for` takes the work of a serial for loop (which you specify) and distributes it to multiple threads to execute in parallel. `parallel_for` takes two parameters, which are described in steps 4 and 5. Here is the `parallel_find_primes` function so far: [Figure 6](#)

Figure 5

```
void find_primes(int* &my_array, int *&prime_array){
    int prime, factor, limit;
    for (int list=0; list < list_count; list++){
        prime = 1;
        if ((my_array[list] % 2) ==1) {
            limit = (int) sqrt((float)my_array[list]) + 1;
            factor = 3;
            while (prime && (factor <=limit)) {
                if (my_array[list] % factor == 0) prime = 0;
                factor += 2;
            }
        } else prime = 0;
        if (prime) {
            prime_array[list] = 1;
        }
        else
            prime_array[list] = 0;
    }
}
```

```
void parallel_find_primes(int *&my_array, int *& prime_array){
    parallel_for (
```

Figure 6

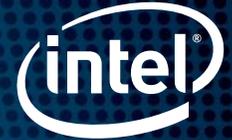
## How does parallel\_for work?

`parallel_for` is the easiest and most commonly used template in Intel TBB. It takes the work of a serial for loop, breaks it into tasks, and then distributes those tasks to all available processing cores at run-time. Using `parallel_for` allows you to think in terms of the work needing to get done, not about threading details. You only need to ensure that the iterations of your serial for loop are independent—if they are, you can use `parallel_for`.

Intel TBB manages the creation, deletion, and load balancing of threads using a thread pool that is sized appropriately for the number of processing cores available. Tasks are then distributed to the threads. This usage model helps reduce overhead and ensure future-proof scalability. By default, Intel TBB will create a thread pool to maximize the computing resources available.

Although the `parallel_for` samples in this guide use default options, there are many tunable parameters developers can use to get the best performance for their application. These examples also show the lambda expression form, but another form exists for use with compilers that do not support the C++0x standard.

# Optimize an Existing Program by Introducing Parallelism



4. Pass a `blocked_range` as the first parameter. `Blocked_range` is a type included in Intel TBB that is used to specify the range of a for loop. When calling `parallel_for`, the `blocked_range` will have the same bounds as the original serial loop (0 to `list_count` in this example). The `parallel_for` implementation will create many tasks, each operating over a portion of the total range you specify. The Intel TBB scheduler will assign each of these tasks its own smaller `blocked_range`. Here is the `parallel_find_primes` function so far: [Figure 7](#)
5. Write the body of the for loop as a lambda expression and pass it as the second parameter. With this parameter, you are specifying the work for each task. Since the for loop will now be executed in chunks by tasks, you will need to modify your original for loop bounds to be the range assigned to each task (`<range>.begin()` and `<range>.end()`).

You will also need to define the work of each task by writing the original for loop body as a lambda expression. A lambda expression allows the compiler to do the work of creating a function object that can be used with Intel TBB template functions. [A lambda expression](#) is a function specified on-the-fly in code, similar in concept to lambda functions in lisp or to [anonymous functions](#) in .NET languages.

In the code below, the `[=]` introduces the lambda expression. Using `"[=]"` instead of `"[&]"` specifies that the variables `list_count` and `my_array`, which are declared outside the lambda expression, should be "captured" by *value* as fields inside the function object. After the `[=]` is the parameter `list` and definition for the operator() of the generated function object. Here is the complete `parallel_find_primes` function: [Figure 8](#)

```
void parallel_find_primes(int *my_array, int *& prime_array){
    parallel_for (blocked_range<int>(0, list_count),
```

Figure 7

```
void parallel_find_primes(int *my_array, int *& prime_array){
    parallel_for (blocked_range<int>(0, list_count),
        [=](const blocked_range<int>& r) {
            int prime, factor, limit;
            for (int list=r.begin(); list < r.end(); list++){
                prime = 1;
                if ((my_array[list] % 2) ==1) {
                    limit = (int) sqrt((float)my_array[list]) + 1;
                    factor = 3;
                    while (prime && (factor <=limit)) {
                        if (my_array[list] % factor == 0) prime = 0;
                        factor += 2;
                    }
                }
                else prime = 0;
            }
            if (prime)
                prime_array[list] = 1;
            else
                prime_array[list] = 0;
        }
    });
}
```

Figure 8

# Optimize an Existing Program by Introducing Parallelism



6. Modify the main function to call the `parallel_find_primes` function and time it. The main code provided calls `find_primes` and times it using the Intel TBB `tick_count` object. `Tick_count` is a thread-safe and thread-aware timer. Here is the code to time and call `parallel_find_primes`. No other code is needed in main to use Intel TBB. [Figure 9](#)

```
tick_count parallel_prime_start=tick_count::now();
parallel_find_primes(data, isprime);
tick_count parallel_prime_end=tick_count::now();
cout << "Time to find primes in parallel for " << list_count << " numbers: " <<
(parallel_prime_end - parallel_prime_start).seconds() << " seconds." << endl;
```

Figure 9

## Step 4. Build the Parallel Version and Verify Speedup

1. Build the solution using **Build >Build Solution**. [Figure 10](#)
2. Run the application from within Microsoft Visual Studio with **Debug > Start Without Debugging**. [Figure 11](#)

Figure 10

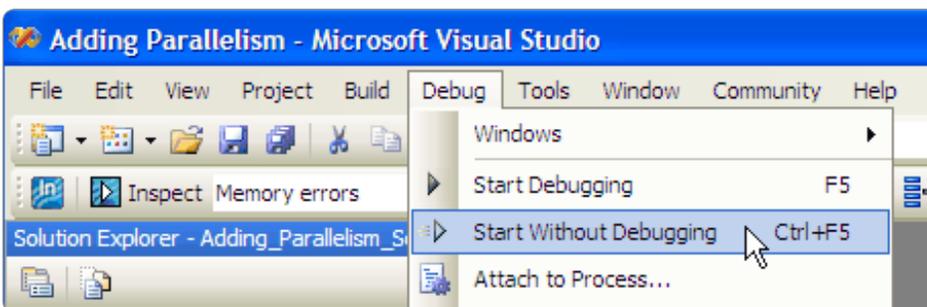
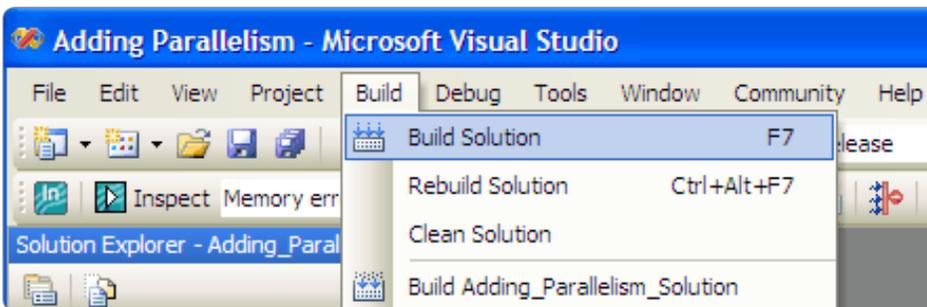


Figure 11

# Optimize an Existing Program by Introducing Parallelism



- Assuming you are running on a multicore system, you should see significant speedup.  
For the most accurate timings, measure serial and parallel time in separate runs. **Figure 12**

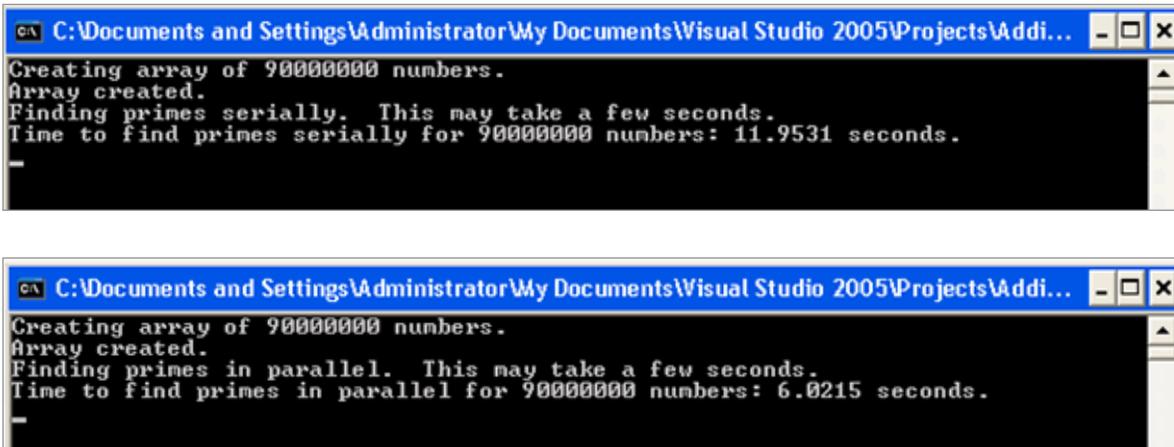


Figure 12

## Success

This example demonstrates how easily `parallel_for` can be applied to a conforming for loop and how it can deliver a significant performance increase even without further tuning. While the scalability attained in this example is nearly perfect, in general the speedup achieved by `parallel_for` will depend on the algorithm and data structure being used. In many cases, tuning using Intel® Parallel Amplifier can improve scalability even further.

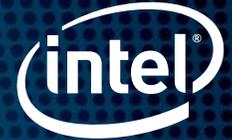
Speedup for this example, using a dual-socket Intel® Core™ i7 server with 90,000,000 numbers:

**Figure 13**

Number of cores	Run time (1st version of find primes only)	Speedup over serial
1	11.95s	---
2	6.02s	1.99x
4	3.02s	3.96x
8	1.52s	7.86x

Figure 13

# Optimize an Existing Program by Introducing Parallelism



## What Now?: Six Steps to Achieving Parallelism with Your Own Code

Parallelism has the potential to significantly increase the performance and expand the possibilities of many compute-intensive applications. However, threading commercial software is never as simplistic as an instructional sample. The components of Intel Parallel Studio are designed to reduce the complexity of threading, debugging, and tuning real-world applications. To apply `parallel_for` to your own code, first determine where to use it. The process below will help you to get started.

1. Identify hotspots.	Run hotspots analysis in Intel® Parallel Amplifier to see which functions in your application take the most time.
2. Drill into code looking for a compute-intensive for loop.	Double-click the hottest functions to see the code and search for key loops.
3. Find and isolate dependencies in a chosen loop.	Trace through at least three iterations of the loop in reverse order. If it works, there are most likely no loop-carried data dependencies.
4. Convert to Intel® TBB <code>parallel_for</code> .	Change the outermost loop (if nested) and convert to <code>parallel_for</code> (with a lambda expression, if possible).
5. Verify correctness using Intel® Parallel Inspector.	Run threading errors analysis in Intel Parallel Inspector to verify your parallel code has no data races.
6. Measure increased performance.	Compare serial to parallel runs to compute speedup from parallelization.

### What if the code I need to optimize isn't appropriate for `parallel_for`?

If your code doesn't feature compute-intensive for loops, Intel® TBB provides many other options for steps 2, 3, and 4 in the process at left. The Adding\_Parallelism code sample also includes an optional function that can be converted to `parallel_reduce`. `Parallel_reduce` is a template similar to `parallel_for`, but it allows a value (such as a min, max, total, or found index) to be returned from the loop. Intel TBB also supports more complex algorithms like sorting, pipelining, and recursion.

# Optimize an Existing Program by Introducing Parallelism



## The Path to Parallelism

### Key Concept: Choosing Small, Representative Data Sets

We are here to help developers write correct, high-performing code that will take advantage of both today's and tomorrow's processing power. Learn more from Intel experts about parallelism, Intel® Parallel Studio, and other related subjects.

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[Intel® Parallel Studio Website](#) >

[Intel® Threading Building Blocks Website](#) >

[Go Parallel—Parallelism Blogs, Papers, and Videos](#) >

[Free, On-Demand Software Developer Webinars](#) >

#### Check out additional evaluation guides:

[Locate a Hotspot and Optimize It](#) >

[Eliminate Memory Errors and Improve Program Stability](#) >

### What Customers Are Saying about Intel Parallel Studio

"The Intel® TBB malloc was an important tool in achieving good parallel speedups for our threaded applications and a drop-in replacement for the memory allocator in the C standard library."

*Ron Henderson, R&D FX Manager  
DreamWorks Animation*

"Two things drew us to Intel® TBB. First and foremost was the relative ease with which it could be integrated into the existing serial code, and second was the speed at which programmers can learn to use it. Within days of first implementing [Intel] TBB, it was yielding performance benefits."

*Yuri O'Donnell, Senior Engine Coder  
Creative Assembly*

"The first time I recompiled SpeedTree using Intel® Parallel Studio, performance dramatically improved. I thought I was measuring it wrong. Since then, we've been getting 35 percent speedups in the CPU-critical sections of the SpeedTree runtime due to [Intel®] Parallel Composer and [Intel®] Parallel Amplifier. We are completely hooked on the Intel® Compiler and it has become a permanent part of our development environment!"

*Chris King, CEO  
IDV*