



## **A Quick Introduction to MPLAB SIM**

Welcome to this web seminar, "A Quick Introduction to MPLAB SIM."

My name is Darrel Johansen and I'm a manager in the Development Tools group at Microchip.

# What Is MPLAB SIM?

- **A free component of MPLAB IDE**

The centerpiece of our tool set is the software MPLAB Integrated Development Environment, or “IDE.”

MPLAB IDE has enjoyed many years of use and evolution, tracking Microchip’s expanding catalog of microcontrollers and digital signal controllers.

One of the most popular elements of MPLAB is the software simulator, MPLAB SIM.

This component, like the MPLAB IDE is free.

## What Is MPLAB SIM?

- **A free component of MPLAB IDE**
- **A software simulator that runs on your PC**

The simulator runs on your PC to simulate the actions of the various PIC and dsPIC microcontrollers.

## What Is MPLAB SIM?

- **A free component of MPLAB IDE**
- **A software simulator that runs on your PC**
- **A verifier for your software**

You can verify your software routines execute as designed...

## What Is MPLAB SIM?

- **A free component of MPLAB IDE**
- **A software simulator that runs on your PC**
- **A verifier for your software**
- **A debugger to test your code**

...and debug, test and inspect your code.

## What Is MPLAB SIM?

- **A free component of MPLAB IDE**
- **A software simulator that runs on your PC**
- **A verifier for your software**
- **A debugger to test your code**
- **An optimizer to improve your application**

MPLAB SIM helps you optimize your application with

- timing tools,
- trace tools, and
- various graphical analyzers.

## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

- **Starting MPLAB SIM**
- **Running to a breakpoint**
- **Single stepping**
- **Setting watchpoints**
- **Running and halting**
- **Using a stimulus**
- **Using the `__DEBUG` variable**
- **Using `fprintf` statements to debug**
- **Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch**
- **Tracing code as it executes**

We'll cover the basic elements of the simulator in this web seminar, including:

- How to configure MPLAB IDE to use MPLAB SIM as the current debugger
- How to run your code in MPLAB SIM halting at a breakpoint
- How to single step through your code
- How to set watchpoints on data variables in your code
- How to run and halt your code
- How to use a stimulus to simulate external inputs to your hardware
- How to use the `__DEBUG` variable to make conditional code execution while debugging
- How to insert `fprintf` statements in your code to monitor the executing routines
- How to measure the execution time of your code, and
- How to record code as it executes, capturing its history in a buffer to be reviewed.

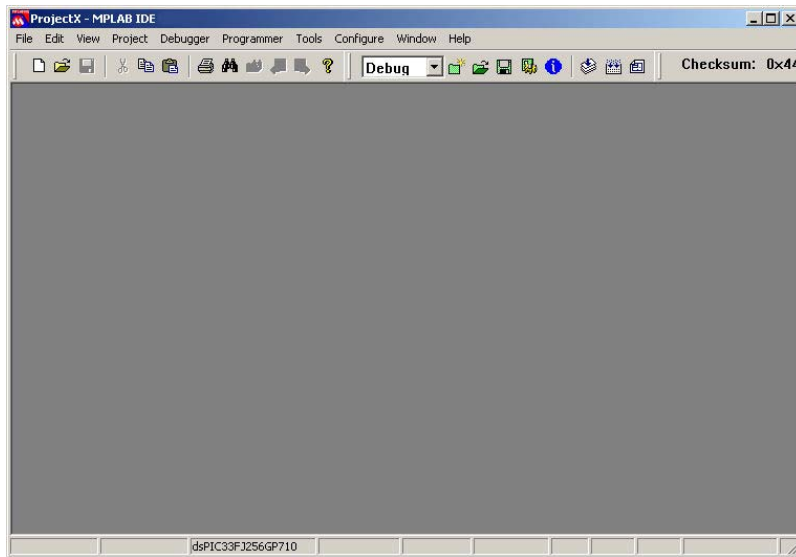
## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

---

- **Starting MPLAB SIM**
- **Running to a breakpoint**
- **Single stepping**
- **Setting watchpoints**
- **Running and halting**
- **Using a stimulus**
- **Using the `__DEBUG` variable**
- **Using `fprintf` statements to debug**
- **Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch**
- **Tracing code as it executes**



# Starting MPLAB SIM MPLAB Desktop

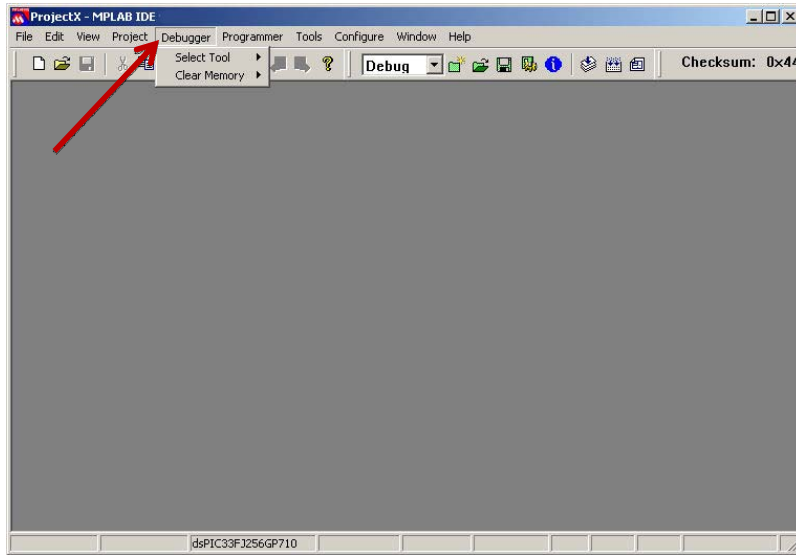


You should already be familiar with MPLAB IDE before going through this seminar. You might want to watch the "Introduction to MPLAB" seminar first.

The MPLAB IDE desktop has all the standard Windows features:

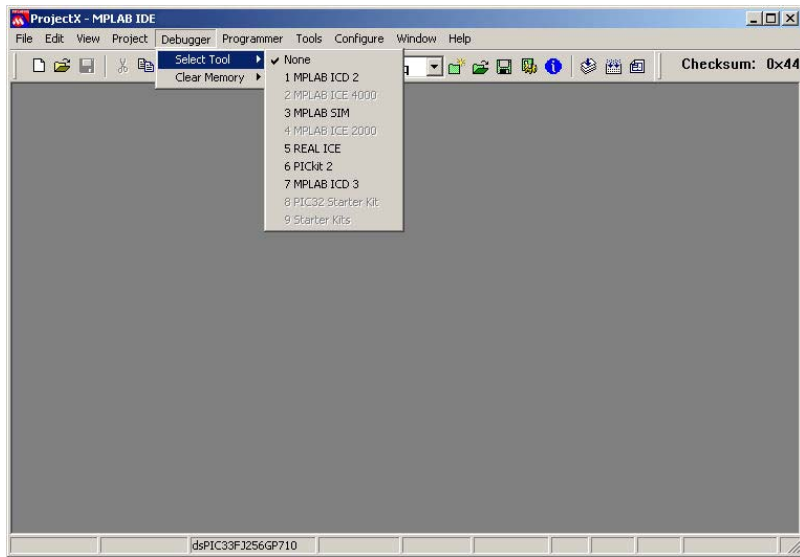
- menus,
- toolbars with icons, and
- a status bar at the bottom.

## Starting MPLAB SIM Debugger>Select Tool



To select the simulator, select the Debugger pull down menu, and scroll to "Select Tool" ...

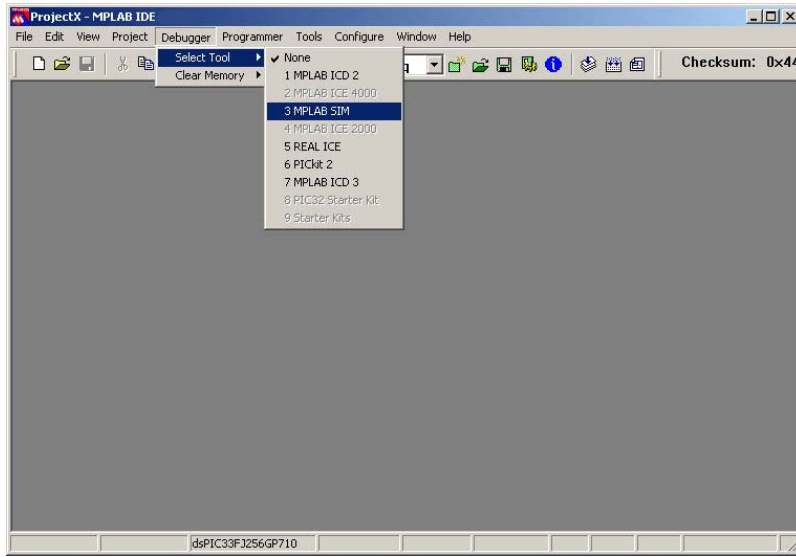
# Starting MPLAB SIM Debugger>Select Tool



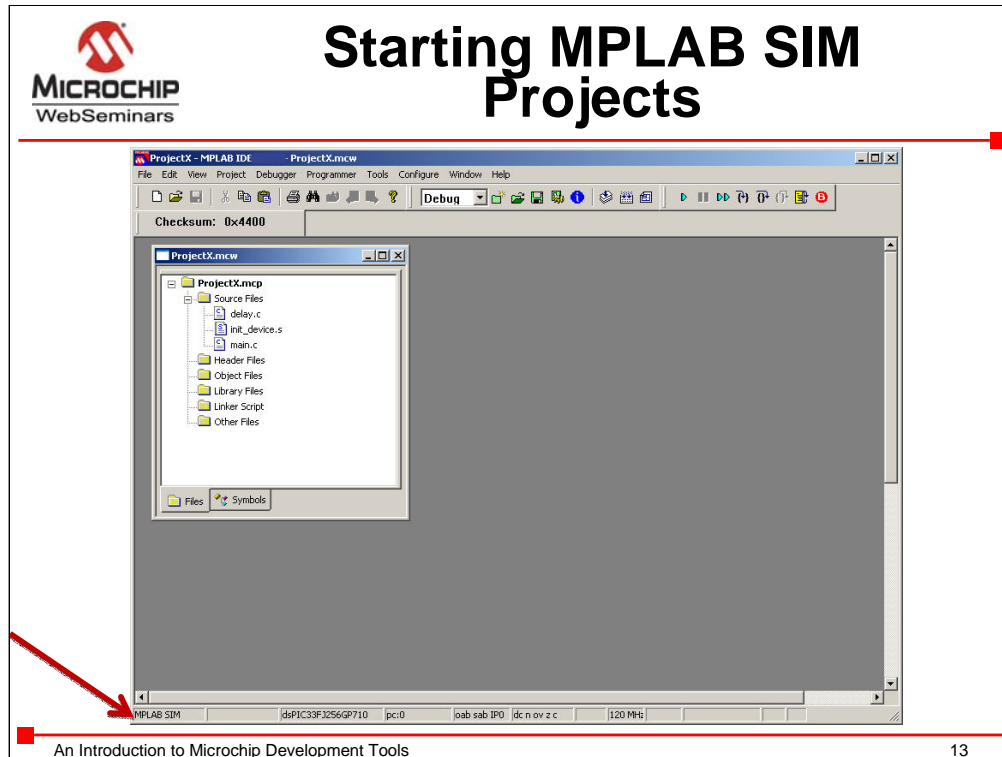
A sub menu pops up...

# Starting MPLAB SIM

***Debugger>Select Tool>MPLAB SIM***



Scroll down to select MPLAB SIM.



Now the status bar shows MPLAB SIM as the current debugging tool.

-- MPLAB deals with applications as “projects.” --

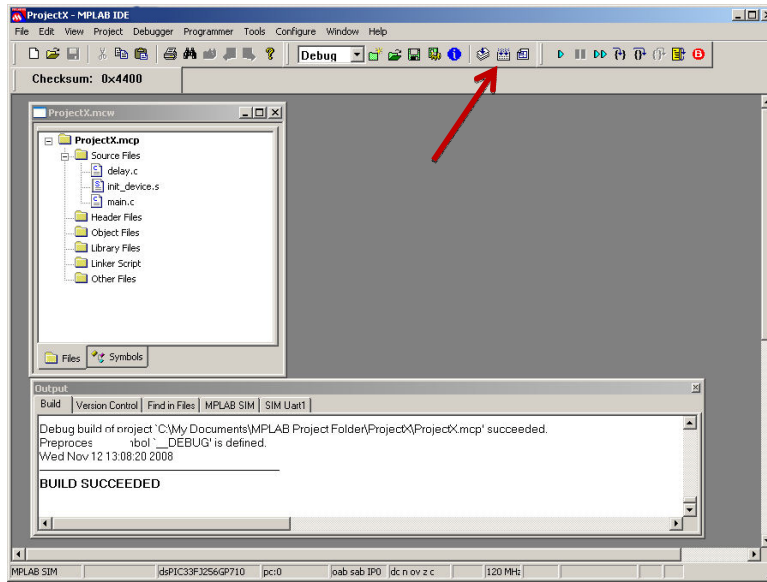
Projects are the source files that are used to build the application along with compilers, assemblers and linkers to “build” the firmware for the application.

In this project are three files, “main.c,” “delay.c,” and an assembly file, “int\_devices.s.”

All will be compiled using the MPLAB C compiler and its tool suite for the dsPIC family of digital signal controllers, but this process is the same for the other families of Microchip microprocessors.

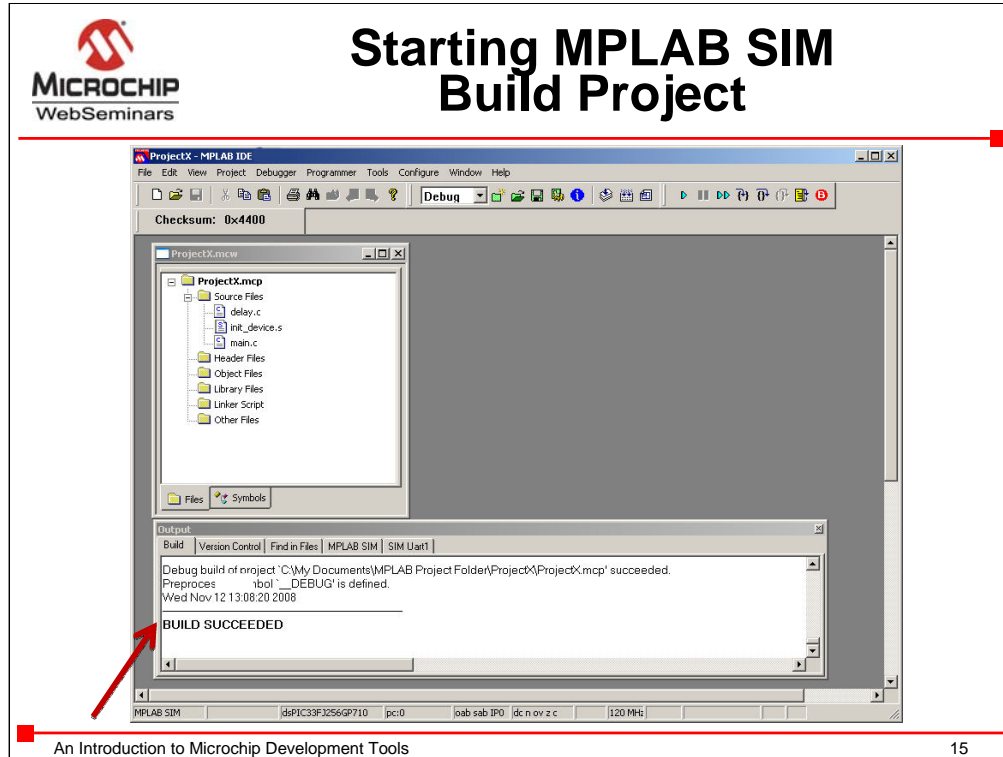
For more information on setting up a project, see the “Introduction to MPLAB” seminar referenced earlier.

# Starting MPLAB SIM Build Project



When all the source code is correctly written and the project configured properly, click the build icon on the toolbar to compile the files.

# Starting MPLAB SIM Build Project



If the project builds with no errors, the output window will show “build succeeded.”

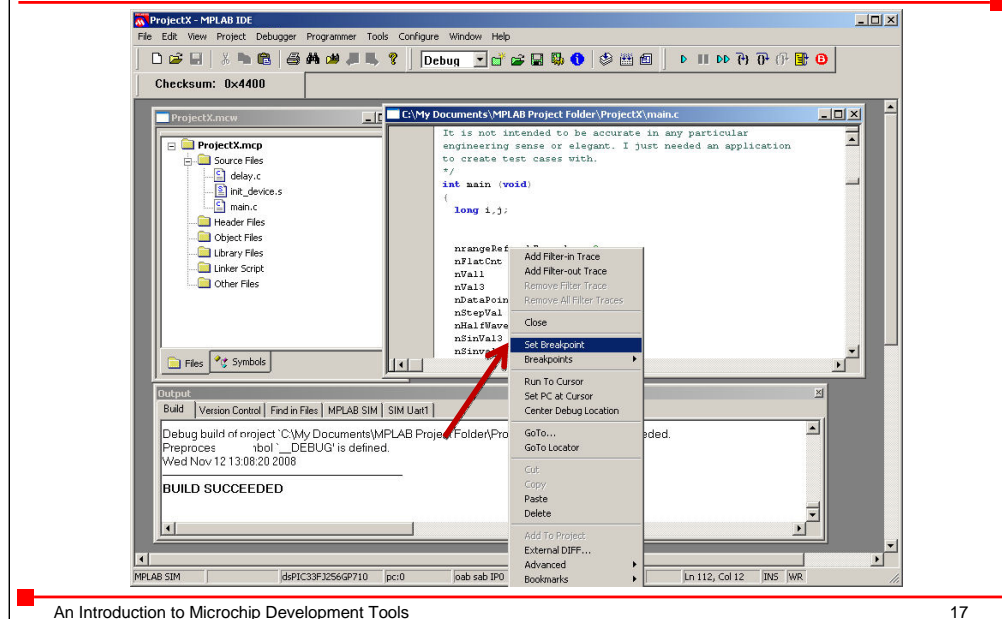
## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

---

- Starting MPLAB SIM
- **Running to a breakpoint**
- Single stepping
- Setting watchpoints
- Running and halting
- Using a stimulus
- Using the `__DEBUG` variable
- Using `fprintf` statements to debug
- Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch
- Tracing code as it executes



# Breakpoint Set Breakpoint

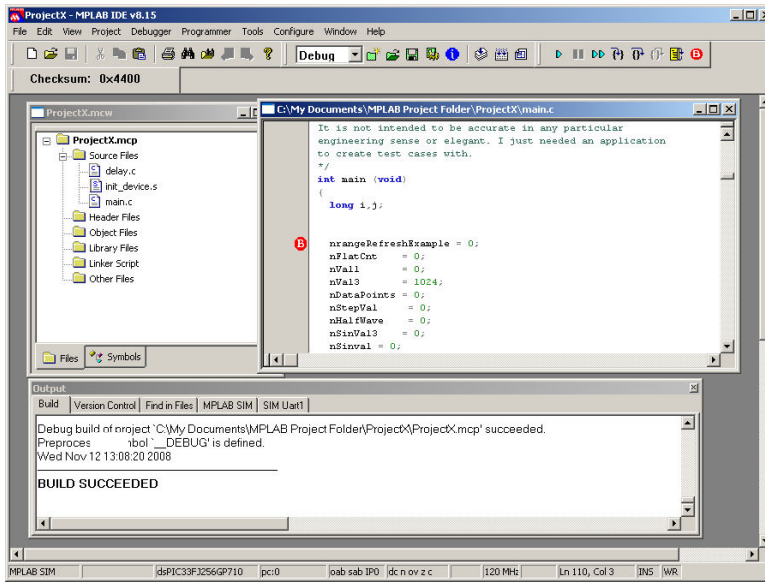


Open a source file for editing or debugging by double clicking on the file name in the project window,

After a project successfully builds, position the cursor on the desired line,

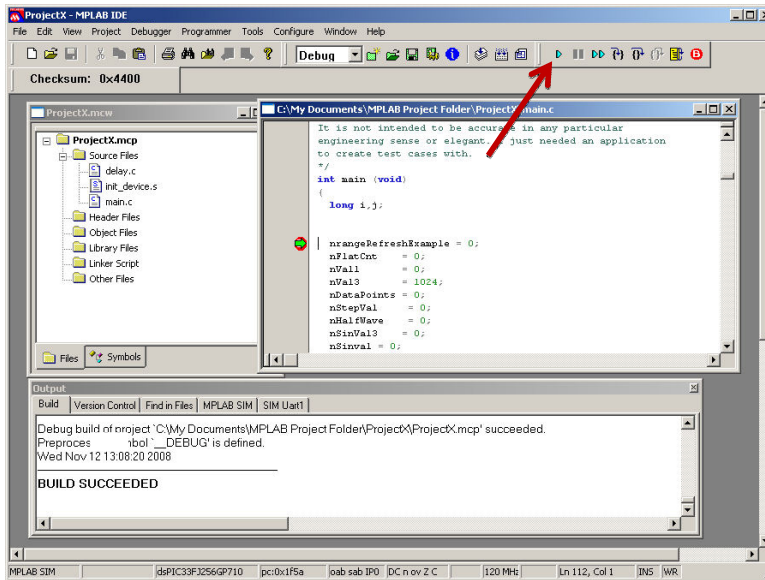
And click the right mouse button to bring up a menu to set a breakpoint.

# Breakpoint



In the source file the breakpoint is shown by the red symbol with the letter "B"

# Run to Breakpoint



Pressing the “Run” icon, starts the simulation, stopping at the breakpoint.

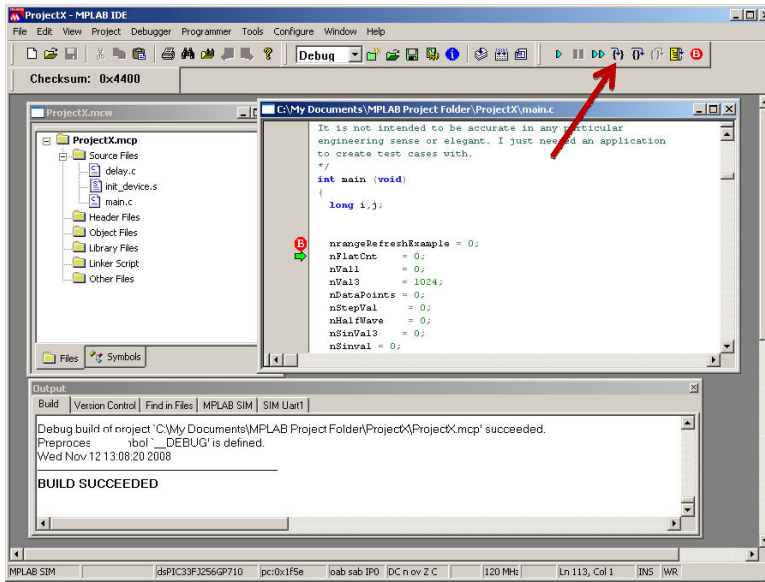
The green arrow on top of the red “B” shows the current program counter location at the breakpoint set in the function “main.”

## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

---

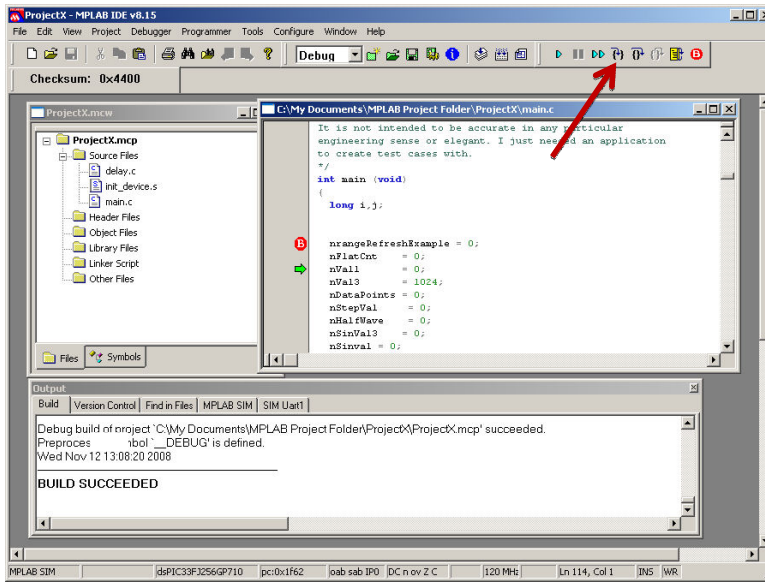
- Starting MPLAB SIM
- Running to a breakpoint
- **Single stepping**
- Setting watchpoints
- Running and halting
- Using a stimulus
- Using the `__DEBUG` variable
- Using `fprintf` statements to debug
- Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch
- Tracing code as it executes

# Single Step

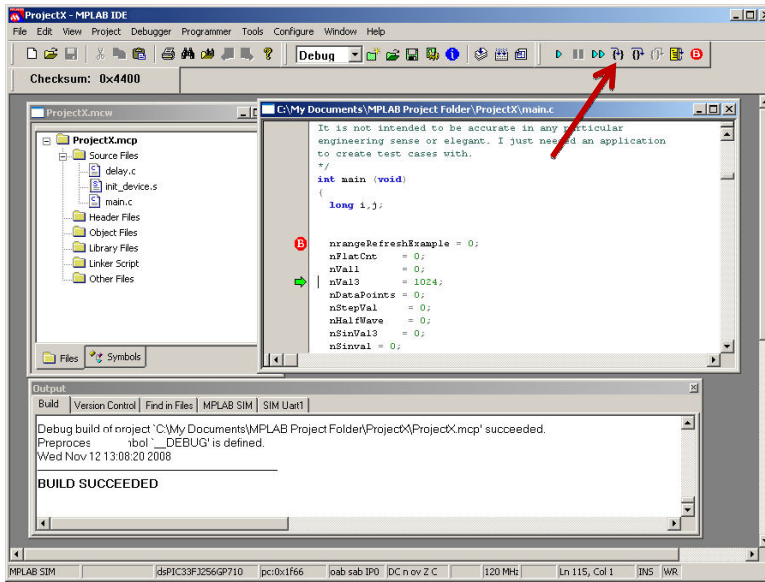


Pressing the “step” icon, single steps one line in the code.

# Step Again



# Step Again



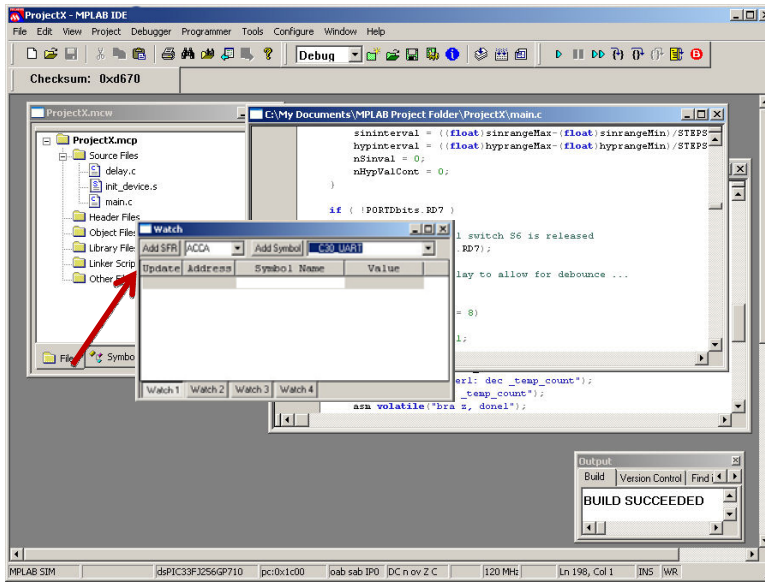
## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

---

- Starting MPLAB SIM
- Running to a breakpoint
- Single stepping
- **Setting watchpoints**
- Running and halting
- Using a stimulus
- Using the `__DEBUG` variable
- Using `fprintf` statements to debug
- Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch
- Tracing code as it executes

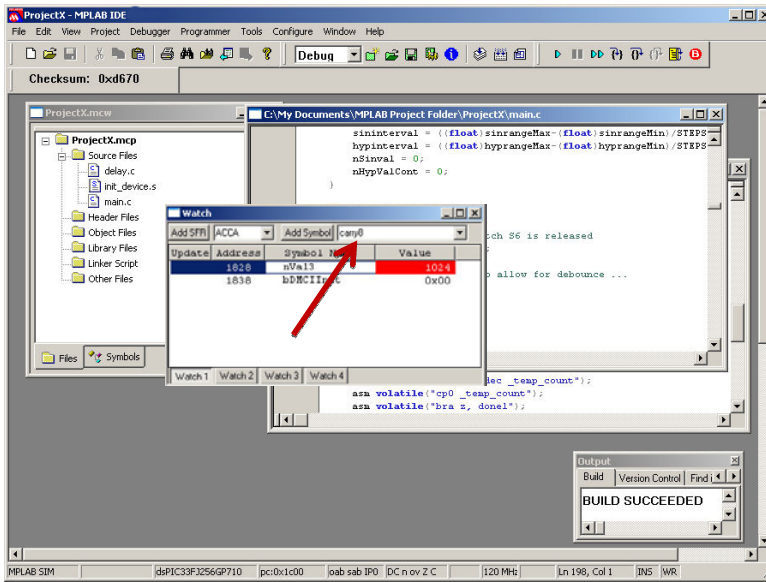


# Watchpoints View>Watch



Watch windows inspect variables in your code. Select the Watch window from the View menu.

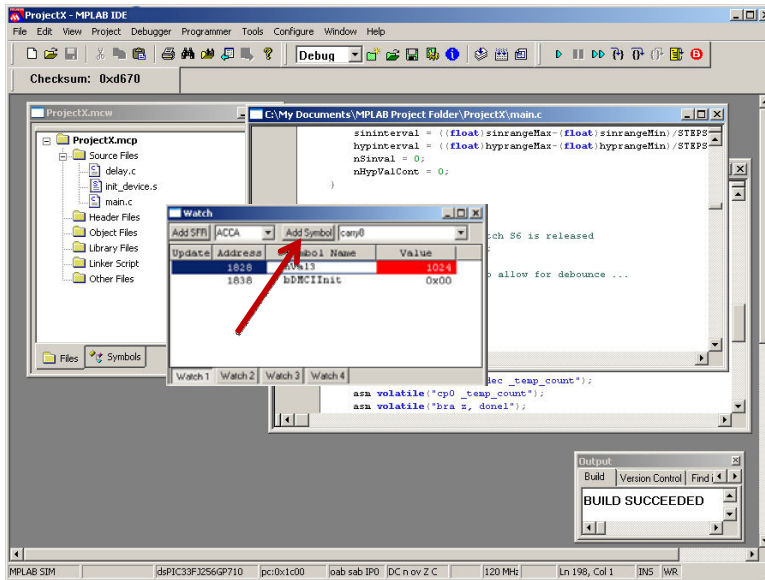
# Watchpoints Select Variables to Watch



Use the right pull down list to see symbols, select the variables to watch...

# Watchpoints

## Add Variables to Watch Window



...then press the Add Symbol button to enter them in the watch window list.

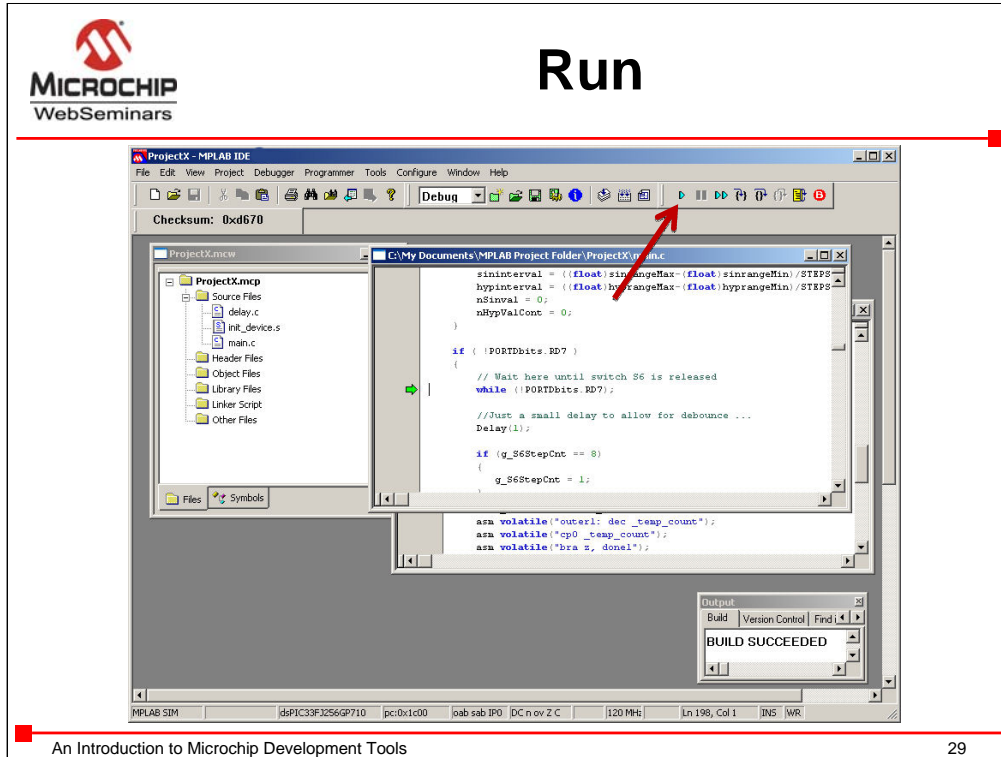
Now when the program is halted or stepped, the variables will show changed values in red.

## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

---

- Starting MPLAB SIM
- Running to a breakpoint
- Single stepping
- Setting watchpoints
- **Running and halting**
- Using a stimulus
- Using the `__DEBUG` variable
- Using `fprintf` statements to debug
- Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch
- Tracing code as it executes

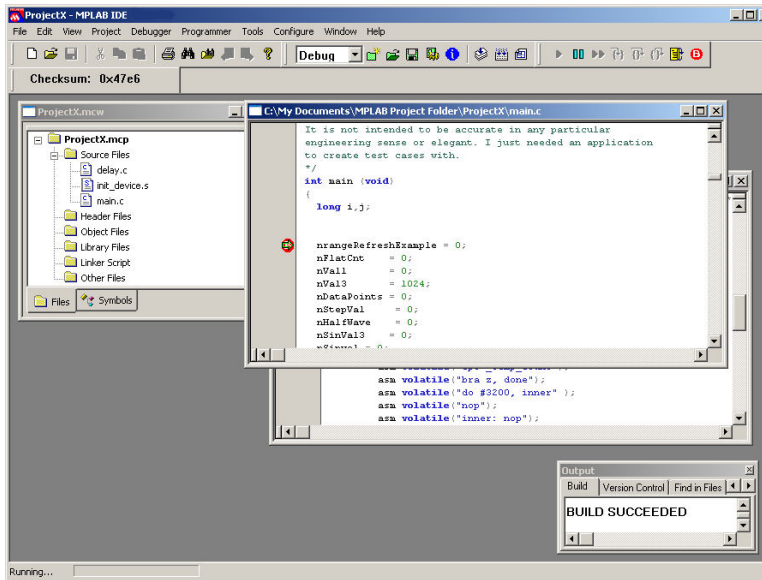
# Run



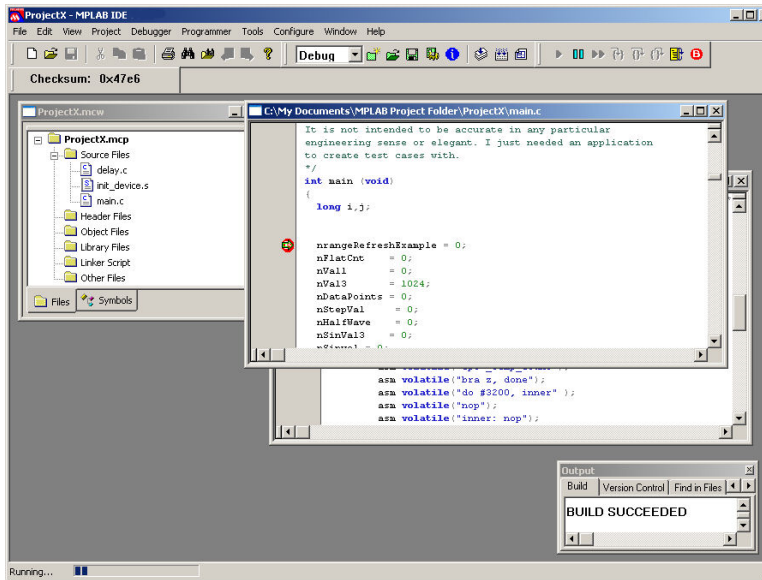
Pressing the “run” icon lets the processor continue running the code from the current breakpoint.

The status bar at the bottom disappears and is replaced by a “running” progress bar.

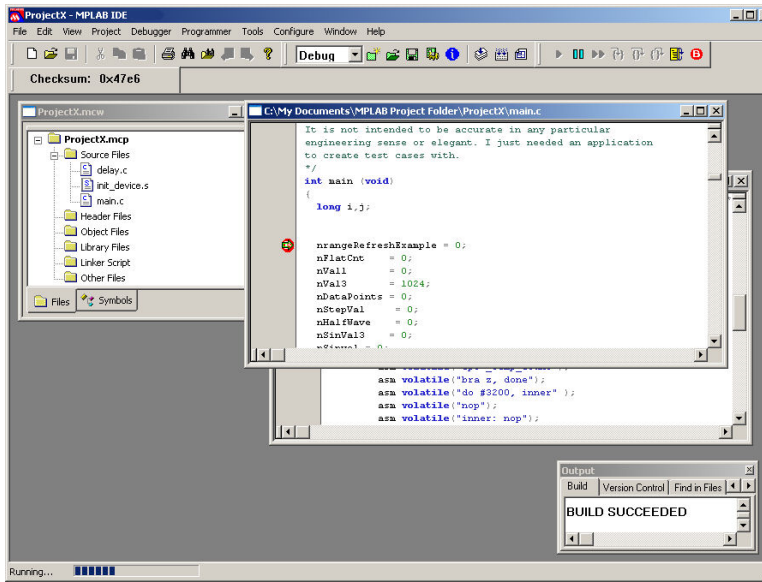
# Run



# Run

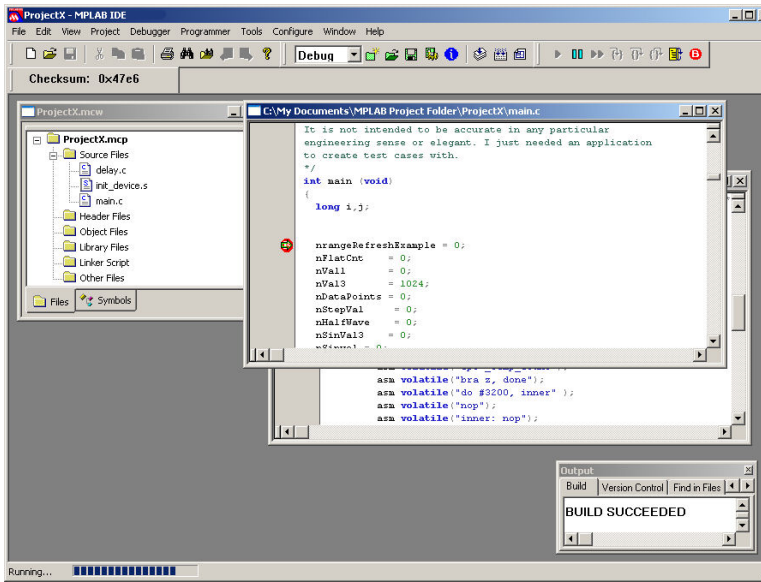


# Run

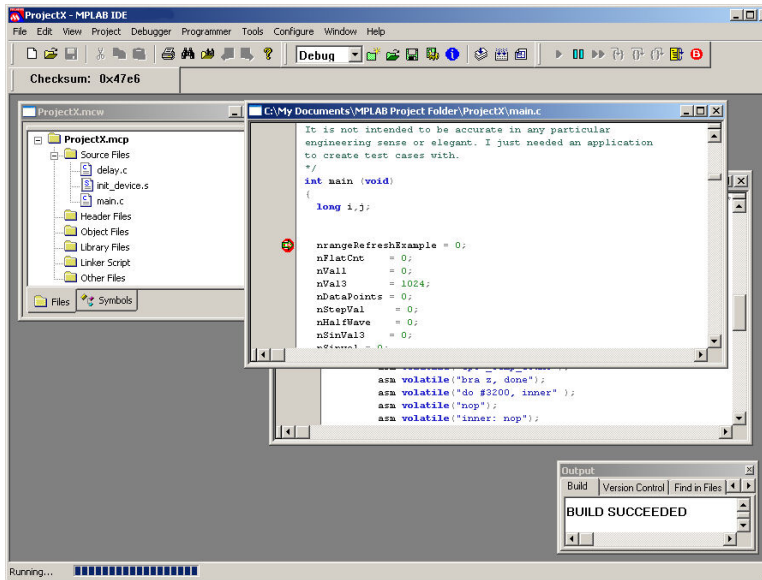




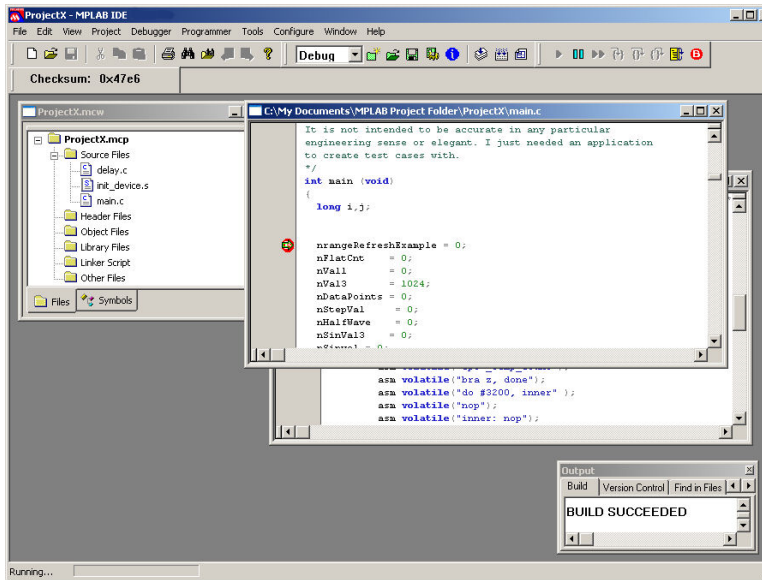
# Run



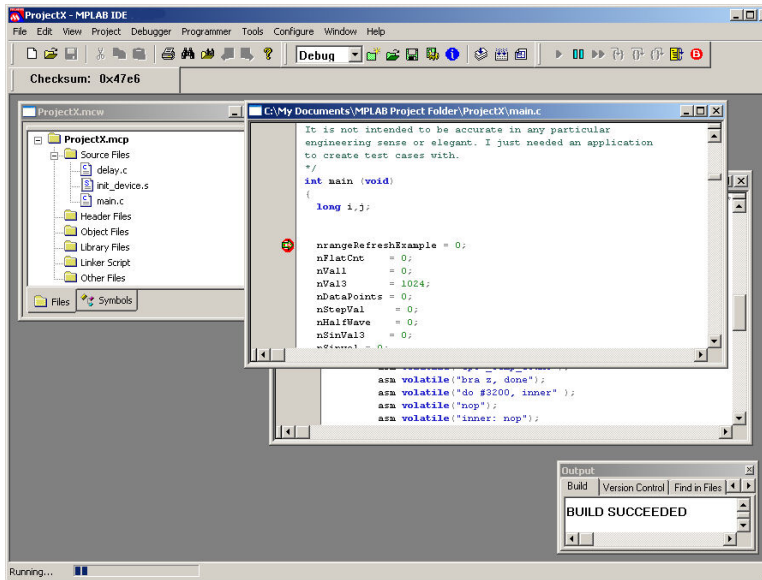
# Run



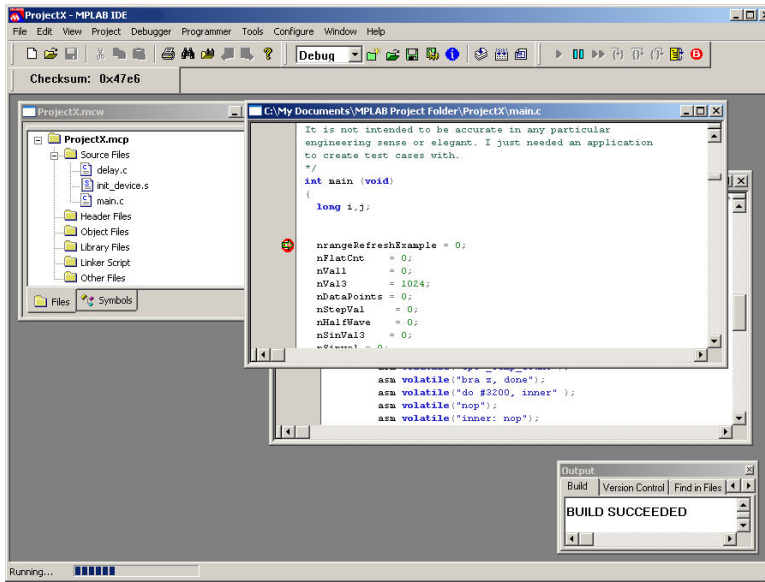
# Run



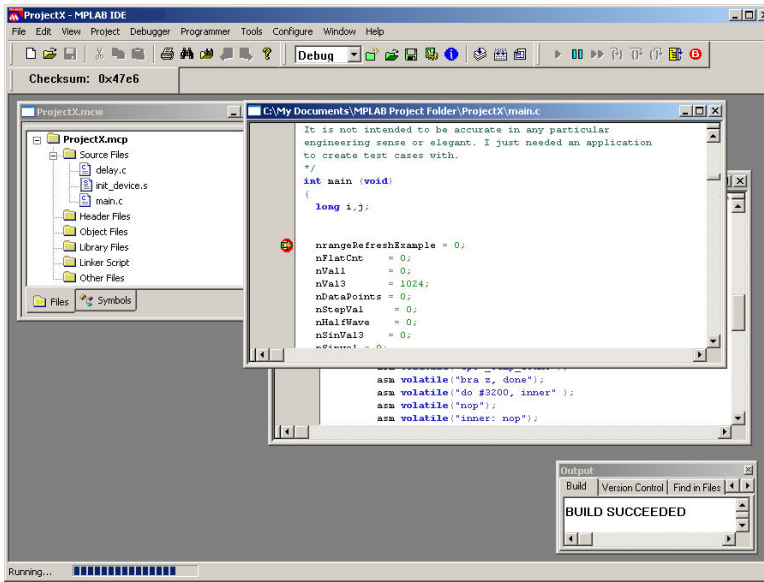
# Run



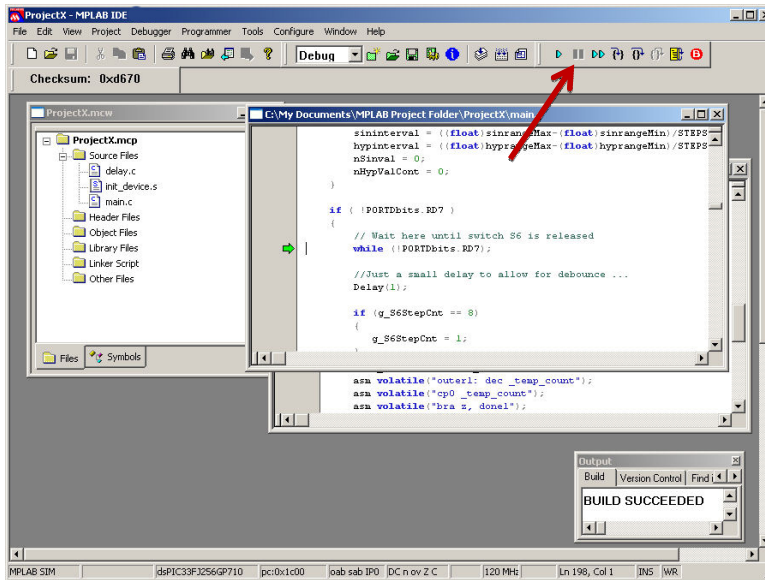
# Run



# Run

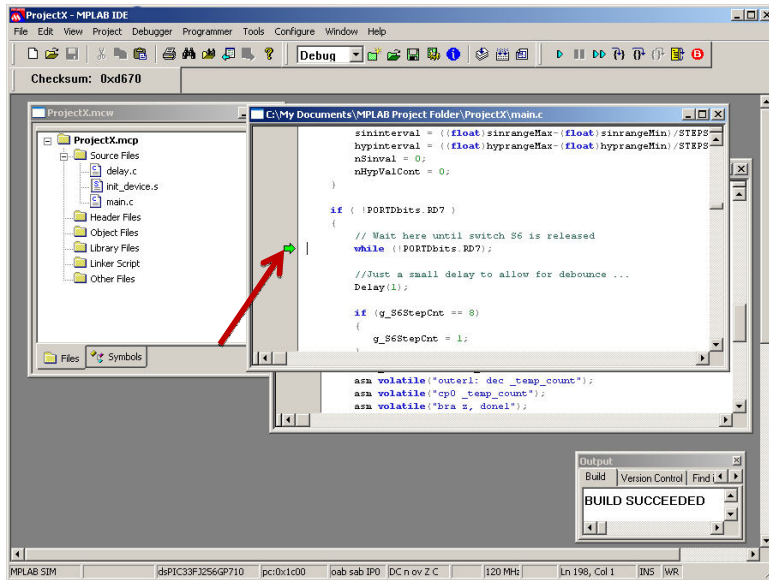


# Halt



Selecting the “Halt” icon stops program execution at the current program counter location, just as if it encountered a breakpoint at that instruction in the code.

# Halt



In this code, after pressing single step, the green arrow does not advance.

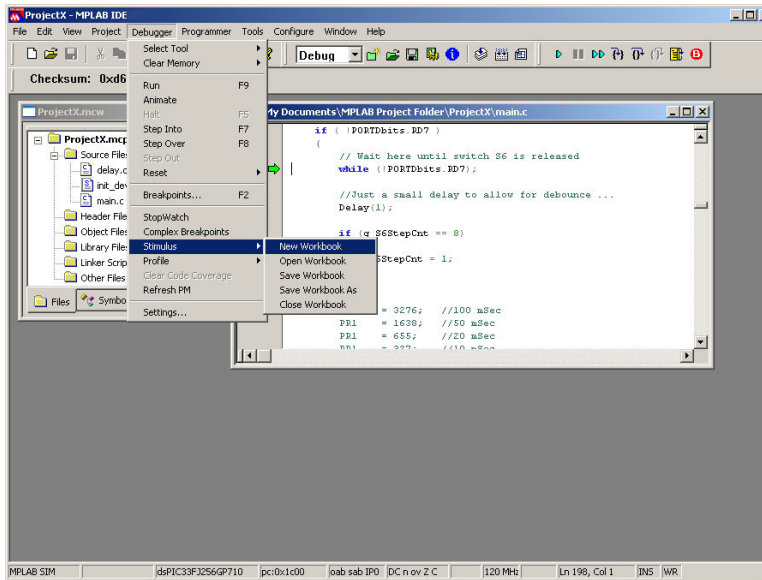
The code is in a “while” loop, waiting for a switch on port pin RD7 to go high.



## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

---

- Starting MPLAB SIM
- Running to a breakpoint
- Single stepping
- Setting watchpoints
- Running and halting
- **Using a stimulus**
- Using the `__DEBUG` variable
- Using `fprintf` statements to debug
- Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch
- Tracing code as it executes

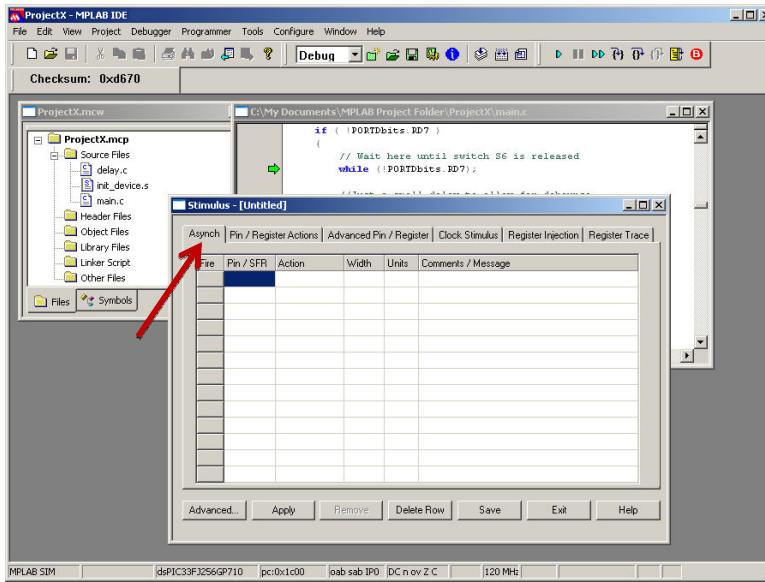


The action of the switch on pin RD7 can be simulated with a stimulus function.

MPLAB SIM can respond to the action of external hardware, such as switches, with the stimulus functions.

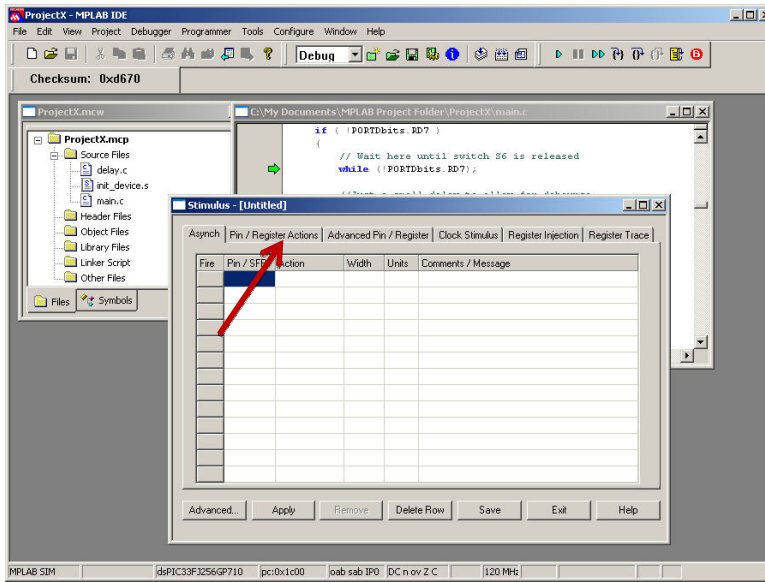
The stimulus dialog is accessed from the Debugger pull down, scroll to “Stimulus” and create a “New workbook.”

# Stimulus Stimulus Dialog



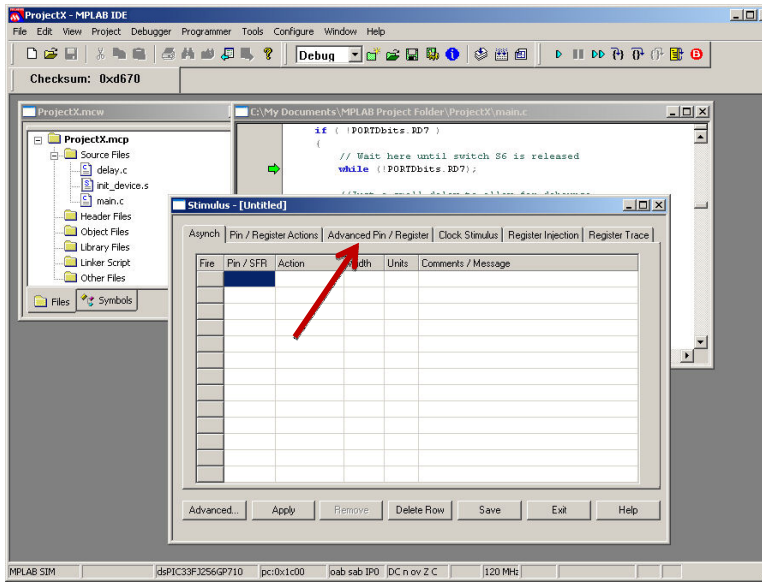
The stimulus workbook has tabs for the various types of stimulus.

# Stimulus Stimulus Dialog



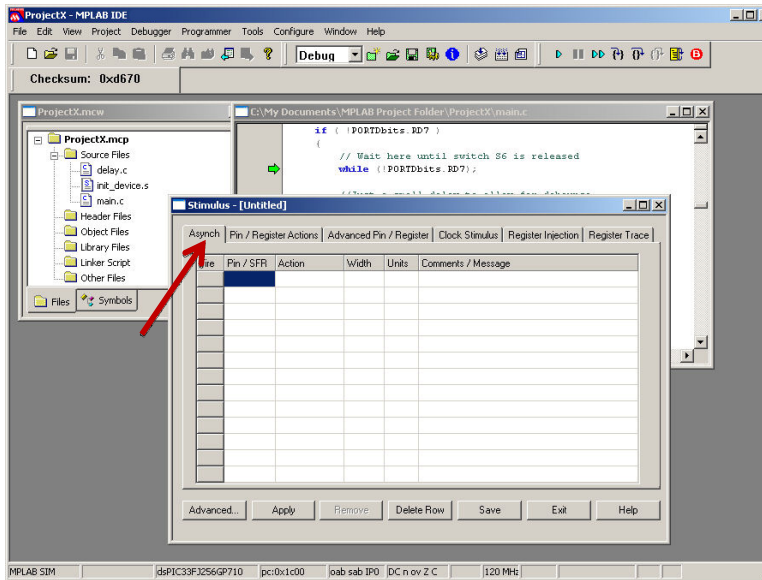
There are six tabs, offering a options to apply stimulus to the simulator,

# Stimulus Stimulus Dialog



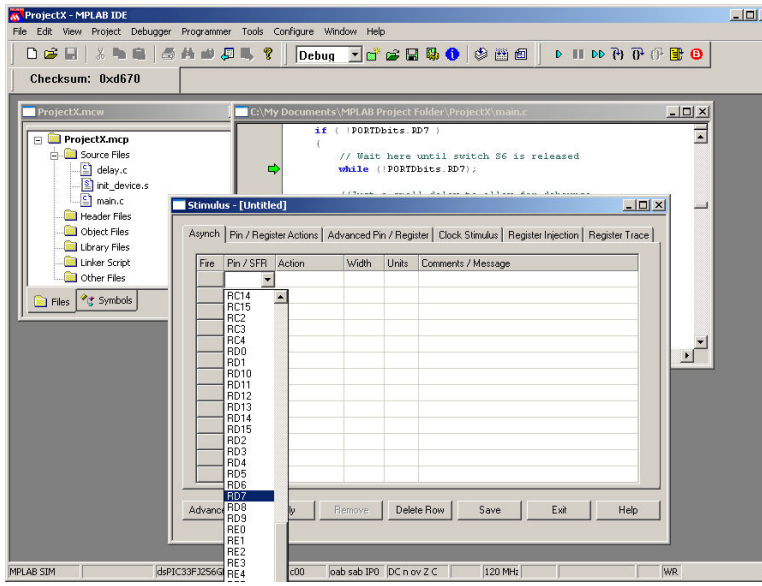
Regular, repeating waveforms, lists of voltage levels, events from files, and sequences of data values can be injected into registers and applied to external pins.

# Stimulus Asynchronous Stimulus



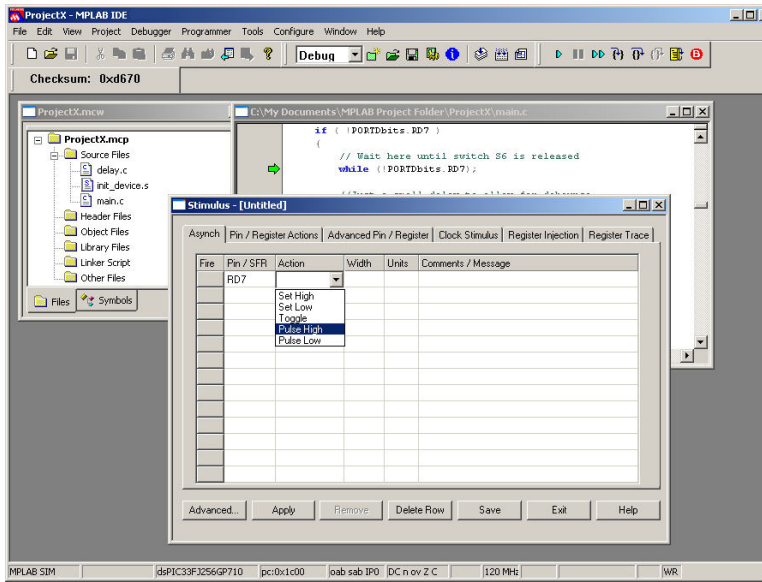
The “asynchronous” stimulus tab can be used to simulate the action of pressing a switch.

# Stimulus Set Pin



Click on the PIN/SFR column to select the pin RD7.

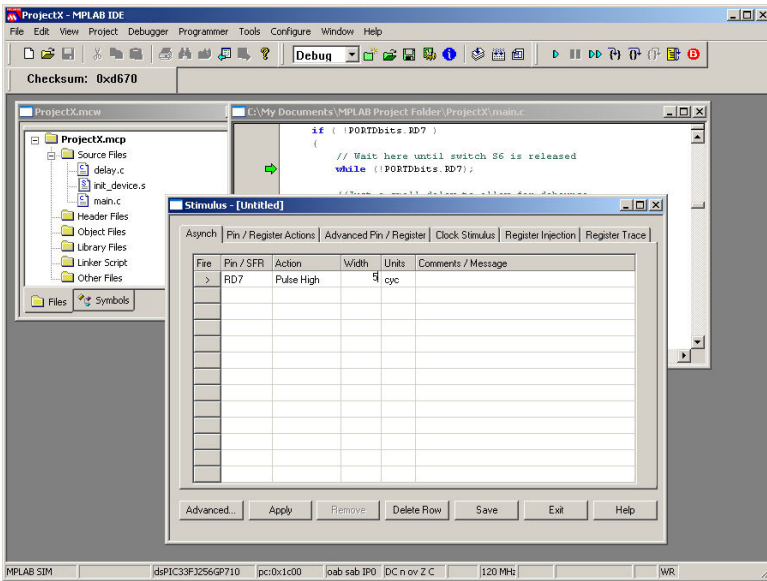
# Stimulus Set Action



In the “Action” column, set the action for the pin to pulse high when pressed.



# Stimulus Set Time



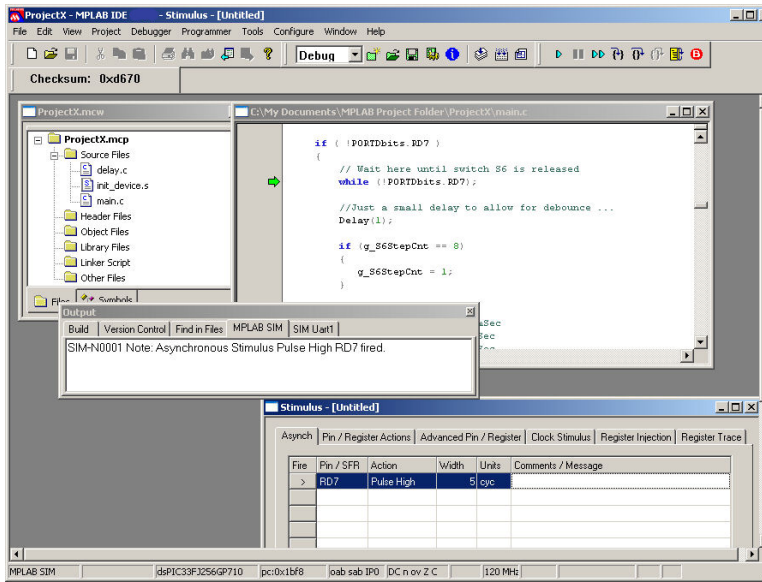
The screenshot shows the MPLAB IDE interface with a Stimulus configuration window open. The Stimulus window contains a table with the following data:

Fire	Pin / SFR	Action	Width	Units	Comments / Message
>	RD7	Pulse High	5	cyc	// Wait here until switch S6 is released

At the bottom of the Stimulus window, there are buttons for: Advanced..., Apply, Remove, Delete Row, Save, Exit, and Help.

In the width column, a somewhat arbitrary value of “5” makes the pulse last 5 cycles, just ensuring the pulse lasts beyond a single instruction.

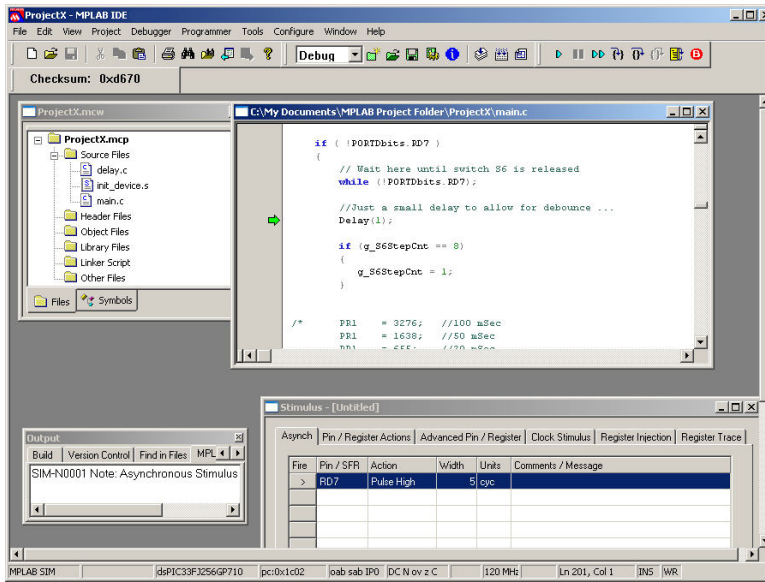
# Stimulus Fire Stimulus



Press the “Fire” button to apply the pulse to the RD7 pin.

The output window logs the action.

# Stimulus Step



The screenshot shows the MPLAB IDE interface. The main window displays a C source file named 'main.c' with the following code:

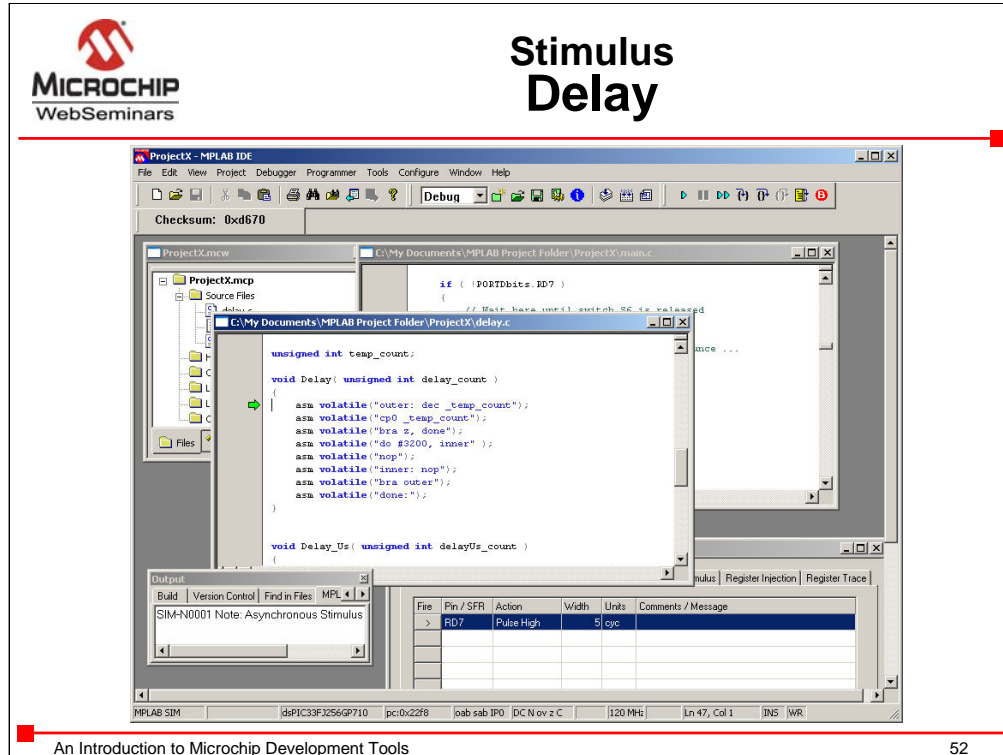
```
if ( !PORTDbits_RD7 )  
{  
    // Wait here until switch S6 is released  
    while ( !PORTDbits_RD7 );  
    //Just a small delay to allow for debounce ...  
    Delay(1);  
    if ( g_S6StepCnt == 0 )  
    {  
        g_S6StepCnt = 1;  
    }  
}  
  
/*  
RD1 = 3276; //100 mSec  
RD2 = 1638; //50 mSec  
RD3 = 454; //10 mSec
```

The Stimulus window is open, showing a table for configuring a stimulus:

File	Pin / SFR	Action	Width	Units	Comments / Message
>	RD7	Pulse High	5	cyc	

Press the single step key to go forward,  
into the Delay routine.

# Stimulus Delay



The next step enters the delay routine.

Delay routines such as this are often used to slow things down so that a display can be seen by the human eye, for instance.

When simulating, which runs at a slower speed than the actual processor, these delays are often not needed.

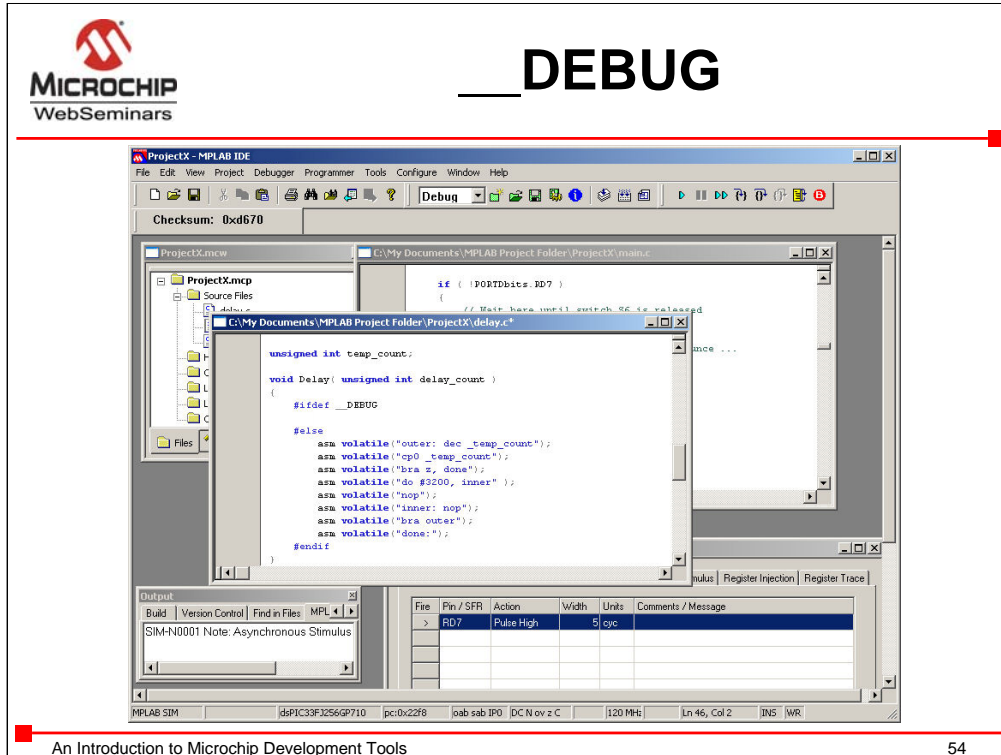
While using the simulator, we just need to know that the delay routine is called, but we don't want to step through thousands of iterations of the delay loop.

## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

---

- Starting MPLAB SIM
- Running to a breakpoint
- Single stepping
- Setting watchpoints
- Running and halting
- Using a stimulus
- **Using the `__DEBUG` variable**
- Using `fprintf` statements to debug
- Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch
- Tracing code as it executes

# \_\_DEBUG



Use the variable underscore-underscore DEBUG to change the way the delay loop operates while debugging using the simulator.

To modify the delay routine to operate differently while debugging, but retain its function in the application add an #ifdef function to check the state of the variable underscore-underscore DEBUG.

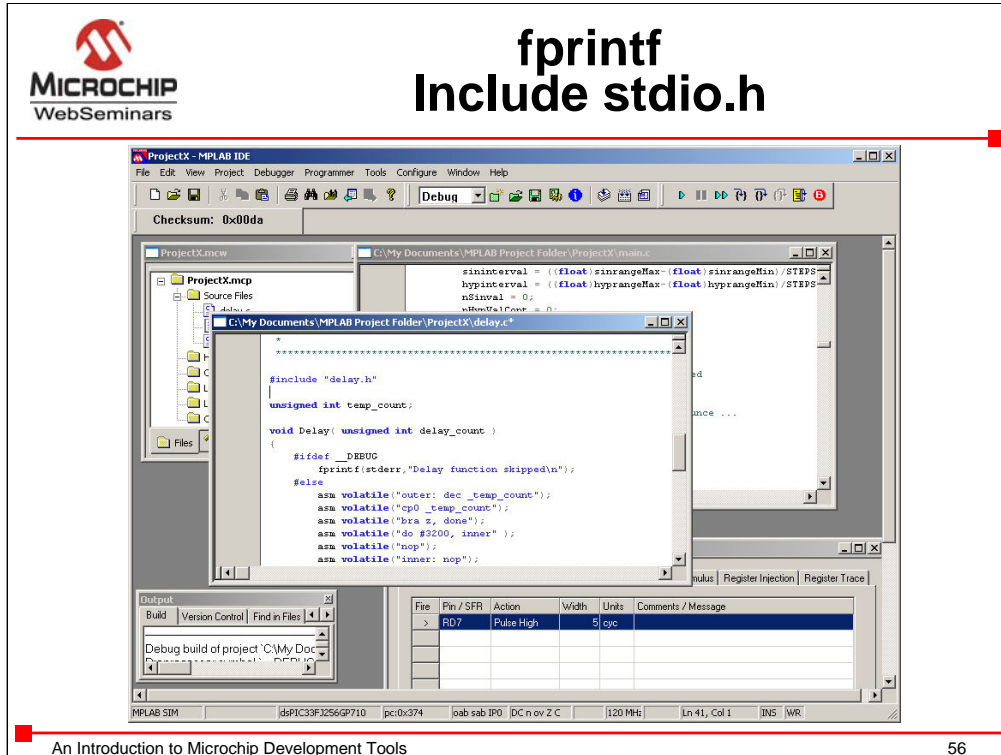
If the variable underscore-underscore DEBUG exists, then we'll skip the thousands of loops in the delay routine, and just exit.

## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

---

- Starting MPLAB SIM
- Running to a breakpoint
- Single stepping
- Setting watchpoints
- Running and halting
- Using a stimulus
- Using the `__DEBUG` variable
- **Using `fprintf` statements to debug**
- Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch
- Tracing code as it executes

# fprintf Include stdio.h

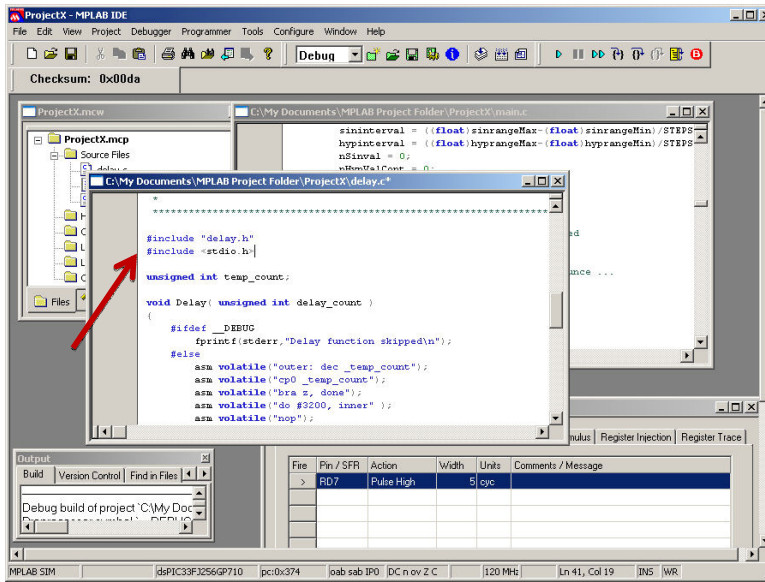


Additionally an fprintf function can print out a message to remind us that the delay routine operates differently while debugging with the simulator.

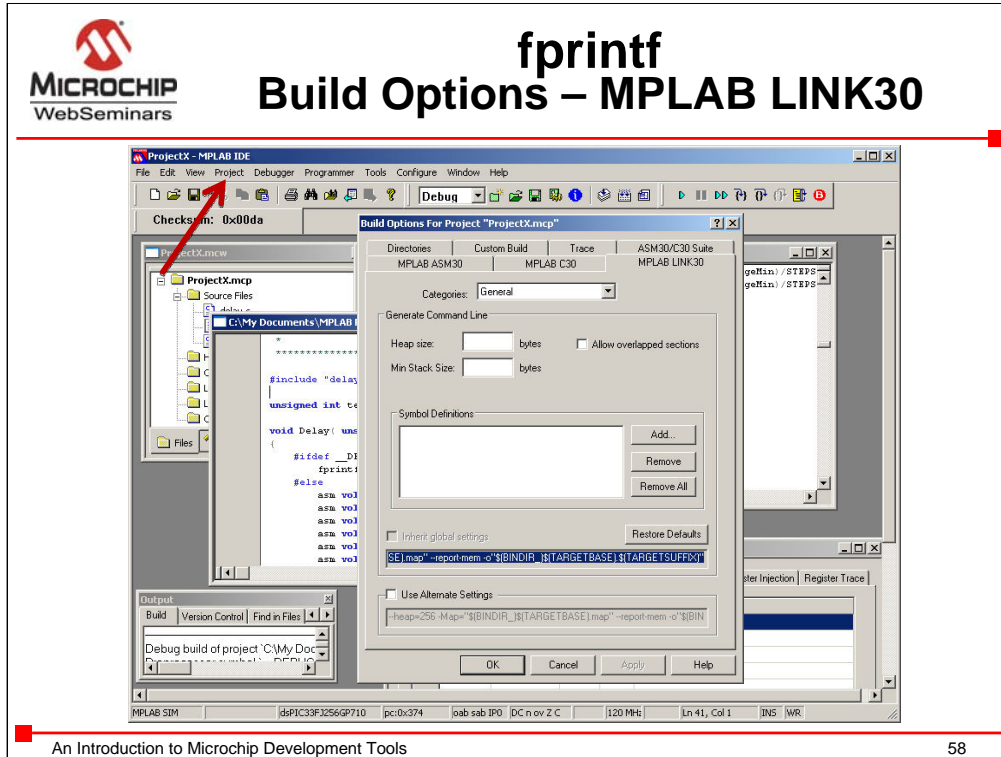
In order to use the printf routine to echo that the delay routine executed (but in a different way when debugging) the stdio.h file must be included.



# fprintf Include stdio.h



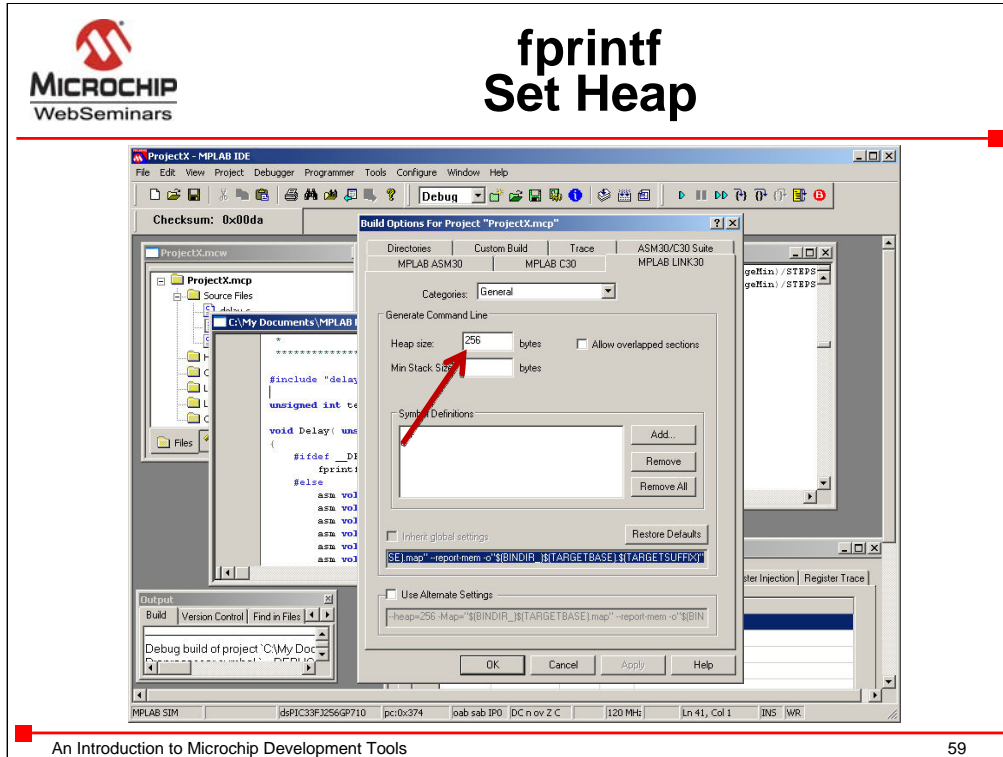
# fprintf Build Options – MPLAB LINK30



A couple of other things need to be set up to use fprintf.

Under the Project menu are the build options.

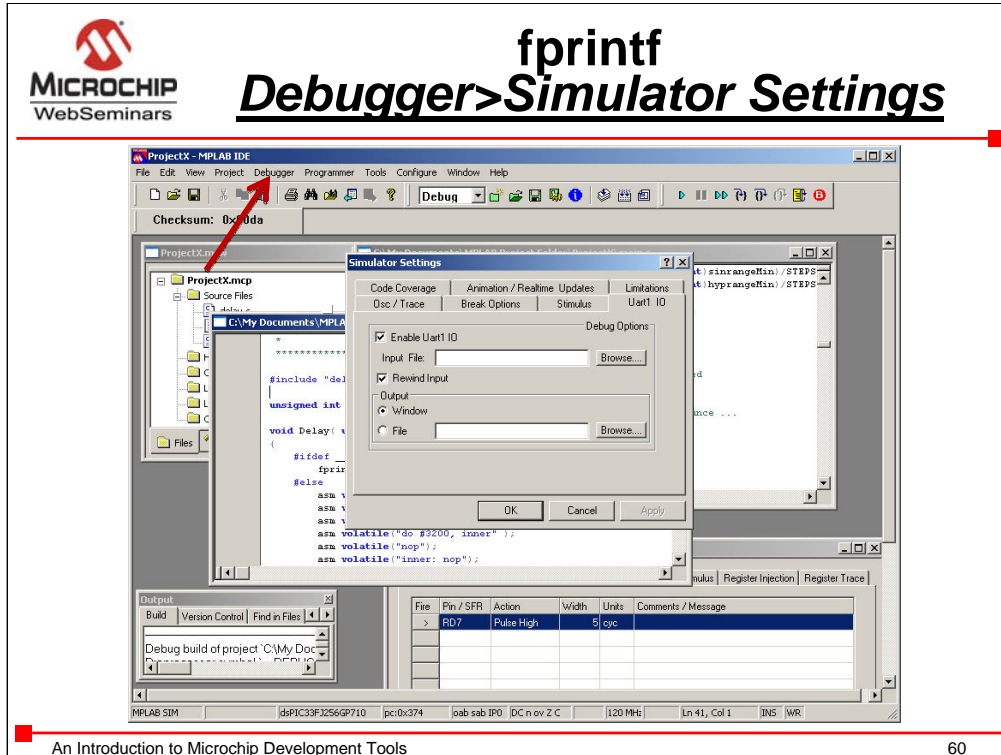
# fprintf Set Heap



The MPLAB LINK30 tab needs to generate a heap to handle the character storage for fprintf.

256 bytes is ample for any message we need to print out.

# fprintf Debugger> Simulator Settings

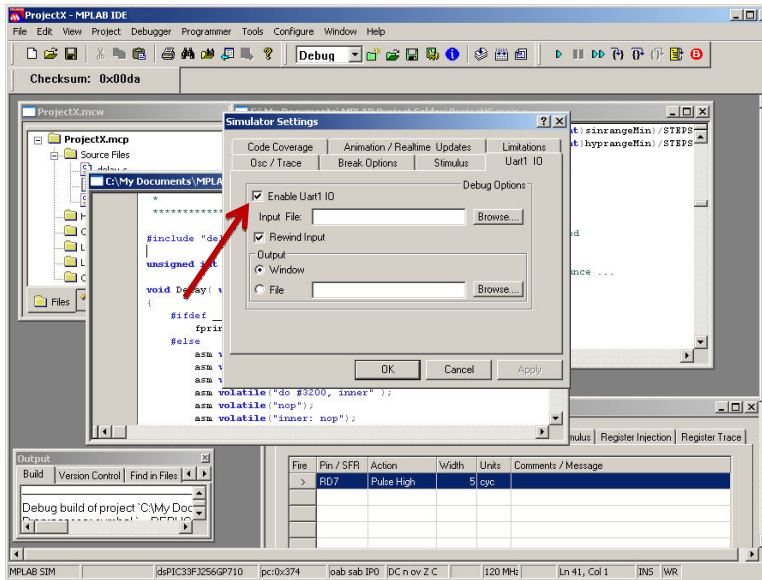


Messages from an embedded controller must come from a peripheral device on that controller.

The UART needs to be configured to send I/O to the Output window.

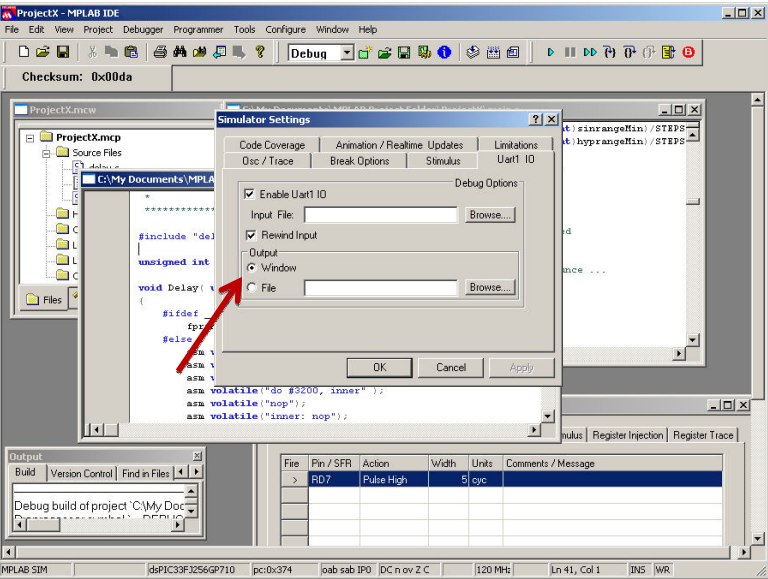
The simulator settings dialog is on the Debugger menu.

# fprintf Enable Uart



Check the box to enable the UART I/O...

# fprintf Output to Window

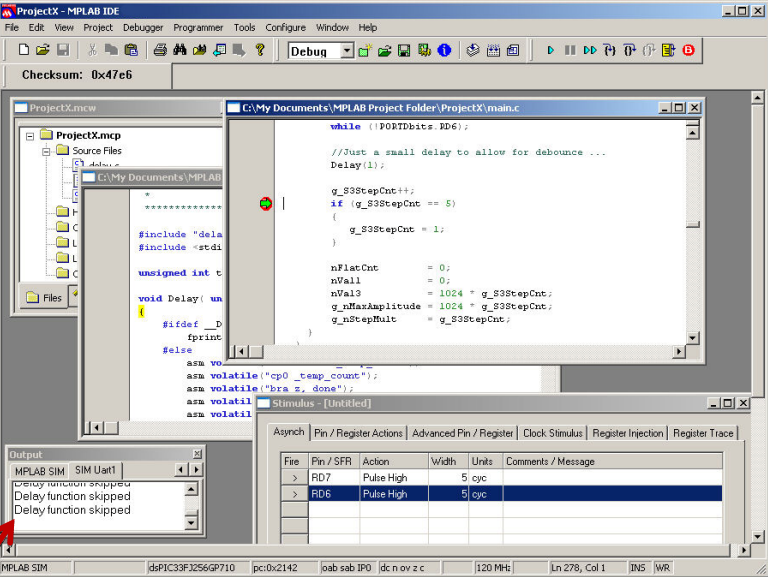


The screenshot shows the MPLAB IDE interface. A 'Simulator Settings' dialog box is open, with the 'Debug Options' tab selected. Under the 'Output' section, the 'Window' radio button is selected, and a red arrow points to it. The 'Output' section also includes 'Enable Usart1 I/O', 'Input File', 'Rewind Input', and 'File' options. The background shows a project window with source files and an output window at the bottom.

ProjectX-MPLAB IDE  
File Edit View Project Debugger Programmer Tools Configure Window Help  
Debug  
Checksum: 0x00da  
ProjectX.mcpw  
ProjectX.mcp  
Source Files  
C:\My Documents\MPLA  
\*\*\*\*\*  
#include "del  
unsigned int  
void Delay (   
 (   
 #ifdef  
 fprintf  
 #else  
 asm volatile("do #3200, inner" );  
 asm volatile("nop");  
 asm volatile("inner: nop");  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 File  
 Output  
 Build Version Control Find in Files  
 Debug build of project 'C:\My Doc  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 File Pin / SFR Action Width Units Comments / Message  
> RD7 Pulse High 5 cyc  
 MPLAB SIM jdsPIC33F3256G9710 jpc:0x374 jlab sab IP0 DC n ov Z C 120 MHz Ln 41, Col 1 JMS WR

...and check this button to see its messages in the Output window.

# fprintf Output Message



The screenshot shows the MPLAB IDE interface. The main editor window displays a C program with a `Delay` function that uses `fprintf` to output a message. The output window at the bottom left shows the simulation results, with a red arrow pointing to the output messages: "Delay function skipped".

```
while (!PORTBbits.RB6);  
  
//Just a small delay to allow for debounce ...  
Delay(1);  
  
g_S3StepCnt++;  
if (g_S3StepCnt == 5)  
{  
    g_S3StepCnt = 1;  
}  
  
nFlatCnt = 0;  
nWall = 0;  
nWall3 = 1024 * g_S3StepCnt;  
g_nMaxAmplitude = 1024 * g_S3StepCnt;  
g_nStepMult = g_S3StepCnt;
```

Output window content:

```
MPLAB SIM | SIM Unit1 |  
|-----|  
| Delay function skipped |  
| Delay function skipped |  
| Delay function skipped |
```

File	Pin / SFR	Action	Width	Units	Comments / Message
>	RD7	Pulse High		5 cyc	
>	RD6	Pulse High		5 cyc	

Now as you go through your code, you'll see the fprintf string in the output window each time the delay function is called.

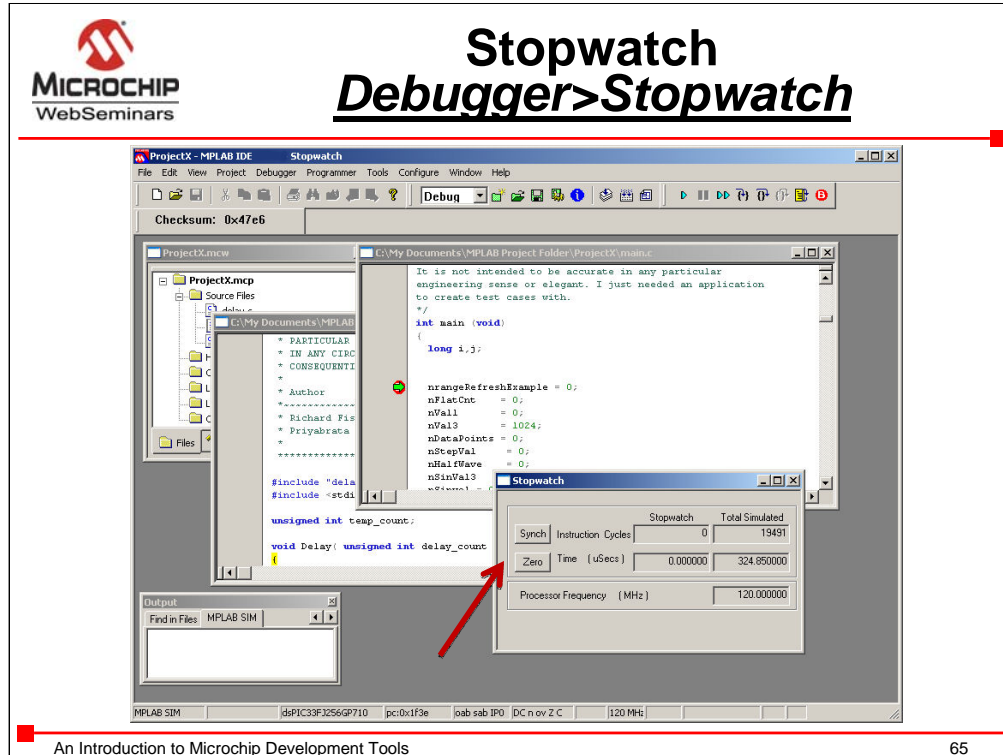
## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

---

- Starting MPLAB SIM
- Running to a breakpoint
- Single stepping
- Setting watchpoints
- Running and halting
- Using a stimulus
- Using the `__DEBUG` variable
- Using `fprintf` statements to debug
- **Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch**
- Tracing code as it executes



# Stopwatch Debugger>Stopwatch



MPLAB SIM has tools to analyze how the code is running.

The stopwatch can time the execution of code.

While stopped at a breakpoint, select the stopwatch from the Debugger menu, then press the “Zero” button to clear its contents to get ready for a measurement.

# Stopwatch

The screenshot shows the MPLAB IDE interface with a Stopwatch window open. The Stopwatch window displays the following data:

Synch	Instruction Cycles	Stopwatch	Total Simulated
Zero	Time (uSecs)	93.033333	417.883333
Processor Frequency (MHz)		120.000000	

A red arrow points to the 'Zero' row of the Stopwatch table. The background shows a C source file with a delay function and a while loop.

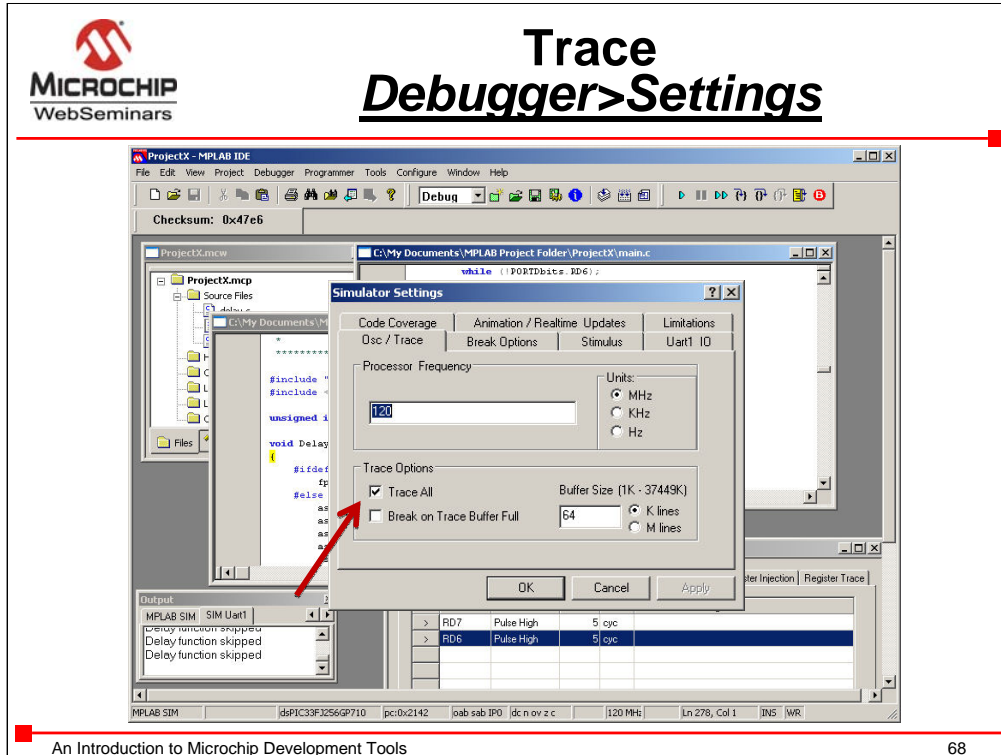
Run to the next breakpoint, and the stopwatch accurately measures the instruction time in cycles and microseconds.

## Topics Covered in This Web Seminar

---

- Starting MPLAB SIM
- Running to a breakpoint
- Single stepping
- Setting watchpoints
- Running and halting
- Using a stimulus
- Using the `__DEBUG` variable
- Using `fprintf` statements to debug
- Measuring routine execution time with the stopwatch
- **Tracing code as it executes**

# Trace *Debugger>Settings*

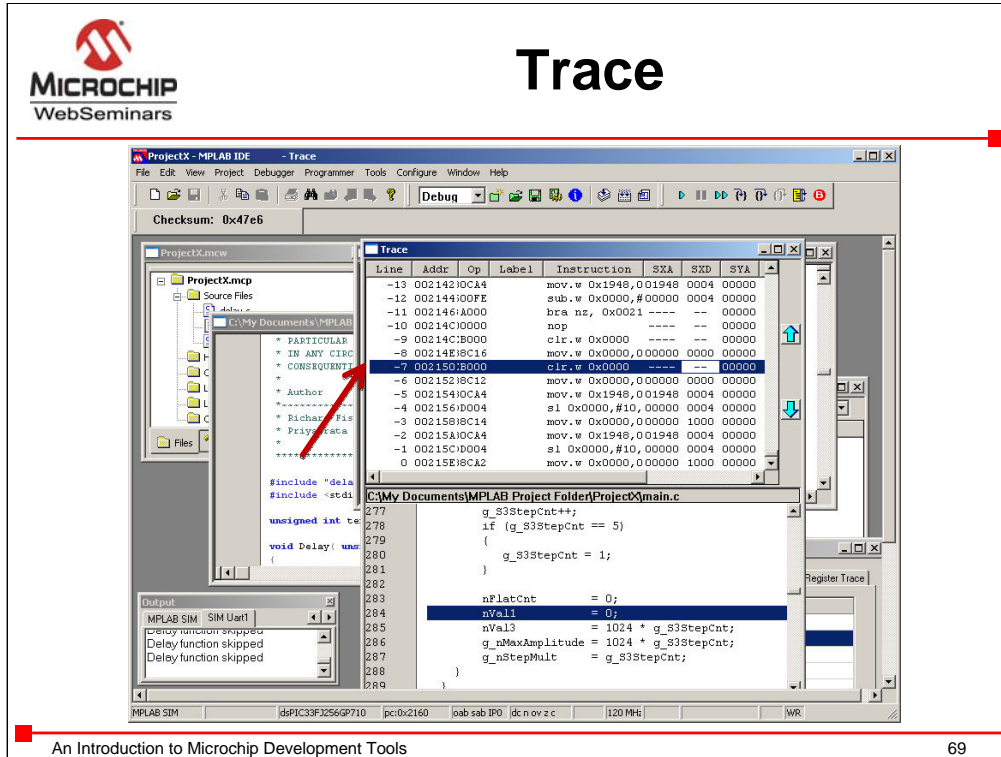


Another way to optimize code is to use the trace analyzer.

While setting breakpoints and single-stepping through code is one way to see how your code is functioning, an alternative is to use the trace facilities of MPLAB SIM to record instructions as they execute while the simulator is running.

Use the Debugger menu to select the Settings dialog, and enable the “Trace All” checkbox.

# Trace



Press run, then halt, or stop at a breakpoint, and view the trace window from the View menu.

The upper half of the trace window shows the instruction flow.

When you click on an instruction there...

# Trace

The screenshot shows the MPLAB IDE interface with a trace window open. The trace window displays assembly instructions with columns for Line, Addr, Op, Label, Instruction, SXA, SXD, and SYA. The source code window shows the corresponding C code with line numbers 277-289. A red arrow points from the source code to the trace window.

Line	Addr	Op	Label	Instruction	SXA	SXD	SYA
-13	00214210CA4	mov.w		0x1948,0x01948	0004	00000	
-12	002144100FE	sub.w		0x0000,#000000	0004	00000	
-11	0021461A000	bra nz,		0x0021----	--	00000	
-10	00214C10000	nop			----	--	00000
-9	00214C18000	clr.w		0x0000	----	--	00000
-8	00214E18C16	mov.w		0x0000,0x0000	0000	00000	
-7	00215018000	clr.w		0x0000	----	--	00000
-6	00215218C12	mov.w		0x0000,0x0000	0000	00000	
-5	00215410CA4	mov.w		0x1948,0x01948	0004	00000	
-4	00215610004	sl		0x0000,#10,0x0000	0004	00000	
-3	00215818C14	mov.w		0x0000,0x0000	1000	00000	
-2	00215A10CA4	mov.w		0x1948,0x01948	0004	00000	
-1	00215C1D004	sl		0x0000,#10,0x0000	0004	00000	
0	00215E18CA2	mov.w		0x0000,0x0000	1000	00000	

```

277     g_s3StepCnt++;
278     if (g_s3StepCnt == 5)
279     (
280         g_s3StepCnt = 1;
281     )
282
283     nFlatCnt     = 0;
284     nVal1        = 0;
285     nVal3        = 1024 * g_s3StepCnt;
286     g_nMaxAmplitude = 1024 * g_s3StepCnt;
287     g_nStepMult  = g_s3StepCnt;
288 }
289

```

...the corresponding section from the source code is shown in the lower half.

Trace is useful to see how you got to a certain point in your code.

## Download MPLAB and Try It!



[WWW.MICROCHIP.COM/MPLAB](http://WWW.MICROCHIP.COM/MPLAB)

That's a quick tour of the simulator. We hope this will give you a few pointers and you'll explore these and other simulator features.

If you haven't already done it, now is the time to get started with MPLAB IDE.

Go to our web site at [www.microchip.com/mplab](http://www.microchip.com/mplab) and download your free copy of MPLAB software.

This is the end of our presentation.

Thank you for your time.