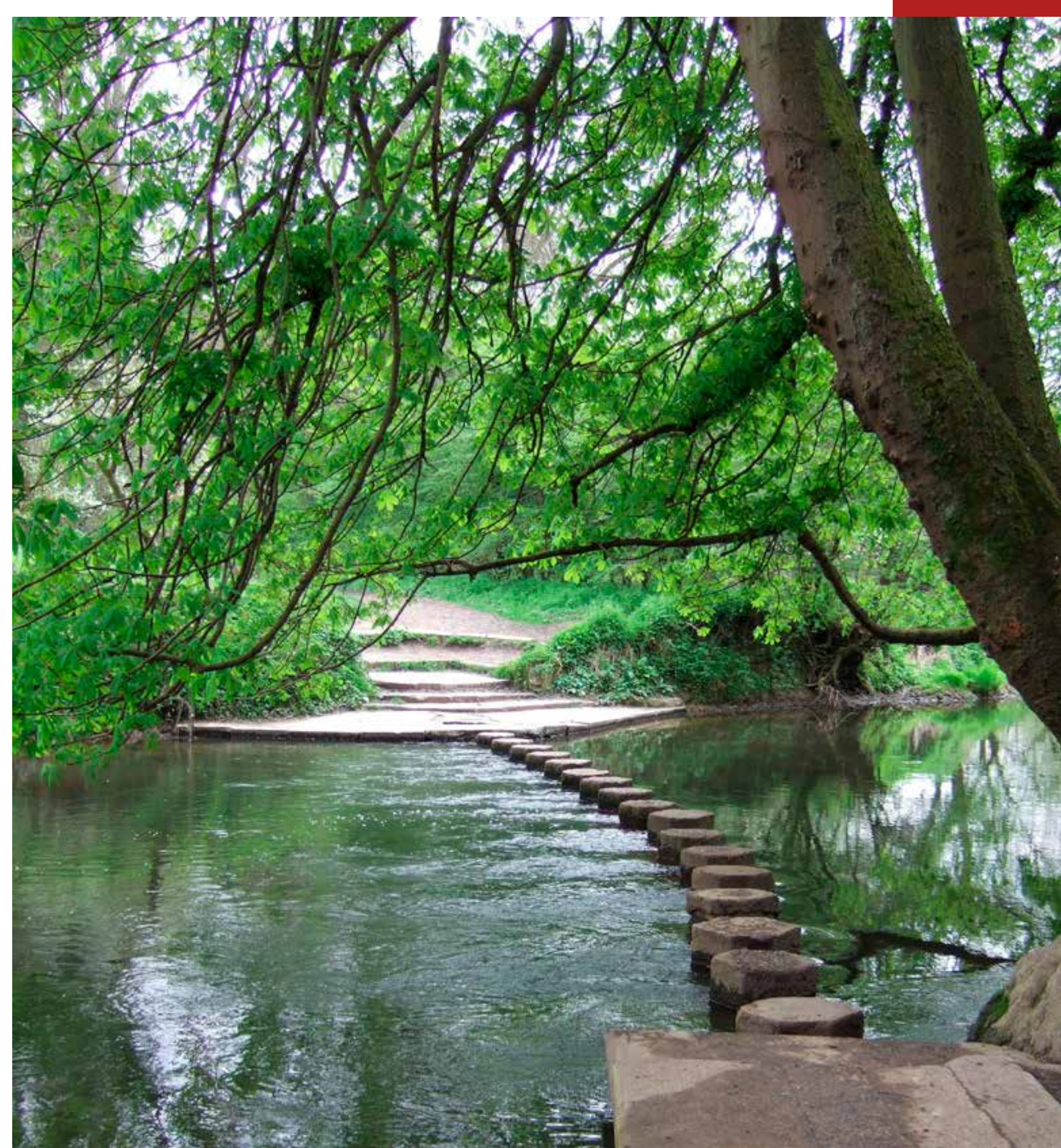


# Machine Checked Proofs

## When computers improve mathematical rigour

Since the invention of the concept of proof in ancient Greece, mathematicians have always sought to write ever more rigorous proofs: identifying axioms precisely, defining every object used in the proof, avoiding the call to intuition, etc. Machine-checked proof is a new step in this never ending quest of rigour. A machine-checked proof is written with such precision that a computer program can check its correctness.



Like the crossing of a river ford, a mathematical proof goes step by step

```
Goal ((P -> Q) -> P) -> P.  
intro piqip.  
assert (ponp: P \ / ~P).  
exact (classic P).  
destruct ponp as [p|np].  
assumption.  
apply piqip.  
intro p.  
destruct np.  
assumption.  
Qed.
```

$$\frac{\frac{\frac{\Gamma, \neg P \vdash \neg P}{\Gamma, \neg P \vdash (P \rightarrow Q) \rightarrow P} \text{ (ax)}}{\Gamma, \neg P \vdash \neg P} \text{ (ax)} \quad \frac{\frac{\frac{\frac{\Gamma, \neg P, P, \neg Q \vdash \neg P}{\Gamma, \neg P, P, \neg Q \vdash \perp} \text{ (}\neg\text{e)}}{\Gamma, \neg P, P \vdash Q} \text{ (}\neg\text{e)}}{\Gamma, \neg P \vdash P \rightarrow Q} \text{ (}\neg\text{e)}}{\Gamma, \neg P \vdash P} \text{ (}\neg\text{e)}}{\vdash ((P \rightarrow Q) \rightarrow P) \rightarrow P} \text{ (}\neg\text{i)}}$$

Two proofs of Peirce's law, in COQ (above) and in the natural deduction calculus (below).

### THE BEGINNING

The two first proof-checkers were Automath (de Bruijn, 1967), and then LCF (Milner, 1972). Their goals were different: Automath was designed to check general mathematical proofs, LCF, more specifically, proofs of properties of programs.

### TODAY

The development of proof-checkers triggered the development of new theories, besides set theory, to express mathematics: each system innovates, introducing new features to express mathematical statements and proofs, just like each new programming language introduces new features to express programs.

Popular proof-checkers are ACL 2, Agda, Coq, HOL Light, HOL 4, Lean, Mizar, Nuprl, PVS, and many others. These proof-checkers are specific to one theory. Others, such as Beluga, Dedukti, Isabelle, Lambda-prolog, Twelf, and others are frameworks, where various theories can be defined.

They have in total more than 10,000 users.

### RECENT PROOFS

2000 : four colour theorem (Gonthier et al.)  
2008 : correctness of the C compiler CompCert (Leroy et al.)  
2009 : correctness of the operating system sel4 (Klein et al.)  
2012 : Feit-Thompson theorem (Gonthier et al.)  
2014 : Kepler's conjecture (Hales et al.)  
2014 : UniMath a body of mathematics using univalent foundations (Voevodsky et al.)

Several of these projects aim at gathering a substantial body of mathematics, like Euclid's *Elements* and Bourbaki's *Éléments de mathématique* did.



For long, mathematics was the only science not to use instruments. The computer is becoming the telescope of mathematicians