

---

# Boost.Tribool

Douglas Gregor <dgregor -at- cs.indiana.edu>

Copyright © 2002-2004 Douglas Gregor

Use, modification and distribution is subject to the Boost Software License, Version 1.0. (See accompanying file LICENSE\_1\_0.txt or copy at [http://www.boost.org/LICENSE\\_1\\_0.txt](http://www.boost.org/LICENSE_1_0.txt))

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Tutorial .....	1
Basic usage .....	1
Renaming the indeterminate state .....	2
tribool input/output .....	3
Reference .....	3
Header <boost/logic/tribool.hpp> .....	3
Header <boost/logic/tribool_fwd.hpp> .....	13
Header <boost/logic/tribool_io.hpp> .....	13
Testsuite .....	18
Acceptance tests .....	18

## Introduction

The 3-state boolean library contains a single class, `boost::logic::tribool`, along with support functions and operator overloads that implement 3-state boolean logic.

## Tutorial

### Basic usage

The `tribool` class acts like the built-in `bool` type, but for 3-state boolean logic. The three states are `true`, `false`, and `indeterminate`, where the first two states are equivalent to those of the C++ `bool` type and the last state represents an unknown boolean value (that may be `true` or `false`, we don't know).

The `tribool` class supports conversion from `bool` values and literals along with its own `indeterminate` keyword:

```
tribool b(true);
b = false;
b = indeterminate;
tribool b2(b);
```

`tribool` supports conversions to `bool` for use in conditional statements. The conversion to `bool` will be `true` when the value of the `tribool` is always `true`, and `false` otherwise. Consequently, the following idiom may be used to determine which of the three states a `tribool` currently holds:

```

tribool b = some_operation();
if (b) {
    // b is true
}
else if (!b) {
    // b is false
}
else {
    // b is indeterminate
}

```

`tribool` supports the 3-state logic operators `!` (negation), `&&` (AND), and `||` (OR), with `bool` and `tribool` values. For instance:

```

tribool x = some_op();
tribool y = some_other_op();
if (x && y) {
    // both x and y are true
}
else if (!(x && y)) {
    // either x or y is false
}
else {
    // neither x nor y is false, but we don't know that both are true

    if (x || y) {
        // either x or y is true
    }
}
}

```

Similarly, `tribool` supports 3-state equality comparisons via the operators `==` and `!=`. These operators differ from "normal" equality operators in C++ because they return a `tribool`, because potentially we might not know the result of a comparison (try to compare true and `indeterminate`). For instance:

```

tribool x(true);
tribool y(indeterminate);

assert(x == x); // okay, x == x returns true
assert(x == true); // okay, can compare tribools and bools

```

The `indeterminate` keyword (representing the `indeterminate tribool` value) doubles as a function to check if the value of a `tribool` is indeterminate, e.g.,

```

tribool x = try_to_do_something_tricky();
if (indeterminate(x)) {
    // value of x is indeterminate
}
else {
    // report success or failure of x
}

```

## Renaming the indeterminate state

Users may introduce additional keywords for the indeterminate value in addition to the implementation-supplied `indeterminate` using the `BOOST_TRIBOOL_THIRD_STATE` macro. For instance, the following macro instantiation (at the global scope) will introduce the keyword `maybe` as a synonym for `indeterminate` (also residing in the `boost` namespace):

```
BOOST_TRIBOOL_THIRD_STATE(maybe)
tribool x = maybe;
if (maybe(x)) { /* ... */ }
```

## tribool input/output

`tribool` objects may be read from and written to streams by including the `boost/logic/tribool_io.hpp` header in a manner very similar to `bool` values. When the `boolalpha` flag is not set on the input/output stream, the integral values 0, 1, and 2 correspond to `tribool` values `false`, `true`, and `indeterminate`, respectively. When `boolalpha` is set on the stream, arbitrary strings can be used to represent the three values, the default being "false", "true", and "indeterminate". For instance:

```
tribool x;
cin >> x; // Type "0", "1", or "2" to get false, true, or indeterminate
cout << boolalpha << x; // Produces "false", "true", or "indeterminate"
```

`tribool` input and output is sensitive to the stream's current locale. The strings associated with false and true values are contained in the standard `std::num_punct` facet, and the string naming the indeterminate type is contained in the `indeterminate_name` facet. To replace the name of the indeterminate state, you need to imbue your stream with a local containing a `indeterminate_name` facet, e.g.:

```
BOOST_TRIBOOL_THIRD_STATE(maybe)
locale global;
locale test_locale(global, new indeterminate_name<char>("maybe"));
cout.imbue(test_locale);
tribool x(maybe);
cout << boolalpha << x << endl; // Prints "maybe"
```

If your C++ standard library implementation does not support locales, `tribool` input/output will still work, but you will be unable to customize the strings printed/parsed when `boolalpha` is set.

## Reference

### Header `<boost/logic/tribool.hpp>`

```
BOOST_TRIBOOL_THIRD_STATE(Name)
```

```
namespace boost {
  namespace logic {
    class tribool;
    bool indeterminate(tribool, unspecified = unspecified);
    tribool operator!(tribool);
    tribool operator&&(tribool, tribool);
    tribool operator&&(tribool, bool);
    tribool operator&&(bool, tribool);
    tribool operator&&(indeterminate_keyword_t, tribool);
    tribool operator&&(tribool, indeterminate_keyword_t);
    tribool operator||(tribool, tribool);
    tribool operator||(tribool, bool);
    tribool operator||(bool, tribool);
    tribool operator||(indeterminate_keyword_t, tribool);
    tribool operator||(tribool, indeterminate_keyword_t);
    tribool operator==(tribool, tribool);
    tribool operator==(tribool, bool);
    tribool operator==(bool, tribool);
    tribool operator==(indeterminate_keyword_t, tribool);
    tribool operator==(tribool, indeterminate_keyword_t);
    tribool operator!=(tribool, tribool);
    tribool operator!=(tribool, bool);
    tribool operator!=(bool, tribool);
    tribool operator!=(indeterminate_keyword_t, tribool);
    tribool operator!=(tribool, indeterminate_keyword_t);
  }
}
```

## Class tribool

boost::logic::tribool — A 3-state boolean type.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool.hpp>

class tribool {
public:
    enum value_t;
    // construct/copy/destroy
    tribool();
    tribool(bool);
    tribool(indeterminate_keyword_t);

    // public member functions
    operator safe_bool() const;
    enum boost::logic::tribool::value_t value;
};
```

## Description

3-state boolean values are either true, false, or indeterminate.

### tribool public construct/copy/destroy

1. `tribool();`

Construct a new 3-state boolean value with the value 'false'.

Throws: Will not throw.

2. `tribool(bool value);`

Construct a new 3-state boolean value with the given boolean value, which may be true or false.

Throws: Will not throw.

3. `tribool(indeterminate_keyword_t);`

Construct a new 3-state boolean value with an indeterminate value.

Throws: Will not throw.

### tribool public member functions

1. `operator safe_bool() const;`

Use a 3-state boolean in a boolean context. Will evaluate true in a boolean context only when the 3-state boolean is definitely true.

Returns: true if the 3-state boolean is true, false otherwise

Throws: Will not throw.

## Type value\_t

boost::logic::tribool::value\_t

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool.hpp>

enum value_t { false_value, true_value, indeterminate_value };
```

## Description

The actual stored value in this 3-state boolean, which may be false, true, or indeterminate.

## Function indeterminate

boost::logic::indeterminate — Keyword and test function for the indeterminate tribool value.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool.hpp>

bool indeterminate(tribool x, unspecified dummy = unspecified);
```

## Description

The `indeterminate` function has a dual role. It's first role is as a unary function that tells whether the tribool value is in the "indeterminate" state. It's second role is as a keyword representing the indeterminate (just like "true" and "false" represent the true and false states). If you do not like the name "indeterminate", and would prefer to use a different name, see the macro `BOOST_TRIBOOL_THIRD_STATE`.

Returns: `x.value == tribool::indeterminate_value`  
Throws: Will not throw.

## Function operator!

`boost::logic::operator!` — Computes the logical negation of a tribool.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool.hpp>

tribool operator!(tribool x);
```

## Description

Returns: the logical negation of the tribool, according to the table:

<b>!</b>	
<b>false</b>	true
<b>true</b>	false
<b>indeterminate</b>	indeterminate

Throws: Will not throw.

## Function operator&&

boost::logic::operator&& — Computes the logical conjunction of two tribools.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool.hpp>

tribool operator&&(tribool x, tribool y);
tribool operator&&(tribool x, bool y);
tribool operator&&(bool x, tribool y);
tribool operator&&(indeterminate_keyword_t, tribool x);
tribool operator&&(tribool x, indeterminate_keyword_t);
```

## Description

Returns: the result of logically ANDing the two tribool values, according to the following table:

<b>&amp;&amp;</b>	<b>false</b>	<b>true</b>	<b>indeterminate</b>
<b>false</b>	false	false	false
<b>true</b>	false	true	indeterminate
<b>indeterminate</b>	false	indeterminate	indeterminate

Throws: Will not throw.

## Function operator||

boost::logic::operator|| — Computes the logical disjunction of two tribools.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool.hpp>

tribool operator|| (tribool x, tribool y);
tribool operator|| (tribool x, bool y);
tribool operator|| (bool x, tribool y);
tribool operator|| (indeterminate_keyword_t, tribool x);
tribool operator|| (tribool x, indeterminate_keyword_t);
```

## Description

Returns: the result of logically ORing the two tribool values, according to the following table:

	false	true	indeterminate
false	false	true	indeterminate
true	true	true	true
indeterminate	indeterminate	true	indeterminate

Throws: Will not throw.

## Function operator==

boost::logic::operator== — Compare tribools for equality.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool.hpp>

tribool operator==(tribool x, tribool y);
tribool operator==(tribool x, bool y);
tribool operator==(bool x, tribool y);
tribool operator==(indeterminate_keyword_t, tribool x);
tribool operator==(tribool x, indeterminate_keyword_t);
```

## Description

Returns: the result of comparing two tribool values, according to the following table:

<b>==</b>	<b>false</b>	<b>true</b>	<b>indeterminate</b>
<b>false</b>	true	false	indeterminate
<b>true</b>	false	true	indeterminate
<b>indeterminate</b>	indeterminate	indeterminate	indeterminate

Throws: Will not throw.

## Function operator!=

boost::logic::operator!= — Compare tribools for inequality.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool.hpp>

tribool operator!=(tribool x, tribool y);
tribool operator!=(tribool x, bool y);
tribool operator!=(bool x, tribool y);
tribool operator!=(indeterminate_keyword_t, tribool x);
tribool operator!=(tribool x, indeterminate_keyword_t);
```

## Description

Returns: the result of comparing two tribool values for inequality, according to the following table:

!=	false	true	indeterminate
false	false	true	indeterminate
true	true	false	indeterminate
indeterminate	indeterminate	indeterminate	indeterminate

Throws: Will not throw.

## Macro BOOST\_TRIBOOL\_THIRD\_STATE

BOOST\_TRIBOOL\_THIRD\_STATE — Declare a new name for the third state of a tribool.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool.hpp>

BOOST_TRIBOOL_THIRD_STATE(Name)
```

## Description

Use this macro to declare a new name for the third state of a tribool. This state can have any number of new names (in addition to `indeterminate`), all of which will be equivalent. The new name will be placed in the namespace in which the macro is expanded.

Example: `BOOST_TRIBOOL_THIRD_STATE(true_or_false)`

```
tribool x(true_or_false); // potentially set x if (true_or_false(x)) { // don't know what x is }
```

## Header <boost/logic/tribool\_fwd.hpp>

## Header <boost/logic/tribool\_io.hpp>

```
namespace boost {
  namespace logic {
    template<typename CharT> class indeterminate_name;
    template<typename T>
      std::basic_string< T > get_default_indeterminate_name();

    // Returns the character string "indeterminate".
    template<>
      std::basic_string< char > get_default_indeterminate_name<char >();

    // Returns the wide character string L"indeterminate".
    template<>
      std::basic_string< wchar_t > get_default_indeterminate_name<wchar_t >();
    template<typename CharT, typename Traits>
      std::basic_ostream< CharT, Traits > &
      operator<<(std::basic_ostream< CharT, Traits > &, tribool);
    template<typename CharT, typename Traits>
      std::basic_ostream< CharT, Traits > &
      operator<<(std::basic_ostream< CharT, Traits > &, unspecified);
    template<typename CharT, typename Traits>
      std::basic_istream< CharT, Traits > &
      operator>>(std::basic_istream< CharT, Traits > &, tribool &);
  }
}
```

## Class template indeterminate\_name

boost::logic::indeterminate\_name — A locale facet specifying the name of the indeterminate value of a tribool.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool_io.hpp>

template<typename CharT>
class indeterminate_name {
public:
    // types
    typedef CharT          char_type;
    typedef std::basic_string< CharT > string_type;

    // construct/copy/destroy
    indeterminate_name();
    indeterminate_name(const string_type &);

    // public member functions
    string_type name() const;
    static std::locale::id id; // Uniquely identifies this facet with the locale.
};
```

## Description

The facet is used to perform I/O on tribool values when `std::boolalpha` has been specified. This class template is only available if the C++ standard library implementation supports locales.

### indeterminate\_name public construct/copy/destroy

1. `indeterminate_name();`

Construct the facet with the default name.

2. `indeterminate_name(const string_type & name);`

Construct the facet with the given name for the indeterminate value.

### indeterminate\_name public member functions

1. `string_type name() const;`

Returns the name for the indeterminate value.

## Function template `get_default_indeterminate_name`

`boost::logic::get_default_indeterminate_name` — Returns a string containing the default name for the indeterminate value of a tribool with the given character type T.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool_io.hpp>

template<typename T> std::basic_string< T > get_default_indeterminate_name();
```

## Description

This routine is used by the input and output streaming operators for tribool when there is no locale support or the stream's locale does not contain the `indeterminate_name` facet.

## Function template operator<<

boost::logic::operator<< — Writes the value of a tribool to a stream.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool_io.hpp>

template<typename CharT, typename Traits>
    std::basic_ostream< CharT, Traits > &
    operator<<(std::basic_ostream< CharT, Traits > & out, tribool x);
```

## Description

When the value of `x` is either `true` or `false`, this routine is semantically equivalent to:

```
out << static_cast<bool>(x);
```

When `x` has an indeterminate value, it outputs either the integer value 2 (if `(out.flags() & std::ios_base::boolalpha) == 0`) or the name of the indeterminate value. The name of the indeterminate value comes from the `indeterminate_name` facet (if it is defined in the output stream's locale), or from the `get_default_indeterminate_name` function (if it is not defined in the locale or if the C++ standard library implementation does not support locales).

Returns:     `out`

## Function template operator<<

boost::logic::operator<< — Writes the indeterminate tribool value to a stream.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool_io.hpp>

template<typename CharT, typename Traits>
    std::basic_ostream< CharT, Traits > &
    operator<<(std::basic_ostream< CharT, Traits > & out, unspecified);
```

## Description

This routine outputs either the integer value 2 (if `(out.flags() & std::ios_base::boolalpha) == 0`) or the name of the indeterminate value. The name of the indeterminate value comes from the `indeterminate_name` facet (if it is defined in the output stream's locale), or from the `get_default_indeterminate_name` function (if it is not defined in the locale or if the C++ standard library implementation does not support locales).

Returns:     out

## Function template operator>>

boost::logic::operator>> — Reads a tribool value from a stream.

## Synopsis

```
// In header: <boost/logic/tribool_io.hpp>

template<typename CharT, typename Traits>
    std::basic_istream< CharT, Traits > &
    operator>>(std::basic_istream< CharT, Traits > & in, tribool & x);
```

## Description

When `(out.flags() & std::ios_base::boolalpha) == 0`, this function reads a long value from the input stream `in` and converts that value to a tribool. If that value is 0, `x` becomes false; if it is 1, `x` becomes true; if it is 2, becomes indeterminate; otherwise, the operation fails (and the fail bit is set on the input stream `in`).

When `(out.flags() & std::ios_base::boolalpha) != 0`, this function first determines the names of the false, true, and indeterminate values. The false and true names are extracted from the `std::num_punct` facet of the input stream's locale (if the C++ standard library implementation supports locales), or from the `default_false_name` and `default_true_name` functions (if there is no locale support). The indeterminate name is extracted from the appropriate `indeterminate_name` facet (if it is available in the input stream's locale), or from the `get_default_indeterminate_name` function (if the C++ standard library implementation does not support locales, or the `indeterminate_name` facet is not specified for this locale object). The input is then matched to each of these names, and the tribool `x` is assigned the value corresponding to the longest name that matched. If no name is matched or all names are empty, the operation fails (and the fail bit is set on the input stream `in`).

Returns: `in`

## Testsuite

### Acceptance tests

Test	Type	Description	If failing...
<a href="#">tribool_test.cpp</a>	run	Test all features of the <code>boost::logic::tribool</code> class.	
<a href="#">tribool_rename_test.cpp</a>	run	Test the use of the <code>BOOST_TRIBOOL_THIRD_STATE</code> macro.	
<a href="#">tribool_io_test.cpp</a>	run	Test tribool input/output.	