11. Software Quality

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Roadmap

> What is quality?
> Quality Attributes
> Quality Assurance: Planning and Reviewing
> Quality System and Standards
Sources


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What is Quality?

Software Quality is conformance to:

> explicitly stated functional and performance requirements,
> explicitly documented development standards,
> implicit characteristics that are expected of all professionally developed software.
Problems with Software Quality

> Software specifications are usually *incomplete and often inconsistent*

> There is *tension* between:
  — customer quality requirements (efficiency, reliability, etc.)
  — developer quality requirements (maintainability, reusability, etc.)

> Some quality requirements are *hard to specify* in an unambiguous way
  — directly measurable qualities (e.g., errors/KLOC),
  — indirectly measurable qualities (e.g., usability).

*Quality management is not just about reducing defects!*
Roadmap

> What is quality?
> **Quality Attributes**
> Quality Assurance: Planning and Reviewing
> Quality System and Standards
Hierarchical Quality Model

Define quality via hierarchical quality model, i.e. a number of *quality attributes* (a.k.a. quality factors, quality aspects, ...)

*Choose quality attributes (and weights) depending on the project context*

- Reliability
- Efficiency
- Usability
- Maintainability
- Portability

*Quality attribute*

---

may be further *refined* into subattributes
Quality Attributes

*Quality attributes apply both to the product and the process.*

> **product**: delivered to the customer  
> **process**: produces the software product  
> **resources**: (both the product and the process require resources)

— Underlying assumption: a quality process leads to a quality product (cf. metaphor of manufacturing lines)
Quality Attributes ...

*Quality attributes can be external or internal.*

> **External:** Derived from the relationship between the environment and the system (or the process). (To derive, the system or process must run)
  — e.g. Reliability, Robustness

> **Internal:** Derived immediately from the product or process description (To derive, it is sufficient to have the description)
  — Underlying assumption: internal quality leads to external quality (cfr. metaphor manufacturing lines)
  — e.g. Efficiency
Correctness, Reliability, Robustness

**Correctness**
- A system is **correct** if it *behaves according to its specification*
  - An **absolute property** (i.e., a system cannot be “almost correct”)
  - ... in theory and practice *undecidable*

**Reliability**
- The user may rely on the system behaving properly
- Reliability is the **probability** that the system will operate as expected over a specified interval
  - A **relative property** (a system has a mean time between failure of 3 weeks)

**Robustness**
- A system is **robust** if it behaves reasonably *even in circumstances that were not specified*
- A **vague property** (once you specify the abnormal circumstances they become part of the requirements)
**Efficiency** (Performance)

> **Use of resources** such as computing time, memory
  > — Affects user-friendliness and scalability
  > — Hardware technology changes fast!
  > — *First do it, then do it right, then do it fast*

> For process, resources are manpower, time and money
  > — relates to the “productivity” of a process
**Efficiency, Usability ...**

**Usability** (User Friendliness, Human Factors)

> The *degree* to which the human users find the system (process) *both “easy to use” and useful*

— Depends a lot on the target audience (novices vs. experts)
— Often a system has various kinds of users (end-users, operators, installers)
— Typically expressed in “amount of time to learn the system”
Maintainability

> External product attributes (evolvability also applies to process)

Maintainability

> How easy it is to change a system after its initial release
  — software entropy ⇒ maintainability gradually decreases over time
Maintainability ...

*Is often refined to ...*

**Repairability**
> How much work is needed to *correct* a defect

**Evolvability** (Adaptability)
> How much work is needed to *adapt* to changing requirements (both system and process)

**Portability**
> How much work is needed to *port* to new environment or platforms
Verifiability, Understandability

> *Internal (and external) product attribute*

**Verifiability**
> How easy it is to *verify* whether desired attributes are there?
  — internally: e.g., verify requirements, code inspections
  — externally: e.g., testing, efficiency

**Understandability**
> How easy it is to *understand* the system
  — internally: contributes to maintainability
  — externally: contributes to usability
Productivity, Timeliness, Visibility

> *External process attribute* (visibility also internal)

**Productivity**

> Amount of product produced by a process for a given number of resources
  — productivity among individuals varies a lot
  — often:

  \[
  \text{productivity (} \sum \text{ individuals)} < \sum \text{ productivity (individuals)}
  \]
**Timeliness**

- Ability to *deliver the product on time*
  - important for marketing ("short time to market")
  - often a reason to sacrifice other quality attributes
  - incremental development may provide an answer
Productivity, Timeliness, Visibility ...

**Visibility** (Transparency)

- Current process steps and project status are accessible
  - important for management
  - also deal with staff turn-over
Roadmap

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Quality Control Assumption

Project Concern = Deliver on time and within budget

External (and Internal) Product Attributes

Process Attributes

Assumptions:

Internal quality
Process quality

External quality
Product quality

Control during project

Obtain after project

Otherwise, quality is mere coincidence!
The Quality Plan

A quality plan should:
> set out desired product qualities and how these are assessed
  — define the most significant quality attributes
> define the quality assessment process
  — i.e., the controls used to ensure quality
> set out which organisational standards should be applied
  — may define new standards, i.e., if new tools or methods are used

NB: Quality Management should be separate from project management to ensure independence
Software Quality Controls

1. Reviews
   - Inspections for defect removal (product)
   - Progress Assessment Reviews (product and process)
   - Quality reviews (product and standards)

2. Automated Software Assessment
   - Measure software attributes and compare to standards (e.g., defect rate, cohesion, etc.)
Types of Quality Reviews

A **quality review** is carried out by a group of people who carefully examine part or all of a software system and its associated documentation.

> Reviews should be *recorded and records maintained*
  — Software or documents may be “*signed off*” at a review
  — Progress to the next development stage is thereby *approved*
## Types of Quality Reviews …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review type</th>
<th>Principal purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal Technical Reviews</strong></td>
<td>Driven by <em>checklist</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a.k.a. design or program</td>
<td>&gt; detect detailed errors in any product</td>
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<tr>
<td>inspections)</td>
<td>&gt; mismatches between requirements and product</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; check whether standards have been followed.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Progress reviews</strong></td>
<td>Driven by <em>budgets, plans and schedules</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>&gt; check whether project runs according to plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&gt; requires precise milestones</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&gt; both a process and a product review</td>
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Review Meetings

*Review meetings should:*

> typically involve 3-5 people
> require a maximum of 2 hours advance preparation
> last less than 2 hours
Review Minutes

The review report should summarize:

1. What was reviewed
2. Who reviewed it?
3. What were the findings and conclusions?

The review should conclude whether the product is:

1. Accepted without modification
2. Provisionally accepted, subject to corrections (no follow-up review)
3. Rejected, subject to corrections and follow-up review
Review Guidelines

1. Review the *product*, not the producer
2. Set an *agenda* and maintain it
3. *Limit debate* and rebuttal
4. *Identify problem areas*, but don’t attempt to solve every problem noted
5. Take *written notes*
6. *Limit the number of participants* and insist upon advance preparation
7. Develop a *checklist* for each product that is likely to be reviewed
8. *Allocate resources* and time schedule for reviews
9. Conduct meaningful *training* for all reviewers
10. *Review* your early reviews
**Sample Review Checklists (I)**

**Software Project Planning**

1. Is software scope unambiguously defined and bounded?
2. Are resources adequate for scope?
3. Have risks in all important categories been defined?
4. Are tasks properly defined and sequenced?
5. Is the basis for cost estimation reasonable?
6. Have historical productivity and quality data been used?
7. Is the schedule consistent?

...
Sample Review Checklists (II)

Requirements Analysis

1. Is information domain analysis complete, consistent and accurate?
2. Does the data model properly reflect data objects, attributes and relationships?
3. Are all requirements traceable to system level?
4. Has prototyping been conducted for the user/customer?
5. Are requirements consistent with schedule, resources and budget?

...
Sample Review Checklists (III)

Design

1. Has modularity been achieved?
2. Are interfaces defined for modules and external system elements?
3. Are the data structures consistent with the information domain?
4. Are the data structures consistent with the requirements?
5. Has maintainability been considered?

...
Sample Review Checklists (IV)

**Code**
1. Does the code reflect the design documentation?
2. Has proper use of language conventions been made?
3. Have coding standards been observed?
4. Are there incorrect or ambiguous comments?

...
Sample Review Checklists (V)

Testing
1. Have test resources and tools been identified and acquired?
2. Have both white and black box tests been specified?
3. Have all the independent logic paths been tested?
4. Have test cases been identified and listed with expected results?
5. Are timing and performance to be tested?
Comments made during the review should be *classified*.

- **No action.**
  - No change to the software or documentation is required.

- **Refer for repair.**
  - Designer or programmer should correct an identified fault.

- **Reconsider overall design.**
  - The problem identified in the review impacts other parts of the design.

*Requirements and specification errors may have to be referred to the client.*
Roadmap

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Product and Process Standards

**Product standards** define *characteristics that all components should exhibit.*
**Process standards** define *how the software process should be enacted.*

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<th><strong>Process standards</strong></th>
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<td>Design review form</td>
<td>Design review conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document naming standards</td>
<td>Submission of documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure header format</td>
<td>Version release process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Java conventions</td>
<td>Project plan approval process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project plan format</td>
<td>Change control process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change request form</td>
<td>Test recording process</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Potential Problems with Standards

> Not always seen as *relevant and up-to-date* by software engineers
> May involve too much *bureaucratic form filling*
> May require *tedious manual work* if unsupported by software tools
  — *Limit overhead to effectively apply standards*
Sample Java Code Conventions

4.2 Wrapping Lines
When an expression will not fit on a single line, break it according to these general principles:
> Break after a comma.
> Break before an operator.
> Prefer higher-level breaks to lower-level breaks.
> Align the new line with the beginning of the expression at the same level on the previous line.
> If the above rules lead to confusing code or to code that’s squished up against the right margin, just indent 8 spaces instead.
10.3 Constants
Numerical constants (literals) should not be coded directly, except for -1, 0, and 1, which can appear in a for loop as counter values.

A **Quality Plan** should be an instance of an organization’s **Quality System**

Customers may require an externally reviewed quality system
ISO 9000 is an international set of standards for quality management applicable to a range of organisations from manufacturing to service industries.

ISO 9001 is a generic model of the quality process, applicable to organisations whose business processes range all the way from design and development, to production, installation and servicing;

> ISO 9001 must be instantiated for each organisation
> ISO 9000-3 interprets ISO 9001 for the software developer

ISO = International Organisation for Standardization

> ISO main site: http://www.iso.ch/
> ISO 9000 main site: http://www.tc176.org/
The SEI process maturity model classifies how well contractors manage software processes.

- **Level 1: Initial** (Ad Hoc)
  - No effective QA procedures, quality is luck

- **Level 2: Repeatable**
  - Formal QA procedures in place

- **Level 3: Defined**
  - QA process is defined and institutionalized

- **Level 4: Managed**
  - QA Process + quantitative data collection

- **Level 5: Optimizing**
  - Improvement is fed back into QA process

Quality depends on individuals!
What you should know!

> Can a correctly functioning piece of software still have poor quality?
> What’s the difference between an external and an internal quality attribute?
> And between a product and a process attribute?
> Why should quality management be separate from project management?
> How should you organize and run a review meeting?
> What information should be recorded in the review minutes?
Can you answer the following questions?

> Why does a project need a quality plan?
> Why are coding standards important?
> What would you include in a documentation review checklist?
> How often should reviews be scheduled?
> Would you trust software developed by an ISO 9000 certified company?
> And if it were CMM level 5?
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