CS 307: Software Engineering

Lecture 8: Users, Usability, and Inspection

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Announcements

- **Design Document**
  - **Due** Tomorrow, September 15 11:58pm
- **Sprint 1** begins next week!
Lecture 08

- Architectural patterns wrap-up
- Users and Usability
- Defects and Inspection
Architectural patterns

- Like software design patterns, there are software architecture patterns
  - Called architectural patterns or styles
- Each pattern has...
  - A context
  - A problem
  - A solution
Transaction-processing pattern

- **Problem** – system must read and handle series of inputs that change stored data

- **Solution** – dispatcher component that decides how to handle each transaction (input), calling a procedure or messaging a component
Design principles?

- Divide and conquer
- Increase cohesion
- Reduce coupling
- Maximize abstraction
- Increase reusability
- Reuse
- Flexibility
- Anticipate obsolescence
- Portability
- Testability
- Defensive design
Pipe-and-filter

- Stream of data is passed through a series of processes
  - Each transforms it in some way
  - Data is constantly fed into the pipeline
  - Processes work concurrently

- Architecture is flexible
  - Almost all components could be removed
  - Components are easily replaced
  - New components easily added
  - Easy to reorder
Design principles?

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Model-View-Controller (MVC)

- **Problem** – UI needs frequent modification without impacting system’s functionality

- **Solution** – break system into three components – model, view, and controller
  - controller mediates between the model and the view
MVC

- Model contains underlying classes
  - Instances are viewed and manipulated
- View contains objects that render the appearance (UI) of data from the model
- Controller contains objects that control and handle user’s interaction with the view and the model
viewed by actor

View

create and update

Controller

receives actor events

Model

notify about changes

modify
MVC on the WWW

- **View component generates HTML**
  - Displayed by browser
- **Controller interprets HTTP POSTs from the browser**
- **Model is the underlying system**
  - Manages the information
Design principles?

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Service-oriented

- **Problem** – service consumers must be able to use/access a number of service providers
  - Without understanding the implementation
- **Solution** – cooperating peers that request service from and provide services to one another across a network
  - Called **web services** on the Internet
Design principles?

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User centered design

- Software development requires an understanding of...
  - your users
  - their tasks
- Users should be involved in the decision-making process
- User interfaces should strive for usability
How?

- Recruit users to test
- Collect feedback
  - Prototype
  - On-line help
  - Draft manuals
- Understand users’
  - Goals
  - Patterns of use
  - Demographics
  - Experience
Why?

- Reduced training and support costs
- Reduced time to learn
- Greater efficiency of use
- Reduced development costs
  - Know which features to focus on
- Easier to anticipate future changes
- Better prioritization
- User appeal on completion
UI Design basics

- Should be done in conjunction with other software engineering activities
- Use case analysis and user stories are valuable for defining the tasks that a UI should facilitate
- Iterative prototyping
  - Natural with scrum
Usefulness

- Do the actual uses of a product achieve the goals of the designers?
- Utility – ability of a product to perform a task or tasks
  - More tasks, more utility
- Usability – how easy is it to accomplish a prescribed task using the product?
Usability

- **Learnability** – how quickly can a new user become proficient with the system
  - **Discovery** – finding a feature in response to a need
    - How long does it take?
- **Efficiency** – how quickly can an experienced user complete a task
- **Error handling**
  - Help prevent users from making errors
  - Detect errors when they occur
  - Correct them when possible
Likability

- Do not confuse likability with usability with utility
- More nebulous than other traits
  - Styling and flash
    - “Eye candy”
  - Conferred status
    - “I Am Rich”
  - How the user feels
  - Music and sounds
Principles

1. Always test with users
   - Usability guidelines only get you so far

2. Identify tasks and design your UI around them
   - Use case analysis, user stories

3. Make tasks as simple as possible
   - Minimize reading and manipulation required by user
4. Give hints about what should be done next

- Make sure users can see what commands are and are not available
- Make important commands stand out

5. Provide clear and concise feedback

- Keep users aware of their progress
- ...and their location as they navigate
6. Effective error handling

- Explain the situation
- Help the user resolve it
  - When you can

7. Ensure users can get out, go back, and undo

- Allow operations to be undone
- Provide easy navigation mechanisms
8. UI should be uncluttered as much as possible

- Subjective, and dependent on task
- Organize information efficiently

9. Design for multiple user groups

- Different locales, support disabilities
- Consider the system from a beginner, intermediate, and expert standpoint
  - Consider providing an advanced or expert “mode” interface
10. Provide help

- Organize it well
- Integrate it with the application
- Keep it accurate

11. Be consistent

- Similar layouts
- Common graphic designs
- Typical look-and-feel standards
- Mimic other applications when appropriate
Evaluating UIs

- Heuristic evaluation
  - Subset of use cases or user stories
  - Try to pick the most important ones
- For each window, page, or dialog that appears while following the use case, study it in detail to look for possible usability defects
- When defects are discovered, write down
  - Short description
  - Proposed fixes
User observation

- Select users representative of most important actors
- Select most important use cases
- Write instructions for each scenario
- Arrange evaluation sessions
  - Explain their purpose
  - Video record if possible
  - Talk to the users as they perform tasks
  - Debrief after they are done
- Note difficulties and formulate recommendations for change
Failure

A failure is an unacceptable behavior exhibited by a system

- Frequency of failures $\rightarrow$ reliability

- Achieving very low failure rate and high reliability is an important design objective
A defect is a flaw in any aspect of a system that contributes, or may contribute, to the occurrence of a failure or failures

- Can be in requirements, design, and/or code
- May take several defects to cause a failure
Common causes of defects

- **Poor communication**
  - Missing or misinterpreting information

- **Oversight**
  - Forgot to do something, skipped steps due to lack of time or other resources

- **Transcription error**
  - Typos followed by failing to read the artifact carefully

- **Lack of education or training**
  - Person was in over their head
Error

- Mistake or inappropriate decision by a software engineer leading to the introduction of a defect
Inspecting

- One or more people systematically
  - Examine source code or documentation
  - Look for defects
- Inspection meetings
- Desk inspecting

Type of code review
- Others include pair programming and walkthroughs
Inspecting and testing

- Inspections can start as soon as any document is generated
- Test planning cannot start until the requirements and/or specifications have been written
- Testing cannot start until the system components have been generated
- Inspections examine static documents
- Testing examines the actual product dynamically
- Inspection precedes testing
- Testing follows inspection
- Inspections find defects which can be missed by testing or are very hard (or too expensive) to find by testing
- Testing finds defects missed by inspections and verifies any performance requirements
- Both are needed to insure that we build quality products
Observation

- Fagan reported in 1986 that the defect insertion rate during the inspection correction process was one defect inserted for each six attempted defect removals.
Weinberg speculated in 1993 that a process with a fault feedback ratio (FFR) of 0.3 or greater is out of control.

\[
\text{FFR} = \frac{\text{New Faults Inserted}}{\text{Faults Found}}
\]
The cost of non-quality software typically accounts for 30% of the development costs and 50-60% of the life cycle costs.
- Studies indicate that each major error found by an Inspection will save at least four hours of downstream correction effort
  - Some estimates range up to 30 hours
- The estimated cost of running Inspections is about 10-15% of the development cost
Inspection steps

1. Request: initiating the Inspection process. Someone must volunteer an artifact.
2. Entry: screen out artifacts which will yield a low probability of successfully exiting the Inspection.
3. Planning: determine the objectives, schedule, resources, and tactics to be used on the artifact to be Inspected.
4. Individual checking: quality time spent by each checker searching and recording possible major and minor defects in the artifact under Inspection

- Each checker has a role – to look for special defects
- Picks their own time and place
- Works alone
Logging meeting: collect and record issues noted by each checker. Search for additional problems as a group. Also a time to log ways to improve the Inspection process

Edit: issues found during Inspection are examined by the owners of the artifact and classified. Defects are hopefully corrected
Follow up: Inspection leader checks to be sure all items addressed by the Inspection have been dealt with by the owners of the artifact

Exit: Inspection leader checks to be sure all steps have been followed, and that the Inspection data and metrics have been recorded
Release: artifact is released to the next software development stage along with an estimate of the number of possible major defects remaining
Typical checking roles

- Usually 3 to 4 people, most hold multiple roles
  - **User** – customer’s point of view
  - **Tester** – viewpoint of testability, test plans, test requirements, etc
  - **System** – big picture, hardware requirements, manuals, documentation, schedule, other system needs
  - **Financial** – cost related implications, estimates, uncertainty, etc
- Quality – quality issues
- Service – installation, field service, customer service, maintenance
- Legal – defects that could create a legal hazard
- Safety – product causes us and the customer no harm
- Rules – rules and procedures are followed and appropriate
  - Code standard, etc
- **Backward** – works from back to front
  - Helps overcome fatigue
  - Latter parts of the artifact less thoroughly checked by others
Sample Inspection roles

- Error message checker
- Data type checker
- Function or procedure call checker
- Algorithm checker
- Logic checker
- Comment checker
- System call checker
- Code format and standards checker
Macro and side effect checker
Parameter testing and sanity test checker
Initialization and use pairs checker
Meets specification checker
Meaningful name checker
What is logged?

- Issues
  - Critical
  - Major
  - Minor
- Improvement suggestions
- Questions of intent to the author(s)
What is not logged?

- Who found the defect
- Whether the issue is really a defect
- How to fix the defect
- Discussion of how the defect entered the artifact
## Inspection vs Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error Type</th>
<th>Inspection</th>
<th>Testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module interface errors</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive code complexity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrequired functionality present</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usability problems</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance problems</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badly structured code</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to meet requirements</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary value errors</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Desk inspections

- Usually done by a team member
- Someone at the same ability level as the coder
- Done on a single module
- Can be done daily
- Usually 10 to 20 minutes
Benefits

- Reduce both omission and commission defects
- Provide an easy method for keeping team members up to date on project effort
- Provide an early check on software quality
- Good way to provide peer training of new team members
Members

- Only one role in desk inspection: the reviewer
- Coder has no involvement
Questions?