CSE 331
Software Design & Implementation

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Testing
(Based on slides by Mike Ernst, Dan Grossman, David Notkin, Hal Perkins)
Outline

• Why correct software matters
  – Motivates testing and more than testing, but now seems like a fine time for the discussion

• Testing principles and strategies
  – Purpose of testing
  – Kinds of testing
  – Heuristics for good test suites
  – Black-box testing
  – Clear-box testing and coverage metrics
  – Regression testing
Non-outline

• Modern development ecosystems have much built-in support for testing
  – Unit-testing frameworks like JUnit
  – Regression-testing frameworks connected to builds and version control
  – Continuous testing
  – …

• No tool details covered here
  – See homework, section, internships, …
Rocket self-destructed 37 seconds after launch
  – Cost: over $1 billion

Reason: Undetected bug in control software
  – Conversion from 64-bit floating point to 16-bit signed integer caused an exception
  – The floating point number was larger than 32767
  – Efficiency considerations led to the disabling of the exception handler, so program crashed, so rocket crashed
Therac-25 radiation therapy machine

Excessive radiation killed patients (1985-87)

- New design removed hardware prevents the electron-beam from operating in its high-energy mode. Now safety checks done in software.

- Equipment control task did not properly synchronize with the operator interface task, so race conditions occurred if the operator changed the setup too quickly.

- Missed during testing because it took practice before operators worked quickly enough for the problem to occur.
Legs deployed → Sensor signal falsely indicated that the craft had touched down (130 feet above the surface)
Then the descent engines shut down prematurely

Error later traced to a single bad line of software code
Why didn’t they blame the sensor?
More examples

- Mariner I space probe (1962)
- Microsoft Zune New Year’s Eve crash (2008)
- iPhone alarm (2011)
- Denver Airport baggage-handling system (1994)
- AT&T network outage (1990)
- USS Yorktown Incapacitated (1997)
- Intel Pentium floating point divide (1993)
- Excel: 65,535 displays as 100,000 (2007)
- Prius brakes and engine stalling (2005)
- Soviet gas pipeline (1982)
- Study linking national debt to slow growth (2010)
- …
Costs to society as of 2002

- Inadequate infrastructure for software testing costs the U.S. $22-$60 billion per year

- Testing accounts for about half of software development costs
  - Program understanding and debugging account for up to 70% of time to ship a software product

- Improvements in software testing infrastructure might save 1/3 of the cost

(Source: NIST Planning Report 02-3, 2002)
Building Quality Software

What Affects *Software Quality*?

**External**
- Correctness: Does it do what it supposed to do?
- Reliability: Does it do it accurately all the time?
- Efficiency: Does it do without excessive resources?
- Integrity: Is it secure?

**Internal**
- Portability: Can I use it under different conditions?
- Maintainability: Can I fix it?
- Flexibility: Can I change it or extend it or reuse it?

**Quality Assurance (QA)**
- Process of uncovering problems and improving software quality
- Testing is a major part of QA
Software Quality Assurance (QA)

Testing plus other activities including:
- Static analysis (assessing code without executing it)
- Correctness proofs (theorems about program properties)
- Code reviews (people reading each others’ code)
- Software process (methodology for code development)
- …and many other ways to find problems and increase confidence

No single activity or approach can guarantee software quality

“Beware of bugs in the above code;
I have only proved it correct, not tried it.”
-Donald Knuth, 1977
What can you learn from testing?

“Program testing can be used to show the presence of bugs, but never to show their absence!”

Edsger Dijkstra

*Notes on Structured Programming*, 1970

Nevertheless testing is essential. Why?
What Is Testing For?

Validation = reasoning + testing
  – Make sure module does what it is specified to do
  – Uncover problems, increase confidence

Two rules:

1. Do it early and often
  – Catch bugs quickly, before they have a chance to hide
  – Automate the process wherever feasible

2. Be systematic
  – If you thrash about randomly, the bugs will hide in the corner until you're gone
  – Understand what has been tested for and what has not
  – Have a strategy!
Kinds of testing

• Testing is so important the field has terminology for different kinds of tests
  – Won’t discuss all the kinds and terms

• Here are three orthogonal dimensions [so 8 varieties total]:
  – *Unit* testing versus *system/integration* testing
    • One module’s functionality versus pieces fitting together
  – *Black-box* testing versus *clear-box* testing
    • Does implementation influence test creation?
    • “Do you look at the code when choosing test data?”
  – *Specification* testing versus *implementation* testing
    • Test only behavior guaranteed by specification or other behavior expected for the implementation?
Unit Testing

- A unit test focuses on one method, class, interface, or module
- Test a single unit in isolation from all others
- Typically done earlier in software life-cycle
  - Integrate (and test the integration) after successful unit testing
How is testing done?

Write the test

1) Choose input data/configuration
2) Define the expected outcome

Run the test

3) Run with input and record the outcome
4) Compare observed outcome to expected outcome
sqrt example

// throws: IllegalArgumentException if x<0
// returns: approximation to square root of x
public double sqrt(double x){…}

What are some values or ranges of x that might be worth probing?

- $x < 0$ (exception thrown)
- $x \geq 0$ (returns normally)
- around $x = 0$ (boundary condition)
- perfect squares ($\sqrt{x}$ an integer), non-perfect squares
- $x < \sqrt{x}$ and $x > \sqrt{x}$ – that's $x < 1$ and $x > 1$ (and $x = 1$)

Specific tests: say $x = -1, 0, 0.5, 1, 4$
What’s So Hard About Testing?

“Just try it and see if it works...”

```c
// requires: 1 ≤ x,y,z ≤ 10000
// returns: computes some f(x,y,z)
int proc1(int x, int y, int z){...}
```

Exhaustive testing would require 1 trillion runs!

– Sounds totally impractical – and this is a trivially small problem

Key problem: choosing test suite

– Small enough to finish in a useful amount of time
– Large enough to provide a useful amount of validation
Approach: Partition the Input Space

Ideal test suite:
  Identify sets with same behavior
  Try one input from each set

Two problems:

1. Notion of same behavior is subtle
   • Naive approach: execution equivalence
   • Better approach: revealing subdomains

2. Discovering the sets requires perfect knowledge
   • If we had it, we wouldn’t need to test
   • Use heuristics to approximate cheaply
Naive Approach: Execution Equivalence

```c
// returns:  x < 0     => returns -x
//           otherwise => returns x

int abs(int x) {
    if (x < 0) return -x;
    else return x;
}
```

All $x < 0$ are execution equivalent:
- Program takes same sequence of steps for any $x < 0$

All $x \geq 0$ are execution equivalent

Suggests that $\{-3, 3\}$, for example, is a good test suite
Execution Equivalence Can Be Wrong

// returns:  x < 0 => returns -x
//           otherwise => returns x

int abs(int x) {
    if (x < -2) return -x;
    else return x;
}

{-3, 3} does not reveal the error!

Two possible executions: x < -2 and x >= -2

Three possible behaviors:
- x < -2 OK, x = -2 or x= -1 (BAD)
- x >= 0 OK
Heuristic: Revealing Subdomains

• A subdomain is a subset of possible inputs

• A subdomain is revealing for error $E$ if either:
  - Every input in that subdomain triggers error $E$, or
  - No input in that subdomain triggers error $E$

• Need test only one input from a given subdomain
  - If subdomains cover the entire input space, we are guaranteed to detect the error if it is present

• The trick is to guess these revealing subdomains
Example

For buggy \texttt{abs}, what are revealing subdomains?

- Value tested on is a good (clear-box) hint

\[
\begin{align*}
// \text{ returns: } & x < 0 & \Rightarrow \text{ returns } -x \\
// & \text{ otherwise } & \Rightarrow \text{ returns } x
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\text{int } \texttt{abs}(\text{int } x) \{ \\
\quad \text{if } (x < -2) \text{ return } -x; \\
\quad \text{else} \quad \text{ return } x;
\}
\]

Example sets of subdomains:

- Which is best?

Why \textit{not}:

\[
\{\ldots,-6,-5,-4}\ \{-3,-2,-1\} \{0,1,2,\ldots\}
\]
Heuristics for Designing Test Suites

A good heuristic gives:
- Few subdomains
- \( \forall \) errors in some class of errors \( E \),
  High probability that some subdomain is revealing for \( E \) and triggers \( E \)

Different heuristics target different classes of errors
- In practice, combine multiple heuristics
- Really a way to think about and communicate your test choices
Black-Box Testing

Heuristic: Explore alternate cases in the specification

Procedure is a black box: interface visible, internals hidden

Example

```c
// returns: a > b => returns a
//          a < b => returns b
//          a = b => returns a

int max(int a, int b) {...}
```

3 cases lead to 3 tests

- (4, 3) => 4 (i.e. any input in the subdomain $a > b$)
- (3, 4) => 4 (i.e. any input in the subdomain $a < b$)
- (3, 3) => 3 (i.e. any input in the subdomain $a = b$)
Black Box Testing: Advantages

Process is not influenced by component being tested
– Assumptions embodied in code not propagated to test data
– (Avoids “group-think” of making the same mistake)

Robust with respect to changes in implementation
– Test data need not be changed when code is changed

Allows for independent testers
– Testers need not be familiar with code
– Tests can be developed before the code
More Complex Example

Write tests based on cases in the specification

    // returns: the smallest i such
    //          that a[i] == value
    // throws:  Missing if value is not in a

    int find(int[] a, int value) throws Missing

Two obvious tests:

    ( [4, 5, 6], 5 ) => 1
    ( [4, 5, 6], 7 ) => throw Missing

Have we captured all the cases?

    ( [4, 5, 5], 5 ) => 1

Must hunt for multiple cases

    – Including scrutiny of effects and modifies
Heuristic: Boundary Testing

Create tests at the edges of subdomains

Why?
- Off-by-one bugs
- "Empty" cases (0 elements, null, …)
- Overflow errors in arithmetic
- Object aliasing

Small subdomains at the edges of the “main” subdomains have a high probability of revealing many common errors
- Also, you might have misdrawn the boundaries
Boundary Testing

To define the boundary, need a notion of adjacent inputs

One approach:
- Identify basic operations on input points
  - Two points are adjacent if one basic operation apart

Point is on a boundary if either:
- There exists an adjacent point in a different subdomain
- Some basic operation cannot be applied to the point

Example: list of integers
- Basic operations: create, append, remove
- Adjacent points: <[2,3],[2,3,3]>, <[2,3],[2]>
- Boundary point: [ ] (can’t apply remove)
Other Boundary Cases

Arithmetic
- Smallest/largest values
- Zero

Objects
- null
- Circular list
- Same object passed as multiple arguments (aliasing)
Boundary Cases: Arithmetic Overflow

// returns: |x|
public int abs(int x) {...}

What are some values or ranges of x that might be worth probing?
- x < 0 (flips sign) or x ≥ 0 (returns unchanged)
- Around x = 0 (boundary condition)
- Specific tests: say x = -1, 0, 1

How about…

int x = Integer.MIN_VALUE; // x=-2147483648
System.out.println(x<0);  // true
System.out.println(Math.abs(x)<0);  // also true!

From Javadoc for Math.abs:

Note that if the argument is equal to the value of
Integer.MIN_VALUE, the most negative representable int
value, the result is that same value, which is negative
Boundary Cases: Duplicates & Aliases

// modifies: src, dest
// effects: removes all elements of src and
//          appends them in reverse order to
//          the end of dest

<E> void appendList(List<E> src, List<E> dest) {
    while (src.size()>0) {
        E elt = src.remove(src.size()-1);
        dest.add(elt);
    }
}

What happens if src and dest refer to the same object?
– This is aliasing
– It’s easy to forget!
– Watch out for shared references in inputs
Heuristic: Clear (glass, white)-box testing

**Focus**: features not described by specification
- Control-flow details
- Performance optimizations
- Alternate algorithms for different cases

Common **goal**:
- Ensure test suite covers (executes) all of the program
- Measure quality of test suite with % coverage

**Assumption** implicit in goal:
- If high coverage, then most mistakes discovered
Glass-box Motivation

There are some subdomains that black-box testing won't catch:

```java
boolean[] primeTable = new boolean[CACHE_SIZE];

boolean isPrime(int x) {
    if (x>CACHE_SIZE) {
        for (int i=2; i<x/2; i++) {
            if (x%i==0)
                return false;
        }
        return true;
    } else {
        return primeTable[x];
    }
}
```
Glass Box Testing: [Dis]Advantages

• Finds an important class of boundaries
  – Yields useful test cases

• Consider \texttt{CACHE\_SIZE} in \texttt{isPrime} example
  – Important tests \texttt{CACHE\_SIZE-1}, \texttt{CACHE\_SIZE}, \texttt{CACHE\_SIZE+1}
  – If \texttt{CACHE\_SIZE} is mutable, may need to test with different \texttt{CACHE\_SIZE} values

Disadvantage:
  – Tests may have same bugs as implementation
  – Buggy code tricks you into complacency once you look at it
int \textbf{min}(\texttt{int} \ a, \ \texttt{int} \ b) \ \{ \\
\texttt{int} \ r = a; \\
\texttt{if} \ (a \leq b) \ \{ \\
\quad r = a; \\
\} \\
\texttt{return} \ r; \\
\} \\

- Consider any test with $a \leq b$ (e.g., $\textbf{min}(1,2)$) \\
  - Executes every instruction \\
  - Misses the bug \\

- \textit{Statement coverage} is not enough
Code coverage: what is enough?

```c
int quadrant(int x, int y) {
    int ans;
    if(x >= 0)
        ans=1;
    else
        ans=2;
    if(y < 0)
        ans=4;
    return ans;
}
```

- Consider two-test suite: (2,-2) and (-2,2). Misses the bug.
- *Branch coverage* (all tests “go both ways”) is not enough
  - Here, *path coverage* is enough (there are 4 paths)
int\ num\_pos(int[\] a) \{
    int\ ans = 0;
    for(int\ x : a) \{
        if (x > 0)
            ans = 1; // should be ans += 1;
    }
    return\ ans;
\}

• Consider two-test suite: \{0,0\} and \{1\}. Misses the bug.
• Or consider one-test suite: \{0,1,0\}. Misses the bug.

• \textit{Branch coverage} is not enough
  – Here, \textit{path coverage} is enough, but \textit{no bound} on path-count
Code coverage: what is enough?

```c
int sum_three(int a, int b, int c) {
    return a+b;
}
```

- *Path coverage* is not enough
  - Consider test suites where `c` is always 0

- Typically a “moot point” since path coverage is unattainable for realistic programs
  - But do not assume a tested path is correct
  - Even though it is more likely correct than an untested path

- Another example: buggy `abs` method from earlier in lecture
Varieties of coverage

Various coverage metrics (there are more):

- Statement coverage
- Branch coverage
- Loop coverage
- Condition/Decision coverage
- Path coverage

Limitations of coverage:

1. 100% coverage is not always a reasonable target
   100% may be unattainable (dead code)
   *High cost* to approach the limit

2. Coverage is *just a heuristic*
   We really want the revealing subdomains

Increasing number of test cases required (generally)
Pragmatics: Regression Testing

- Whenever you find a bug
  - Store the input that elicited that bug, plus the correct output
  - Add these to the test suite
  - Verify that the test suite fails
  - Fix the bug
  - Verify the fix

- Ensures that your fix solves the problem
  - Don’t add a test that succeeded to begin with!

- Helps to populate test suite with good tests
- Protects against reversions that reintroduce bug
  - It happened at least once, and it might happen again
Rules of Testing

First rule of testing: *Do it early and do it often*
- Best to catch bugs soon, before they have a chance to hide
- Automate the process if you can
- Regression testing will save time

Second rule of testing: *Be systematic*
- If you randomly thrash, bugs will hide in the corner until later
- Writing tests is a good way to understand the spec
- Think about revealing domains and boundary cases
  - If the spec is confusing, write more tests
- Spec can be buggy too
  - Incorrect, incomplete, ambiguous, missing corner cases
- When you find a bug, write a test for it first and then fix it
Closing thoughts on testing

Testing matters
  – You need to convince others that the module works

Catch problems earlier
  – Bugs become obscure beyond the unit they occur in

Don't confuse *volume* with *quality* of test data
  – Can lose relevant cases in mass of irrelevant ones
  – Look for revealing subdomains

Choose test data to cover:
  – Specification (black box testing)
  – Code (glass box testing)

Testing can't generally prove absence of bugs
  – But it can increase quality and confidence