

CSE 403 Wrapup

Software lifecycle

- Determines the order for tasks:
 - Requirements
 - Design
 - Implementation
 - Testing
 - Maintenance
- Goal: Perform work as **early as practical**
 - Costly to discover information or make changes late
 - Costly to make decisions too early
 - Costly to do tasks multiple times
- In CSE 403: iterative process

Requirements

- “What”, not “how”
- Reflects user view, not developer view
- Understand the customer
 - Preferably better than they understand themselves
 - Seek transformational solutions (beware risk)
- Common technique: use case / scenario / story
- User interfaces
 - High-level concepts & metaphors
 - Low-level efficiency
- Get feedback early (example: paper prototype)

Architecture

- Divide and conquer (with simple interfaces)
- Modules for logical units of computation
 - Minimize coupling, maximize cohesion
- Draw it as a picture (UML)
 - Key purpose: to communicate to others
- Interactions are part of the architecture too

Divide and conquer:

Modularity, abstraction, specifications

- No one person can understand all of a realistic system
- Modularity permits focusing on just one part
- Abstraction enables ignoring detail
- Specifications and documentation formally describe behavior
- Helps to understand/fix errors
 - Or to **avoid** them in the first place

Teamwork

- Dividing work
 - By module in the architecture
 - By task (PM, development, testing, ...)
- Decisions
 - Get understanding and buy-in
- Communication
 - Specifications
 - Deadlines
 - Effective meetings
- Motivation, trust, and morale

Working in a team

- No one person can understand all of a realistic system
 - Break the system into pieces
 - Use modularity, abstraction, specification, documentation
- Different points of view bring value
- Work effectively with others
 - Sometimes challenging, usually worth it
- Manage your resources effectively
 - Time, people
 - Engineering is about tradeoffs
- Both technical and management contributions are critical

Process

Needed to keep your project under control:

- Specification
- Schedule
- Source control
- Testing
- Automated build and test
- Bug database (and fix bugs first)

Testing

- Goal: completely verify functionality
 - In practice: heuristics improve completeness
- Much cheaper than discovering errors later
- Be systematic
- Test early and often
- Tests are code too
- Involve users
- Can be fun!

Reviews

- Another way to get feedback early
- Team members critique documents, code, etc.
- Greatly improves quality

- Identifies opportunities for refactoring
- Refactoring improves the design
 - Design quality has many facets, depends on task

Design

- Design of classes: similar considerations to architecture
- Design patterns: the vocabulary of program development
 - Helps you design
 - Helps you communicate
- Don't reinvent the wheel!

Getting it right ahead of time

- Design: predicting implications
- Example: understanding interconnections
- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses
- If you don't understand a design, you can't use it
- Documentation matters!

Documentation

- Everyone wants good documentation when using a system
 - Not everyone likes writing documentation
- What's obvious to you probably isn't obvious to others
- Documentation is the **most important** part of a user interface (in a nontrivial system)
- “An undocumented software system has **zero commercial value.**” –John Chapin (CTO of Vanu, Inc.)

Maintenance

- Maintenance accounts for most of the effort (often 90% or more) spent on a successful software system
- A good design enables the system to adapt to new requirements while maintaining quality
 - Think about the long term, but don't prematurely optimize
- Good documentation enables others to understand the design

Interviewing

- Know your audience
- Communicate about yourself
- Be competent
- Be honest (about yourself, knowledge, etc.)
- You are evaluating them too

What you have learned in CSE403; what you will learn

- Compare your skills today to last year
 - Bottom line: Your project would be **easy** for you
 - This is a measure of how much you have learned
- Your next project can be much more ambitious
- You will continue to learn
 - Building interesting systems is never easy
 - Like all worthwhile endeavors
 - Practice is a good teacher
 - Requires thoughtful introspection
 - Don't learn *only* by trial and error!

Course evaluation

- Please complete the course evaluation form
 - Useful to future students
 - Useful to course staff
 - Useful to the department

Go forth and conquer

- System building is fun!
 - It's even more fun when you build them successfully
- Pay attention to what matters
 - Use the techniques and tools of CSE 403 effectively