

A Rigorous Methodology for Analyzing and Designing Plug-ins

Marieta V. Fasie
DTU Compute
Technical University of Denmark
DK-2800 Lyngby, Denmark
Email: marietafasie@gmail.com

Anne E. Haxthausen
DTU Compute
Technical University of Denmark
DK-2800 Lyngby, Denmark
Email: ah@imm.dtu.dk

Joseph Kiniry
DTU Compute
Technical University of Denmark
DK-2800 Lyngby, Denmark
Email: jkin@imm.dtu.dk

Abstract—Today, GUI plug-ins development is typically done in a very ad-hoc way, where developers dive directly into implementation. Without any prior analysis and design, plug-ins are often flaky, unreliable, difficult to maintain and extend with new functionality, and have inconsistent user interfaces. This paper addresses these problems by describing a rigorous methodology for analyzing and designing plug-ins. The methodology is grounded in the Extended Business Object Notation (EBON) and covers informal analysis and design of features, GUI, actions, and scenarios, formal architecture design, including behavioral semantics, and validation. The methodology is illustrated via a case study whose focus is an Eclipse environment for the RAISE formal method's tool suite.

I. INTRODUCTION

What is the paper about.

A. Background

What problems do we run into when starting building an Eclipse plug-in.

B. Related work

What solutions have other papers brought

II. ANALYSIS AND DESIGN METHOD

This section describes a methodology used to analyze and design plug-ins. The methodology has six stages, each described in a separate subsection and presented in the order in which they are applied. These six steps are: *domain modeling*, *user interface*, *events*, *components*, *components communication* and *code generation*.

What happened to the domain modeling you did? I added in a mention of it here. -jrk

The methodology is illustrated via a case study whose focus is an Eclipse environment for the RAISE formal method's tool suite. This case study is a real project, meant to be used in an academic environment, and it will be used to illustrate how the methodology is applied in practice. Due to space restrictions, the entire project's analysis and design phases are not presented here; instead, only one scenario of the plug-in is shown from beginning to end. This way, the reader sees the evolution step by step, and can then apply the method themselves.

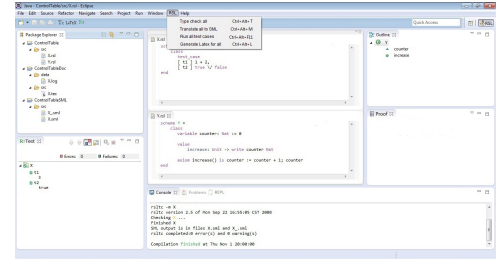


Fig. 1. Eclipse user interface displaying the RSL menu item

A. Domain Modeling

To be written.

B. User interface

The purpose of the first step is to determine the plug-in functionality from the user's point of view. This means identifying all the things a user can do from the plugin's user interface (UI). This UI feature set consequently derives the requirements for the product (the plugin) and designs the UI in the same time. Therefore, for each user action that is relevant and important for the plug-in, a mock-up user interface is created. Of course, if many user actions are similar, they can be grouped under a single user interface. It is up to the plug-in developer to determine what are the most important features and how, or if, she wants to prioritize them.

The mock-up user interface can be a vague handmade sketch or a precise drawing made with an advanced graphical editing program. The intention here is not presentation and precision, but instead feature completeness and UI consistency.

For the Eclipse case study, it was decided, for example, that a user should have the possibility to typecheck all RAISE Specification Language (RSL) files (the primary file type of the RAISE tool suite). Also, the user should have the possibility to translate all files to SML, to run all test cases existing in all files, and to generate \LaTeX documents for them. Therefore, it was decided that these four actions should be grouped under a menu item which is called *RSL* and presented in the same UI, for consistency and simplicity.

```

scenario_chart MENU
scenario "MENU1"
description "The user can type check all RSL files in the
workspace. Success or failure messages will be displayed along
with the list of errors in case of a failure"
scenario "MENU2"
description "The user can translate to SML all RSL files in
the workspace. Success or failure messages will be displayed
along with the list of errors in case of a failure"
scenario "MENU3"
description "The user can run all test cases in the workspace.
Success or failure messages will be displayed along with the
list of errors in case of a failure"
scenario "MENU4"
description "The user can generate Latex files for all files
in the workspace. Success or failure messages will be
displayed along with the list of errors in case of a failure"

```

Listing 1. Scenario chart for typechecking features.

These figures will have to span both columns to be viewable, I suspect. Also note that figure-like things in Latex should always appear before their first reference in the source Latex. Also note the use of the `autoref` command. -jrk

Figure 1 illustrates the graphical user interface for the *RSL* menu item. This illustration was created by taking a screenshot of Eclipse and then hand-editing the resulting image in just a few minutes.

While the user interface is being drawn, product requirements are documented using EBON *scenario_chart* elements. The beautiful part about using EBON from the beginning is that it allows the requirements specification to be captured using natural language. Therefore no intermediate step is required between identifying the requirements and documenting them. To demonstrate requirements, this is how the *scenario_charts* for the requirements presented in Figure 1 look:

C. Events

Incoming events representing user actions and *outgoing* events meant to inform the user.

D. Components

Major components captured in BON *static_diagrams* using *cluster_chart* and *class*.

E. Components communication

Component interfaces added to the interface diagram using *feature*, *require* and *ensure*. This will later result in plug-in extensions and extension points.

Update scenarios with events.

F. Code generation

Beetlz generates the Java code from BON specification.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to thank...

REFERENCES

- [1] H. Kopka and P. W. Daly, *A Guide to L^AT_EX*, 3rd ed. Harlow, England: Addison-Wesley, 1999.