Function Count

Alan Albrecht while working for IBM, recognized the problem in size measurement in the 1970s, and developed a technique (which he called Function Point Analysis), which appeared to be a solution to the size measurement problem.

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The principle of Albrecht's function point analysis (FPA) is that a system is decomposed into functional units.

- Inputs : information entering the system
- Outputs : information leaving the system
- Enquiries : requests for instant access to information
- Internal logical files : information held within the system
- External interface files : information held by other system that is used by the system being analyzed.

The FPA functional units are shown in figure given below:

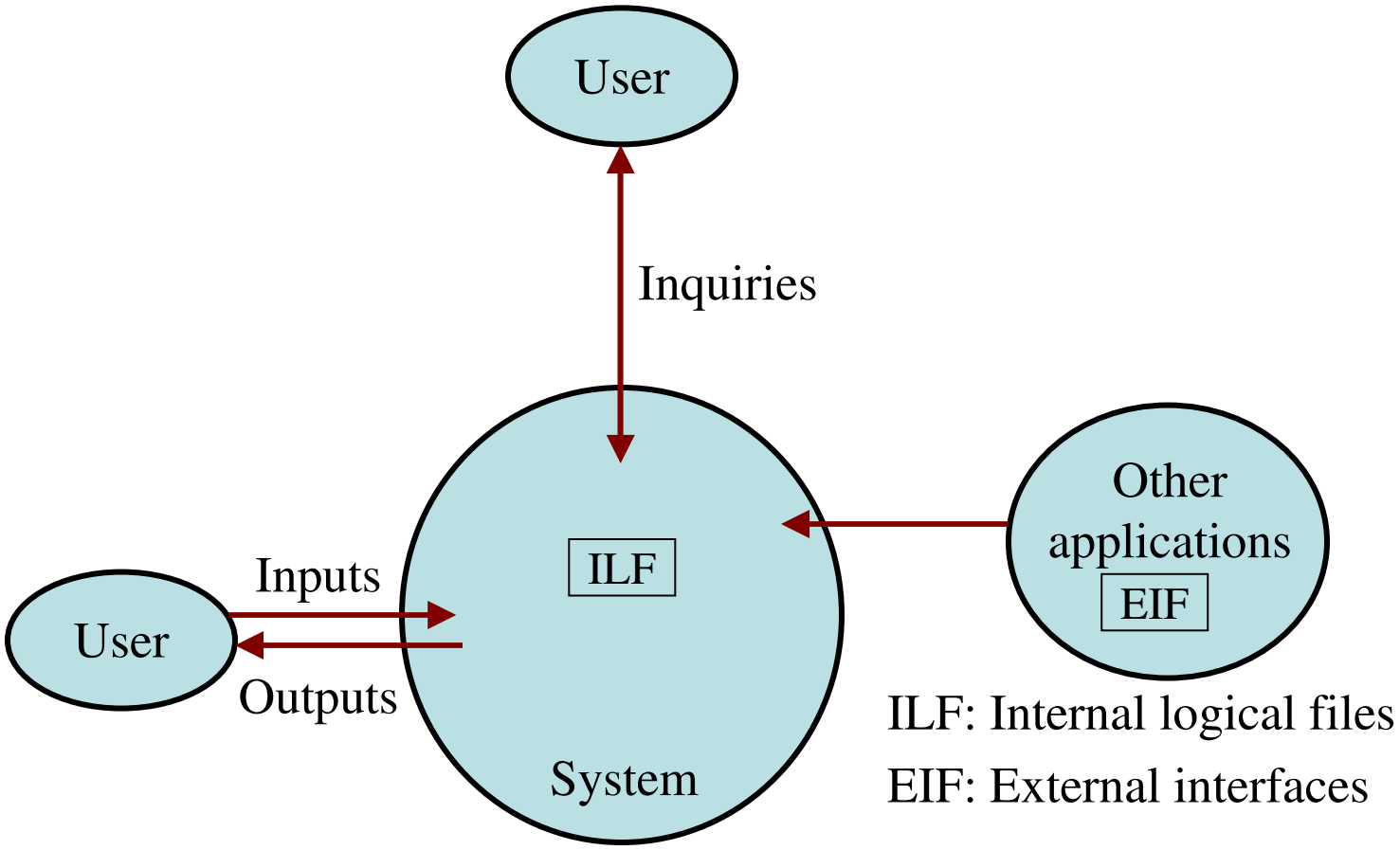

Fig. 3: FPAs functional units System

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The five functional units are divided in two categories:

(i) Data function types

- Internal Logical Files (ILF): A user identifiable group of logical related data or control information maintained within the system.
- External Interface files (EIF): A user identifiable group of logically related data or control information referenced by the system, but maintained within another system. This means that EIF counted for one system, may be an ILF in another system.

(ii) Transactional function types

- External Input (EI): An EI processes data or control information that comes from outside the system. The EI is an elementary process, which is the smallest unit of activity that is meaningful to the end user in the business.
- External Output (EO): An EO is an elementary process that generate data or control information to be sent outside the system.
- External Inquiry (EQ): An EQ is an elementary process that is made up to an input-output combination that results in data retrieval.

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Special features

- Function point approach is independent of the language, tools, or methodologies used for implementation; i.e. they do not take into consideration programming languages, data base management systems, processing hardware or any other data base technology.
- Function points can be estimated from requirement specification or design specification, thus making it possible to estimate development efforts in early phases of development.

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- Function points are directly linked to the statement of requirements; any change of requirements can easily be followed by a re-estimate.
- Function points are based on the system user's external view of the system, non-technical users of the software system have a better understanding of what function points are measuring.

Counting function points

Functional Units	Weighting factors		
	Low	Average	High
External Inputs (EI)	3	4	6
External Output (EO)	4	5	7
External Inquiries (EQ)	3	4	6
External logical files (ILF)	7	10	15
External Interface files (EIF)	5	7	10

Table 1 : Functional units with weighting factors

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Table 2: UFP calculation table

Functional Units	Count Complexity		Complexity Totals	Functional Unit Totals
External Inputs (EIs)		Low x 3 =		
		Average x 4 =		
		High x 6 =		
External Outputs (EOs)		Low x 4 =		
		Average x 5 =		
		High x 7 =		
External Inquiries (EQs)		Low x 3 =		
		Average x 4 =		
		High x 6 =		
External logical Files (ILFs)		Low x 7 =		
		Average x 10 =		
		High x 15 =		
External Interface Files (EIFs)		Low x 5 =		
		Average x 7 =		
		High x 10 =		
Total Unadjusted Function Point Count				

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The weighting factors are identified for all functional units and multiplied with the functional units accordingly. The procedure for the calculation of Unadjusted Function Point (UFP) is given in table shown above.

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The procedure for the calculation of UFP in mathematical form is given below:

$$UFP = \sum_{i=1}^{5} \sum_{J=1}^{3} Z_{ij} W_{ij}$$

Where i indicate the row and j indicates the column of Table 1

W_{ij} : It is the entry of the i^{th} row and j^{th} column of the table 1

Zij : It is the count of the number of functional units of Type *i* that have been classified as having the complexity corresponding to column *j*.

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Organizations that use function point methods develop a criterion for determining whether a particular entry is Low, Average or High. Nonetheless, the determination of complexity is somewhat subjective.

$$FP = UFP * CAF$$

Where CAF is complexity adjustment factor and is equal to [0.65 + 0.01 x ΣF_i]. The F_i (i=1 to 14) are the degree of influence and are based on responses to questions noted in table 3.

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Table 3 : Computing function points.

Rate each factor on a scale of 0 to 5.

Number of factors considered (F_i)

1. Does the system require reliable backup and recovery ?
2. Is data communication required ?
3. Are there distributed processing functions ?
4. Is performance critical ?
5. Will the system run in an existing heavily utilized operational environment ?
6. Does the system require on line data entry ?
7. Does the on line data entry require the input transaction to be built over multiple screens or operations ?
8. Are the master files updated on line ?
9. Is the inputs, outputs, files, or inquiries complex ?
10. Is the internal processing complex ?
11. Is the code designed to be reusable ?
12. Are conversion and installation included in the design ?
13. Is the system designed for multiple installations in different organizations ?
14. Is the application designed to facilitate change and ease of use by the user ?

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Functions points may compute the following important metrics:

Productivity	=	FP / persons-months
Quality	=	Defects / FP
Cost	=	Rupees / FP
Documentation	=	Pages of documentation per FP

These metrics are controversial and are not universally acceptable. There are standards issued by the International Functions Point User Group (IFPUG, covering the Albrecht method) and the United Kingdom Function Point User Group (UFPGU, covering the MK11 method). An ISO standard for function point method is also being developed.

Example: 4.1

Consider a project with the following functional units:

Number of user inputs	= 50
Number of user outputs	= 40
Number of user enquiries	= 35
Number of user files	= 06
Number of external interfaces	= 04

Assume all complexity adjustment factors and weighting factors are average. Compute the function points for the project.

Solution

We know

$$UFP = \sum_{i=1}^{5} \sum_{J=1}^{3} Z_{ij} w_{ij}$$

UFP = 50 x 4 + 40 x 5 + 35 x 4 + 6 x 10 + 4 x 7

= 200 + 200 + 140 + 60 + 28 = 628

CAF = $(0.65 + 0.01 \Sigma F_i)$

= (0.65 + 0.01 (14 x 3)) = 0.65 + 0.42 = 1.07

FP = UFP x CAF

= 628 x 1.07 = 672

Example:4.2

An application has the following:

10 low external inputs, 12 high external outputs, 20 low internal logical files, 15 high external interface files, 12 average external inquiries, and a value of complexity adjustment factor of 1.10.

What are the unadjusted and adjusted function point counts ?

Solution

Unadjusted function point counts may be calculated using as:

$$UFP = \sum_{i=1}^{5} \sum_{J=1}^{3} Z_{ij} w_{ij}$$

= 10 x 3 + 12 x 7 + 20 x 7 + 15 + 10 + 12 x 4

= 30 + 84 +140 + 150 + 48

= 452

FP = UFP x CAF

= 452 x 1.10 = 497.2.

Example: 4.3

Consider a project with the following parameters.

(*i*) External Inputs:
- (a) 10 with low complexity
- (b) 15 with average complexity
- (c) 17 with high complexity

(*ii*) External Outputs:
- (a) 6 with low complexity
- (b) 13 with high complexity

(*iii*) External Inquiries:
- (a) 3 with low complexity
- (b) 4 with average complexity
- (c) 2 high complexity

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(*iv*) Internal logical files:

(a) 2 with average complexity

(b) 1 with high complexity

(v) External Interface files:

(a) 9 with low complexity

In addition to above, system requires

i. Significant data communication

ii. Performance is very critical

iii. Designed code may be moderately reusable

iv. System is not designed for multiple installation in different organizations.

Other complexity adjustment factors are treated as average. Compute the function points for the project.

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Solution: Unadjusted function points may be counted using table 2

Functional Units	Count	Complexity		Complexity Totals	Functional Unit Totals
External Inputs (EIs)	10	Low x 3	=	30	
	15	Average x 4	=	60	
	17	High x 6	=	102	192
External Outputs (EOs)	6	Low x 4	=	24	
	0	Average x 5	=	0	
	13	High x 7	=	91	115
External Inquiries (EQs)	3	Low x 3	=	9	
	4	Average x 4	=	16	
	2	High x 6	=	12	37
External logical Files (ILFs)	0	Low x 7	=	0	
	2	Average x 10	=	20	
	1	High x 15	=	15	35
External Interface Files (EIFs)	9	Low x 5	=	45	
	0	Average x 7	=	0	
	0	High x 10	=	0	45
Total Unadjusted Function Point Count					424

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$$\sum_{i=1}^{14} F_i = 3+4+3+5+3+3+3+3+3+3+2+3+0+3=41$$

$$\begin{aligned} CAF &= (0.65 + 0.01 \times \Sigma F_i) \\ &= (0.65 + 0.01 \times 41) \\ &= 1.06 \\ FP &= UFP \times CAF \\ &= 424 \times 1.06 \\ &= 449.44 \end{aligned}$$

Hence $\boxed{FP = 449}$