finxter Book: Simplicity – The Finer Art of Creating Software

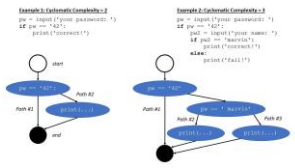
Complexity

"A whole, made up of parts—difficult to analyze, understand, or explain".

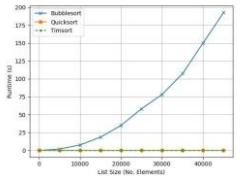
Complexity appears in
- Project Lifecycle
- Code Development
- Algorithmic Theory
- Processes
- Social Networks
- Learning & Your Daily Life

Project Lifecycle

Cyclomatic Complexity



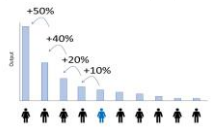
Runtime Complexity

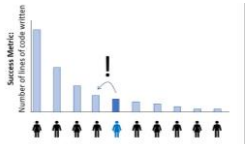


→ Complexity reduces productivity and focus. It'll consume your precious time. Keep it simple!

80/20 Principle

Majority of effects come from the minority of causes.



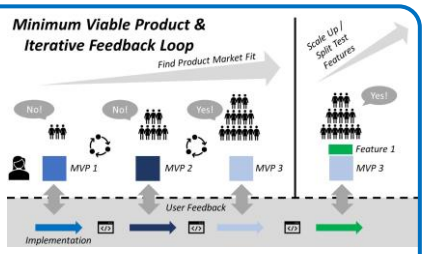


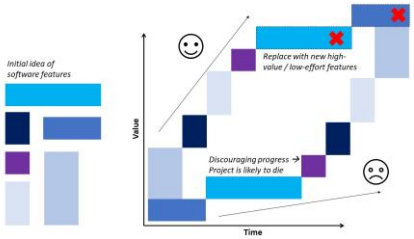
Pareto Tips
1. Figure out your success metrics.
2. Figure out your big goals in life.
3. Look for ways to achieve the same things with fewer resources.
4. Reflect on your own successes
5. Reflect on your own failures
6. Read more books in your industry.
7. Spend much of your time improving and tweaking existing products
8. Smile.
9. Don't do things that reduce value

Maximize Success Metric:
#lines of code written

Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

A minimum viable product in the software sense is code that is stripped from all features to focus on the core functionality.





How to MVP?
- Formulate hypothesis
- Omit needless features
- Split test to validate each new feature
- Focus on product-market fit
- Seek high-value and low-cost features

Clean Code Principles

1. You Ain't Going to Need It
2. The Principle of Least Surprise
3. Don't Repeat Yourself
4. **Code For People Not Machines**
5. Stand on the Shoulders of Giants
6. Use the Right Names
7. Single-Responsibility Principle
8. Use Comments
9. Avoid Unnecessary Comments
10. Be Consistent
11. Test
12. Think in Big Pictures
13. Only Talk to Your Friends
14. Refactor
15. Don't Overengineer
16. Don't Overuse Indentation
17. Small is Beautiful
18. Use Metrics
19. Boy Scout Rule: Leave Camp Cleaner Than You Found It

Unix Philosophy

1. Simple's Better Than Complex
2. **Small is Beautiful (*Again*)**
3. Make Each Program Do One Thing Well
4. Build a Prototype First
5. Portability Over Efficiency
6. Store Data in Flat Text Files
7. Use Software Leverage
8. Avoid Captive User Interfaces
9. **Program = Filter**
10. Worse is Better
11. Clean > Clever Code
12. **Design *Connected* Programs**
13. Make Your Code Robust
14. Repair What You Can — But Fail Early and Noisily
15. Write Programs to Write Programs

Premature Optimization

"Programmers waste enormous amounts of time thinking about […] the speed of noncritical parts of their programs. We should forget about small efficiencies, say about 97 % of the time: premature optimization is the root of all evil." – **Donald Knuth**

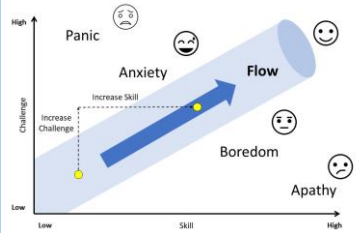
Performance Tuning 101
1. Measure, then improve
2. Focus on the slow 20%
3. Algorithmic optimization wins
4. All hail to the cache
5. Solve an easier problem version
6. Know when to stop

Less Is More in Design

How to Simplify Design?
1. Use whitespace
2. Remove design elements
3. Remove features
4. Reduce variation of fonts, font types, colors
5. Be consistent across UIs

Flow

"… the source code of ultimate human performance" – ***Kotler***

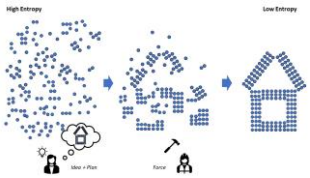


How to Achieve Flow? (1) clear goals, (2) immediate feedback, and (3) balance opportunity & capacity.

Flow Tips for Coders
1. Always work on an explicit practical code project
2. Work on fun projects that fulfill your purpose
3. Perform from your strengths
4. Big chunks of coding time
5. Reduce distractions: smartphone + social
6. Sleep a lot, eat healthily, read quality books, and exercise → garbage in, garbage out!

Focus

You can take raw resources and move them from a state of high entropy into a state of low entropy—using *focused effort towards the attainment of a greater plan*.



3-Step Approach of Efficient Software Creation
1. Plan your code
2. Apply focused effort to make it real.
3. Seek feedback

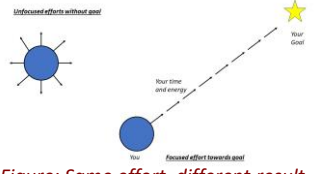


Figure: Same effort, different result.

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Python Cheat Sheet: Keywords

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Keyword	Description	Code example
`False, True`	Data values from the data type Boolean	`False == (1 > 2), True == (2 > 1)`

`and, or, not`	Logical operators:
	`(x and y)` → both x and y must be True
	`(x or y)` → either x or y must be True
	`(not x)` → x must be false
		`x, y = True, False`
		`(x or y) == True  # True`
		`(x and y) == False  # True`
		`(not y) == True  # True`

`break`	Ends loop prematurely	`while(True):`
		`  break # no infinite loop`
		`print("hello world")`

`continue`	Finishes current loop iteration	`while(True):`
		`  continue`
		`  print("43") # dead code`

`class`
 	
`def`
	Defines a new class → a real-world concept (object oriented programming)
	
	Defines a new function or class method. For latter, first parameter ("self") points to the class object. When calling class method, first parameter is implicit.
		`class Beer:`
		`  def __init__(self):`
		`  self.content = 1.0`
		`  def drink(self):`
		`  self.content = 0.0`
		
		`becks = Beer() # constructor - create class`
		`becks.drink() # beer empty: b.content == 0`

`if, elif, else`	Conditional program execution: program starts with "if" branch, tries the "elif" branches, and finishes with "else" branch (until one branch evaluates to True).	`x = int(input("your value: "))`
		`if x > 3: print("Big")`
		`elif x == 3: print("Medium")`
		`else: print("Small")`

`for, while`	`# For loop declaration`
	`for i in [0,1,2]:`
	`  print(i)`
		`# While loop - same semantics`
		`j = 0`
		`while j < 3:`
		`  print(j)`
		`  j = j + 1`

`in`	Checks whether element is in sequence	`42 in [2, 39, 42] # True`

`is`	Checks whether both elements point to the same object	`y = x = 3`
		`x is y # True`
		`[3] is [3] # False`

`None`	Empty value constant	`def f():`
		`  x = 2`
		`f() is None # True`

`lambda`	Function with no name (anonymous function)	`(lambda x: x + 3)(3) # returns 6`

`return`	Terminates execution of the function and passes the flow of execution to the caller. An optional value after the return keyword specifies the function result.	`def incrementor(x):`
		`  return x + 1`
		`incrementor(4) # returns 5`

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Python Cheat Sheet: Classes

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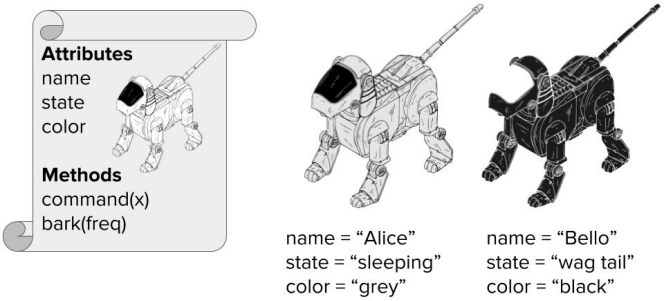
	Description	Example
Classes	A class encapsulates data and functionality: data as attributes, and functionality as methods. It is a blueprint for creating concrete instances in memory. Class Instances 	
Instance	You are an instance of the class human. An instance is a concrete implementation of a class: all attributes of an instance have a fixed value. Your hair is blond, brown, or black--but never unspecified. Each instance has its own attributes independent of other instances. Yet, class variables are different. These are data values associated with the class, not the instances. Hence, all instance share the same class variable `species` in the example.	
Self	The first argument when defining any method is always the `self` argument. This argument specifies the instance on which you call the method. `self` gives the Python interpreter the information about the concrete instance. To *define* a method, you use `self` to modify the instance attributes. But to *call* an instance method, you do not need to specify `self`.	

Creation	You can create classes "on the fly" and use them as logical units to store complex data types.
	
	`class Employee():`
	`  pass`
	`employee = Employee()`
	`employee.salary = 122000`
	`employee.firstname = "alice"`
	`employee.lastname = "wonderland"`
	
	`print(employee.firstname + " "`
	`  + employee.lastname + " "`
	`  + str(employee.salary) + "$")`
	`# alice wonderland 122000$`	

```
class Dog:
        """ Blueprint of a dog """

        # class variable shared by all instances
        species = ["canis lupus"]

        def __init__(self, name, color):
                self.name = name
                self.state = "sleeping"
                self.color = color

        def command(self, x):
                if x == self.name:
                        self.bark(2)
                elif x == "sit":
                        self.state = "sit"
                else:
                        self.state = "wag tail"

        def bark(self, freq):
                for i in range(freq):
                        print("[" + self.name
                                + "]: Woof!")

bello = Dog("bello", "black")
alice = Dog("alice", "white")

print(bello.color) # black
print(alice.color) # white

bello.bark(1) # [bello]: Woof!

alice.command("sit")
print("[alice]: " + alice.state)
# [alice]: sit

bello.command("no")
print("[bello]: " + bello.state)
# [bello]: wag tail

alice.command("alice")
# [alice]: Woof!
# [alice]: Woof!

bello.species += ["wulf"]
print(len(bello.species)
        == len(alice.species)) # True (!)
```

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Python Cheat Sheet: Functions and Tricks

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		Description	Example	Result
ADVANCED FUNCTIONS	`map(func, iter)`	Executes the function on all elements of the iterable	`list(map(lambda x: x[0], ['red', 'green', 'blue']))`	`['r', 'g', 'b']`
	`map(func, i1, ..., ik)`	Executes the function on all k elements of the k iterables	`list(map(lambda x, y: str(x) + ' ' + y + 's' , [0, 2, 2], ['apple', 'orange', 'banana']))`	`['0 apples', '2 oranges', '2 bananas']`
	`string.join(iter)`	Concatenates iterable elements separated by `string`	`' marries '.join(list(['Alice', 'Bob']))`	`'Alice marries Bob'`
	`filter(func, iterable)`	Filters out elements in iterable for which function returns `False` (or 0)	`list(filter(lambda x: True if x>17 else False, [1, 15, 17, 18]))`	`[18]`
	`string.strip()`	Removes leading and trailing whitespaces of string	`print("\n  \t  42  \t ".strip())`	`42`
	`sorted(iter)`	Sorts iterable in ascending order	`sorted([8, 3, 2, 42, 5])`	`[2, 3, 5, 8, 42]`
	`sorted(iter, key=key)`	Sorts according to the key function in ascending order	`sorted([8, 3, 2, 42, 5], key=lambda x: 0 if x==42 else x)`	`[42, 2, 3, 5, 8]`
	`help(func)`	Returns documentation of `func`	`help(str.upper())`	`'... to uppercase.'`
	`zip(i1, i2, ...)`	Groups the i-th elements of iterators `i1, i2, ...` together	`list(zip(['Alice', 'Anna'], ['Bob', 'Jon', 'Frank']))`	`[('Alice', 'Bob'), ('Anna', 'Jon')]`
	Unzip	Equal to: 1) unpack the zipped list, 2) zip the result	`list(zip(*[('Alice', 'Bob'), ('Anna', 'Jon')]))`	`[('Alice', 'Anna'), ('Bob', 'Jon')]`
	`enumerate(iter)`	Assigns a counter value to each element of the iterable	`list(enumerate(['Alice', 'Bob', 'Jon']))`	`[(0, 'Alice'), (1, 'Bob'), (2, 'Jon')]`
TRICKS	python -m http.server <P>	Want to share files between PC and phone? Run this command in PC's shell. <P> is any port number 0–65535. Type <IP address of PC>:<P> in the phone's browser. You can now browse the files in the PC directory.		
	Read comic	`import antigravity`	Open the comic series xkcd in your web browser	
	Zen of Python	`import this`	`'...Beautiful is better than ugly. Explicit is ...'`	
	Swapping numbers	Swapping variables is a breeze in Python. No offense, Java!	`a, b = 'Jane', 'Alice'` `a, b = b, a`	`a = 'Alice'` `b = 'Jane'`

	Unpacking arguments	Use a sequence as function arguments via asterisk operator *. Use a dictionary (key, value) via double asterisk operator **	`def f(x, y, z): return x + y * z`
			`f(*[1, 3, 4])`
			`f(**{'z' : 4, 'x' : 1, 'y' : 3})`
				
				`13`
				`13`

	Extended Unpacking	Use unpacking for multiple assignment feature in Python	`a, *b = [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]`	`a = 1` `b = [2, 3, 4, 5]`

	Merge two dictionaries	Use unpacking to merge two dictionaries into a single one	`x={'Alice' : 18}`
			`y={'Bob' : 27, 'Ann' : 22}`
			`z = {**x,**y}`
				`z = {'Alice': 18, 'Bob': 27, 'Ann': 22}`

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Python Cheat Sheet: 14 Interview Questions

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Question	Code	Question	Code

Check if list contains integer x	`l = [3, 3, 4, 5, 2, 111, 5]`
	`print(111 in l) # True`
		Get missing number in [1...100]	`def get_missing_number(lst):`
			`  return set(range(lst[len(lst)-1])[1:]) - set(l)`
			`l = list(range(1,100))`
			`l.remove(50)`
			`print(get_missing_number(l)) # 50`

Find duplicate number in integer list	`def find_duplicates(elements):`
	`  duplicates, seen = set(), set()`
	`  for element in elements:`
	`  if element in seen:`
	`  duplicates.add(element)`
	`  seen.add(element)`
	`  return list(duplicates)`
		Compute the intersection of two lists	`def intersect(lst1, lst2):`
			`  res, lst2_copy = [], lst2[:]`
			`  for el in lst1:`
			`  if el in lst2_copy:`
			`  res.append(el)`
			`  lst2_copy.remove(el)`
			`  return res`

Check if two strings are anagrams	`def is_anagram(s1, s2):`
	`  return set(s1) == set(s2)`
	`print(is_anagram("elvis", "lives")) # True`
		Find max and min in unsorted list	`l = [4, 3, 6, 3, 4, 888, 1, -11, 22, 3]`
			`print(max(l)) # 888`
			`print(min(l)) # -11`

Remove all duplicates from list	`lst = list(range(10)) + list(range(10))`
	`lst = list(set(lst))`
	`print(lst)`
	`# [0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]`
		Reverse string using recursion	`def reverse(string):`
			`  if len(string)<=1: return string`
			`  return reverse(string[1:])+string[0]`
			`print(reverse("hello")) # olleh`

Find pairs of integers in list so that their sum is equal to integer x	`def find_pairs(l, x):`
	`  pairs = []`
	`  for (i, el_1) in enumerate(l):`
	`  for (j, el_2) in enumerate(l[i+1:]):`
	`  if el_1 + el_2 == x:`
	`  pairs.append((el_1, el_2))`
	`  return pairs`
		Compute the first n Fibonacci numbers	`a, b = 0, 1`
			`n = 10`
			`for i in range(n):`
			`  print(b)`
			`  a, b = b, a+b`
			`# 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, ...`

Check if a string is a palindrome	`def is_palindrome(phrase):`
	`  return phrase == phrase[::-1]`
	`print(is_palindrome("anna")) # True`
		Sort list with Quicksort algorithm	`def qsort(L):`
			`  if L == []: return []`
			`  return qsort([x for x in L[1:] if x< L[0]]) + L[0:1] +`
			`qsort([x for x in L[1:] if x>=L[0]])`
			`lst = [44, 33, 22, 5, 77, 55, 999]`
			`print(qsort(lst))`
			`# [5, 22, 33, 44, 55, 77, 999]`

Use list as stack, array, and queue	`# as a list ...`
	`l = [3, 4]`
	`l +=  [5, 6] # l = [3, 4, 5, 6]`
	
	`# ... as a stack ...`
	`l.append(10) # l = [4, 5, 6, 10]`
	`l.pop() # l = [4, 5, 6]`
	
	`# ... and as a queue`
	`l.insert(0, 5) # l = [5, 4, 5, 6]`
	`l.pop() # l = [5, 4, 5]`
		Find all permutations of string	`def get_permutations(w):`
			`  if len(w)<=1:`
			`  return set(w)`
			`  smaller = get_permutations(w[1:])`
			`  perms = set()`
			`  for x in smaller:`
			`  for pos in range(0,len(x)+1):`
			`  perm = x[:pos] + w[0] + x[pos:]`
			`  perms.add(perm)`
			`  return perms`
			`print(get_permutations("nan"))`
			`# {'nna', 'ann', 'nan'}`

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Python Cheat Sheet: NumPy

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Name	Description	Example
`a.shape`	The shape attribute of NumPy array a keeps a tuple of integers. Each integer describes the number of elements of the axis.	`a = np.array([[1,2],[1,1],[0,0]])` `print(np.shape(a))  # (3, 2)`
`a.ndim`	The ndim attribute is equal to the length of the shape tuple.	`print(np.ndim(a))  # 2`

`*`	The asterisk (star) operator performs the Hadamard product, i.e., multiplies two matrices with equal shape element-wise.	`a = np.array([[2, 0], [0, 2]])`
		`b = np.array([[1, 1], [1, 1]])`
		`print(a*b)  # [[2 0] [0 2]]`

`np.matmul(a,b), a@b`	The standard matrix multiplication operator. Equivalent to the @ operator.	`print(np.matmul(a,b))` `# [[2 2] [2 2]]`
`np.arange([start, ]stop, [step, ])`	Creates a new 1D numpy array with evenly spaced values	`print(np.arange(0,10,2))` `# [0 2 4 6 8]`
`np.linspace(start, stop, num=50)`	Creates a new 1D numpy array with evenly spread elements within the given interval	`print(np.linspace(0,10,3))` `# [ 0.  5. 10.]`
`np.average(a)`	Averages over all the values in the numpy array	`a = np.array([[2, 0], [0, 2]])` `print(np.average(a))  # 1.0`

`<slice> = <val>`	Replace the <slice> as selected by the slicing operator with the value <val>.	`a = np.array([0, 1, 0, 0, 0])`
		`a[::2] = 2`
		`print(a)  # [2 1 2 0 2]`

`np.var(a)`	Calculates the variance of a numpy array.	`a = np.array([2, 6])` `print(np.var(a))  # 4.0`
`np.std(a)`	Calculates the standard deviation of a numpy array	`print(np.std(a))  # 2.0`

`np.diff(a)`	Calculates the difference between subsequent values in NumPy array a	`fibs = np.array([0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5])`
		`print(np.diff(fibs, n=1))`
		`# [1 0 1 1 2]`

`np.cumsum(a)`	Calculates the cumulative sum of the elements in NumPy array a.	`print(np.cumsum(np.arange(5)))` `# [ 0  1  3  6 10]`

`np.sort(a)`	Creates a new NumPy array with the values from a (ascending).	`a = np.array([10,3,7,1,0])`
		`print(np.sort(a))`
		`# [ 0  1  3  7 10]`

`np.argsort(a)`	Returns the indices of a NumPy array so that the indexed values would be sorted.	`a = np.array([10,3,7,1,0])`
		`print(np.argsort(a))`
		`# [4 3 1 2 0]`

`np.max(a)`	Returns the maximal value of NumPy array a.	`a = np.array([10,3,7,1,0])` `print(np.max(a))  # 10`
`np.argmax(a)`	Returns the index of the element with maximal value in the NumPy array a.	`a = np.array([10,3,7,1,0])` `print(np.argmax(a))  # 0`
`np.nonzero(a)`	Returns the indices of the nonzero elements in NumPy array a.	`a = np.array([10,3,7,1,0])` `print(np.nonzero(a))  # [0 1 2 3]`

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