

Test Execution

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April 3, 2014

Learning Objectives

- Appreciate the purpose of test automation
 - Factoring repetitive, mechanical tasks from creative, human design tasks in testing
- Recognize main kinds and components of test scaffolding
- Understand some key dimensions in test automation design
 - Design for testability: Controllability and observability
 - Degrees of generality in drivers and stubs
 - Comparison-based oracles and self-checks

Automating Test Execution

- Designing test cases and test suites is creative
 - Like any design activity: A demanding intellectual activity, requiring human judgment
- Executing test cases should be automatic
 - Design once, execute many times
- Test automation separates the creative human process from the mechanical process of test execution

Generation: From Test Case Specifications to Test Cases

- Test design often yields test case specifications, rather than concrete data
 - Ex: “a large positive number”, not 420023
 - Ex: “a sorted sequence, length > 2 ”, not “Alpha, Beta, Chi, Omega”
- Other details for execution may be omitted
- Generation creates concrete, executable test cases from test case specifications

Generation: From Test Case Specifications to Test Cases

- We could combine ...
 - A combinatorial test case generation (like `genpairs.py`) to create test data
 - Optional: Constraint-based data generator to “concretize” individual values, e.g., from “positive integer” to 42
 - DDSteps to convert from spreadsheet data to JUnit test cases
 - JUnit to execute concrete test cases
- Many other tool chains are possible ...
 - depending on application domain

Scaffolding

- Code produced to support development activities (especially testing)
 - Not part of the “product” as seen by the end user
 - May be temporary (like scaffolding in construction of buildings)
- Includes
 - Test harnesses, drivers, and stubs

Scaffolding

- Test driver
 - A “main” program for running a test
 - May be produced before a “real” main program
 - Provides more control than the “real” main program
 - To driver program under test through test cases
- Test stubs
 - Substitute for called functions/methods/objects
- Test harness
 - Substitutes for other parts of the deployed environment
 - Ex: Software simulation of a hardware device

Controllability & Observability

GUI input (MVC “Controller”)



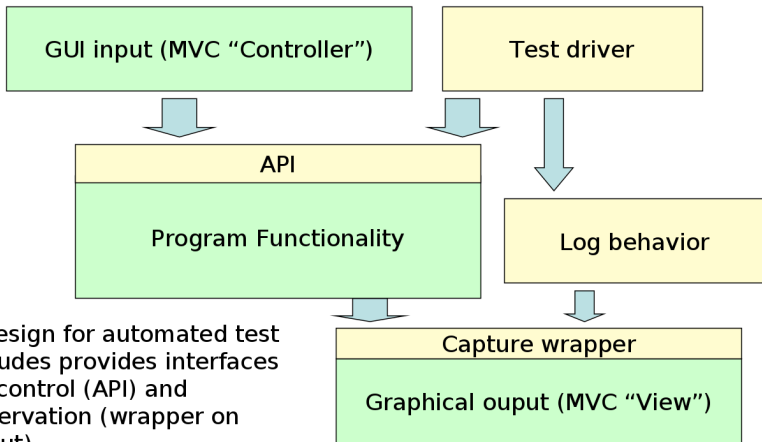
Program Functionality



Graphical output (MVC “View”)

Example: We want automated tests, but interactive input provides limited control and graphical output provides limited observability

Controllability & Observability



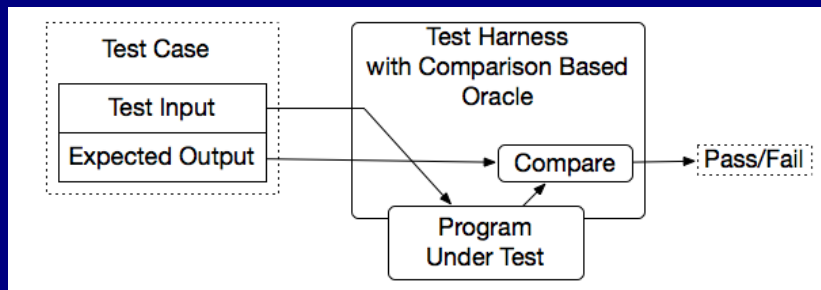
Generic or Specific?

- How general should scaffolding be?
 - We could build a driver and stubs for each test case
 - ... or at least factor out some common code of the driver and test management (e.g., JUnit)
 - ... or further factor out some common support code, to drive a large number of test cases from data (as in DDSteps)
 - ... or further, generate the data automatically from a more abstract model (e.g., network traffic model)
- A question of costs and re-use
 - Just as for other kinds of software

Oracles

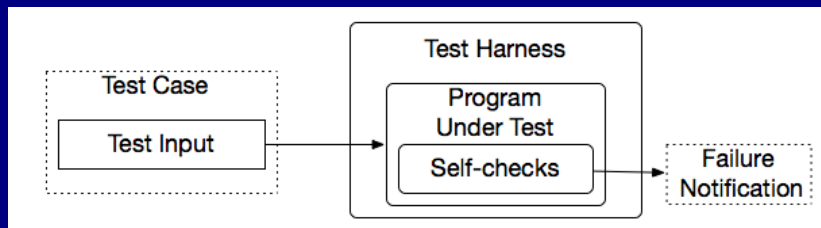
- Did this test case succeed, or fail?
 - No use running 10,000 test cases automatically if the results must be checked by hand!
- Range of specific to general, again
 - ex. JUnit: Specific oracle (“assert”) coded by hand in each test case
 - Typical approach: “comparison-based” oracle with predicted output value
 - Not the only approach!

Comparison-based oracle



- With a comparison-based oracle, we need predicted output for each input
 - Oracle compares actual to predicted output, and reports failure if they differ
- Fine for a small number of hand-generated test cases
 - E.g., for hand-written JUnit test cases

Self-Checking Code as Oracle



- An oracle can also be written as self-checks
 - Often possible to judge correctness without predicting results
- Advantages and limits: Usable with large, automatically generated test suites, but often only a partial check
 - e.g., structural invariants of data structures
 - recognize many or most failures, but not all

Capture and Replay

- Sometimes there is no alternative to human input and observation
 - Even if we separate testing program functionality from GUI, some testing of the GUI is required
- We can at least cut repetition of human testing
- Capture a manually run test case, replay it automatically
 - with a comparison-based test oracle: behavior same as previously accepted behavior
 - reusable only until a program change invalidates it
 - lifetime depends on abstraction level of input and

Summary

- Goal: Separate creative task of test design from mechanical task of test execution
 - Enable generation and execution of large test suites
 - Re-execute test suites frequently (e.g., nightly or after each program change)
- Scaffolding: Code to support development and testing
 - Test drivers, stubs, harness, including oracles
 - Ranging from individual, hand-written test case drivers to automatic generation and testing of large test suites
 - Capture/replay where human interaction is required

- Pick 2 problems from Chapter 17 and turn into the dropbox.

Reading

Read Chapter 19.