Week 8: Reproducing Quality Feedback Loop

Nate Bachmeier

TIM-7140:Software Engineering

April 18, 2021

Northcentral University

# Reproducing Quality Feedback Loop

Businesses of all shapes and sizes are leveraging software-based solutions to reduce costs and become more competitive. This vast breadth of use-cases comes with unique constraints that span technical, cultural, and regulatory requirements. For instance, updating an eCommerce website multiple times per day is trivial compared to NASA’s challenges with their Mars Rover. Organizations manage these differences by aligning their software engineering models with the business needs. Regardless of the methodology, all companies desire quality software that gives customers a positive experience. Delivering this outcome is highly challenging and requires multi-discipline skills that span quality assurance and project management.

## Problem Description

SoftTeam (2021) is a software consulting firm with fourteen hundred employees that operate across several European nations. They need a mechanism that promotes agile methodologies, ensures quality, and provides task-level visibility. The business began with a standard scrum implementation with sprints, user stories, and defect backlogs. However, the existing tooling did not provide a single-pane view into the system. Instead, engineers would sprawl project status information across source control (e.g., Git and SVN), task tracking (e.g., Jira), and continuous deployment & integration services (CICD, e.g., Jenkins).

## Study Accomplishments

The Developer Operations Team (DevOps) built Q-Rapid, a dashboarding solution for holistically gaining insights into these systems. Business leaders can monitor the Quality Feedback Loop (QFL) across each engineering stage. For instance, when an engineer commits a revision into source control, it triggers a refresh of code quality metrics (e.g., comment ratios and security warnings). Automation and standard open-source tooling produce most of these metrics, ensuring that information is timely and accurate. Teams can also reference quality requirement documentation such as Mantis defects, Jira user stories, and Open Project timelines.

## Methodology

SoftTeam supports Model-IO, a customer-facing application that converts various software diagrams (e.g., Unified Modeling Language) into Java code. After four years of development, the program contains numerous components with varying quality. The DevOps team chose this complex product as the basis of their case study. This non-trivial development workflow utilizes multiple analytical tools and verifies the management effectiveness.

During the case study, team members would provide feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of Q-Rapid. Users can provide feedback through open-ended templates that flow into an issue tracking system. This process sounds relatively ad-hoc, and the researchers exclude quantitative data and sample contributions.

## Contributions

Model-IO’s case study outlines a journey from decentralized software engineering to a central reporting system. The researchers enumerate several challenges and limitations that other implementations might encounter. For instance, onboarding new projects is very tedious, and the custom solution has a considerable initial cost. In exchange, development teams that make that investment are more productive and data-driven. These capabilities improve engineering agility, cost estimate accuracy, and product quality monitoring.

## Extensions and Enhancements

When an organization makes data-driven decisions, it can ensure the right choices for the right reasons (Zambetti, Pinto, & Pezzotta, 2019). However, acquiring those capabilities detract from the company’s mission. Business leaders need to evaluate the system’s resource costs across both humans and machines. If the return on investment is insufficient, then procuring the solution would not make economic sense. Since the publication does not provide any data about those expenses, the reader cannot assess the solution’s net value.

The study also employs an ad-hoc feedback process that allows end-users to request changes. However, there is little insight into those comments, their fix-rate, nor user acceptance data. It is equally plausible that (a) team members love the system or (b) team members find the solution cumbersome. For example, the conclusion specifically notes that adding more tools and projects is tedious. The researchers need to define how that impacts the user’s satisfaction.

# Reproducing the Study

SoftTeam’s journey into data-driven software management is a unique story. Certain aspects generally apply to many organizations, but each business will have a slightly different experience.

## Setup and Resources

It

## Methodology

## Limitations and Challenges

## Results

## 