CS1632, Lecture 5: Defects

Wonsun Ahn

Defects, Defined (Short Version)

- When *observed behavior ≠ expected behavior*

- How can we know *expected behavior*?
  - One word: *Requirements*

Defects, Defined (Long Version)

- When a system does one of the following:

1. Violates an *explicit requirement*
2. Violates an *implicit requirement*

- What is an *explicit requirement*?
  - A requirement that is documented on the Software Requirements Specification (SRS)
  - Includes both functional and non-functional requirements (quality attributes)
- What is an *implicit requirement*?
  - A requirement that is not documented in the SRS but is still expected in the application domain (e.g. DBs should never lose data, Flight software should always have backup systems, …)
  - Yes, it would have been better if requirements engineer made these explicit in the SRS
  - But hard for requirements engineer to think of all the corner cases that can arise in software

Defects vs Enhancements

- Main job of software QA team is to find and report *defects*
- But a QA team is also expected to find and suggest *enhancements*

- What's in common between *defects* and *enhancements*?
  - Both are something that can improve software quality if fixed
- What's the difference?
  - *Defect*: A violation of requirements (both explicit and implicit)
  - *Enhancement*: A proposed improvement to the requirements
- The difference often has legal implications
  - *Defect*: Developer must often pay customer for any damages
  - *Enhancement*: Customer must often pay developer for the added improvement

Differentiating Defects vs Enhancements

- Sometimes differentiating the two is surprisingly hard
  - Mainly due to implicit requirements

- Key: Is this adding to requirements, or was it already implicit?
  - Subject of countless lawsuits
  - Need to consider this before filing something as defect or enhancement

Defect or Enhancement?

- Suppose SRS didn't specify the following behavior explicitly
- Example: Program loses internal data on system power outage
  - If program is a database, probably a defect.
    Why? Implicit assumption is no data loss should happen in any circumstance.
  - If program is a solitaire game, may be just a candidate for enhancement.
- Example: Program becomes unresponsive for 1 second
  - If program is a real-time game, probably a defect.
    Why? Implicit assumption is a real-time game must be responsive at all times.
  - If program is a batch file copy tool, may be just a candidate for enhancement.
- Note: the answer depends in large part on the application domain!

Understand Implicit Requirements

- You need to understand implicit requirements that come with domain
  - You may need to do some research on prior literature on the subject matter
  - You may need to talk to a subject matter expert (SME) if you don't understand
  - Sometimes, the best SME is your customer

- Communication!
- Communication!
- Communication!

Finding Defects

- Defects are often the result of faulty programming
  - Which manifest as defective behavior when executed
- But defects can also come from external sources
  - Faulty external software
    - Faulty compiler
    - Faulty operating system
  - Faulty hardware
    - Faulty CPU, DRAM, I/O device
    - Cosmic rays from space (not joking)
- We are only going to focus on internal defects in this course

A Defect Must Lead to Defective Behavior

```
// Expected behavior: Code shall always print “cat”
// Is there a defect in this code?
int k = 4;
if (k > 100) {
   System.out.println(“centipede”);
} else {
   System.out.println(“cat”);
}
```

- It’s not OK to have ugly code even if it does not impact behavior
- But it is still not a defect if it does not cause defective behavior

Defective Behavior doesn’t have to be Severe

- Images are sized 1 pixel too small
- Delays are 1 ns longer than required
- Upon shutdown, typo in shutdown message
- Seldom-used feature does not work correctly
- Background color is slightly off
- There should be three periods in an ellipsis, not two..

Non-trivial software will ship with defects. Get used to it.

- It will contain KNOWN bugs as well as UNKNOWN bugs

- Why ship when there are known bugs?
  - Bug may not be severe enough to impact everyday usage
  - Bug may have a workaround (ways to avoid the bug)

- Knowns bugs should be well-documented and advertised
  - Your customer will thank you

When testing, prioritize severe defects

- What are some severe defects?
  - Faulty data
  - System crashes
  - Extreme resource usage
  - Issues with core features
  - Otherwise makes the software unusable (using your best judgement)

- Less severe defects may get fixed by patches after software release

Reporting Defects

How to report defects?

Varies based on company/project, but there are some common items that go into a bug report.

A Typical Bug Report Template

- SUMMARY
- DESCRIPTION
- REPRODUCTION STEPS
- EXPECTED BEHAVIOR
- OBSERVED BEHAVIOR
- IMPACT
- SEVERITY
- NOTES

Summary - *succinct description of problem*

- Usually a one sentence description
- Examples:
  - Number of widgets in cart not refreshed when removing two at a time
  - If time zone is changed during execution, idle tasks never wake up
  - CPU pegs at 100% after the addition of two nodes to the list
  - Title does not display after clicking "Next“
  - Page title is "Alll Entries", should be "All Entries“

DESCRIPTION - *details of problem*

- A detailed description of everything the tester discovered
- Example
  - *Summary*: Number of widgets not refreshed when removing 2 widgets
  - *Description*: If 2 widgets are removed at once from the shopping cart, the number of widgets is not changed from the initial value. Removing 3, 4, and 5 widgets resulted in the same defective behavior. The value is updated correctly if the widgets are removed one at a time.

- Be careful not to overgeneralize (or undergeneralize)
  - Describing the contours of the issue accurately helps developer

REPRODUCTION STEPS
- *Preconditions + Steps to Reproduce Defect*

- First, list *preconditions* (if there are any)
  - If defect found by test case, identical to test case preconditions
  - If not, should have the same level of detail

- Next, enumerate *steps* required to reproduce defect
  - Again, will look very similar to test case *execution steps*

- It's usually better to err on the side of over-specifying
  - If developer cannot reproduce the defect, it cannot be fixed

REPRODUCTION STEPS

- BAD: Put some things in the shopping cart. Take a couple things out.

- GOOD:

  Start with empty shopping cart.

  1. Add 3 widgets to shopping cart.
  2. Note number of widgets listed is 3.
  3. Remove 2 widgets from shopping cart.
  4. Observe number of widgets listed.

REPRODUCTION STEPS

- Example given in Mozilla Firefox web browser project: https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Mozilla/QA/Bug_writing_guidelines#Writing_precise_steps_to_reproduce

- BAD: Open Gmail in another window
- GOOD:

  (Any preconditions. E.g. settings in Firefox configuration relevant to defect)

  1. Start Firefox by clicking on the desktop icon
  2. Press Cmd+N (or Ctrl+N for Windows users) to open a new browser window
  3. Paste https://mail.google.com/ in the address bar and press Enter

EXPECTED AND OBSERVED BEHAVIOR

- *EXPECTED BEHAVIOR*: What you expected according to requirements.
  - If defect found through a test case, may be identical to *postconditions*
  - Why important? Shows what tester's understanding of the requirements are.

- *OBSERVED BEHAVIOR*: What you ACTUALLY saw.
  - This is the CRUX of the defect report
  - Be as precise as possible
  - You may consider attaching a screenshot of what you saw

EXPECTED AND OBSERVED BEHAVIOR

- BAD:
  - Expected Behavior: Number is correct.
  - Observed Behavior: Number is incorrect.

- GOOD:
  - EXPECTED BEHAVIOR: The number of widgets in the shopping cart is 1.
  - OBSERVED BEHAVIOR: The number of widgets in the shopping cart is 3.

IMPACT – impact to various stakeholders

- BAD: The user will hate this because everything is wrong!

- GOOD: The user will see an incorrect number of widgets in their shopping cart, meaning they could purchase more widgets than they expect. This will lead to an avalanche of customer complaints and major overhead to the business to process returns.

SEVERITY – how severe is the problem?

- Severity is a combination of several factors:
  1. How bad is the problem when it does occur?
  2. How often does it occur?
  3. Is there a workaround?

LEVELS OF SEVERITY (Bugzilla)

- CRITICAL
- MAJOR
- NORMAL
- MINOR
- TRIVIAL

SEVERITY is different from PRIORITY

- *Priority*: the ordering of which defects should be work on first

- Usually a higher severity bug will be given higher priority
  - But not always; other considerations may take precedence

NOTES – Technical and detailed notes that can help understand and fix the problem.

- Stack traces
- Log file excerpts
- Environment
- Anything that may be helpful to a developer fixing this defect

Tracking Defects

Tracking Defects

- Once defects are reported they need to be tracked
  - To make sure that they are fixed in a timely manner
  - To verify the fix corrects the defect and doesn't cause regression

- Must be done in a systematic way
  - Often hundreds of bugs at various stages of resolution
  - Often done with the help of a *bug tracking system*

Tracking Defects

- In order to track, defects should have the following info:
  - Identifier: Usually numbered, not named
  - Source: associated test case, if applicable
  - Version of software found
  - Version of software fixed, if applicable

Lifecycle of a defect

- Discovery
- Recording
- Triage
- Sub-triage (optional)
- Fixed
- Verified

Triage (or "Defect Review")

- This is where relevant stakeholders meet to determine:
  1. Validity of defect / Need for more information
  2. Final severity
  3. Final priority
  4. Assignment of defect to a particular developer

Sub-Triage

- For larger projects, there may be two levels of triage:
  - *Systems-level triage*
    1. Filtering out non-defects and duplicate defects
    2. Assignment of defects to subsystems, for sub-triage
  - *Sub-triage*
    1. Prioritization of defects within a subsystem
    2. Assignment of defects to developers for that subsystem

Fixing

- Assigned developer works on a fix for the bug

Verification

- QA team verifies that the fix is correct
  - The fix actually resolves the reported defect
  - And it does not cause any other issues (regression testing)

- If fix is incorrect, iterate back to fixing stage
- If fix is correct, close the bug report
  - (Optionally) Add test case for bug to test suite

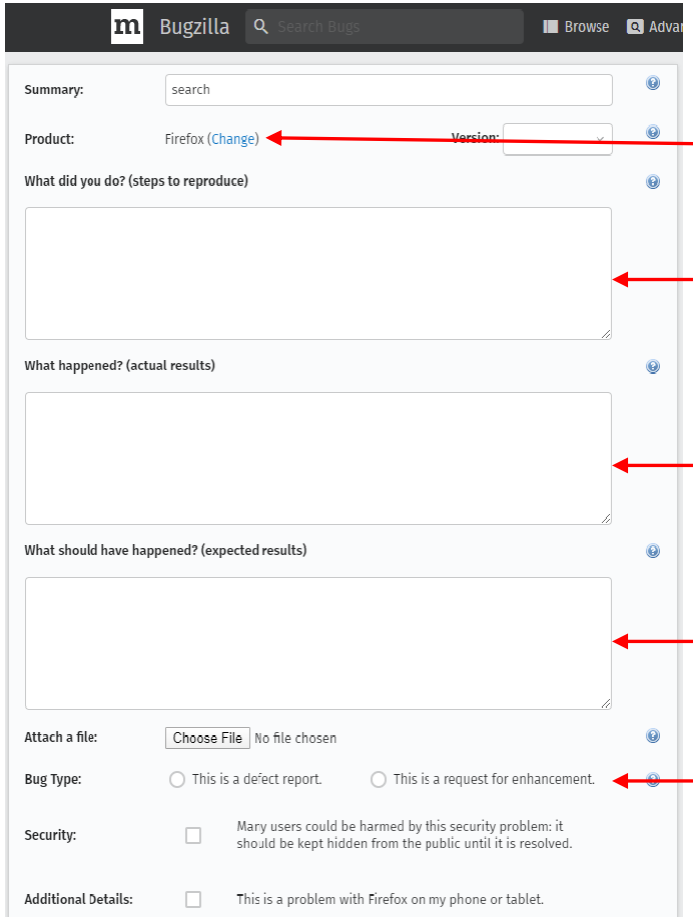
Example: Bugzilla

A web-based general-purpose bug tracking system

Bugzilla

- Bugzilla: a web-based general-purpose bug tracking system
- Developed and used by the Mozilla project
  - Originally developed in 1998 to track defects in Netscape web browser
  - Now used to track defects in Firefox web browser along with other projects
- Also used by WebKit, Linux kernel, FreeBSD, Apache, Red Hat, Eclipse

Example: Bugzilla Defect Reporting



Product: Firefox

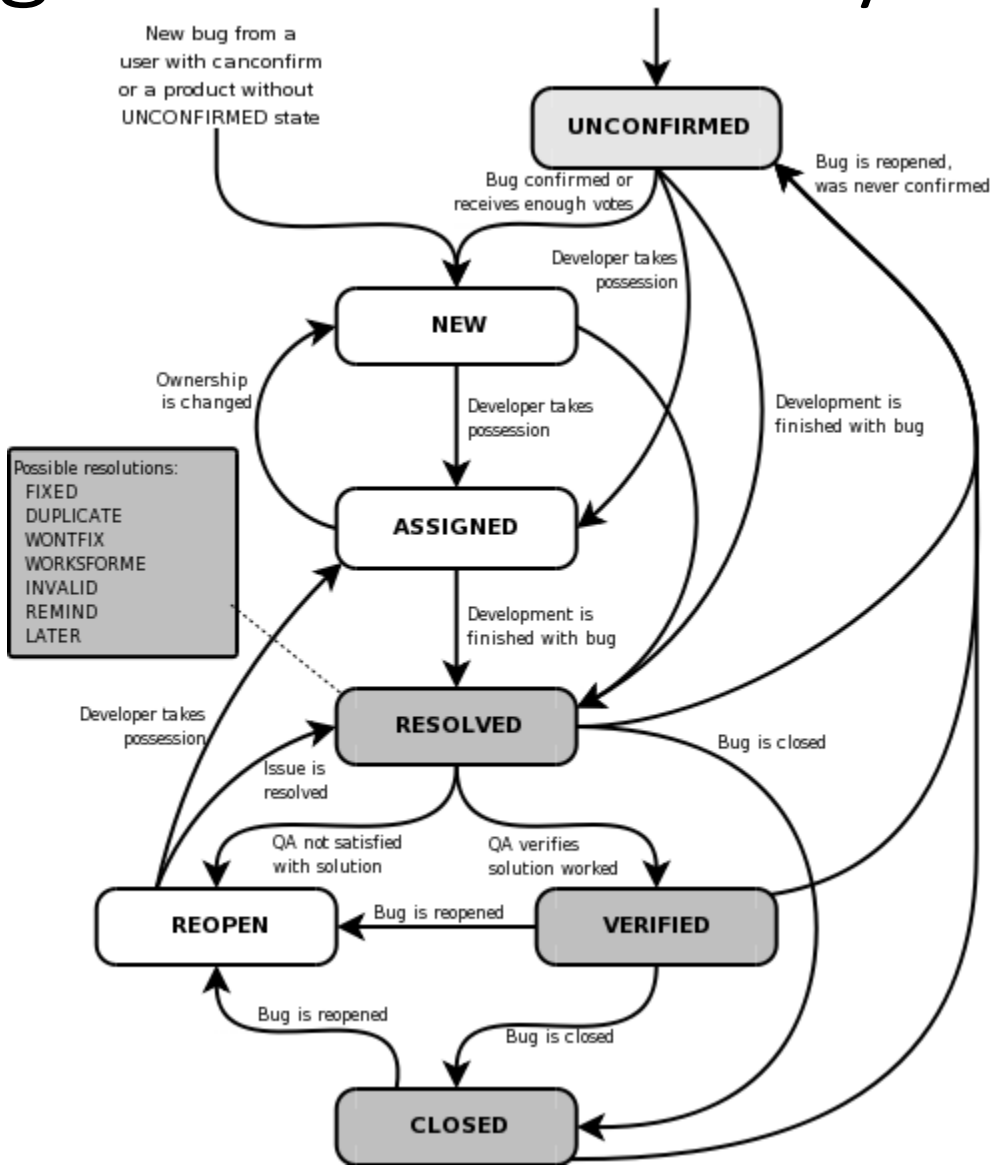
Steps to Reproduce (includes Preconditions)

Actual Results

Expected Results

Defect or Enhancement?

Example: Bugzilla Defect Life Cycle



Example Bugzilla Defect Tracking

Component: Address Bar **Resolution:** --- **Product:** Firefox

This result was limited to 500 bugs. See all search results for this query.

ID	Type	Summary	Product	Comp	Assignee ▼	Status
440400	+	Add pref to change number of rows shown at one time in locationbar autocomplete popup	Firefox	Address Bar	at.light@live.com.au	NEW
675818	+	Add delete button to awesome bar result matches	Firefox	Address Bar	attach-and-request@bugzilla...	NEW
1603678	◎	2.29 - 3.18% Explicit Memory (windows7-32, windows7-32-shippable) regression on push 3a083701018bf872acfc5e391312042d8d246aa4 (Wed December 4 2019)	Firefox	Address Bar	dao+bmo@mozilla.com	NEW
597237	◎	"Paste & Go" should turn into "Paste & Search" when contents of the clipboard aren't a URI	Firefox	Address Bar	jhugman@mozilla.com	NEW
1506100	◎	javascript: protocol URLs typed into the address bar no longer work	Firefox	Address Bar	jonathan@jooped.co.uk	NEW
1303366	◎	In a containers/contextual-identity tab, the location bar's rightmost icons can be pushed outside out of location bar entirely in a small window (instead of being clipped/ellipsized)	Firefox	Address Bar	jonathan@jooped.co.uk	NEW

Now Please Read Textbook Chapter 9

- Be sure read Chapter 9.3 carefully since you will be using the defect template for exercise 1 and deliverable 1.

- Try searching the Bugzilla database yourself! https://bugzilla.mozilla.org/describecomponents.cgi

- Read Bugzilla reporting guidelines at Mozilla: https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Mozilla/QA/Bug_writing_guidelines