

EasyMerge - A New Tool for Code Clones Refactoring

Shengying Pan
School of Computer Science
University of Waterloo
s5pan@uwaterloo.ca

Haocheng Qin
School of Computer Science
University of Waterloo
h7qin@uwaterloo.ca

Yahui Chen
School of Computer Science
University of Waterloo
y556chen@uwaterloo.ca

ABSTRACT

Abstract goes here.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

D.2.8 [Software Engineering]: Metrics—*complexity measures, performance measures*

General Terms

Software Engineering, Recommendation System

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Software Engineering, Clone Detection, Code Refactoring, Recommendation System

1. INTRODUCTION

In software development, it's very common seeing developers reuse code fragments by copying and pasting with or without minor adaptation. Moreover, for large scale projects, developers are often too lazy to browse existing source files so that they may rewrite similar or even identical functions which were already in the code base. As a result, software systems often contain sections of code that are very similar, called code clones.

Previous research shows that a significant fraction (between 7% and 23%) of the code in a typical software system has been cloned [1] [3]. Many code clones in code bases are unnecessary duplications. Code duplication can be a significant drawback, leading to bad design, and increased probability of bug occurrence and propagation. As a result, it can significantly increase maintenance cost, and form a barrier for software evolution. By detecting, categorizing, and removing code clones, we can produce easier to understand, cleaner, and more reusable code.

Clone detection has been an avid research topic in the field of software engineering for decades. Fortunately, several automated techniques for detecting code clones have already

been proposed. However, how to deal with detected clones, e.g. how to distinguish necessary clones from unnecessary ones and how to refactor code to remove unnecessary clones still remain a big problem in not only commercial but also academic domain. As a result, in this paper, we try to classify code clones and build a recommendation system called EasyMerge to help developers merge unnecessary clones on top of current state-of-the-art clone detection approach.

More specifically, we pick CloneDigger [2], an anti-unification duplicate code detection tool as our underlying clone detection approach. CloneDigger is one of the best available clone detection tools currently for its overall performance, coverage of multiple clone types, and availability. EasyMerge integrates CloneDigger as the pre-processing tool, analyze its output clone pairs, and recommend possible merges which can remove unnecessary clones without changing functionality of code base, creating reference conflicts, nor causing troubles to future code understanding and development.

The paper is structured as following: we first go through the basics, background, and current state of clone detection and code clone refactoring in general. Then we introduce and discuss the fundamentals of CloneDigger and the anti-unification algorithm it is using to detect clones. Afterwards, we explain EasyMerge's work flow and underlying techniques. And at the end, we set up testing environment and discuss the experimental results of running EasyMerge against several open source projects of different scales.

2. BACKGROUND

Roy and Cordy has done a great work [4]

3. CLONE CODE DETECTION

4. EASYMERGE

5. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

6. CONCLUSIONS

7. FUTURE WORK

8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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