CS1632, LECTURE 2: TESTING THEORY AND TERMINOLOGY

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Key (🔑) concept to the course

Expected behavior vs observed behavior

Expected vs. Observed Behavior

- *Expected behavior*: What “should” happen
- *Observed behavior*: What “does” happen

- *Testing*: comparing expected and observed behavior
- *Defect*: when expected != observed behavior

- Expected behavior is also known as *requirement*

Example

- Suppose we are testing a function `sqrt`:
  ```
  // returns the square root of num
  float sqrt(int num) { … }
  ```
- When I call `sqrt` with argument `42`,
  ```
  float ret = sqrt(42);
  ```
  Expected behavior: `ret` == `6.48074069841`
- When `float ret = sqrt(9);`,
  Expected behavior: `ret` == `3`
- When `float ret = sqrt(-9);`,
  Mathematically, square root of `−9` can't be a real number, but requirements should still specify some behavior

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF EXHAUSTIVE TESTING

- Let’s say we want to ensure that `sqrt` is defect-free for all arguments (both positive and negative)
- Assume arg is a Java `int` (signed 32-bit integer)
- How many values do we have to test?

4,294,967,296

What if there are two arguments?

- Suppose we are testing a function `add`:
  ```
  // return the sum of x and y
  int add(int x, int y) { … }
  ```
- How many tests do we have to perform? (Hint: all combinations of `x` and `y`)

4,294,967,296 ^ 2

What if the argument is an array?

- Suppose we are testing a function `add`:
  ```
  // return sum of elements in A
  int add(int[] A) { … }
  ```
- How many tests do we have to perform? (Note: array `A` can be arbitrarily long)

4,294,967,296 ^ Infinity

Would testing all the combinations of arguments guarantee that there are no problems?

LOL NOPE

- Issues causing defects even after exhaustive testing
  - Compiler issues
  - Parallel programming issues (e.g. data races)
  - Non-functional issues (e.g. performance)
  - Floating-point issues (e.g. loss of precision)
  - Systems-level issues (e.g. OS/device-dependent defect)

- The same input must be tested multiple times
  - On different compilers, OSes, devices, runtimes, …

Compiler Issues

- The compiled binary, not your source code, runs on the computer
- What if compiler has a bug? (Rare)
- What if compiler *exposes* a bug in your program? (More frequent)

```
int add_up_to (int count) {
  int sum, i;    /* some C compilers will init sum to 0, others will not */
  for(i = 0; i <= count; i++) sum = sum + i;
  return sum;
}
```

☞ Code will work with some compilers but not with others

- You can avoid this issue by using the same compiler with the same compiler options, but sometimes that is not feasible

Parallel programming issues

```java
class Main implements Runnable {
    public static int count = 0;
    public void run() {
        for(int i=0; i < 1000000; i++) { count++; }
        System.out.println("count = " + count);
    }
    public static void main(String[] args) {
        Main m = new Main();
        Thread t1 = new Thread(m);
        Thread t2 = new Thread(m);
        t1.start();
        t2.start();
    }
}
```

```
$ javac Main.java
$ java Main
count = 1868180
count = 1868180
$ java Main
count = 1033139
count = 1033139
```

Why?

Parallel programming issues

- Why does this happen?
  - Threads `t1` and `t2` run on separate CPUs
  - Two threads try to increment `count` at the same time
  - Often, they step on each other’s toes (a data race)
- If there is a data race, result is undefined
  - Java language specifications say so!
  - Every time you run it, you may get a different result
  - Passing a test once does not guarantee correctness
- Worst part: often, result is correct 99% of the time

  ☞ Must test thousands of times to find defect

Parallel programming issues

```java
class Main implements Runnable {
    public static int count = 0;
    public void run() {
        for(int i=0; i < 1000000; i++)
            synchronized(this) { count++; }
        System.out.println("count = " + count);
    }
    public static void main(String[]
        Main m = new Main();
        Thread t1 = new Thread(m);
        Thread t2 = new Thread(m);
        t1.start();
        t2.start();
    }
}
```

Solved?

```
$ javac Main.java
$ java Main
count = 1065960
count = 2000000
$ java Main
count = 1061149
count = 2000000
```

Parallel programming issues

- `synchronized` removes the data race
  - Now `count` = 2000000 in the end, as expected
- How?
  - `synchronized` "locks" the code region while incrementing `count` so that other thread can't interfere
- But note that value of intermediate `count` is still nondeterministic. Why?
  - Speed of threads `t1` and `t2` are nondeterministic

☞ Data-race-free programs can still pose problems

For the purposes of this Chapter…

- Let’s ignore these issues for now
  - Compiler issues
  - Parallel programming issues
  - Non-functional issues
  - Floating-point issues
  - Systems-level issues
- Exhaustive input value testing is hard enough
  - a.k.a. “test explosion problem”
  - This is what we will focus on in this chapter

Defining Test Coverage

- Goal of testing: achieve good *test coverage*
  - Test coverage: measure of how rigorously code has been tested

- Ideally, *test_coverage = defects_found / total_defects*
  - But is there a way to measure *total_defects*?
  - Only reliable way is to do exhaustive testing (infeasible)
  - Impossible to measure true test coverage

- Then how do you know you've achieved good coverage?
  - Use a proxy coverage metric that estimates true coverage
  - *statement_coverage = statements_tested / total_statements*
  - Rationale: if a high percentage of statements are tested
    ☞ likely that a high percentage of defects have been found

Improving Test Coverage

- QA engineers have a limited testing time budget
  - Since true test coverage is impossible to measure, must choose tests maximizing a proxy coverage metric
  - Most commonly, maximizing statement coverage

- Which tests are likely to maximize statement coverage?
  - Tests that exercise all required program behaviors
  - If tests exercise only one specific program feature or program behavior → likely to have low statement coverage
  - This is the idea behind *equivalence class partitioning*

Equivalence Class Partitioning

- Partition the input values into "equivalence classes"
  - Equivalence class = group of values with similar behavior

- E.g. equivalence classes for our `sqrt` method: {*nonnegative_numbers*, *negative_numbers*}

- Behavior for each equivalence class:
  - *nonnegative_numbers*: returns the square root of number
  - *negative_numbers*: returns NaN (not a number)

Equivalence Classes should be *Strictly* Partitioned

- *Strictly*: each value belongs to one and only one class

- If an input value belongs to multiple classes
  - Means requirements specify two different behaviors for the input
  - Either requirements are inconsistent, or you misunderstood them

- If an input value belongs to no class
  - Means requirements do not specify a behavior for the input
  - Either requirements are incomplete, or you misunderstood them

Values can be Strings

- For a spell checker, input values are strings
- Equivalence classes: {*strings_in_dictionary*, *strings_not_in_dictionary*}
- Behavior for each equivalence class:
    - *strings_in_dictionary*: do nothing
    - *strings_not_in_dictionary*: red underline string

Values can be Any Object

- Input values can be tuna cans
- Equivalence classes:
  {*not_expired*, *expired_and_not_smelly*, *expired_and_smelly*}
- Behavior for each equivalence class:
  - *not_expired*: eat
  - *expired_and_not_smelly*: use it in your rat trap
  - *expired_and_smelly*: discard

Test Each Equivalence Class

- Pick at least one value from each equivalence class
- Ensures you cover all behavior expected of program
- Gets you good coverage without exhaustive testing!

- How to pick the value? Well, that is part of the art.
    - However, there are some good guidelines!

Interior and boundary values

- Empirical truth:
  - Defects are more prevalent at boundaries of equivalence classes than in the middle.
- Why?
  - Due to the prevalence of off-by-one errors

Off-by-one Error

- Suppose expected behavior is:
  - Method shall take the age of a person as argument
  - Method shall determine whether person can be US president
  - Rule: Person must be 35 years or older to be US president

- Suppose code implementation is:

```
boolean canBePresident(int age) {
   return age > 35;
}
```

- Is observed behavior the same as expected behavior?

Equivalence class partitioning

CANNOT_BE_PRESIDENT =
[…19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34]

CAN_BE_PRESIDENT =
[35,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,49,50…]

Always Test Boundary Values

CANNOT_BE_PRESIDENT =
[…19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34]

CAN_BE_PRESIDENT =
[35,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,49,50…]

- Always test boundary values (shown in red).
- In fact, there is a bug at 35: `age > 35`

Also Test a few Interior Values

CANNOT_BE_PRESIDENT =
[…19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34]

CAN_BE_PRESIDENT =
[35,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,49,50…]

- Testing interior values (in green) is also important.
- Who knows? There may be a non-off-by-one error.

Are we done?

CANNOT_BE_PRESIDENT =
[…19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34]

CAN_BE_PRESIDENT =
[35,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,49,50…]

- Input values so far: {26, 30, 34, 35, 39, 42}

“Hidden” (IMPLICIT) boundary values

- Boundary values we’ve added so far are explicit – that is, they are defined by requirements
- Some boundaries are implicit – they are generated from the language, hardware, domain, etc.:
  - Language boundaries:
    MAXINT, MININT
  - Hardware boundaries:
    memory space, hard drive space, etc.
  - Domain boundaries:
    weight can’t be negative, score can’t exceed 100, etc.

Add implicit boundary values

CANNOT_BE_PRESIDENT =
[MININT,…-2,-1,0,1,…,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34]

CAN_BE_PRESIDENT =
[35,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,…,MAXINT]

- MININT, MAXINT: language boundaries
- -1, 0: domain boundaries (age can't be negative)
- Inputs: {MININT, -1, 0, 26, 30, 34, 35, 39, 42, MAXINT}

Finding the Off-by-one Error

- Now let's feed these inputs to our code:

  ```
  boolean canBePresident(int age) {
     return age > 35;
  }
  ```

  Inputs: {MININT, -1, 0, 26, 30, 34, 35, 39, 42, MAXINT}
- Remember, expected behavior was:
  - Person must be 35 years or older to be US president
- A defect is found with input 35:
  - Expected behavior: Can be president
  - Observed behavior: Cannot be president

Base, edge, and corner cases

- **Base case**: An expected use case
    - Interior value of equivalence class for normal operation
- **Edge case**: An unexpected use case
    - Boundary value of equivalence class for normal operation
- **Corner case** (or **pathological case**):
    - Value far outside of normal operating parameters
    - OR multiple edge cases happening simultaneously

Base, edge, and corner cases: Example

- Suppose a cat scale has these operating envelopes:
  - Weight between 0 – 100 lbs
  - Temperature between 0 – 120 F
- Base cases: (10 lbs, 60 F), (20 lbs, 70 F), …
- Edge cases: (**100 lbs**, 70 F), (10 lbs, **0 F**), …
- Corner cases: (**300 lbs**, 70 F), (**100 lbs**, **120 F**), …
- Why test corner cases?
  - Even if scale isn't expected to operate correctly for 300 lbs, user still cares what happens (i.e. does it break the scale?)

Test Values from Source Code

- So far, test values were found without viewing source code
    - Explicit boundaries: from requirements
    - Implicit boundaries: from knowledge of language, domain, …
    - And a few arbitrarily chosen interior values
- Suppose implementation for `canBePresident` was:

```
boolean canBePresident(int age) {
   return age >= 35 && age < 65;
}
```

- Age limit of 65 is not in the requirements but it is in code
    - A defect! But may not be tested since it’s not a boundary value
    - Choosing input values based on code is called *white box testing*

Black-, white, and grey-box testing

- **Black-box testing**:
  - Testing with no knowledge of interior structure or source code
  - Tests are performed from the user's perspective through user interface
  - Can be performed by lay people who don't know how to program
- **White-box testing**:
  - Testing with explicit knowledge of the interior structure and codebase
  - Tests are performed from the developer's perspective
  - Test inputs are crafted to exercise specific lines of code
  - Testing may involve explicitly calling specific methods (unit testing)
- **Grey-box testing**:
  - Testing with some knowledge of the interior structure and codebase
  - Knowledge comes from partial code inspection or a design document
  - Performed from the user's perspective, but informed by knowledge

Black-box testing examples

- Testing a website using a web browser
- Testing a game by actually playing it
- Testing a script against an API endpoint
- Any type of beta test

White-box testing examples

- Crafting input to exercise specific program paths
  - Choosing a boundary value not present in the requirements but present in the source code
  - Intentionally choosing inputs that cause exceptions (and observing whether handled correctly)
- Explicitly calling methods from a testing script
  - Testing that a function returns the correct result
  - Testing that instantiating a class creates a valid object

Grey-box testing examples

- *Reviewing code* and noticing that bubble sort is used. Then writing a *user-facing test* involving a large input.
- *Reviewing code* in a web app and noticing user input is not properly sanitized. Then writing a *user-facing test* which attempts SQL code injection.
- *Reading a design document* and noticing a network connection through which lots of data passes. Then writing a *user-facing test* that stresses that connection.

Static vs dynamic testing

- We talked a great deal about choosing good inputs
    - But is this all there is to testing?
- Dynamic testing = code is executed
    - Relies on good inputs for good coverage
- Static testing = code is not executed
    - There are no inputs since code is not executed
    - Relies on analyzing the code to find defects

Dynamic testing

- What we have been talking about so far
  - Code is executed under certain circumstances (e.g. input values, compiler, OS, runtime library, etc.)
  - Observed results are compared with expected results
- More commonly used in industry
  - Programmers know to do this even w/o being taught
  - Can be done w/o special tools or training
  - Majority of the class will be about dynamic testing

Static testing

- Code is analyzed by a person or testing tool
- Examples:
  - Code walkthroughs and reviews by a person
  - Code analysis using a tool
    - Linting
    - Model checking
    - Complexity analysis
    - Code coverage
    - Finite state analysis
    - … COMPILING!

Now Please Read Textbook Chapters 2-4