

# **CS 4530**

## **Fundamentals of Software Engineering**

### **Lesson 11: Refactoring, Code Smells and Technical Debt**

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# Learning Goals

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to...

- Describe different kinds of “Refactoring”: restructuring of code to improve structure.
- Review some common code “smells” (anti-patterns).
- Identify the “technical debt” metaphor; Indicate when and where technical debt is appropriate to accrue versus retire.

# Refactoring

- **refactoring** is the process of applying transformations (refactorings) to a program, with the goal of improving its design
- goals:
  - keep program readable, understandable, and maintainable
  - by eliminating small problems soon, you can avoid big trouble later
- characteristics:
  - **behavior-preserving**: make sure the program works after each step
  - **small steps**

# History of Refactoring

- refactoring is something good programmers have always done
  - Opdyke's PhD thesis (1990): refactoring tools for Smalltalk
  - popularized by various agile development methodologies
- especially popular in the context of object-oriented languages
  - OO features are well-suited to make designs flexible & reusable
  - but refactoring is not specific to OO

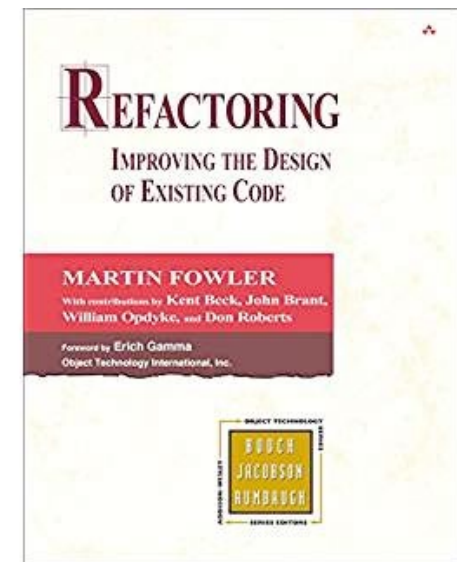
# Refactoring

Martin Fowler

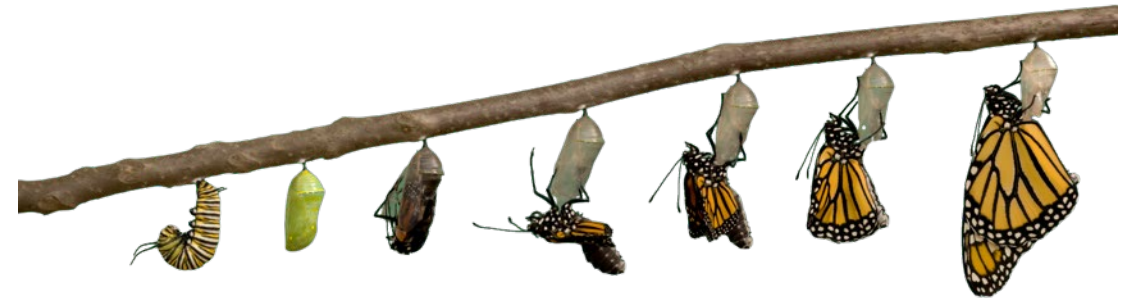


“Any fool can write code that a computer can understand. Good programmers write code that humans can understand.”

# Fowler's book



- presents a **catalogue of refactorings**, similar to the catalogue of design patterns in the GoF book
  - catalogues “bad smells” - indications that refactoring may be needed
  - explains when and how to apply refactorings
- many of Fowler's refactorings are the inverse of another refactoring
  - often there is not a unique “best” solution
  - discussion of the tradeoffs



# Why Refactor?

- requirements have changed, and a different design is needed
- design needs to be more flexible (so new features can be added)
  - design patterns are often a target for refactoring
- address sloppiness by programmers

# Example Refactoring

## Consolidating duplicate conditional fragments

### Original Code

```
if (isSpecialDeal()) {  
    total = price * 0.95;  
    send()  
} else {  
    total = price * 0.98;  
    send()  
}
```

### Refactored Code

```
if (isSpecialDeal()) {  
    total = price * 0.95;  
} else {  
    total = price * 0.98;  
}  
send()
```



# Observations

- **small incremental steps** that preserve program behavior
- most steps are so simple that they can be **automated**
  - automation limited in complex cases
- refactoring does not always proceed “in a straight line”
  - sometimes, undo a step you did earlier...
  - ...when you have insights for a better design

# When to refactor?

## Refactoring is incremental redesign

- Acknowledge that it will be difficult to get design right the first time
- When adding new functionality, fixing a bug, doing code review, or any time
- Refactoring evolves design in increments
- Refactoring reduces technical debt
- What do you refactor?

# Code Smells

## Mysterious Name

“We may fantasize about being International Men of Mystery, but our code needs to be mundane and clear”

- Martin Fowler on “Mysterious Name”

# Code Smells

## Shotgun Surgery

“When the changes are all over the place, they are hard to find, and it’s easy to miss an important change.”

- Martin Fowler on “Shotgun Surgery”

# Code Smells

**A complete list (links to book!)**

[Mysterious Name](#)

[Duplicated Code](#)

[Long Function](#)

[Long Parameter List](#)

[Global Data](#)

[Mutable Data](#)

[Divergent Change](#)

[Shotgun Surgery](#)

[Feature Envy](#)

[Data Clumps](#)

[Primitive Obsession](#)

[Repeated Switches](#)

[Loops](#)

[Lazy Element](#)

[Speculative Generality](#)

[Temporary Field](#)

[Message Chains](#)

[Middle Man](#)

[Insider Trading](#)

[Large Class](#)

[Alternative Classes with Different Interfaces](#)

[Data Class](#)

[Refused Bequest](#)

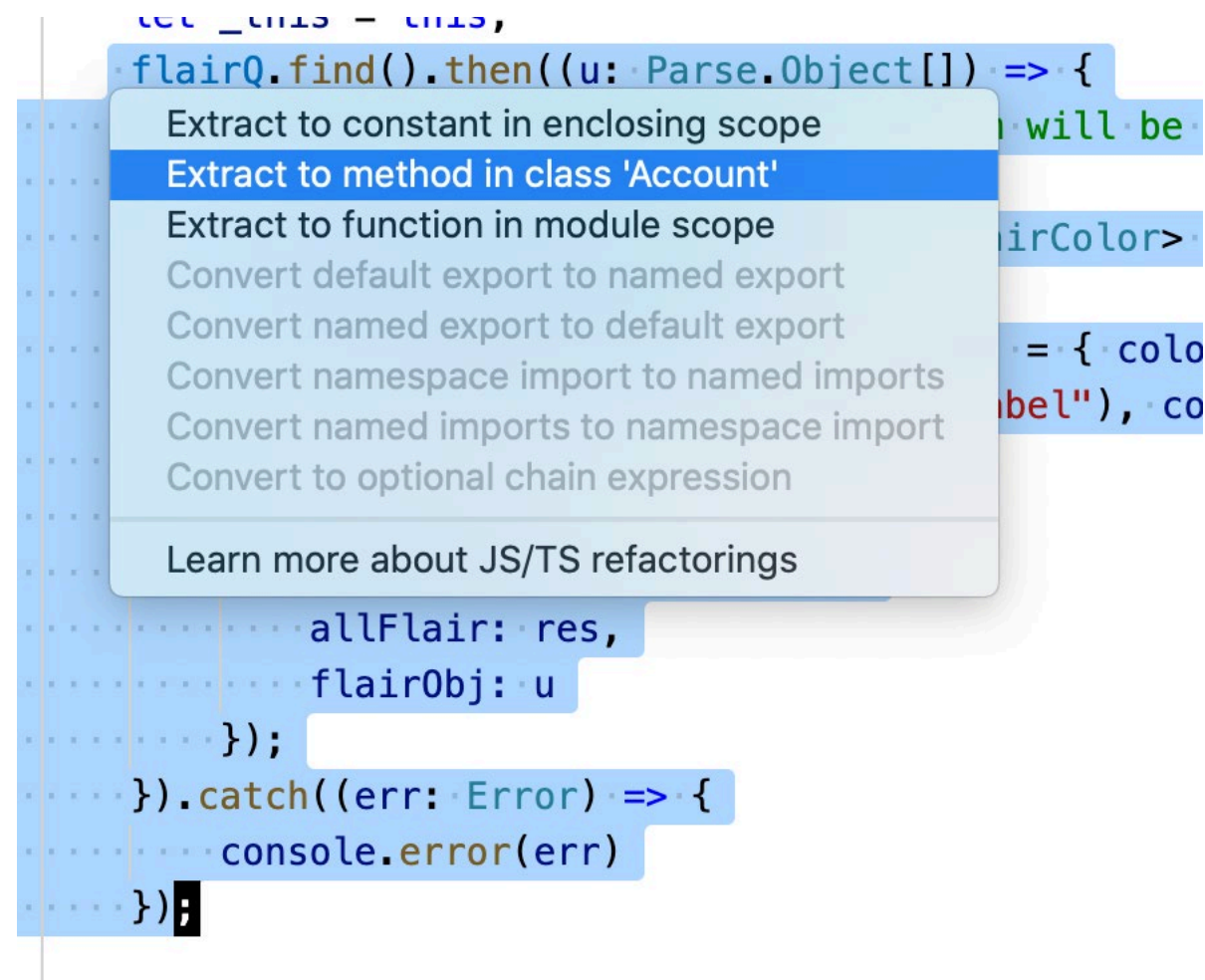
# “Local” Refactorings

<b>Rename</b>	rename variables, fields methods, classes, packages provide better intuition for the renamed element's purpose
<b>Extract Method</b>	extract statements into a new method enables reuse; avoid cut-and-paste programming improve readability
<b>Inline Method</b>	replace a method call with the method's body often useful as intermediate step
<b>Extract Local</b>	introduce a new local variable for a designated expression
<b>Inline Local</b>	replace a local variable with the expression that defines its value
<b>Change Method Signature</b>	reorder a method's parameters
<b>Encapsulate Field</b>	introduce getter/setter methods
<b>Convert Local Variable to Field</b>	convert local variable to field sometimes useful to enable application of Extract Method

# Type-Related Refactorings

<b>Generalize Declared Type</b>	replace the type of a declaration with a more general type
<b>Extract Interface</b>	create a new interface, and update declarations to use it where possible
<b>Pull Up Members</b>	move methods and fields to a superclass
<b>Infer Generic Type Arguments</b>	infer type arguments for “raw” uses of generic types

# Automated Refactorings in VSC





# Refactoring Risks

- Developer time is valuable: is this the best use of time *today*?
- Despite best intentions, may not be safe
- Potential for version control conflicts

# Technical Debt is Sum of Internal Problems in Project Codebase

- Internal because they don't show as user-visible failures.
- Examples:
- Code Smells;
- Missing tests;
- Missing documentation;
- Dependency on old versions of third-party systems;
- Inefficient and/or non-scalable algorithms.

*Not just code!*



# Technical Debt is Sum of Internal Problems in Project Codebase

## Example of Debt

- Code Smells;
- Missing tests;
- Missing documentation;
- Dependency on old versions of third-party systems;
- Inefficient and/or non-scalable algorithms.

## Example of Cost

- “Smelly” code is less flexible;
- Need to revert breaking change;
- Can’t figure out how to use;
- May have take over maintenance of old system;
- Lose potential customers.

# Good Reasons to Go Into Technical Debt

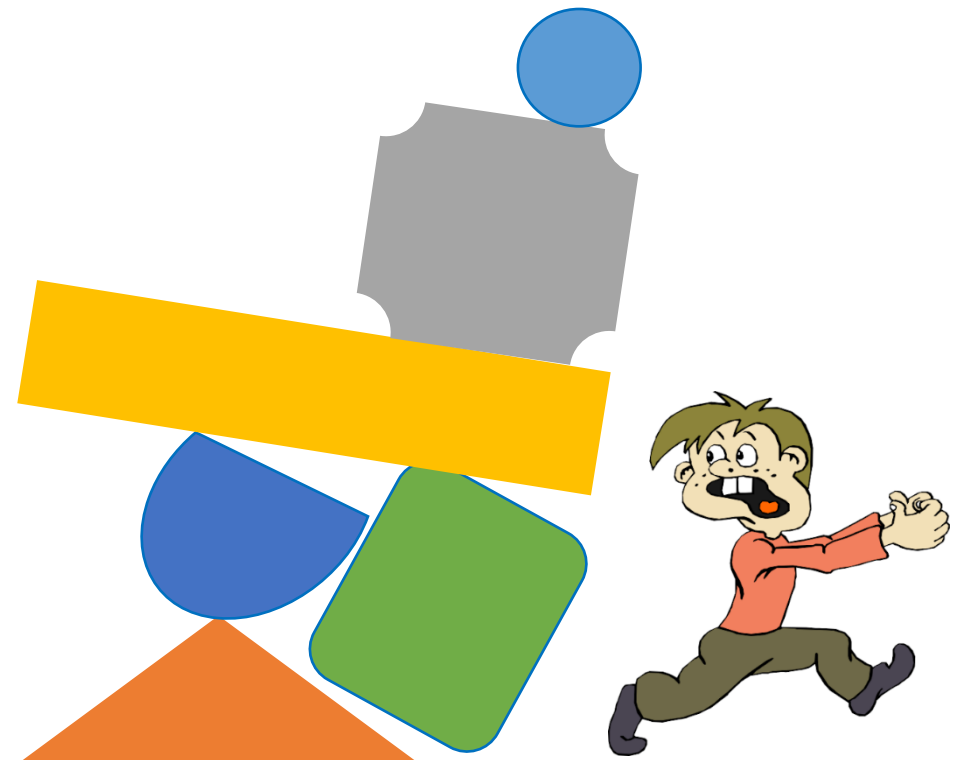
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- Prototyping:
  - If code will be discarded, or drastically rewritten, don't waste time perfecting it.
- Getting a product out the door:
  - Time is often crucial in a competitive environment.
- Fixing a critical failure:
  - People are waiting.
- Maybe a simple algorithm is good enough:
  - “Premature optimization is the root of all evil”
    - Tony Hoare, Donald Knuth

# Retire Technical Debt at Leisure

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- Set aside time to pay off technical debt:
  - Google has (had?) “20%-time” for tasks such as this.
- A new initiative can take on some technical debt:
  - Refactoring at the start of a project.
- Don’t keep on putting off!
  - When a crisis hits, it’s too late;
  - Hasty fixes to unmaintainable code multiplies problems;
  - Eventually mounting technical debt can bury the team.



# Review: Learning Objectives for this Lesson

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- You should now be able to:
  - Describe different kinds of “Refactoring”: restructuring of code to improve structure.
  - Review some common code “smells” (anti-patterns).
  - Identify the “technical debt” metaphor; Indicate when and where technical debt is appropriate to accrue versus retire.