

# CS 4530: Fundamentals of Software Engineering

## Lesson 11 Code Smells, Refactoring and Technical Debt

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# Outline of this lesson

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1. Some common code “smells” (anti-patterns).
2. “Refactoring”: restructuring of code to improve structure.
3. “Technical Debt”: generalization covering all internal problems in a code-base.

# Learning Objectives for this Lesson

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- By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:
  - Review several classes of code smells;
  - Describe several kinds of refactoring;
  - Identify the “technical debt” metaphor;
  - Indicate when and where technical debt is appropriate to accrue versus retire.

# “Code Smells” are Anti-Patterns

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- Cases of **poor** code:
  - Likely to harbor faults;
  - Difficult to use;
  - Expensive to maintain.
- Common and Known:
  - Each code smell has a name,
  - ... and a recommended fix.
- Example catalog:

<https://refactoring.guru/refactoring/smells>



(figure courtesy of Refactoring Guru)

# Code Smell Example (1 of 3)

```
class Product {  
    private _id : string;  
    private _desc : string;  
    private _weight : number;  
  
    public get id() { return this._id ; }  
    public set id( newID ) {  
        this._id = newID ;  
    }  
    public get desc() {  
        return this._desc ;  
    }  
    // set desc  
    // get weight, set weight  
}
```

- DATA CLASS
- A class has public properties (or public getters and setters) and few if any methods.
- How to fix:
  - Determine what is being done with class properties;
  - Make some properties immutable;
  - Define methods to perform tasks;
  - Reduce getters/setters.

## Code Smell Example (2 of 3)

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```
if ( this.width > lineSize ) {  
    warn('at beginning, too big');  
    this.width -= OVERFULL;  
}
```

// more code

```
if ( this.width > lineSize ) {  
    warn('before return, too big');  
    this.width -= OVERFULL;  
}
```

- DUPLICATED CODE
- The same (or very similar code) occurs more than once.
  - Multiplies maintenance work.
- How to Fix:
  - Extract the common code in a method;
  - Use that method where code was.

# Code Smell Example (3 of 3)

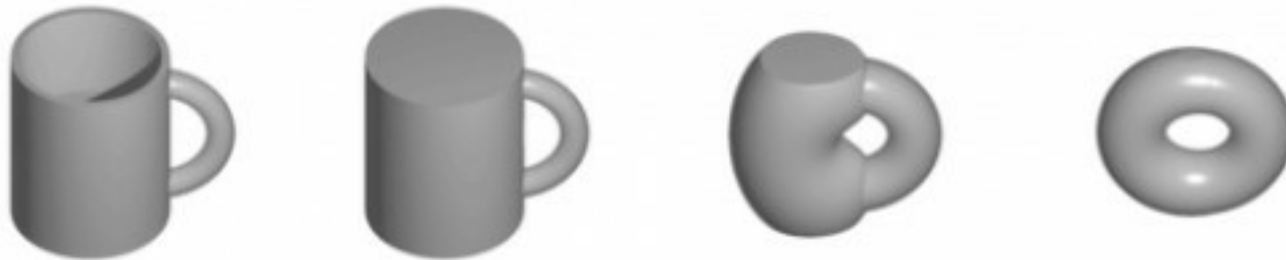
```
setUpPage
( USLetter.width      ,
  USLetter.height    ,
  recipe.getTitle     (),
  recipe.getContents  (),
  defaultFont        ,
  2, /* number of columns
true, /* number pages? */
false, /* balance? */
1.4, /* PDF level */
outputFile );
```

- TOOMANYPARAMETERS
- A method has a long list of parameters; difficult for clients to keep order and number straight.
- How to Fix:
  - Package up groups of related parameters in objects, or
  - Separate method into parts with fewer arguments.

# Refactoring is Code Restructuring

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- Code is reorganized:
  - No (executable) code is added or removed;
  - Code's behavior is preserved;
    - (not for fixing bugs!)
  - Change is reversible;
- Metaphor: topology-preserving transformations:





# Refactoring Can Improve Code

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- Refactoring can remove “smells”:
  - Bring together similar responsibilities;
  - Separate disjoint responsibilities.
- Refactoring can improve code flexibility:
  - It can add generality/abstraction;
  - This prepares for changes to come later.
- Refactoring can break code, if done wrong:
  - IDEs provide (usually) safe refactoring;
  - Use regression tests to double-check.

# Refactoring Example (1 of 3)

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- EXTRACT LOCAL
- Pull an expression out into a named local variable.
- (In this case, preparing for next step so that duplicates can become identical.)

```
if ( this.width > lineSize ) {  
    warn('at begin, too big');  
    this.width -= OVERFULL;  
}
```

```
const msg = ;  
if ( this.width > lineSize ) {  
    warn( 'at begin, too big'  
    this.width -= OVERFULL;  
}
```

# Refactoring Example (2 of 3)

- EXTRACT METHOD
- Pull out code with locals becoming formal parameters.

```
checkWidth ( lineSize:number ,  
            msg:string ) {  
  
  
  
  
}
```

```
const msg = 'at begin, too big';  
if ( this.width > lineSize ) {  
    warn(msg);  
    this.width -= OVERFULL;  
}
```

```
const msg = 'at begin, too big';  
this.checkWidth ( lineSize , msg );  
warn(msg);  
this.width -= OVERFULL;  
}
```

# Refactoring Example (3 of 3)

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- INLINE LOCAL
- Replace name with value.
- Inverse of EXTRACT LOCAL.

To avoid hard-coding,  
the next task would be to  
EXTRACT CONSTANT.

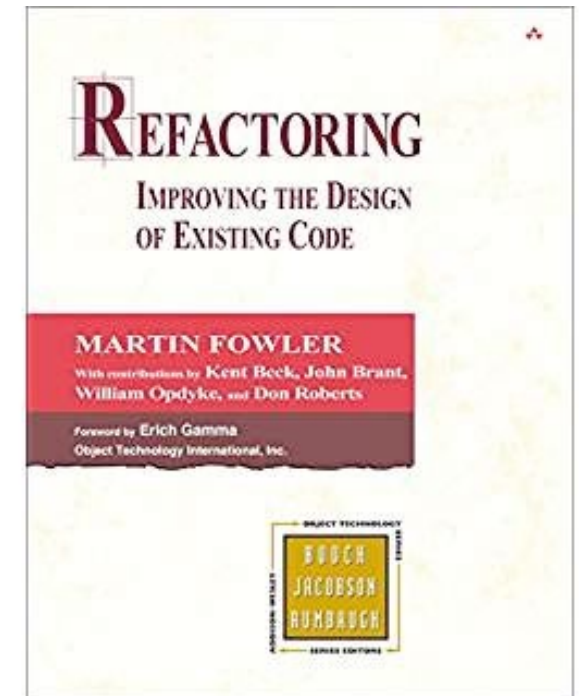
```
const msg = 'at begin, too big';  
this.checkWidth ( lineSize , msg);
```

```
const msg = 'at begin,; too big'  
this.checkWidth ( lineSize , msg);
```

# More Refactoring

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- EXTRACT INTERFACE / EXTRACT ABSTRACT CLASS
- INTRODUCE PARAMETER
  - Take out special case from function into new argument.
- MAKE STATIC / MAKE INSTANCE
- MOVE METHOD (to new class)
- [...]



# Technical Debt is Sum of Internal Problems in Project Codebase

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- **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 Exacts Interest During Maintenance (Usually)

## 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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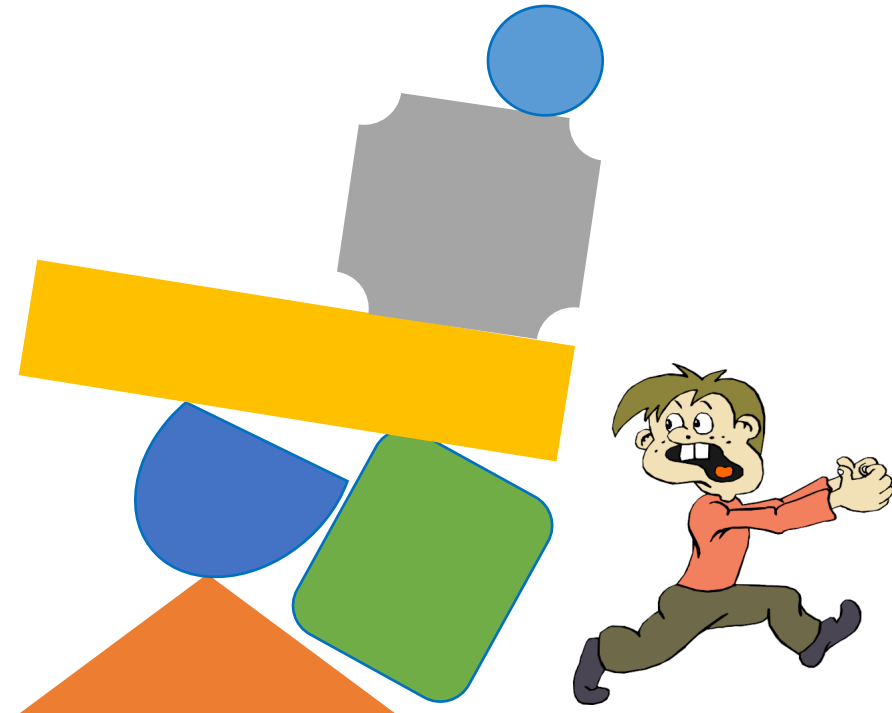
- Prototyping:
  - If code will be discarded, or drastically rewritten, don't waste time perfecting it.
- Getting a product out the door:
  - Time is often crucial in a competitive environment.
- Fixing a critical failure:
  - People are waiting.
- Maybe a simple algorithm is good enough:
  - “Premature 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:
  - Review several classes of code smells;
  - Describe several kinds of refactoring;
  - Identify the “technical debt” metaphor;
  - Indicate when and where technical debt is appropriate to accrue versus retire.