

"Code Better C#"

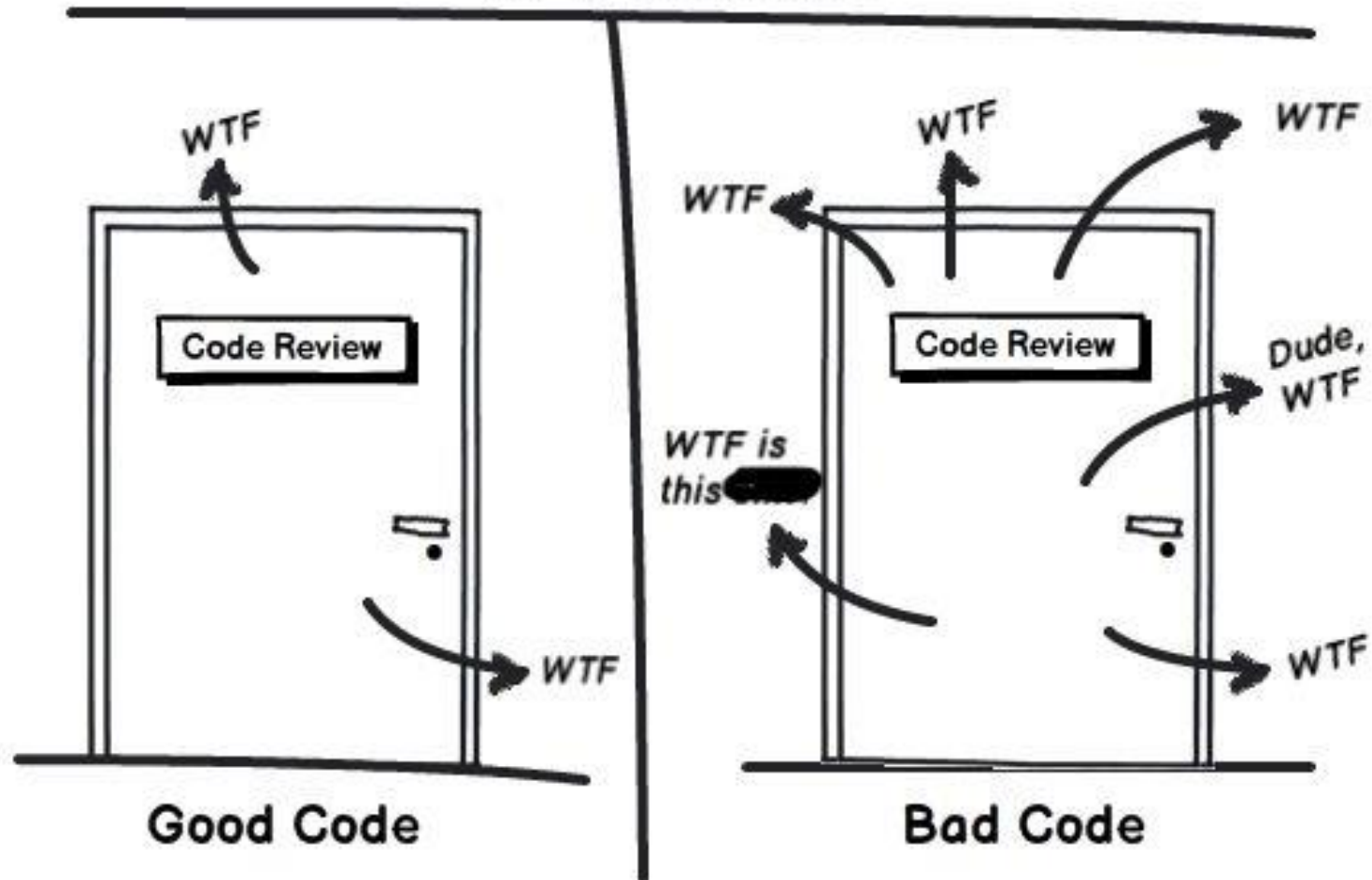
PROSA Online Course

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Code Quality Measurement: WTFs/Minute

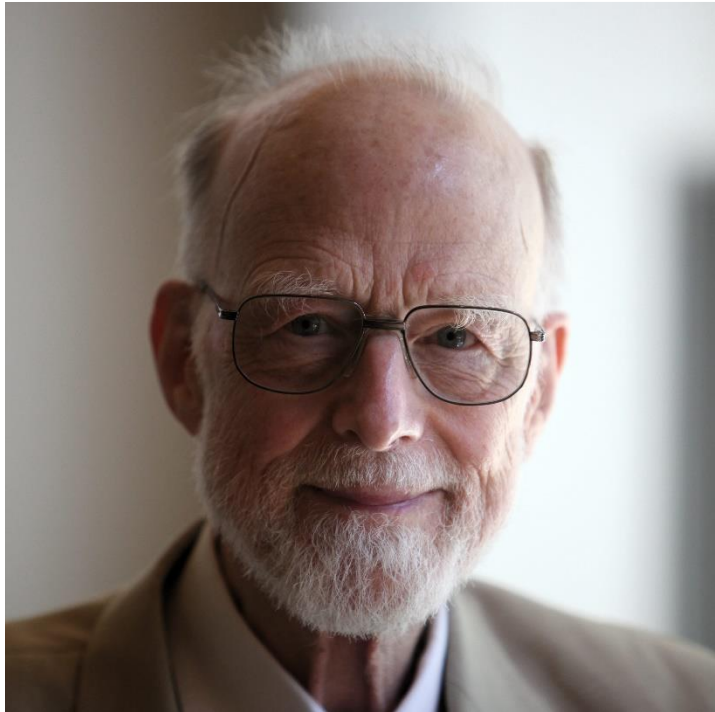


Agenda

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ **Nullable Reference Types and Records**
- ▶ Clean Code
- ▶ Exception Do's and Don'ts
- ▶ *If Time Permits*: Code Complexity
- ▶ Curing Primitive Obsession
- ▶ Summary



Null References: "The Billion-dollar Mistake"



"I call it my billion-dollar mistake. It was the invention of the null reference in 1965. At that time, I was designing the first comprehensive type system for references in an object oriented language (ALGOL W). My goal was to ensure that all use of references should be absolutely safe, with checking performed automatically by the compiler. But I couldn't resist the temptation to put in a null reference, simply because it was so easy to implement. This has led to innumerable errors, vulnerabilities, and system crashes, which have probably caused a billion dollars of pain and damage in the last forty years."

– Tony Hoare 2009



Introducing Nullable Reference Types

- ▶ C# 8 allows declaring intent of reference types
 - *Nonnullable Reference Types*
 - A reference is not supposed to be null
 - *Nullable Reference Types*
 - A reference is allowed to be null

```
class Person
{
    public string  FirstName { get; } // Non-nullable string
    public string? MiddleName { get; } // Nullable string
    public string  LastName { get; }  // Non-nullable string

    ...
}
```

- ▶ Traditionally, C# reference types do not make this distinction!



Static Analysis

- ▶ Produces compile-time static analysis warning when
 - Setting a **nonnullable** to null
 - Dereferencing a **nullable** reference

```
class Person
{
    public string FirstName { get; }
    public string? MiddleName { get; }
    public string LastName { get; }

    public Person( string firstName ) => FirstName = firstName;

    int GetLengthOfMiddleName( Person p ) => p.MiddleName.Length;
}
```


Null-forgiving Operator

- ▶ You can assert to the compiler that a reference is not null using the *Null-forgiving Operator* !

```
class Person
{
    public string FirstName { get; }
    public string? MiddleName { get; }
    public string LastName { get; }

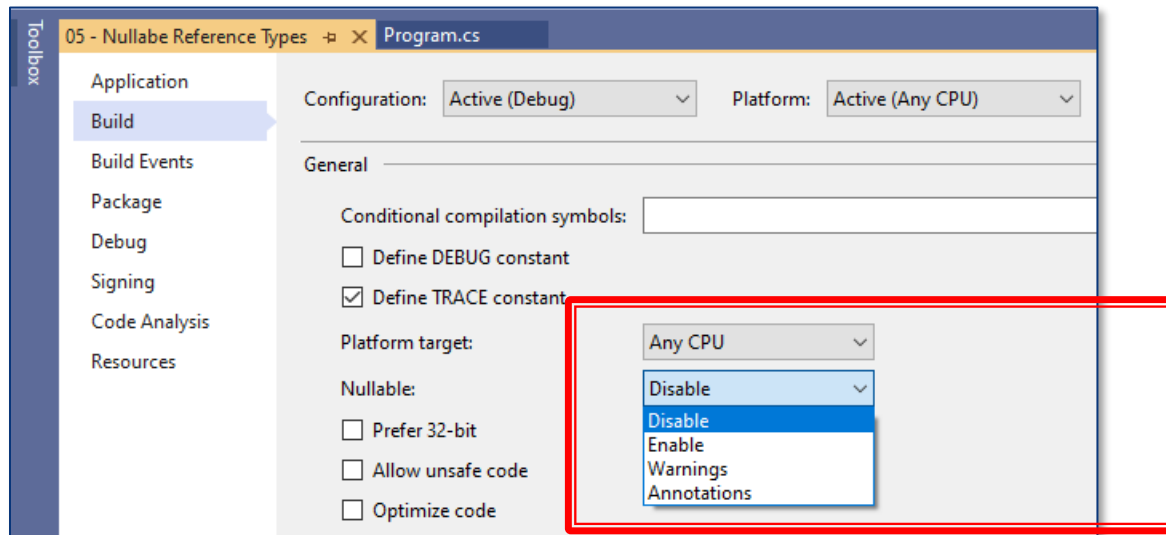
    public Person( string firstName ) => FirstName = firstName;

    int GetLengthOfMiddleName( Person p ) => p.MiddleName!.Length;
}
```



Wait a Minute...!?

- ▶ Not Backwards Compatible with C# 7.x!
- ▶ Behavior can be controlled in Project Properties



- ▶ Nullable Contexts
 - Annotations
 - Warnings

Init-only Setters

- ▶ Restricted setter only allowing initialization:

```
public sealed class Album
{
    public string Artist { get; init; }
    public string AlbumName { get; init; }
    public DateTime ReleaseDate { get; init; }

    ...
}
```

- ▶ Can have usual visibility on init-only setter
- ▶ Can not have both **init** and **set**...!



Records

- ▶ Records are simpler, immutable classes

```
record Person(string FirstName, string LastName);
```

- ▶ Defines init-only properties with “Primary Constructors”
- ▶ Can have additional properties + methods, of course

```
record Album(string Artist, string AlbumName, DateTime ReleaseDate)
{
    public int Age
    {
        get { ... }
    }
}
```

Built-in Features of Records

- ▶ Overrides
 - **ToString()**
 - **Equals()** (Implements **IEquatable<T>**)
 - **GetHashCode()**
 - **==** and **!=**
- ▶ What about **ReferenceEquals**?
- ▶ Supplies built-in deconstructors



Mutation-free Copying

- ▶ Additional keyword: Create copies using **with**

```
Album album = new Album("Prince",  
                        "Purple Rain",  
                        new DateTime(1984, 11, 02));  
  
Album renamed = album with  
{  
    Artist = "The Artist Formerly Known as..."  
};
```

- ▶ Does not mutate source record
 - Copies and replaces



Records and Inheritance

- ▶ Almost all OO aspects are identical to classes
 - Visibility, parameters, etc.
 - But Records and Classes cannot mix inheritance!
- ▶ Can override and change built-in method overrides, if needed



Required Members

- ▶ Express that a member must be initialized during construction
 - *Not* required to be initialized to a valid nullable state at the end of the constructor

```
record class Person
{
    public required string FirstName { get; init; }
    public string? MiddleName { get; init; }
    public required string LastName { get; init; }
}
```

- ▶ Defer the check to the site of object construction
- ▶ Help address the shortcoming of nullability checks for reference types of C# 8
- ▶ But are actually completely orthogonal to non-nullable reference types
 - Also work for nullable types etc.



[SetsRequiredMembers]

- ▶ Asserts that a specific constructor initializes all required members

```
record class Person
{
    ...
    [SetsRequiredMembers]
    public Person(string firstName, string lastName)
    {
        FirstName = firstName;
        LastName = lastName;
    }
}
```

- ▶ Essentially this is the “!” of required members at the constructor level
- ▶ Note: Static analysis does *not* check whether correct!



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What is Clean Code?

- ▶ Make code readable
- ▶ Reflect intent
- ▶ Express yourself in code
- ▶ Originally:
 - Published set of rules
- ▶ Modern interpretation:
 - Subjective set of recommendations
 - Broadly accepted as becoming technology-specific

"Even bad code can function. But if code isn't clean, it can bring a development organization to its knees"

- Clean Code by Robert C. Martin



CBC#1: Early Return Principle

- ▶ Turn failed guard clauses into quick returns
- ▶ One of the steps to avoid deeply nested structures



CBC#2: Use Nonnullable Reference Types

- ▶ (Non)nullability of reference types make C# powerfully expressible
 - Use it! Always..! (All the time! No buts... 😊)
- ▶ This will actually remove quite many guard clauses altogether
- ▶ Prefer using the **required** keyword instead of multiple overloads of constructors
 - The **init** accessor is your friend



CBC#3: Name Booleans Positively

- ▶ Always name boolean variables, fields, and methods as
 - **Is**Xxx
 - **Has**Yyy
- ▶ Use positive version of boolean proposition
 - Better for complex boolean expressions
 - Avoids double negatives



CBC#4: Merge Multiple If-statements

- ▶ Enhance readability and conciseness by collapsing
 - If-statements
 - Boolean expressions



CBC#5: Replace Boolean Expressions with Descriptive Methods

- ▶ Introduce more variables and methods if necessary
 - Provide "comments in code"
 - Are searchable
 - Minimize need for actual textual comments



CBC#6: Use LINQ for Conciseness

- ▶ Always prefer LINQ for precision, reusability, and clarity
- ▶ Don't worry about micro-optimizations...!



CBC#7: No Magic Numbers or Strings

- ▶ Replace magic numbers with constants
- ▶ Replace magic strings with enums



CBC#8: Prefer String Interpolation over Concatenation

- ▶ Type-safe and more performant alternative to concatenation
- ▶ Use raw string literals for structured strings



CBC#9: Express Fields and Primary Constructors

- ▶ In general:
 - Use **_xxx** for fields and **xxx** for variables
- ▶ In primary constructors
 - Use **_xxx** when captured
 - Use **xxx** when not captured.



CBC#10: Embrace Pattern Matchings

- ▶ Readability in syntax duality
 - Object initializers create
 - Pattern matchings check



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CBC#11: Throw Custom Exceptions

- ▶ Never throw generic Exceptions!
- ▶ At least throw specific exception
- ▶ But prefer throwing custom exceptions
 - Can use contextual information in Exception, e.g. OrderId
 - Can match on such information in
 - Exception when clauses
 - Pattern matching



Lippert's Exception Taxonomy

- ▶ Eric Lippert classifies exceptions into four exception categories
 - ▶ Fatal
 - ▶ Boneheaded
 - ▶ Vexing
 - ▶ Exogenous
- ▶ Stephen Cleary expands of this classification in
 - <https://blog.stephencleary.com/2011/03/exception-types.html>



Fatal Exceptions

- ▶ **Definition:** Fatal exceptions are *not your fault*, and you *cannot sensibly clean up from them*.
- ▶ **Examples:** Out of memory, thread aborted.
- ▶ **Resolution:** Don't catch; let them crash the program.
- ▶ **Design:** Don't ever throw fatal exceptions directly.



Boneheaded Exceptions

- ▶ **Definition:** Boneheaded exceptions are *violations of the API*, and are *bugs in your code*.
- ▶ **Examples:** Argument is null, index out of range.
- ▶ **Resolution:** Don't catch; fix them in the code.
- ▶ **Design:** Use code contracts for boneheaded exceptions; do not document the specific exception type.



Vexing Exceptions

- ▶ **Definition:** Vexing exceptions are due to *bad design decisions*, thrown in *non-exceptional situations*.
- ▶ **Examples:** Parsing errors.
- ▶ **Resolution:** Avoid calling vexing functions; if not possible, catch the vexing exception.
- ▶ **Design:** Don't ever throw vexing exceptions.



Exogenous Exceptions

- ▶ **Definition:** Exogenous exceptions are from *unpredictable, external influences*.
- ▶ **Examples:** File not found, resource already in use.
- ▶ **Resolution:** Always catch and handle.
- ▶ **Design:** Throw exogenous exceptions as necessary; document the specific exception type.



Alternative: Result Object Pattern

- ▶ **Some** people advocate the Result Object Pattern as an alternative to using exceptions
- ▶ Pattern:
 - Create a return type to be returned from method
 - Contains
 - Result type (when processing was success)
 - Error indication (when processing was unsuccessful)



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Code Metrics Values in Visual Studio

- ▶ Visual Studio can generate code metrics data to measure complexity and maintainability of your code
- ▶ Main metrics are:
 - Maintainability Index
 - Cyclomatic Complexity
 - Depth of Inheritance
 - Class Coupling
- ▶ Additionally:
 - Lines of Source Code
 - Lines of Executable Code
- ▶ <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/visualstudio/code-quality/code-metrics-values?view=vs-2022>



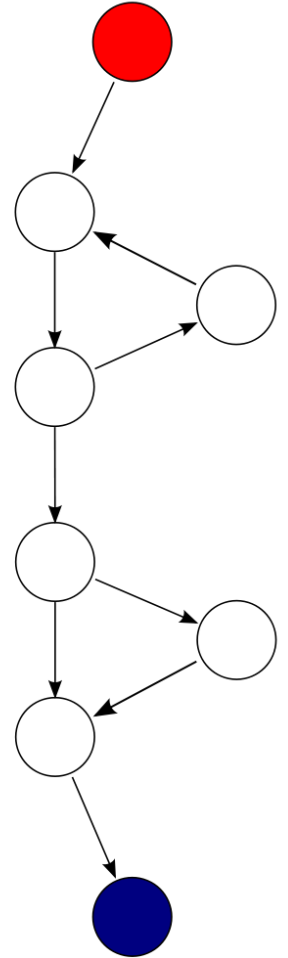
How to Generate Code Metrics Values

- ▶ Generate code metrics in Visual Studio via
 - **Analyze > Calculate Code Metrics**
- ▶ Alternatively;
 - Enable .NET code quality analyzers in Solution Explorer or **EditorConfig** file
 - Command line



Cyclomatic Complexity

- ▶ Measures the amount of decision logic in a source code function
 - ~ number of paths through a method
- ▶ Influenced by boolean operators, **if**, **switch**, **while**, ...
- ▶ Lower is good
- ▶ Higher is bad
 - indicates more tests needed to cover it
 - indicates harder to maintain



Maintainability Index

- ▶ Calculates an index value between 0 and 100 that represents the relative ease of maintaining the code
 - ~ Complexity per program parts

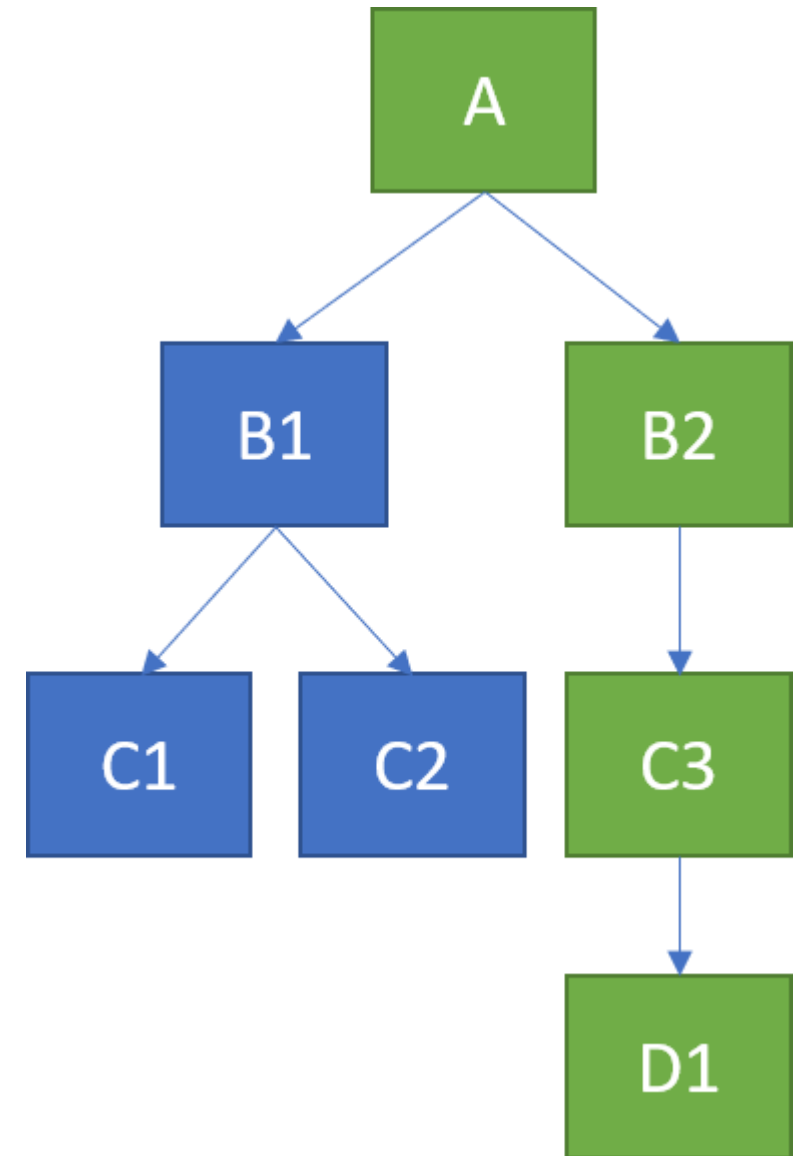
Size of program's size in "bits"

$$\text{Maintainability Index} = \text{Max}(\begin{aligned} &0, \\ &(171 - 5.2 * \ln(\text{Halstead Volume}) \\ &\quad - 0.23 * (\text{Cyclomatic Complexity}) \\ &\quad - 16.2 * \ln(\text{Lines of Code}) \\ &)*100 / 171 \end{aligned})$$

- ▶ Higher is good
 - 0-9 10-19 20-100

Depth of Inheritance

- ▶ Measures the depth of longest inheritance chain from root to leaf classes
- Lower
 - implies less complexity but also the possibility of less code reuse through inheritance.
- Higher
 - implies more potential for code reuse through inheritance but also higher complexity with a higher probability of errors in the code.



Class Coupling

- ▶ Measures the coupling to unique classes through
 - parameters, local variables, return types, method calls, generic or template instantiations, base classes, interface implementations, fields defined on external types, and attribute decoration
- ▶ ~ how many “custom” types the class uses
- ▶ Lower is good
 - High cohesion and low coupling is preferred
- ▶ Higher is bad
 - Difficult to reuse and maintain due to interdependencies on other types



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What is Primitive Obsession?

- ▶ "Primitive Obsession" ~ Code smell where primitive data types only are used for modelling your domain classes and objects
- ▶ String is not your friend!
- ▶ Type-safety is lost
- ▶ Validation logic is scattered and/or duplicated



Doctor's Prescriptions

- ▶ Cure primitive obsession by
 - Create value objects
 - Validation
 - Create strongly-typed id types
 - Type-safety
 - Refactor scattered algorithms into Strategy objects
- ▶ Consider reusability and/or "frameworks" for value objects and types



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