

Software Quality, Verification, and Validation

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Feb 2023

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Chapter no. 1

Software Quality, Verification, and Validation

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Problems in our society

Our society depends on software, cars, water, energy, computers, everything is controlled by software.

Flawed software will hurt profits, fixing a bug after release and delivery is much more expensive than fixing it before its release. Even if bugs aren't noticeable by the end users or the company hosting it, bugs can lead to security exploits, and later breaches.

Flawed software can even hurt users directly, e.g. pacemaker crashing or av making a wrong turn.

1.1.2 Why this course

- What is "good" software?
we determine this through quality dependencies
- What is the key to good software?
Verification and Validation.
- Exploration of testing and analysis activities of the V and V process

1.2 When is software ready for reease?

1.2.1 The short answers

- We can't find any bugs
- When we have finished testing
- When quality is high

1.2.2 The long answer

We all want high-quality software, but be don't all agree what that means.

- We can't find any bugs
but we can't find all bugs.
- When we have finished testing
but we can't test everything.

- When quality is high
but we don't know what that means.

We need to define what we mean by quality, and how we can measure it.

Quality attributes

- Performance
Ability to meet timing requirements
- Security
Ability to protect information
- Scalability
Ability to grow the system to process more concurrent requests
- Availability
Ability to carry out the task whenever needed
- Modifiability
Ability to enhance the software to meet new requirements or fix bugs
- Testability
Ability to easily find faults in the software
- Interoperability
Exchange information with other systems
- Usability
Ability to be used by the intended audience and perform required tasks
How easy it is to learn to use the software

These can easily conflict with each other, its important to decide what to prioritize and set a threshold of what's good enough.

1.2.3 When is software ready for release?

It's ready for release when it's **dependable**. This means it needs to be correct, reliable.

1.3 Verification and Validation

1.3.1 Verification

The process of checking that a system meets its requirements.

Are we building the product right?

Verification is an experiment. We perform trials, evaluate the results, and gather information about what and why it happened.

Testing

An investigation into system quality, it's based on sequences of stimulations and observations. The software version of a lab rat we later dissect to analyze what failed.

1.3.2 Validation

The process of proving that it meets the specifications set by the customer.

Are we building the right product?

Does the product work in the real world? Even if the software does exactly what we set out to do, it might not be what the customer wants.

1.3.3 Conclusion

Verification checks if the software works as intended.

Validation checks that the software is useful. (This is much harder)

Both are important and complete each other. This class however, focuses largely on verification.

- Testing is the primary activity of verification.

1.4 Required level of V and V

Depends on:

- Software Purpose
The more critical, the more important that it works
- User Expectations
Some users are more forgiving than others
- Marketing environment
With competing products in a market, it might be more important to release a product quickly than to make it perfect.

1.4.1 Basic questions

1. When do verification start and end?
 - It should start as soon as the project starts
we need to know what we're building and how design/technical choices affect our product's quality
A great starting point is static verification
 - It ends when the product is released
A great way of verifying during the development process is through dynamic verification
2. How do we obtain an acceptable level of quality at an acceptable cost?
3. How do we decide when it's ready to release?
4. How can we control quality during the development process?

1.5 Trade offs

There's always a trade-off when designing software, "Better, faster, or cheaper - pick any two".

1.5.1 Verification Trade-offs

We are interested in proving that a program demonstrates property X

- Pessimism inaccuracy
Not guaranteed to program even if X is true
- Optimism inaccuracy
May be true, even if X is false
- Property Complexity
if X is too difficult to check, substitute with simpler property Y

Finding all faults is nearly impossible, instead we need to decide ourselves when we are ready for release, how good is good enough?

We need to establish criteria for what is good enough, and what is not. One way of doing this is through **Alpha/Beta testing** where a small group of users gets the chance to use the product in a somewhat controlled environment and reports feedback and failures.

Chapter no. 2

Quality Attributes and Measurement

2.1 Quality Attributes

Developers prioritize attributes and design systems that meet their needs.

2.1.1 Availability

Ability to avoid completely or recover quickly from failures. Redundancy.

2.1.2 Performance

Ability to meet timing or throughput requirements. The system needs to be able to respond quickly to events.

2.1.3 Scalability

Ability to scale the system performance to meet increased load. The system needs to be able to handle more concurrent requests.

2.1.4 Security

Ability to protect information. The system needs to be able to protect information from unauthorized access while still allowing authorized access.

2.2 Scalability

2.2.1 When is software ready for release?

It's ready for release when it's **dependable**. This means it needs to be correct, reliable, safe, and robust.

Correctness

A program is correct if it is always consistent with its specification. This depends on quality and detail of requirements, it's really easy to build a correct program with a weak specification, but if it's too detailed it becomes impossible to prove your program is completely correct.

More often than not, correctness is something we aim for, not prove.

Reliability

A statistical approximation of correctness, the probability that the program will perform correctly during a given period of time under a given set of conditions. We test reliability by running the program as different types of user profiles, and mainly focuses on reliability for our target audience.

Dependence on specifications

Correctness and reliability are dependent on the quality and strength of the specification. The more detailed the specification, the more likely the program is to be correct and reliable in the real world.

Correctness and reliability doesn't consider the severity of different crashes and bugs, a program that crashes once a year is more reliable than one that crashes once a day while in the real world it might be better with a daily crash than leaking all personal data once a year.

Safety

Safety is the ability to avoid hazards. We specify a set of undesirable situations, hazards, and prove that our program avoids them.

Robustness

Software that is correct may fail when our design assumptions are violated; *how* it fails matters. Software that gracefully fails is robust, e.g. if we tries to save a program to a read-only disk, the program should tell us what wet wrong gracefully instead of crashing.

Robustness cannot be proven, but is rather a goal to aspire to.

2.2.2 Dependability

We could have software that is reliable, but not correct, or correct but not safe, or robust but not safe. We need to consider all of these attributes when we talk about dependability.

Measuring Dependability

We need to establish criteria for when our system is dependable enough for release.

Correctness is too hard to prove conclusively for most programs.

Robustness and safety is important, but doesn't prove that our program functions correctly.

Reliability is the basis for arguing dependability, we can measure it, and we can demonstrate it through testing.

2.3 Reliability

Reliability is the probability of failure-free operation for a specified time in a specified environment for a given purpose. This depends heavily on the system and user type.

2.3.1 Improving reliability

Reliability is improved when faults in our most frequently used parts are removed, this means that a program is more or less reliable for different users.

2.3.2 Reliability is measurable

Reliability can be defined and measured. We can specify requirements (both functional and non-functional) and measure how well our program meets them.

2.3.3 How to measure reliability

Hardware metrics often aren't suitable for software, since in hardware it can only hard crash and we can assume that the design of the hardware is correct.

With software most of the failures are design failures, and when a system has failed the system is often still available.

Availability

Can the software carry out its given task when needed. Can the system avoid failures, and recover quickly from failures. Can the system keep working for other users when it has crashed for one?

Availability is only a measurement of whether the system is available, not whether it's correct or reliable meaning incorrect computations or security isn't considered.

Availability is also a standalone quality attribute. We can through design prevent, tolerate, remove, or forecast failures. We can keep our system partially available more easily than hardware.

Probability of Failure on Demand (POFOD)

Likelihood that a single request will result in failure. A POFOD of 0.001 means that there is a 0.1% chance that a single request will fail. This is used in situations where failure is unacceptable, e.g. a medical system.

Rate of Occurrence of Fault (ROCOF)

Frequency of occurrence of unexpected behaviour. A ROCOF of 0.02 means that we have 2 failure per 100 time units. Is appropriate when requests are made regularly, like a web server.

Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF)

Average time between failures. If we have a system that is used for long sessions, especially where users might only save their data once every few hours or so, it might be important to prevent crashes happening too often.