Lecture 18: Non-Functional Requirements (NFRs)

Definitions

- Quality criteria; metrics
- Example NFRs

Product-oriented Software Qualities

- Making quality criteria specific
- Catalogues of NFRs
- Example: Reliability

Process-oriented Software Qualities

- Softgoal analysis for design tradeoffs

Example NFRs

- Interface requirements
  - how will the new system interface with its environment?
  - Interfaces with other systems
- Performance requirements
  - time/space bounds
  - reliability
  - the availability of components
  - integrity of information maintained and supplied to the system
  - security
  - e.g. permissible information flows, or who can do what
- Lifecycle requirements
  - "future-proofing"
  - limits on development
  - e.g. development time limitations, resource availability
- Operating requirements
  - physical constraints (size, weight)
  - personnel availability & skill level
  - environmental conditions
- etc
- Economic requirements
  - e.g. restrictions on immediate and/or long-term costs.

What are Non-functional Requirements?

- Functional vs. Non-Functional
  - Functional requirements describe what the system should do
    - things that can be captured in use cases
    - things that can be analyzed by drawing sequence diagrams, statecharts, etc.
  - Non-functional requirements are global constraints on a software system
    - e.g. development costs, operational costs, performance, reliability, maintainability, portability, robustness etc.
    - Often known as the "ilities"
    - Usually cannot be implemented in a single module of a program

- The challenge of NFRs
  - Hard to model
  - Usually stated informally, and so are:
    - often contradictory,
    - difficult to enforce during development
    - difficult to evaluate for the customer prior to delivery
  - Hard to make them measurable requirements
    - We'd like to state them in a way that we can measure how well they've been met

Approaches to NFRs

- Product vs. Process?
  - Product-oriented Approaches
    - Focus on system (or software) quality
    - Aim is to have a way of measuring the product once it's built
  - Process-oriented Approaches
    - Focus on how NFRs can be used in the design process
    - Aim is to have a way of making appropriate design decisions

- Quantitative vs. Qualitative?
  - Quantitative Approaches
    - Find measurable scales for the quality attributes
    - Calculate degree to which a design meets the quality targets
  - Qualitative Approaches
    - Study various relationships between quality goals
    - Reason about trade-offs etc.
Software Qualities

- Think of an everyday object
  - e.g. a chair
  - How would you measure it’s “quality”?
    - construction quality? (e.g. strength of the joints,…)
    - aesthetic value? (e.g. elegance,…)
    - fit for purpose? (e.g. comfortable,…)

- All quality measures are relative
  - there is no absolute scale
  - we can sometimes say A is better than B,… but it is usually hard to say how much better!

- For software:
  - construction quality?
    - software is not manufactured
  - aesthetic value?
    - but most of the software is invisible
    - aesthetic value matters for the user interface, but is only a marginal concern
  - fit for purpose?
    - Need to understand the purpose

Fitness

- Software quality is all about fitness to purpose
  - e.g. does it do what is needed?
  - does it do it in the way that its users need it to?
  - does it do it reliably enough? fast enough? safely enough? securely enough?
  - will it be affordable? will it be ready when its users need it?
  - can it be changed as the needs change?

- Quality is not a measure of software in isolation
  - it measures the relationship between software and its application domain
  - …and the quality will be different in different environments!
  - during design, we need to predict how well the software will fit its purpose
  - during requirements analysis, we need to understand how fitness-for-purpose will be measured
  - What is the intended purpose?
  - What quality factors will matter to the stakeholders?
  - How should those factors be operationalized?

Factors vs. Criteria

- Quality Factors
  - These are customer-related concerns
    - Examples: efficiency, integrity, reliability, correctness, survivability, usability,…

- Design Criteria
  - These are technical (development-oriented) concerns such as anomaly management, completeness, consistency, traceability, visibility,…

- Quality Factors and Design Criteria are related:
  - Each factor depends on a number of associated criteria:
    - E.g. correctness depends on completeness, consistency, traceability,…
  - E.g. verifiability depends on modularity, self-descriptiveness and simplicity
  - There are some standard mappings to help you…

- During Analysis:
  - Identify the relative importance of each quality factor
    - From the customer’s point of view
  - Identify the design criteria on which these factors depend
  - Make the requirements measurable

Boehm’s NFR list

- General utility
- As-is utility
- Maintenability
- Understandability
- Modifiability
- Portability
- Self-containedness
- Accuracy
- Completeness
- Reliability
- Robustness/integrity
- Consistency
- Accountability
- Device efficiency
- Accessibility
- Communicativeness
- Self-descriptiveness
- Structuredness
- Conciseness
- Legibility
- Augmentability

Source:
- See Blum, 1992, p176
Making Requirements Measurable

We have to turn our vague ideas about quality into measurables

The Quality Concepts
(abstract notions of quality properties)

examples...

Measureable Quantities
(define some metrics)

Counts taken from Design Representations
(realization of the metrics)

Example: Measuring Reliability

Definition
- the ability of the system to behave consistently in a user-acceptable manner when operating within the environment for which it was intended.

Comments:
- Reliability can be defined in terms of a percentage (say, 99.999%)
- This may have different meaning for different applications:
  - Telephone network: the entire network can fail no more than, on average, 1hr per year, but failures of individual switches can occur much more frequently
  - Patient monitoring system: the system may fail for up to 1hr/year, but in those cases doctors/nurses should be alerted of the failure. More frequent failure of individual components is not acceptable.
- Best we can do may be something like:
  - "...No more than X bugs per 10KLOC may be detected during integration and testing; no more than Y bugs per 10KLOC may remain in the system after delivery", as calculated by the Monte Carlo seeding technique of appendix Z; the system must be 100% operational 99.9% of the calendar year during its first year of operation..."
### Measuring Reliability...

- **Example reliability requirement:**
  - "The software shall have no more than X bugs per thousand lines of code"
  - ...But is it possible to measure bugs at delivery time?

- **Use bebugging**
  - Measures the effectiveness of the testing process
  - A number of seeded bugs are introduced to the software system
    - Then testing is done and bugs are uncovered (seeded or otherwise)
  - Number of bugs = \( \# \) of seeded bugs \( \times \) \( \# \) of detected bugs in system
    \( \div \# \) of detected seeded bugs
  - ...BUT, not all bugs are equally important!

### Example model: Reliability growth

- **Motorola's Zero-failure testing model**
  - Predicts how much more testing is needed to establish a given reliability goal
  - Basic model:
    \[ \text{failures} = \frac{\text{fd}}{e^{bt}} \]
  - Reliability estimation process:
    - Inputs needed:
      - \( fd \) = target failure density (e.g., 0.03 failures per 1000 LOC)
      - \( tf \) = total test failures observed so far
      - \( th \) = total testing hours up to the last failure
    - Calculate number of further test hours needed using:
      \[ \ln(\frac{fd}{0.5 + fd}) \times th \]
      \[ \ln(\frac{0.5 + fd}{tf + fd}) \]
    - Result gives the number of further failure free hours of testing needed to establish the desired failure density
    - If a failure is detected in this time, you stop the clock and recalculate
  - Note: this model ignores operational profiles!

### Making Requirements Measurable

- **Define ‘fit criteria’ for each requirement**
  - Give the ‘fit criteria’ alongside the requirement
    - E.g., for new ATM software:
      - Requirement: "The software shall be intuitive and self-explanatory"
      - ‘Fit Criteria’:
        - "95% of existing bank customers shall be able to withdraw money and deposit cheques within two minutes of encountering the product for the first time"
  - Choosing good fit criteria:
    - Stakeholders are rarely this specific
    - The right criteria might not be obvious:
      - Things that are easy to measure aren’t necessarily what the stakeholders want
        - Standard metrics aren’t necessarily what stakeholders want
    - Stakeholders need to construct their own mappings from requirements to fit criteria

### Using softgoal analysis

- **Goal types:**
  - Non-functional Requirement
  - Satisficing Technique
    - E.g., a design choice
  - Claim
    - Reporting/explaining a choice
  - **Contribution Types:**
    - AND links (decomposition)
    - OR links (alternatives)
    - Sup links (supports)
    - Sub links (necessary subgoal)
  - **Evaluation of goals:**
    - Satisfied
    - Denied
    - Conflicting
    - Undetermined
  - **Using softgoal analysis**
    - **Validity:**
      - Valued
      - Available
      - Managed
      - Claims (target values, max actual values, etc.)
**NFR Catalogues**

- Predefined catalogues of NFR decomposition
  - Provides a knowledge base to check coverage of an NFR
  - Provides a tool for elicitation of NFRs
  - Example: