XX. Object Design

What is Object Design?

Class Specifications and Interfaces

Cohesion and Coupling

Designing Associations

Integrity Constraints

Referential, Dependency and Domain Integrity

Object Design

- Within the architectural decisions of systems design, object design
  - Produces full definitions of classes, associations, algorithms
    & interfaces of operations;
  - Adds classes that will be useful during implementation;
  - Defines object interactions and object lifetimes in terms of
    interaction and state diagrams;
  - Optimises data structures and algorithms.

Class Specifications

- Attribute signature
  - name: `:´ type-expression `=´ initial-value `{property-string}`
- Operation signature
  - Operation name: `(´ parameter-list ´)´ `:´ return-type-expression
- Object Visibility
  - `+` Public -- The feature is directly accessible by any class;
  - `-` Private -- The feature may only be used by the class that
    includes it;
  - `#` Protected -- The feature maybe used by either the class that
    includes it or by a subclass of that class;

An Example

Class Interfaces

- An interface is a group of externally visible (public) operations.
- An interface is like a class, but contains no internal structure,
  has no attributes, no associations and no implementation of its
  operations.
- The realizes relationship indicates that the target class
  supports at least the operations listed in the interface
Criteria for Good Design: Cohesion and Coupling

- **Coupling** measures the degree of interconnectedness between design components.
- The degree of coupling is reflected by the number of links an object has, and by the degree of interaction the object has with other objects.
- Low coupling is preferable in a design for many good reasons, e.g., easier to understand and modify the design.

**Cohesion**, on the other hand, measures the degree to which an element (subsystem, module, or class) contributes to a single purpose.

Of course, we want a highly cohesive design.

Minimizing Coupling

- **Interaction coupling**
  - Measures the number of message types an object sends to other objects and the number of parameters passed with these message types;
  - Should be kept to a minimum in order to reduce the possibility of changes rippling through object interfaces;

- **Inheritance coupling**
  - Degree to which a subclass actually needs the features (attributes or operations) it inherits;
  - A subclass with unnecessary attributes or operations is more complex than it needs to be and instances of the subclass unnecessarily use up more memory.

Maximizing Cohesion

- **Operation cohesion**
  - Measure the degree to which an operation focuses on a single functional requirement.
  - Good design produces highly cohesive operations, each of which deals with a single functional requirement.

- **Class cohesion**
  - Degree to which a class is focused on a single requirement.

Good operation cohesion, ... but lousy class cohesion

Liskov Substitution Principle

- In class hierarchies, it should be possible to treat a specialized object as if it were a base object.

More Design Principles

- **Clarity** -- A design should be easy to understand.
- **Do not over-design** -- Developers are tempted to produce designs that may not only satisfy current requirements but may also be capable of supporting a wide range of future requirements.
- **Inheritance hierarchies** -- Neither too deep nor too shallow!
- **Keep messages and operations simple** -- Limit the numbers of parameters passed in a message, specify operations in no more than one page.
- **Design volatility** -- A good design should be stable in response to change in requirements; enforcing encapsulation is a key factor in producing stable systems.
- **Evaluation by scenario** -- Can be done with a role play based on use cases, using CRC cards.
- **Design by delegation** -- A complex object should be decomposed into component objects forming a composition or aggregation.
Designing Associations

- Each association needs to be analysed to determine whether it should be a one-way or a two-way association.
- Depending on multiplicities, we may use collection classes (e.g., lists).
- Need to ask questions about object visibility:
  - does object A need to know object B's object-id?
  - does it need to communicate to third-party objects the object-id?

Depending on multiplicities, we may use collection classes (e.g., lists).

Owner needs to send messages to Car but not vice versa.

Association may be implemented by placing an attribute to hold the object identifier for the Car class in Owner objects.

The object identifiers could be held in a simple one-dimensional array in the Campaign object, but program code would have to be written to manipulate the array.

Collection classes are useful for one-to-many associations.

Integrity Constraints

- We'll discuss three types of integrity constraints (…there are many others...)
- Referential Integrity ensures that an object identifier in an object actually refers to an object that exists.
- Dependency Integrity ensures that attribute dependencies are maintained, where one attribute may be calculated from other attributes.
- Domain Integrity ensures that attributes only hold permissible values

Referential Integrity

- A Campaign must have a CreativeStaff instance as its manager.
- What happens if the manager is deleted?
- Referential integrity is maintained by ensuring that the deletion of a CreativeStaff object that is a campaign manager always involves allocating a new campaign manager.
Dependency Constraints: Derived Attributes

- The value of a derived attribute may be calculated from other attributes.
- For example, the total advertising cost can be calculated by summing the individual advert costs and storing the value in the attribute `totalAdvertCost` in the Campaign class or by calculating every time it is required.
- However, whenever the cost of an advert changes, or an advert is either added to or removed from a campaign the `totalAdvertCost` attribute has to be adjusted.
- This can be done by sending message `adjustCost()` to the Campaign object.

Constraints Between Associations

- Enforced by placing a check in `assignChair()` to confirm that the `Employee` object identifier passed as a parameter is already in the collection class of committee members.

Designing Operations

- Determine the best algorithm for the required function.
- Factors constraining algorithm design:
  - The cost of implementation;
  - Performance constraints;
  - Requirements for accuracy;
  - The capabilities of the chosen platform.
- Factors to be considered when choosing among alternative algorithm designs:
  - The computational complexity of candidate algorithms;
  - Ease of implementation and understandability;
  - Flexibility;
  - Fine-tuning the object model.