The Toolbox

- Chapters 1-5 fill up a “toolbox” with useful criteria for testing software
- To move to level 3 (reducing risk) or level 4 (mental discipline of quality), testing must be integrated into the development process
- Most importantly:
  - In any activity, knowing the tools is only the first step
  - The key is utilizing the tools in effective ways
- Topics:
  - Regression testing (6.1)
  - Integrating software components and testing (6.2)
  - Integrating testing with development (6.3)
  - Test plans (6.4)
  - Checking the output (6.5)
Chapter 6 Outline

1. **Regression Testing**
2. Integration and Testing
3. Test Process
4. Test Plans
5. Identifying Correct Outputs
Regression Testing (6.1)

Definition

The process of re-testing software that has been modified

- Most software today has very little new development
  - Correcting, perfecting, adapting, or preventing problems with existing software
  - Composing new programs from existing components
  - Applying existing software to new situations
- Because of the deep interconnections among software components, changes in one method can cause problems in methods that seem to be unrelated
- Not surprisingly, most of our testing effort is regression testing
- Large regression test suites accumulate as programs (and software components) age
Automation and Tool Support

Regression tests **must** be automated

- **Too many** tests to be run by hand
- Tests must be run and evaluated **quickly**
  - Often overnight, or more frequently for web applications
- Testers do not have time to **view** the results by inspection
- Types of **tools**:
  - **Capture / Replay** – *Capture* values entered into a GUI and *replay* those values on new versions
  - **Version control** – Keeps track of collections of *tests*, expected *results*, where the tests *came from*, the *criterion* used, and their past *effectiveness*
  - **Scripting software** – Manages the process of obtaining test *inputs*, *executing* the software, obtaining the *outputs*, *comparing* the results, and generating *test reports*
- **Tools** are plentiful and inexpensive (often free)
Managing Tests in a Regression Suite

- Test suites accumulate new tests over time
- Test suites are usually run in a fixed, short, period of time
  - Often overnight, sometimes more frequently, sometimes less
- At some point, the number of tests can become unmanageable
  - We cannot finish running the tests in the time allotted
- We can always add more computer hardware
- But is it worth it?
- How many of these tests really need to be run?
Policies for Updating Test Suites

• Which tests to keep can be based on several policies
  – Add a new test for every problem report
  – Ensure that a coverage criterion is always satisfied

• Sometimes harder to choose tests to remove
  – Remove tests that do not contribute to satisfying coverage
  – Remove tests that have never found a fault (risky !)
  – Remove tests that have found the same fault as other tests (also risky !)

• Reordering strategies
  – If a suite of $N$ tests satisfies a coverage criterion, the tests can often be reordered so that the first $N-x$ tests satisfies the criterion – so the remaining tests can be removed
When a Regression Test Fails

- Regression tests are **evaluated** based on whether the test result on the new program $P$ is **equivalent** to the test result on the previous version $P-1$
  - If they **differ**, the test is considered to have **failed**
- Regression test failures represent **three possibilities**:
  - The **software** has a fault – *Must fix the fix*
  - The **test values** are no longer valid on the new version – *Must delete or modify the test*
  - The **expected output** is no longer valid – *Must update the test*
- Sometimes **hard to decide** which !!
Evolving Tests Over Time

- Changes to **external interfaces** can sometimes cause all tests to fail
  - Modern **capture / replay** tools will not be fooled by trivial changes like color, format, and placement
  - **Automated scripts** can be changed automatically via global changes in an editor or by another script

- Adding **one test** does not cost much – but over time the cost of these small additions start to pile up
Choosing Which Regression Tests to Run

Change Impact Analysis (CIA)

How does a change impact the rest of the software?

- When a **small change** is made in the software, what portions of the software can be **impacted** by that change?
- More directly, **which tests** need to be re-run?
  - *Conservative approach*: Run all tests
  - *Cheap approach*: Run only tests whose **test requirements** relate to the statements that were changed
  - *Realistic approach*: Consider how the **changes propagate** through the software
- Clearly, tests that **never reach** the modified statements do not need to be run
- Lots of **clever algorithms** to perform CIA have been invented
  - Few if any available in commercial tools
Rationales for Selecting Tests to Re-Run

- **Inclusive**: A selection technique is *inclusive* if it includes tests that are “modification revealing”
  - Unsafe techniques have less than 100% inclusiveness
- **Precise**: A selection technique is *precise* if it *omits regression tests* that are not modification revealing
- **Efficient**: A selection technique is *efficient* if deciding what tests to omit is *cheaper* than running the omitted tests
  - This can depend on how much automation is available
- **General**: A selection technique is *general* if it applies to most practical situations
Summary of Regression Testing

• We spend far more time on regression testing than on testing new software

• If tests are based on covering criteria, all problems are much simpler
  – We know why each test was created
  – We can make rationale decisions about whether to run each test
  – We know when to delete the test
  – We know when to modify the test

• Automating regression testing will save much more than it will cost
Chapter 6 Outline

1. Regression Testing

2. Integration and Testing

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Integration and Testing (6.2)

**Big Bang Integration**

Throw all the classes together, compile the whole program, and system test it

- The polite word for this is *risky*
  - Less polite words also exist …
- The usual method is to **start small**, with a few classes that have been tested thoroughly
  - Add a small number of new classes
  - Test the connections between the new classes and pre-integrated classes
- **Integration testing**: testing interfaces between classes
  - Should have already been tested in isolation (unit testing)
Methods, Classes, Packages

- **Integration** can be done at the **method** level, the **class** level, **package** level, or at **higher** levels of abstraction.
- Rather than trying to use **all those words** in every slide ...
- Or **not** using any specific word ...
- We use the word **component** in a generic sense.

- A **component** is a piece of a program that can be tested independently.

- **Integration testing** is done in several ways
  - Evaluating **two specific components**
  - Testing integration aspects of the **full system**
  - Putting the system together “piece by piece”
Software Scaffolding

- *Scaffolding* is extra software components that are created to support integration and testing.

- A **stub** emulates the results of a call to a method that has not been implemented or integrated yet.

- A **driver** emulates a method that makes calls to a component that is being tested.

```
Component Under Test (example: ADT)

Stubs
Emulates methods the CUT calls

Driver
Makes calls to methods in CUT
```
Stubs

- The **first responsibility** of a stub is to allow the CUT to be compiled and linked without error
  - The **signature** must match
- What if the called method needs to **return values**?
- These values will **not be the same** the full method would return
- It may be important for testing that they satisfy certain limited constraints

**Approaches:**

1. Return **constant values** from the stub
2. Return **random** values
3. Return values from a **table lookup**
4. Return values **entered by the tester** during execution
5. Processing **formal specifications** of the stubbed method

More costly / more effective
Drivers

• Many good programmers add drivers to every class as a matter of habit
  – Instantiate objects and carry out simple testing
  – Criteria from previous chapters can be implemented in drivers

• Test drivers can easily be created automatically

• Values can be hard-coded or read from files
Class Integration and Test Order (CITO)

- **Old programs** tended to be very hierarchical
- **Which order to integrate** was pretty easy:
  - Test the “leaves” of the call tree
  - Integrate up to the root
  - Goal is to minimize the number of stubs needed
- **OO programs** make this more complicated
  - Lots of kinds of dependencies (call, inheritance, use, aggregation)
  - Circular dependencies: A inherits from B, B uses C, C aggregates A
- **CITO** : *Which order should we integrate and test?*
  - Must “break cycles”
  - Common goal: least stubbing
- **Designs** often have few cycles, but cycles creep in during implementation
Test Process (6.3)

We know **what** to do … but now … **how** can we do it?
Testing by Programmers

• The important issue is about quality

• Quality cannot be “tested in”!
Changes in Software Production

- **Teamwork** has changed
  - *1970*: we built log cabins
  - *1980*: we built small buildings
  - *1990*: we built skyscrapers
  - *200X*: we are building **integrated communities** of buildings

- We do **more maintenance** than construction
  - Our **knowledge base** is mostly about testing new software

- We are **reusing** code in many ways

- **Quality vs efficiency** is a constant source of stress

- **Level 4** thinking requires the recognition that quality is usually more crucial than efficiency
  - Requires **management** buy-in!
  - Requires that programmers **respect** testers
Test Activities

Software requirements
- Define test objectives (criteria)
- Project test plan

System design
- Design system tests
- Design acceptance tests
- Design usability test, if appropriate

Intermediate design
- Specify system tests
- Integration and unit test plans
- Acquire test support tools
- Determine class integration order

Detailed design
- Create tests or test specifications
Test Activities (2)

Implementation
- Create tests
- Run tests when units are ready

Integration
- Run integration tests

System deployment
- Apply system test
- Apply acceptance tests
- Apply usability tests

Operation and maintenance
- Capture user problems
- Perform regression testing
Managing Test Artifacts

• Don’t fail because of lack of organization

• Keep track of:
  – Test design documents
  – Tests
  – Test results
  – Automated support

• Use configuration control

• Keep track of source of tests – when the source changes, the tests must also change
Professional Ethics

• If you can’t test it, **don’t build it**
• Put **quality first** : Even if you lose the argument, you will gain respect
• Begin test activities **early**
• **Decouple**
  – **Designs** should be independent of language
  – **Programs** should be independent of environment
  – Couplings are **weaknesses** in the software!
• **Don’t take shortcuts**
  – If you lose the argument you will **gain respect**
  – **Document** your objections
  – **Vote** with your feet
  – Don’t be afraid to be **right**!
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Test Plans (6.4)

• The most common question I hear about testing is

  “How do I write a test plan?”

• This question usually comes up when the focus is on the document, not the contents

• It’s the contents that are important, not the structure
  – Good testing is more important than proper documentation
  – However – documentation of testing can be very helpful

• Most organizations have a list of topics, outlines, or templates
Standard Test Plan

- ANSI / IEEE Standard 829-1983 is ancient but still used

Test Plan

A document describing the scope, approach, resources, and schedule of intended testing activities. It identifies test items, the features to be tested, the testing tasks, who will do each task, and any risks requiring contingency planning.

- Many organizations are required to adhere to this standard
- Unfortunately, this standard emphasizes documentation, not actual testing – often resulting in a well documented vacuum
Types of Test Plans

- **Mission plan** – tells “why”
  - Usually one mission plan per organization or group
  - Least detailed type of test plan

- **Strategic plan** – tells “what” and “when”
  - Usually one per organization, or perhaps for each type of project
  - General requirements for coverage criteria to use

- **Tactical plan** – tells “how” and “who”
  - One per product
  - More detailed
  - Living document, containing test requirements, tools, results and issues such as integration order
Test Plan Contents – System Testing

- **Purpose**
- **Target audience and application**
- **Deliverables**

**Information included**
- Introduction
- Test items
- Features tested
- Features not tested
- Test criteria
- Pass / fail standards
- Criteria for starting testing
- Criteria for suspending testing
- Requirements for testing restart

- Hardware and software requirements
- Responsibilities for severity ratings
- Staffing & training needs
- Test schedules
- Risks and contingencies
- Approvals
Test Plan Contents – Tactical Testing

- Purpose
- Outline
- Test-plan ID
- Introduction
- Test reference items
- Features that will be tested
- Features that will not be tested
- Approach to testing (criteria)
- Criteria for pass / fail
- Criteria for suspending testing
- Criteria for restarting testing
- Test deliverables

- Testing tasks
- Environmental needs
- Responsibilities
- Staffing & training needs
- Schedule
- Risks and contingencies
- Approvals
Chapter 6 Outline

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Identifying Correct Outputs (6.5)

Oracle Problem

Does a program execute correctly on a specific input?

• With **simple software** methods, we have a very clear idea whether outputs are correct or not
• But for most programs it’s **not so easy**
• This section presents **four general methods** for checking outputs:
  1. Direct verification
  2. Redundant computation
  3. Consistency checks
  4. Data redundancy
(1) Direct Verification

Using a program to check the answer

• Appealing because it eliminates some **human error**
• Fairly **expensive** – requiring more programming
• Verifying outputs is deceptively **hard**
  – One difficulty is getting the **post-conditions** right
• Not always possible – we do not always know the correct answer
  – Flow calculations in a stream – the solution is an approximation based on models and guesses; we don’t know the correct answers!
  – Probability of being in a particular state in a Petri net – again, we don’t know the correct answer
Direct Verification Example

- Consider a simple **sort** method
- **Post-condition**: Array is in sorted order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>92</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Post-condition**: Array sorted from lowest to highest and contains all the elements from the input array

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>87</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>87</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Post-condition**: Array sorted from lowest to highest and is a *permutation* of the input array
Direct Verification Example – Cont.

Input : Array A
Make copy B of A
Sort A
// Verify A is a permutation of B
Check A and B are of the same size
For each object in A
  Check if object appears in A and B the same number of times
// Verify A is ordered
for each index i except the last in A
  Check if A [i] <= A [i+1]

• This is almost as complicated as the sort method under test!
• We can easily make mistakes in the verification methods
(2) Redundant Computation

Computing the answer in a different way

- Write **two programs** – check that they produce the same answer
- Very expensive!
- Problem of **coincident failures**
  - That is, both programs fail on the same input
  - Sadly, the “**independent failure assumption**” is not valid in general
- This works best if completely **different algorithms** can be used
  - Not clear exactly what “completely different” means
- Consider **regression testing**
  - Current software checked against prior version
  - Special form of redundant computation
  - Clearly, independence assumption does not hold
    - But still extremely powerful
(3) Consistency Checks

Check part of the answer to see if it makes sense

- Check if a **probability** is negative or larger than one
- Check **assertions or invariants**
  - No duplicates
  - Cost is greater than zero
  - Internal consistency constraints in databases or objects
- These are only **partial solutions**
- Consistency Checks do **not** always apply, but are very useful within those limits
(4) Data Redundancy

Compare results of different *inputs*

- Check for “identities”
  - Testing $\sin (x) : \sin(a+b) = \sin(a)\cos(b) + \cos(a)\sin(b)$
    - Choose $a$ at random
    - Set $b=x-a$
    - Note failure independence of $\sin(x)$, $\sin(a)$
    - Repeat process as often as desired; choose different values for $a$
    - Possible to have arbitrarily high confidence in correctness assessment
  - *Inserting* an element into a structure and *removing* it
- These are only *partial solutions*
- Data Redundancy does *not* always apply, but is very useful within those limits
Summary – Chapter 6

- A major **obstacle** to the adoption of advanced test criteria is that they affect the **process**
  - It is very hard to **change** a process
  - Changing process is required to move to level 3 or level 4 thinking
- Most testing is actually **regression testing**
- **Test criteria** make regression testing much easier to **automate**
- **OOP** has changed the way in which we integrate and test software components
- To be successful, testing has to be **integrated throughout the process**
- Identifying **correct outputs** is almost as hard as writing the program