

Measurement

EECS 481 (W25)

RECESS, EDUCATIONAL PROCESSING UNIT 4B7-TANGO, BROODWORLD PRIME





One-Slide Summary

- Software metrics are widely used in industry to support decision-making. Metrics are often inadequately supported and thus lack validity. They should be used cautiously.
- Measurement is a fundamental activity but is influenced by human biases. It is easy to misinterpret data or focus on what is easy to measure. Metrics can incentivize perverse behavior.
- Managers are more concerned with real-world s/w use metrics than individual productivity.



Outline

- Motivation
- Case Study Maintainability Index
 - Lines of Code, Halstead Volume, Cyclomatic Complexity
- Measurement
 - How should we think about it?
- Challenges
 - Validity, understanding data, confounding variables, correlations, metrics and incentives.
- The Begel and Zimmerman Survey (extra information)



Learning Objectives: by the end of today's lecture you should be able to...

- 1. (knowledge) list common software metrics and their challenges
- 2. (knowledge) explain the difference of correlation and causation
- 3. (knowledge) explain the relationship of confounding variables and causation
- 4. (*value*) believe that there are lots of ways to measure and use measurements incorrectly
- 5. (*value*) believe that measurement is useful for decision making in software processes



The Story so far...

- Using software processes correctly can improve efficiency.
- However, we need information to do so (e.g., the spiral development model requires identifying risks)
 - BUT we may lack information because of uncertainty.
- If only we could measure to gain information...





Aside: Due Dates

- What are some assignments in this class due at 11:59pm?
- What are some assignments in this class due X hours after they are released?
- At a company, you may well be due at a stand-up meeting at 9am and have a commit deadline for the shipping version at midnight
 - Scheduling is explicitly a topic in this course, and we want you to have opportunities to practice it in lower-risk setting. (e.g., calendar? "pretend"?)

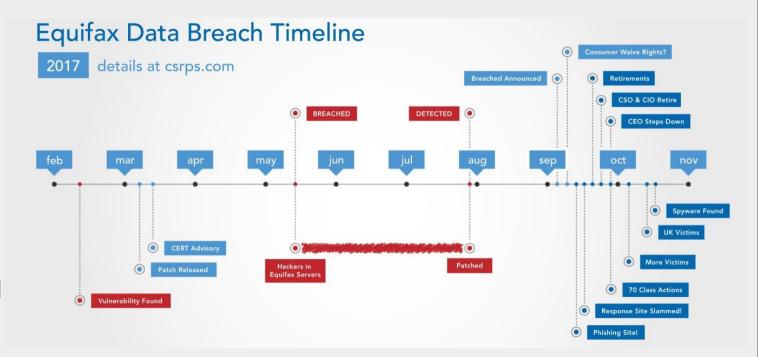


Motivation, Context, blah blah blah



Wait... Process? Why? Who cares?

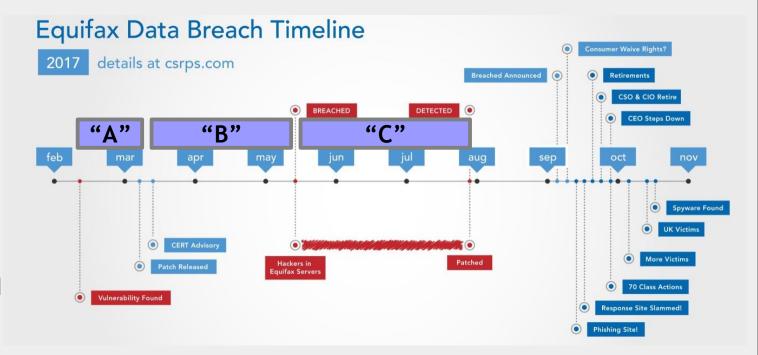
Reminder: "cybercriminals accessed approximately 145.5 million U.S. Equifax consumers' personal data, including their full names, social security numbers, birth dates. addresses, and in some cases, driver license numbers."





Consider Time Ranges A vs. B+C

Reminder: "cybercriminals accessed approximately 145.5 million U.S. Equifax consumers' personal data, including their full names, social security numbers, birth dates. addresses, and in some cases, driver license numbers."



Wait... Process? Why? Who cares?





When I die, I would like the people I did group projects with to lower me in to my grave so they can let me down one last time.

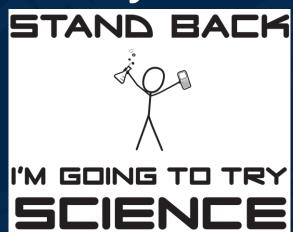
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You, and 41 others like this.



Case Study – Maintainability Index

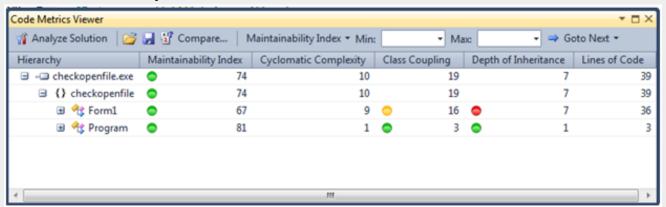
aka Lets make up some fancy maths and call it Science!





Maintainability Index

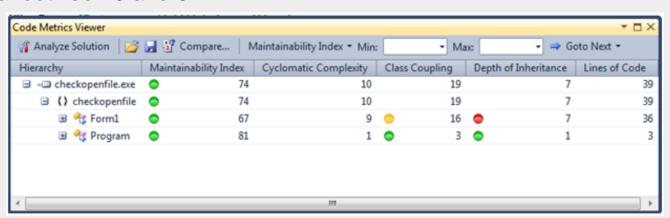
- A "Feature" in Visual Studio since 2007
- "Maintainability Index calculates an index value between 0 and 100 that represents the relative
 ease of maintaining the code. A high value means better maintainability. Color coded ratings
 can be used to quickly identify trouble spots in your code. A green rating is between 20 and 100
 and indicates that the code has good maintainability. A yellow rating is between 10 and 19 and
 indicates that the code is moderately maintainable. A red rating is a rating between 0 and 9 and
 indicates low maintainability."





Maintainability Index in a Nutshell

- Index between 0 and 100 representing the relative ease of maintaining the code.
- Higher is better. Color coded by number:
 - Green: between 20 and 100
 - Yellow: between 10 and 19
 - Red: between 0 and 9



13



Design Rationale

- "We noticed that as code tended toward 0 it was clearly hard to maintain code and the difference between code at 0 and some negative value was not useful."
- "The desire was that if the index showed red then we would be saying with a high degree of confidence that there was an issue with the code."

```
[Allies] Valeur: i still think its your fault
[Allies] Valeur: just because
[Allies] Valeur: otherwise
[Allies] Valeur: it is my fault
[Allies] Valeur: and i dont like that
```

[https://blogs.msdn.microsoft.com/codeanalysis/2007/11/20/maintainability-index range-and-meaning/]



The Magic Formula

```
Maintainability Index =
        \max(0,
                (171)
                  -5.2 \times \log(\text{Halstead Volume}) -
                  -0.23 \times (Cyclomatic Complexity)
                  -16.2 \times \log(\text{Lines of Code})
                     100
```



The Magic Formula

Maintainability Index =

max





Lines of Code

- Superficially easy to measure
 - \$ wc -1 file1 file2

LOC	projects
450	Expression Evaluator
2.000	Sudoku, Functional Graph Library
40,000	OpenVPN
80-100,000	Berkeley DB, SQLlight
150-300,000	Apache, HyperSQL, Busybox, Emacs, Vim, ArgoUML
500-800,000	gimp, glibc, mplayer, php, SVN
1,600,000	gcc
6,000,000	Linux, FreeBSD
45,000,000	Windows XP

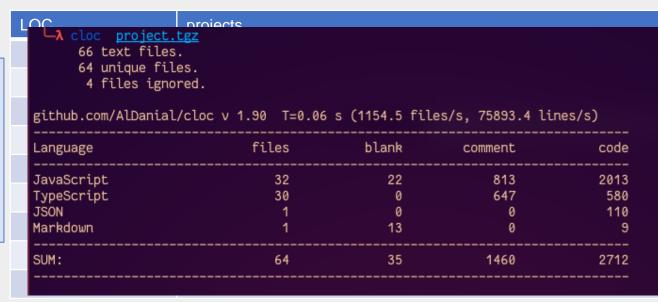


Lines of Code

- Superficially easy to measure
 - \$ wc -1 file1 file2

Also:

Count lines of code (cloc)
Perl utility with no
dependencies
Install with package
manager





Lines of Code: Normalized

- Common Practices:
 - Ignore comments and empty lines
 - Ignore lines with fewer than 2 characters
 - Pretty Print source code first

for (i = 0; i < 100; i += 1) printf("hello"); /* How many lines of code is this? */

```
Elon Musk  
@elonmusk

Hashtags are an abomination

Tweet übersetzen
9:45 vorm. · 17. Aug. 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

Pranay Pathole @PPathole · 8 Std.

Antwort an @elonmusk
In python hashtags are used to tell the computer that a line is not worth reading, much like in social media

□ 32  □ 164  □ 1,9 Tsd.  □
```



Languages: Normalized

"Programmers working with high-level languages achieve better productivity and quality than those working with lower-level languages.

Languages such as C++, Java, Smalltalk, and Visual Basic have been credited with improving productivity, reliability, and comprehensibility by factors of 5 to 15 over low-level languages such as assembly and C (Brooks 1987, Jones 1998, Boehm 2000)."

[Steve McConnell. Code Complete: A Practical Handbook of Software Construction, Second Edition. Microsoft.]



Languages: Normalized

• "... typical ratios of source statements in several high-level languages to the equivalent code in C. A higher ratio means that each line of code in the language listed accomplishes more than does each line of code in C."



Language	Ratio
С	1.0
Fortran	2.0
C++	2.5
Java	2.5
Visual Basic	4.5
Perl	6.0
Python	6.0
Smalltalk	6.0

Halstead Volume

- Introduced by Maurice Halstead in 1977
 - "Halstead made the observation that metrics of the software should reflect the implementation or expression of algorithms in different languages, but be independent of their execution on a specific platform."

Halstead Volume =
$$\left(\frac{\text{\# of operators}}{\text{operands}}\right) \times \log_2\left(\frac{\text{\# of distinct operators}}{\text{operands}}\right)$$

Approximates the size of elements and vocabulary

Halstead Example

- How many operators?
 - How many are unique?

How many unique operands?

```
main() {
    int a, b, c, avg;
    scanf("%d %d %d", &a, &b, &c);
    avg = (a + b + c) / 3;
    printf("avg = %d", avg);
}
```

Halstead Example

- How many operators? → 27
 - How many are unique? → 12

```
• main, (), {}, int,
scanf, &, =, +, /, main() {
  printf, ', ', ;
    int
```

How many unique operands?

```
main() {
    int a, b, c, avg;
    scanf("%d %d %d", &a, &b, &c);
    avg = (a + b + c) / 3;
    printf("avg = %d", avg);
}
```

Halstead Example

- How many operators? → 27
 - How many are unique? → 12
 - main, (), { }, int,
 scanf, &, =, +, /,
 printf, ',',;
- How many unique operands? → 7
 - a, b, c, avg,"%d %d %d", 3,"avg = %d"

```
main() {
    int a, b, c, avg;
    scanf("%d %d %d", &a, &b, &c);
    avg = (a + b + c) / 3;
    printf("avg = %d", avg);
}
```

Cyclomatic Complexity

- Proposed by McCabe in 1976
- Based on control flow graphs, it measures linearly independent paths through a program
 - ~ "number of decisions"
 - ~ "tests to cover all branches"
- (for more info: take a Compilers or PL class)

```
if (c1) {
   f1();
   else {
   f2();
if (c2) {
   f3();
   else {
   f4();
```

Maintainability Index: Origins

- Developers rated a number of HP systems
- Statistical regression analysis to find key factors among 40 candidate metrics

```
171 - 5.2 • ln(avgHV) - 0.23 • avgCC(g') –
```

 $16.2 \cdot \ln (avgLOC) + 50 \cdot \sin (sqrt(2.4 \cdot perCM))$

HV: Halstead Volume CC: Cyclomatic Complexity

LOC: lines of code perCM: % Comment Lines

[Oman and Hagemeister. Metrics for Assessing a Software System's Maintainability. ICSM 1992.]

Maintainabil

- Developers rate
- Statistical reg among 40 ca

16.1

HV:

LOC

[Oman and Hagen



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bility. ICSM 1992.]



Case Study Thoughts

- Metrics seem attractive, can be easy to compute, and seem to match our intuition
- Parameters can be arbitrary: calibrated from small study, few devs, unclear significance
 - Ex: original 1992 C/Pascal programs may be quite different from modern Java / JS / C# code
- Many of these metrics strongly correlate with size: just measure lines of code?

 [cf. https://avandeursen.com/2014/08/29/think-twice-before-using-the-maintainability-index/]





A TROLLEY IS BARRELING TOWARDS FIVE HELPLESS PEOPLE ON THE TRACKS. YOU CAN PULL A LEVER TO DIRECT IT ONTO ANOTHER TRACK, BUT-



CAN I REACH THE LEVER

I GUESS I FORGOT WHO I WAS TALKING TO.

FOR A DOLLAR, I'LL
PROMISE TO PULL THE
LEVER IF ONE OF THE
FIVE PEOPLE 15 YOU.

Measurements

A utilitarian approach to thinking about it





Measurement for Decision Making in Software

 Measurement is the empirical, objective assignment of numbers, according to a rule derived from a model or theory, to attributes of objects or events with the intent of describing them.

[Craner, Bond, "Software Engineering Metrics: What Do They Measure and How Do We Know?"]

 A quantitively expressed reduction of uncertainty based on one or more observations.

[Hubbard, "How to Measure Anything ..."]





Software Quality Metric

• IEEE 1061 says:

"A software quality metric is a function whose inputs are software data and whose output is a single numerical value that can be interpreted as the degree to which [the] software possesses a given attribute that affects its quality."

Measurement for Decision Making

- Fund project?
- More Testing?
- Fast enough? Secure enough?
 - ("Should Equifax apply this webserver patch?")
- Code quality sufficient?
- Which feature to focus on?
- Developer bonus?
- Time and cost estimation? Predictions reliable?

Software Qualities

- Scalability
- Security
- Extensibility
- Documentation
- Performance
- Consistency
- Portability

- Installability
- Maintainability
- Functionality (e.g., data integrity)
- Availability
- Ease of use
- Privacy
- Energy Efficiency

Process Qualities

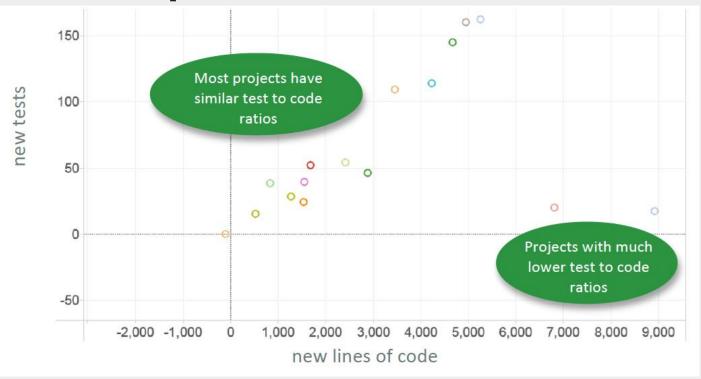
- On-time release
- Development speed
- Meeting efficiency
- Conformance to processes
- Time spent on rework
- Reliability of predictions
- Fairness in decision making

- Measure time, costs, actions, resources, and quality of work packages; compare with predictions
- Use information from issue trackers, communication networks, team structures, etc.

•



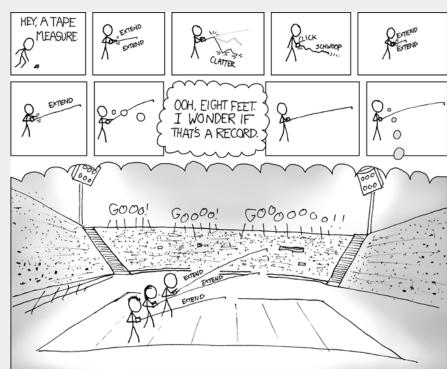
Positive Example: Benchmark-based Metrics





Conclusion: Measurement is Difficult







Trivia





Trivia: Computer Science

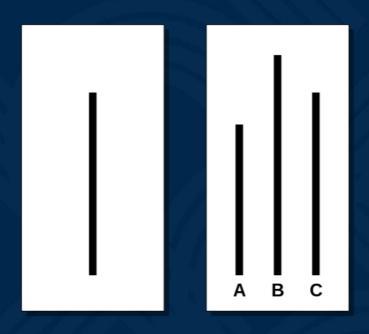
 This American Turing-award winner is known both for Byzantine fault tolerance (distributed computing) and also objectoriented type systems (programming languages). The eponymous substitution principle states that an object of a subclass can be used whenever an object of a superclass is expected.





Psychology: "Perception"

 You are participating in a perception study with other students. One by one you each say aloud which line in the second card has the same length as the line in the first card.



Psychology: "Perception"

- When you are alone, your accuracy is 100%
- When 7 of the 8 people ahead of you give the wrong answer, your accuracy drops to 63.2%
- Overall, 75% of participants gave an [obviously!] incorrect answer at least one time out of the twelve
- Most "yielders": "I suspected the middle but tried to put it out of my mind"
- 12/50 had "distortion of perception": expressed belief that given the answer was correct; were unaware that all were wrong



Psychology: Social Influence

- This study is Asch's Conformity Experiment
- Individual differences were large, independence was frequent (e.g., 95% of subjects defied the majority at least once)
 - Still, 75% yielded to a falsehood at least once
- Implications for SE: What if you and your boss disagree on a measurement "before your eyes"?
 Also: dangers of groupthink

[Asch, S.E. (1951). Effects of group pressure on the modification and distortion of judgments. In H. Guetzkow (Ed.), Groups, leadership and men (pp. 177–190).]



Psychology: Social Influence

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 Implicat on a me

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43

[Asch, S.E. (1951). Effects of group pressure on the modification and distortion of judgments. In H. Guetzkow (Ed.), Groups, leadership and men (pp. 177-190).



Measurement

...validity and bias

Validity

- Construct Validity: Are we measuring what we intended to measure?
- Predictive Validity: The extent to which the measurement can be used to explain some other characteristic of the entity being measured
- External Validity: Concerns the generalization of the findings to contexts and environments, other than the one studied.

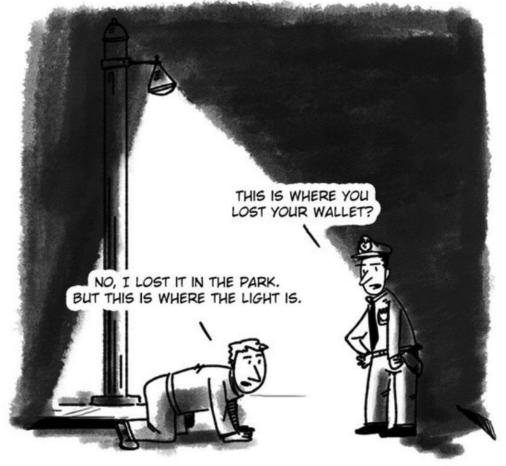


RAISIN D'ETRE

Everything is Measurable

- If X is something we care about, then X, by definition, must be detectable
 - How could we care about things like "quality", "risk", security" or "public image" if these things were totally undetectable, directly or indirectly?
 - If we have reason to care about some unknown quantity, it is because we think it corresponds to desirable or undesirable results in some way.
- If X is detectable, then it must be detectable in some amount
 - If you can observe a thing at all, you can observe more of it or less of it
 - If we can observe it in some amount, then it must be measurable.

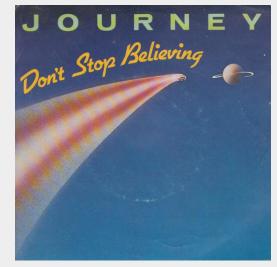






The Streetlight Effect

- The streetlight effect is a type of observational bias that occurs when people are searching for something and look only where it is easiest.
- Despite this, don't lose faith in measurement: just work to avoid the bias





Dangers When Using Metrics

- <u>Bad statistics</u>: A basic misunderstanding of measurement theory and what is being measured.
- <u>Bad decisions</u>: The incorrect use of measurement data, leading to unintended side effects.
- <u>Bad incentives</u>: Disregard for the human factors, or how the cultural change of taking measurements will affect people.

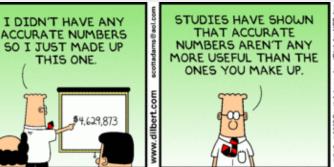


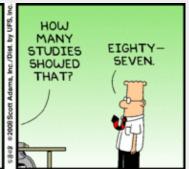
Lies, damned lies, and ...

A case study for your consideration:

• In 1995, the UK Committee on Safety of Medicines issued the following warning: "third generation oral contraceptive pills increased the risk of potentially lifethreatening blood clots in the legs or lungs twofold - that

is, by 100 percent"





THIS ONE.



... statistics

- "...of every 7,000 women who took the earlier second-generation oral contraceptive pills, about one had a thrombosis; this number increased to two among women who took thirdgeneration pills..."
- "...The absolute risk increase was only one in 7,000, whereas the relative increase (among women who developed blood clots) was indeed 100 percent."

WE SHOULD GO TO THE NORTH BEACH. SOMEONE SAID THE SOUTH BEACH HAS A 20% HIGHER RISK OF SHARK ATTACKS. YEAH, BUT STATISTICALLY, TAKING THREE BEACH TRIPS INSTEAD OF TWO INCREASES OUR ODDS OF GETTING SHOT BY A SWIMMING DOG CARRYING A HANDGUN IN ITS MOUTH BY **50%!** OH NO! THIS IS OUR THIRD TRIP!

> REMINDER: A 50% INCREASE IN A TINY RISK IS **STILL TIMY**.



False Positive Paradox

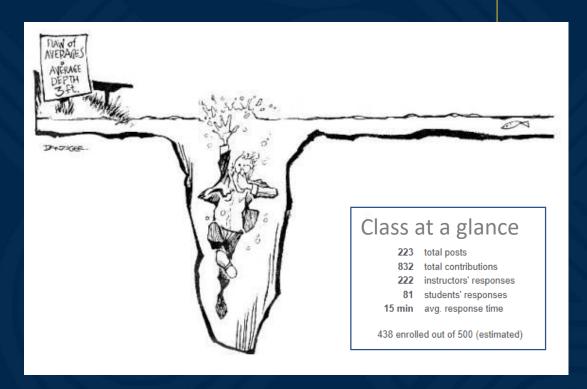
• The false positive paradox is a statistical result where false positive tests are more probable than true positive tests, occurring when the overall population has a low incidence of a condition and the incidence rate is lower than the false positive rate.

• The probability of actually being infected after one is told that one is infected is only 29% (20/20+49) for a test that otherwise appears to be "95% accurate".

Number of people	Infected	Uninfected	Total
Test positive	20 (true positive)	49 (false positive)	69
Test negative	0 (false negative)	931 (true negative)	931
Total	20	980	1000



Understanding Data



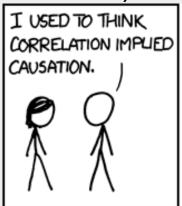
Measurement Scales

- Scale: the type of data being measured
- The scale dictates which analyses are legitimate or meaningful
- Common options:
 - Nominal: categories
 - Ordinal: order, but no magnitude
 - Interval: order, magnitude, but no zero
 - Ratio: order, magnitude and zero
 - Absolute: special case of ratio

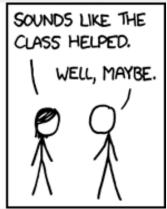


To Argue Causation

- 1. Provide a theory (from domain knowledge, independent of data)
- 2. Show correlation
- 3. Demonstrate ability to predict new cases (replicate/validate)











Headline: "Women who own horses live longer"

Implied correlation: horses make you live longer.

Reality: if you own a horse, you can probably afford health insurance.

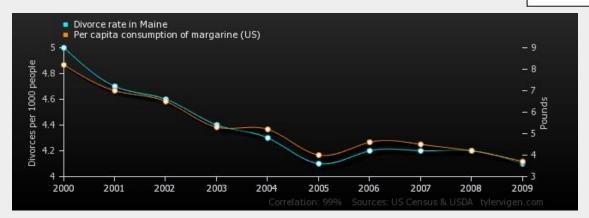
9/10/18, 10:18 PM



Same idea at https://datacolada.org/

16.5 16 16 17 1880 1980 1980 14.5 1880 14.5 13 35000 45000 20000 15000 5000 400 17 Number of Pirates (Approximate) www.venganza.org

Global Average Temperature Vs. Number of Pirates





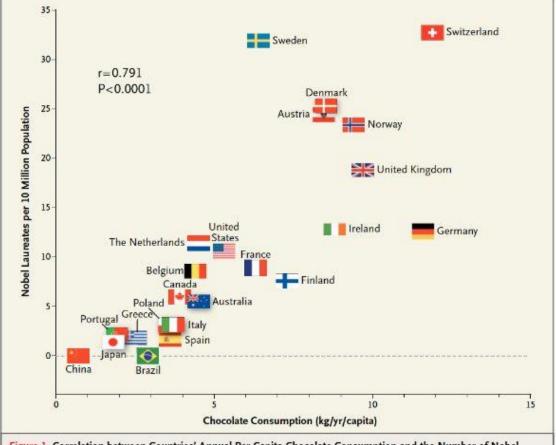
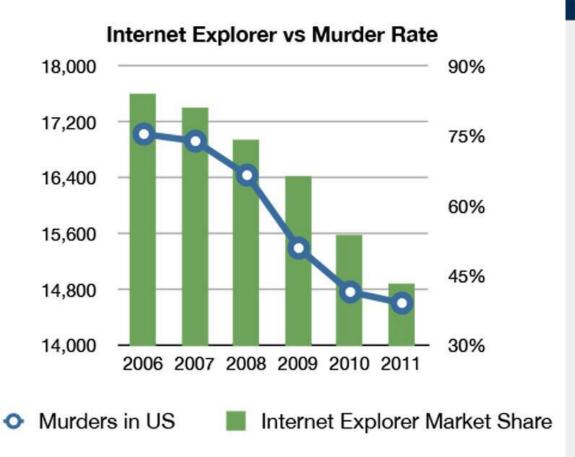


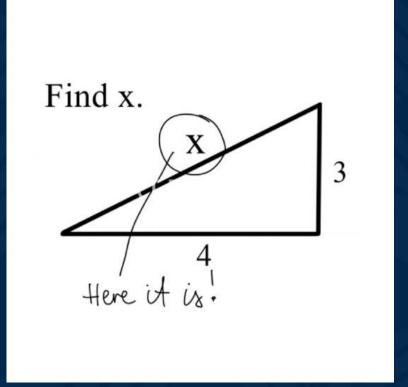
Figure 1. Correlation between Countries' Annual Per Capita Chocolate Consumption and the Number of Nobel Laureates per 10 Million Population.

58

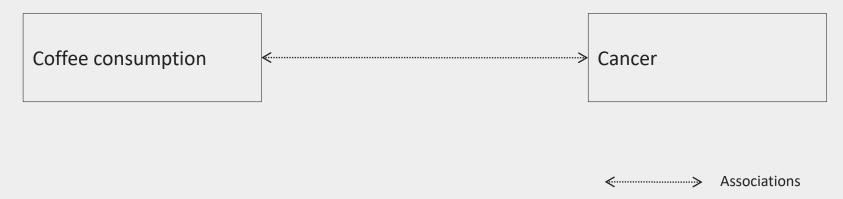




Confounding Variables

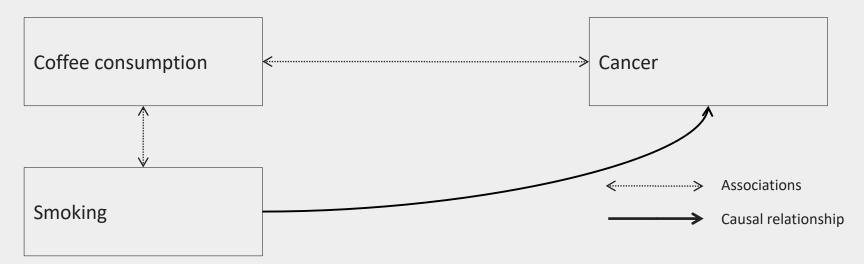


Confounding Variables!



• If we examine coffee consumption → cancer

Confounding Variables!



- If we examine coffee consumption → cancer
- Smoking is a confounding variable



This is an asteroid crater in Arizona. Look how close it came to hitting the visitor center....





Back to Confounding Software Analysis

- Earlier we considered that some metrics (e.g., Halstead, Cyclomatic) might be just "size" cleverly disguised
- In a study of twenty-four commonly-used object oriented metrics, only four were actually useful in predicting the quality of a software module when the effect of the module size was accounted for.

[El Emam et al. *The Confounding Effect of Class Size on the Validity of Object-Oriented Metrics*. IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering 2001.]



McNamara Fallacy

- The McNamara fallacy (or quantitative fallacy), involves making a decision based solely on quantitative observations (or metrics) and ignoring all others.
- The reason given is often that these other observations cannot be proven.
- "There seems to be a general misunderstanding to the effect that a
 mathematical model cannot be undertaken until every constant and
 functional relationship is known to high accuracy. ... to omit variables is
 equivalent to saying that they have zero effect... Probably the only value
 known to be wrong ..." J.W. Forrester



McNamara on Vietnam

 The McNamara fallacy originates from the Vietnam War, in which enemy body counts were taken to be a precise and objective measure of success. War was reduced to a mathematical model: by increasing enemy deaths and minimizing one's own, victory was assured. ... The fallacy refers to McNamara's belief as to what led the United States to defeat in the Vietnam War—specifically, his quantification of success in the war (e.g. in terms of the enemy body count), ignoring other variables.



Metrics Schmetrics

Thought Experiment: Defect Metrics

- Defect Density = known bugs / line of code
- System Spoilage = time to fix post-release defects / total system development time
- Considerations:
 - Post-release vs. pre-release
 - What counts as a defect? Severity? Relevance?
 - What size metric is used?
- Little reference data is available (typically 2-10 defects / 1,000 lines of code)

Measurement Strategies

- Automated measures on code repositories
- Use or collect process data
- Instrument the program (e.g., in-field crash reports)
- Ask humans: surveys, interviews, controlled experiments, expert judgements
- Statistical analysis of a sample



Metrics and Incentives



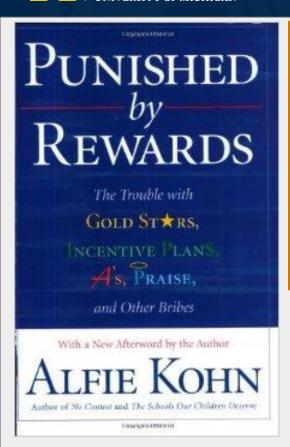






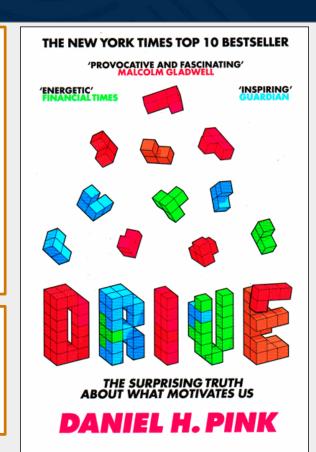
Incentivizing Productivity

- What happens when developer bonuses are based on...
 - Lines of code per day
 - Amount of documentation written
 - Low number of reported bugs in your code
 - Low number of open bugs in your code
 - High number of bugs fixed
 - Accuracy of time estimates



Can extinguish intrinsic
motivation
Can diminish performance
Can crush creativity
Can crowd out good behavior
Can encourage cheating,
shortcuts, and unethical behavior
Can become addictive
Can foster short-term thinking

Autonomy Mastery Purpose





An Example Metric Incentive

- At a "large top-five public research university", the engineering deans used "research dollars expended per square foot" as a ranking and incentive metric for departments.
- A department with more "RDE/ft²" was doing better and would get more perks from the dean
- How would you arrive at this metric?
- What could go wrong?

Software Metric Warning

- Most software metrics are controversial
- Usually based on plausibility arguments (not rigorous validation)
- Cyclomatic Complexity was repeatedly refuted and is still used
- "Similar to the attempt of measuring the intelligence of a person in terms of the weight or circumference of the brain."

Software Metric Advice

- Use software metrics carefully
- Avoid claims about human factors (e.g., readability) and quality, unless validated
- Calibrate metrics using your project history and the histories of other projects

Metrics can be gamed: you get what you measure

Successful Measurement Programs

- Set solid measurement objectives and plans.
- Make measurement part of the process.
- Gain a thorough understanding of measurement.
- Focus on cultural issues.
- Create a safe environment to collect and report true data.
- Cultivate a predisposition to change.
- Develop a complementary suite of measures.

Questions when Choosing A Metric

- What is the purpose of this measure?
- What is the scope of this measure?
- What attribute are you trying to measure?
- What is the attributes natural scale?
- What is the attributes natural variability?
- What instrument are you using to measure the attribute and what reading do you take from the instrument?

- What is the instrument's natural scale?
- What is the reading's natural variability (normally called measurement error)?
- What is the attribute's relationship to the instrument?
- What are the natural and foreseeable side effects of using this instrument?



Begel and Zimmerman Microsoft Survey



Begel and Zimmerman Microsoft Survey

"Suppose you could work with a team of data scientists and data analysts who specialize in studying how software is developed. Please list up to five questions you would like them to answer. Wy do you want to know? What would you do with the answers?"

Top Questions (1/2)

- How do users typically use my application?
- What parts of a software product are most used and/or loved by customers?
- How effective are the quality gates we run at checkin?
- How can we improve collaboration and sharing between teams?
- What are best key performance indicators (KPIs) for monitoring services?
- What is the impact of a code change or requirements change to the project and tests?

Top Questions (2/2)

- What is the impact of tools on productivity?
- How do I avoid reinventing the wheel by sharing and/or searching for code?
- What are the common patterns of execution in my application?
- How well does test coverage correspond to actual code by our customers?
- What kinds of mistakes do developers make in their software? Which ones are the most common?
- What are effective metrics for ship quality?

Bottom Questions

- Which individual measures correlate with employee productivity? (e.g., employee age, tenure, engineering skills, education, promotion velocity, IQ, family status)
- Which coding measures correlate with employee productivity? (e.g., lines of code, time it takes to build the software, a particular tool set, pair programming, number of hours of coding per day, language)
- What metrics can be used to compare employees?
- How can we measure the productivity of a Microsoft employee?
- Is the number of bugs a good measure of developer effectiveness?
- Can I generate 100% test coverage?



The Story so far...

- We want to deliver high-quality software at low cost. We can be more efficient in this endeavor if we plan to use a software development process
- Good planning needs Good decision making. Both require information:
 - We measure the world to combat uncertainty and mitigate risk
- Good measurement is difficult and requires critical thinking
- Reminder: No classes or OH on Monday Jan. 16th
 - HW1a due in one week (Jan. 18th)!



Questions?

- Blue slides don't count!
- Why should I go to office hours?
 - GSI's/IA's help with concepts, course logistics, and assignments
 - Professors say hello, get to know you, concepts, and careers/mentorship

Next terrifying exciting:

Quality Assurance and Testing (How do we measure, assess, or assure software quality?)