Course "Softwareprozesse"

Software Measurement

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- Measure, measurement
- Scale type
- Validity, reliability, precision
- Product measures
  - size (LOC, FP)
  - quality
- Process measures
  - productivity
  - process quality
- Measurement application examples
- Goal-Question-Metric (GQM)

Learning objectives

- What are measures? What is measurement?
- What are the difficulties of measurement?
- Measurement in the software process
- What would we like to measure?
- What measures are common?
- Examples of more specialized measures?

Metrics and measurement

What is it about?

- Measurement is assigning a symbolic **value** to an object in order to characterize a certain **attribute** of that object

Why is it of interest?

- Measurement is useful **abstraction**: It sometimes allows talking about a complex situation in a way that is simple, yet precise and objective

What will we look at?

- Base ideas (measurement, scale type, validity, inference)
- Common mistakes
- Example metrics (product, process)

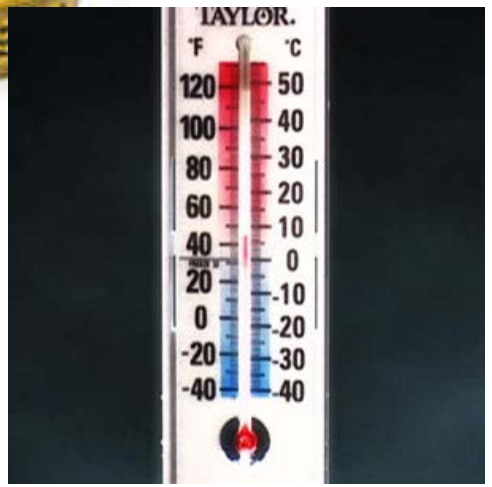
Definitions

- Measurement
  - The process P of using a measure M
  - for assigning a value V to some object X
  - in order to characterize attribute A of X.
- Measure ("Maß")
  - A specific rule M for measuring A: $A_M(X) = V$
  - Each measure is on a particular scale (see below)
  - Different measures may exist for the same attribute
    - These can be equivalent (differ in scale (**measurement unit)** only)
    - non-equivalent but similar (use the same basic approach)
    - or non-compatible (differ in their approach to characterizing A)
- Metric ("Metrik")
  - Mathematics: A measure of distance between points
  - Software Engineering: A synonym for measure
    - Actually, 'metric' is more common,
      probably because 'measure' also means 'Maßnahme'

Example measurements

- $\text{Number}_{\text{Wheels}}(\text{Car X}) = 4$
  - absolute scale

- $\text{Height}_{\text{feet}}(\text{Room X}) = 9.8\ \text{ft}$
  $\text{Height}_{\text{meter}}(\text{Room X}) = 3\ \text{m}$
  - ratio scale



- $\text{Temperature}_{\text{Centigrade}}(\text{Room X}) = 22^{\circ}\text{C}$
  $\text{Temperature}_{\text{Fahrenheit}}(\text{Room X}) = 72^{\circ}\text{F}$
  - difference scale

- Grade(Student X) = "very good" (absolute)
  Grade(Student X) = "top group" (relative)
  - ordinal scale

A word of warning: scale types

- An advantage of quantitative data is that it can be processed using mathematical operations ("inference")
  - This can allow easy summarization or can provide additional insights
- However, not all computations (inferences) are valid for all kinds of quantitative data
  - The data must be on a sufficient scale type
    - otherwise, an operation may be invalid and may make no sense
  - See the next slide

The scale types

- Nominal/categorial scale (named values)
  - Qualitative data: The values are just names
  - Example: Design method A, design method B
  - Inference: mode
    - (the most frequent value)
- Ordinal scale (rank scale)
  - Ordered nominal data: One value is larger than another, but we cannot characterize the size of the difference
  - Inference: comparison, median
  - Example: very good, good, OK, not so good, bad
- Difference scale (interval scale)
  - Inference: difference, mean
    - but 0 is not equal to 'nothing'
  - Example: degrees centigrade
- Ratio scale ("Verhältnisskala")
  - We can compute ratios: 20 is twice as much as 10
    - Note: But we cannot compare apples to oranges (or meters to watts)!
  - Most physical quantities, including absolute temperature (Kelvin)
- Absolute scale
  - 1 is also special (counting)

What often goes wrong with scale types

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- *"Oh, 20 degrees. That's twice as warm as yesterday."*
  - A difference scale is not a ratio scale
  - 20 degrees centigrade is 293 Kelvin.
    That is only 3.5% more than 283 Kelvin.

- When something qualitative is measured using an ordinal scale
  - e.g. *"How well did you like using the tool?"*
    very well, well, OK, not so well, did not like it
  - Often such scales are coded with numbers: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
  - Wrong: *"average satisfaction was 3.8"*
  - Even worse: *"average satisfaction in group B was 30% higher than in group A"*
    - This is utter nonsense! (What assumption does it imply?)
    - Assume you would have coded using 605, 604, 603, 602, 601?
      Or 605, 604, 22, 0, -888?

What sometimes goes wrong with scale types

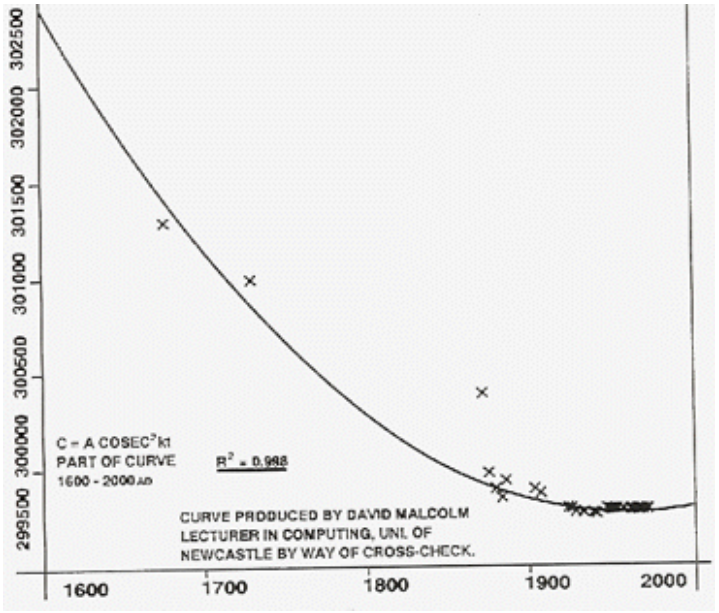
- Even if you do have a ratio scale, things may go wrong:

established
elevation
population

Exercise:
Which scales are present here?

Characteristics of measures and measurements

- Validity
  - For a measure: How well does the measure really characterize the intended attribute?
  - For a measurement procedure: How well do specific measurements really approximate the true measurement value?
    - How exact is it? (Accuracy)
  - See next slides



- Reliability
  - How well do multiple measurements of the same object agree?
  - e.g. repeated measurements of IQ

- Precision
  - How fine is the maximal resolution of differences in the attribute?
  - e.g. measurement of time in minutes, seconds, or milliseconds

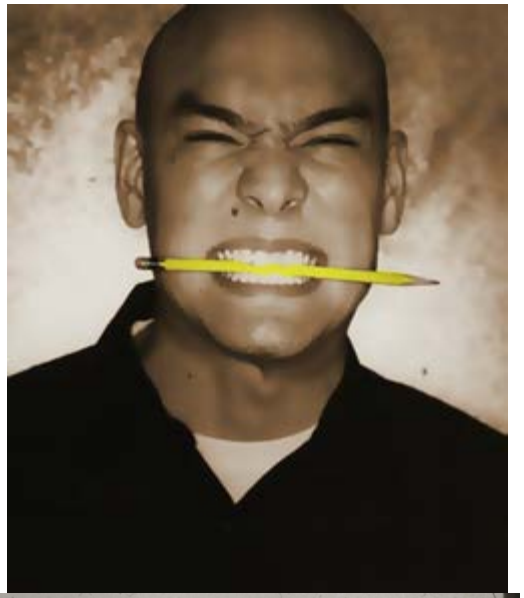
Validity of a measure

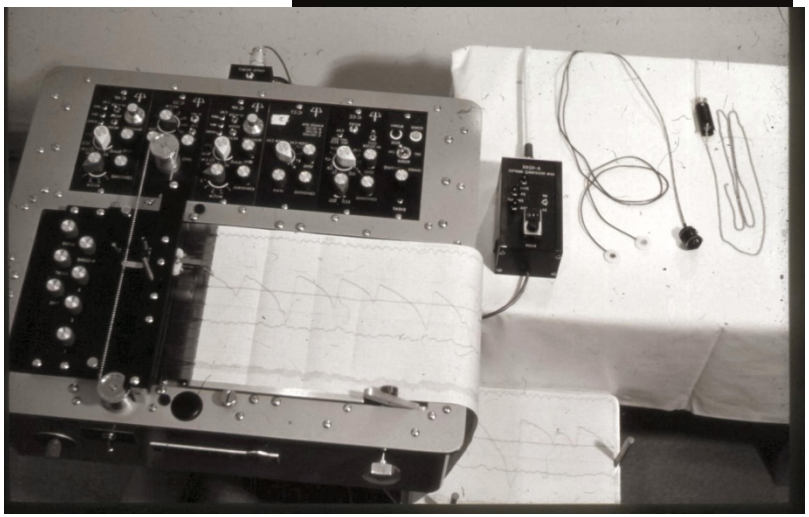
- **Simple attributes** (such as physical quantities) can be characterized completely and precisely by a single measure
  - e.g. the length
- All such measures of one attribute are equivalent and valid
  - they just use different measurement units
  - which can be converted by fixed formulae

- **Complex attributes**, however, have no single measure
  - e.g. the quality of a piece of software
- Many different measures can be invented for such attributes
- They are not equivalent
- They measure different aspects of the attribute or are different representatives (proxies) of the attribute
  - They can be more or less "good" measures of the attribute
  - This goodness is called "validity" (Validität, Gültigkeit)

Validity example: Stress

- Attribute to be measured:
  Current level S of stress of a person
  - (stress is not a well-defined state)
- Possible proxies:
  - Rate of heartbeat
  - Blood pressure
  - Muscle tone (Muskeltonus)
  - Skin temperature
  - Skin electrical resistance
- None of these alone is a very valid measure of stress
- However, they can be combined to form a fairly valid measure
  - This is used for instance in the Polygraph (Lügendetektor)





Validity example: Size of software

- Attribute to be measured:
  The size S of a piece of software
  - (software size is not a well-defined attribute)
- Examples of possible proxies:
  - Length of source code
    - In statements? In lines? In bytes?
    - In lines, but ignoring comments, empty lines, brace-only lines, …
  - Length of object code
    - Using which compiler? Which settings?
  - Memory requirements
    - But: Does my sort program get bigger when it sorts a longer input sequence?
  - Functionality
    - Sensible idea! But: Unit? Measured how?
- Validity depends on purpose of measurement

What would we like to measure?

1. Attributes of the product:	2. Attributes of the process:	3. Predictors of any of these
• Software size • Software quality • Software value	• Effort • Productivity (efficiency) • Process quality	

Measuring software size

- Software size is of interest because it is a major factor for all process attributes relating to effort, such as
  - productivity
  - implementation/test/maintenance effort
- However, it is an elusive property.
  Sensible, valid measures of size are difficult to obtain.
    - Do not confuse software size with code size!

- The most common measures are
  - Function points (at reqmts. level)
  - Number of pages of requirements (at reqmts. level)
  - Number of interfaces/modules/classes (at design level)
  - Lines-of-code (LOC) (at code level)

Measuring size: Function Points (FP)

- Idea:
  - Sum up the requirements, weighted by kind and complexity, in a standardized way to measure SW size
- Advantages:
  - Size can be determined early in the process
  - The measure is independent of language, technology, design style, superfluous functionality etc.
- Function point rules:
  - Count the number of
    input dialog screens ("inputs"),
    view/report screens ("outputs"),
    connections to other programs ("interfaces"),
    blocks of internal program state ("files")
  - Weigh each as "simple", "medium", or "complex" (according to well-defined criteria), each giving a fixed number of points
  - Sum up all these points

FTR's	DATA ELEMENTS		
	1-5	6-19	> 19
0-1	Low	Low	Ave
2-3	Low	Ave	High
> 3	Ave	High	High

Measuring size: Function Points (2)

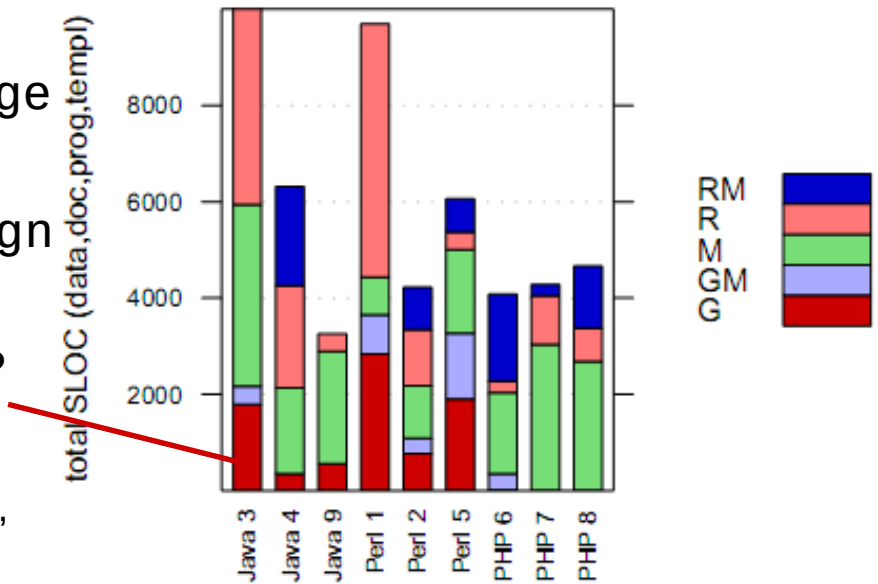
- Function points are fairly well-defined
  - Detailed definitions exist for the requirement kinds and complexity classes
    - Even for SW changes (as opposed to new development)
  - Once the productivity (FP/personmonth) is known, FPs provide a good basis for project estimation

But:

- Function points are valid only for certain kinds of system
  - Straightforward information systems whose internal processing is simple
    - The basic idea can be adapted to some other domains, though
- Counting FPs is a manual process
  - Except if the requirements are structured along FP counting rules

Measuring size: Lines-of-Code (LOC)

- Idea:
  - Length of source code is a reasonable representative of size
- Advantages:
  - Can be measured automatically
- Common definition:
  - Count all lines containing program code (declaration/statement)
    - i.e., ignore empty lines and comment-only lines
  - Names: LOC (lines of code), KLOC (1000 LOC), SLOC (source LOC), NCSLOC (non-comment SLOC)
- What to watch out for:
  - Depends on programming language
  - Depends on formatting style
  - Heavily depends on program design
  - Should comments count or not?
  - Have code generators been used?
  - Has code been cloned?



PF07resultsTR, Figure 10.5: **R**eused **M**odified, **R**eused, **M**anually written, **G**enerated **M**odified, **G**enerated

LOC: Dependence on language and program design

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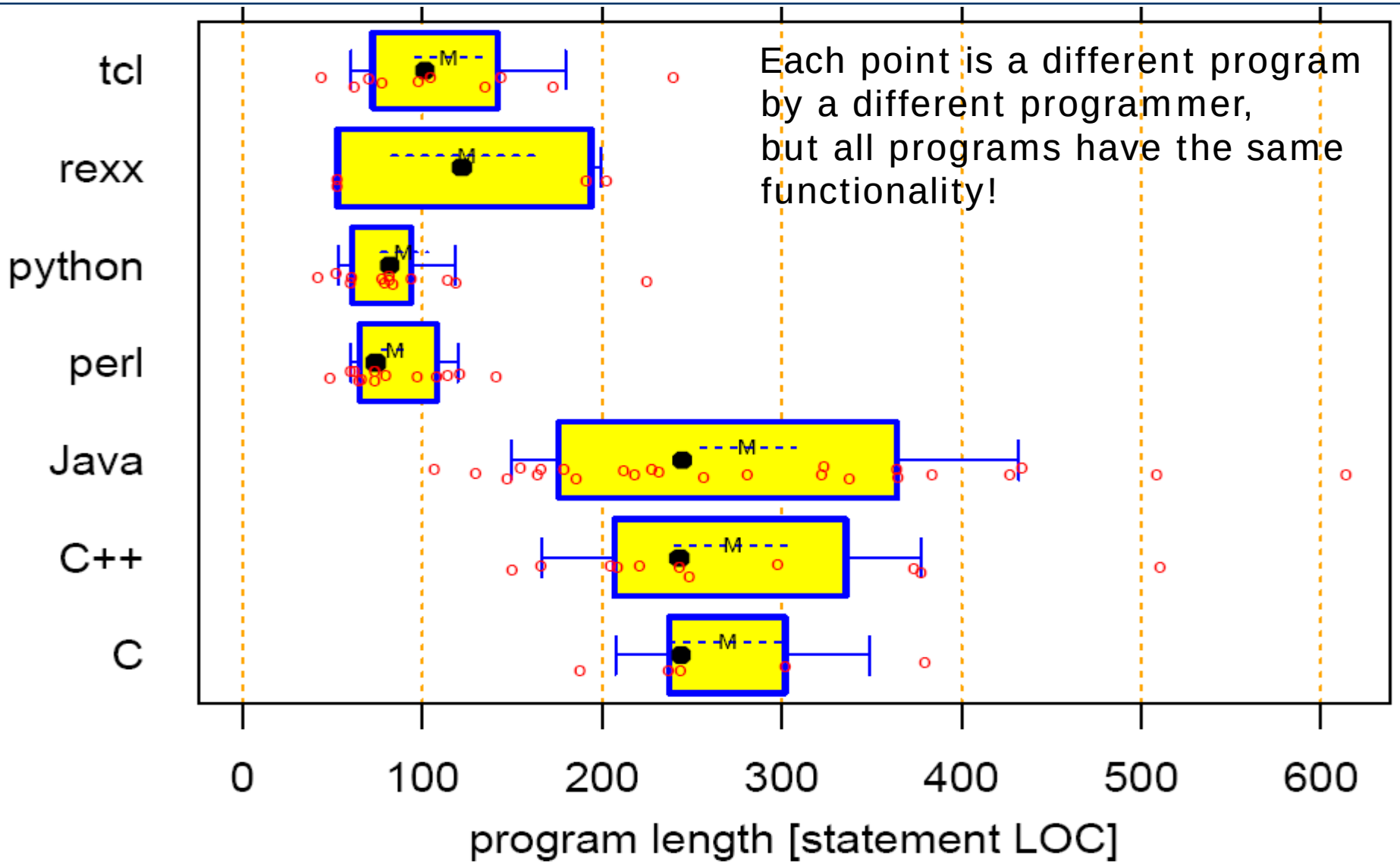
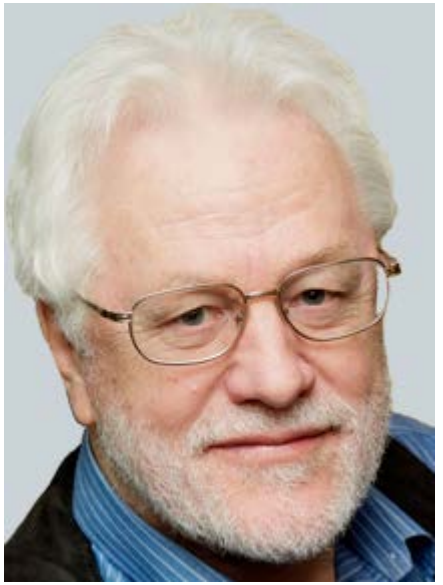


Measuring software quality

- Measuring quality is the holy grail of SW measurement
- Quality is not one attribute but many
  - e.g. efficiency, modifiability, readability, correctness, robustness, etc.
- All of them can only be measured after specifying context and assumptions
  - e.g. the workload or the expected changes
- Some of them can then be measured
  - e.g. efficiency by benchmarking
    - again several aspects: runtime, throughput, memory consumption, network traffic, energy consumption, etc.
  - e.g. learnability by a beginner experiment
    - measure task completion time, correctness, and success rates of beginners after receiving a well-defined training or instruction
- others are by-and-large impractical to measure
  - e.g. modifiability: How to generalize from one change to all?

Measuring quality: Quantify where possible

- Quality attributes are very important for software project agreements/contracts
- Therefore, all quality attributes that can be operationalized should really be defined and measured: "Quantify quality"
  - "Poor quantification is better than none" (Tom Gilb)
    - at least it can be; because it allows for systematic progress
  - Definitions could be part of the contract
  - Measurements can be part of the acceptance test
  - They will often involve human beings and subjectivity, but that is acceptable if statistical averaging is used
    - e.g. test learnability by measuring a group of 20 random representative users
    - See course "Empirische Bewertung in Informatik"
- Definitions will change as you learn how to measure better



Tom Gilb

Note: Quality and complexity attribute scales

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There are a number of important attributes of software for which no good ratio scales are known

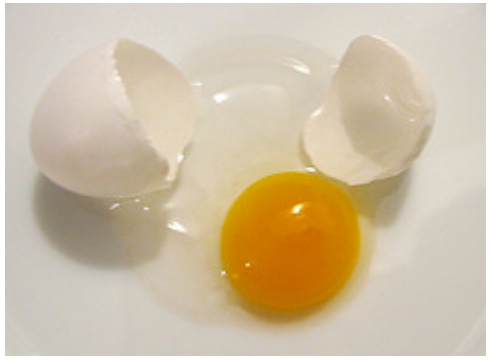
In particular:

- Quality
  - And all quality attributes such as comprehensibility, usability, portability, maintainability, etc.
- Complexity

- These are frequent places of scale type mis-use
  - So watch out what you are doing
  - e.g. reducing the number of defects by half is not doubling the correctness
    - correctness is bounded by 1 and does probably not have a sensible ratio scale (as opposed to reliability, which has one)

Measure quality: defects

- Most quality measures are costly to evaluate
  - They require much additional effort
- Hence, most projects take a much simplified approach:
  They count defects only
  - Hence they only measure correctness and measure it indirectly:
  - Some defects lead to frequent failures,
    others to rare ones or none;
  - some failures have high impact,
    others are negligible
- Defects can be counted in various situations:
  - during inspections
  - during testing
  - after delivery ("field defects")
- Defects can be classified in various ways
  - See separate lecture



Measuring productivity

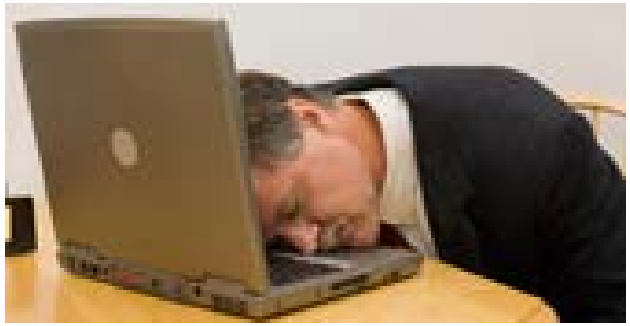
- Increasing productivity is one of the main goals of software engineering
- In general terms, productivity is output per input
  - For SW engineering:
    Amount (or value) of SW produced per effort invested

- Effort can be measured reasonably well
  - see next slide
- We have discussed measuring the amount (size) of SW before: This is a vague concept!
- Value would be a superior replacement for amount
  - but is difficult to measure as well
  - see lecture "economical view of SE"

Measuring productivity: effort

When measuring effort, take into account:

- Which tasks to measure:
  - usually design, coding, testing,
  - perhaps also requirements.
  - What about learning and training time?
    - technology, domain, specific requirements
  - What about overhead?
    - typically 10-30% of work time of engineering staff



- Whose effort to include:
  - only software engineering staff
  - or also: administrative support (secretary), customer contact (sales, customer support), technical project support (system administration), customers' participation.

Possible levels of productivity

Very, very, very roughly (these are examples only!):

- Individual programmer, small program, known technology and domain:
  - Coding only: 100 LOC/hour 17000 LOC/month
  - Design/code/test: 30 LOC/hour 5100 LOC/month
- 5-person team, 50 KLOC project, known technology and domain:
  - Overall: 6 LOC/personhour 1100 LOC/personmonth
  - i.e., this project takes 9 months
- 20-person team, 100 KLOC project, unproven technology, embedded SW, known domain:
  - Overall: 1 LOC/personhour 170 LOC/personmonth
  - i.e, this project takes 29 months!
- These values can vary over rather wide range
  - and are influenced by many factors, see next slide for examples

Example: Productivity study

- 29 projects from Hewlett Packard (median size 70 KLOC)
  - MacCormack et al., IEEE Software, September 2003

Variable	Description	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Defect rate	Average no. of customer-reported defects per month per million lines of new code over first 12 months	18.8	7.1	23.1	0.0	80.0
Productivity	New LOC developed per person-day	26.4	17.6	24.0	0.7	85.0
Functional specification	Percentage of functional specification that was complete before team started coding	55%	55%	32%	0%	100%
Design specification	Percentage of detailed design specification complete before team started coding	20%	10%	26%	0%	80%
Design review	Binary: 1 if design reviews were performed during development, 0 if not	0.79	1	0.41	0	1
Code review	Binary: 1 if the number of people who typically reviewed another person's code was one or more, 0 if none	0.52	1	0.51	0	1
Subcycles	Binary: 1 if development was divided into separate subcycles, 0 if not	0.76	1	0.43	0	1
Early prototype†	Percentage of final product's functionality contained in the first prototype	38%	40%	24%	0%	90%
Daily builds	Binary: 1 if design changes were integrated into code base and compiled daily; 0 if not	0.32	0	0.48	0	1
Regression test	Binary: 1 if someone ran an integration or regression test when checking code into the build; 0 if not	0.55	1	0.51	0	1

Example: Productivity study results

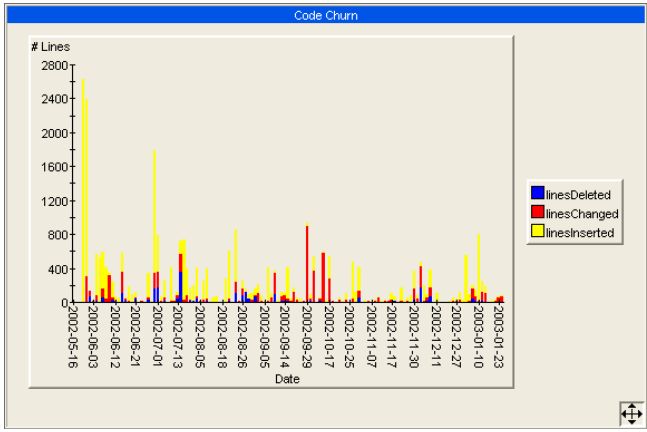
Results of the study:

- Several of the development practices investigated have a large impact on either productivity or product quality:
  - System SW has much higher defect rates
  - Automated tests upon each check-in correlate with greatly improved resulting quality, as do design reviews
  - Daily builds correlate with greatly increased productivity
- (Note: The study only indicates correlation, not causation!)

Model	Defect rate	Productivity
Constant	16.36	34.9****
Systems	14.87**	
Early prototype†	0.48***	–0.42***
Daily builds		16.89**
Regression test	–12.64**	
Design review	–19.65**	
R-squared (adjusted)	74.6%	52.8%
F-ratio	15	11.1
Df	15	16

Measuring process quality

- For process improvement, we are not only interested in product quality, but also in the quality of the process that produced it
- Common measures of process quality:
  - Productivity (as seen above)
  - Inspection yield
    - What fraction of all defects present in a document is found by an inspection?
  - Defect insertion
    - How often do new code or defect corrections introduce new defects?
  - Schedule accuracy/predictability
    - Tasks: How much too long how often?
    - When does replanning occur (early/late)?
  - Churn
    - What fraction of documents (e.g. code files) is changed frequently? How frequently?
  - etc.



Example: A qualitative process compliance measure

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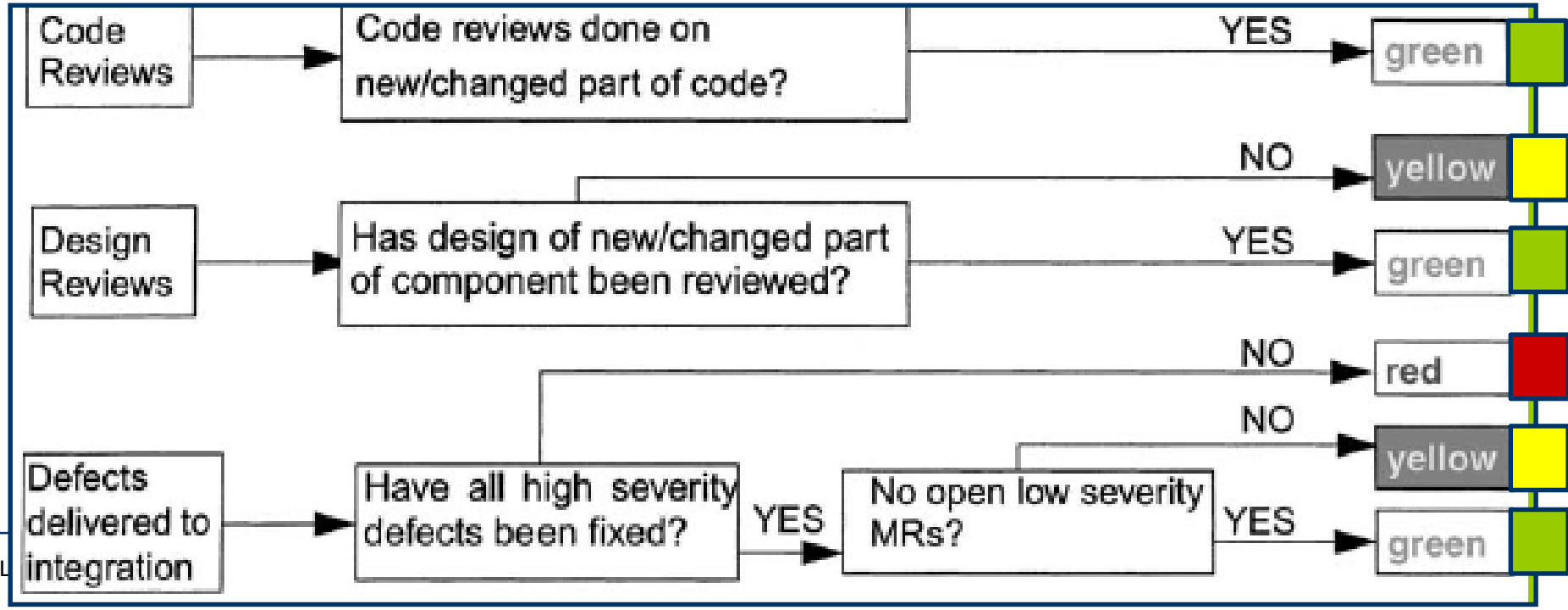
- Marek Leszak, Dewayne Perry, Dieter Stoll: *"Classification and evaluation of defects in a project retrospective"*, J. of Systems and Software 61(3), April 2002
- Define a 3-level ordinal measure of QA process compliance
  - levels green, yellow, red
  - based on process compliance with respect to unit test, code review, design review, integration test

(excerpt)



Example: A qualitative process compliance measure (2)

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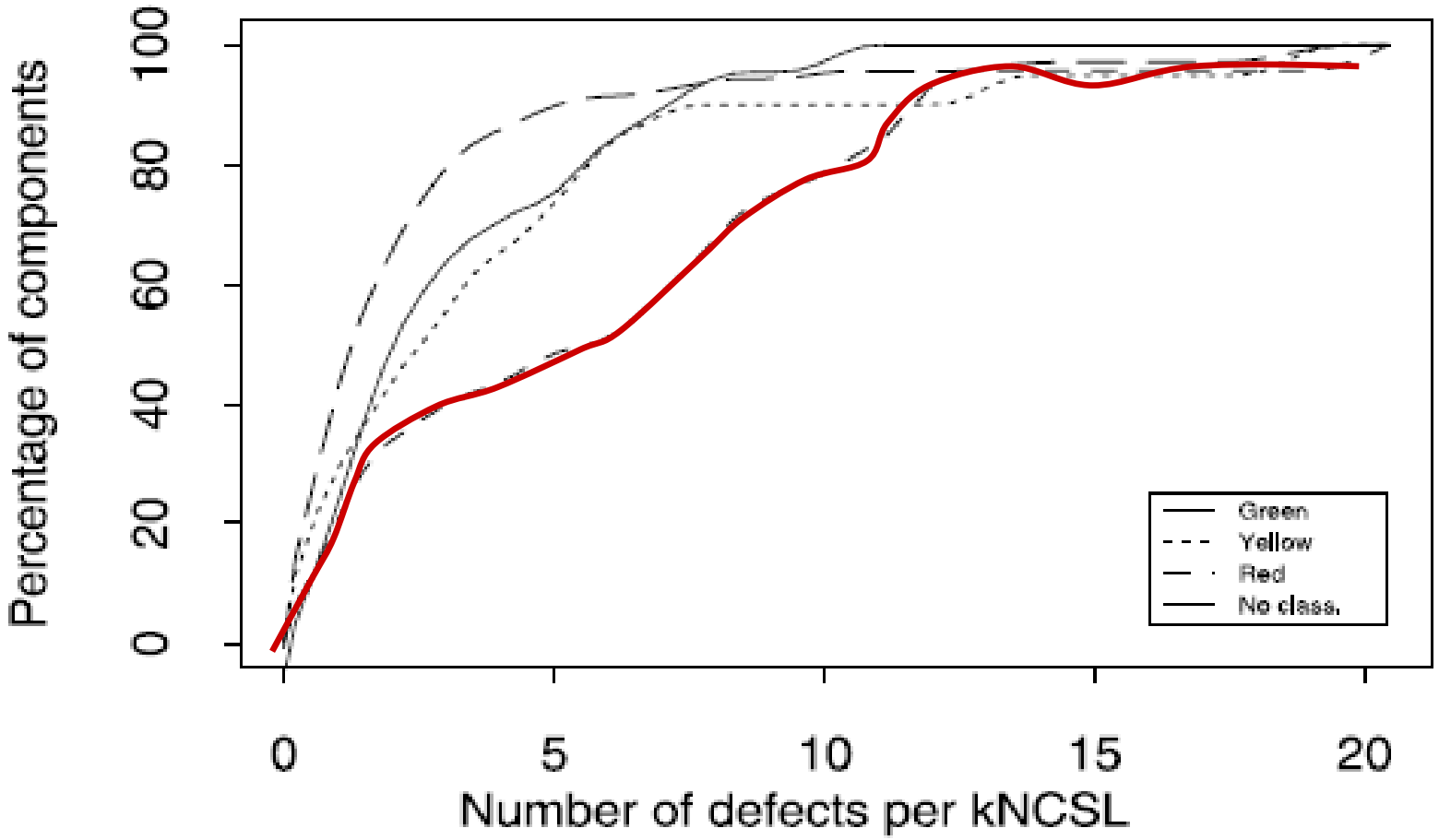
- and use it to compare defect densities



Important special case: Defect prediction

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- Goal: Predict which modules will contain a defect
  - so as to best allocate the available QA effort
- There is a lot of literature about this problem

- Foyzur Rahman, Prem Devanbu: *"How, and Why, Process Metrics Are Better"*, ICSE 2013.
  - Code metrics: size (on various levels), fan-in, fan-out, cohesion, inheritance, …
  - Process metrics: #commits, #developers, #lines added/del, change scattering, owner's experience, committer's exp, …

- Result: Prediction models based on code metrics stagnate: They are not release-specific. But the defects are.

Measurement in the software process

- All measurement must be made for a specific, well-understood purpose
  - i.e., in order to reach a process-related goal
- Otherwise, the measurements will probably not be useful

- Further, the process must support the measurement
- Otherwise
  - measurement cost will often be high
  - data quality may be low (mistakes, lack of precision, gaps)

- An approach for designing and arranging goal-directed, well-supported measurement programmes is called **GQM**
  - see next slide

Goal-Question-Metric (GQM)

- Source: Victor Basili, David Weiss: *"A Methodology for Collecting Valid Software Engineering Data",* IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering 10(6), Nov. 1984.

- Step 1(G): Establish the goals of the data collection
  - e.g. "Understand our software changes and change process"

- Step 2(Q): Formulate questions of interest
  - e.g. "What is the distribution of change reasons?", "What is the distribution of changes over system components?", "How large are individual changes?", "How much effort is needed for individual changes?

- Step 3(M): Define concrete measurements (metrics)
  - categorial ones, e.g. change reason classes, subtask types
  - quantiative ones, e.g. number of files modified, person hours

GQM (2)

- Step 4(M): Implement the measurement
  - Manual measurement: develop a data collection form
  - Automated measurement: implement data collection software
  - Introduce the process change that includes the measurement
- Step 5(M): Collect and validate data
  - Validate as soon as possible
    - Initially all data, later samples of data
  - Validate even automatically collected data
- Step 6(Q): Analyze data
  - Analyze measurement data in order to answer questions
- And then(G):
  - Progress towards your goal,
  - perhaps modify measurements

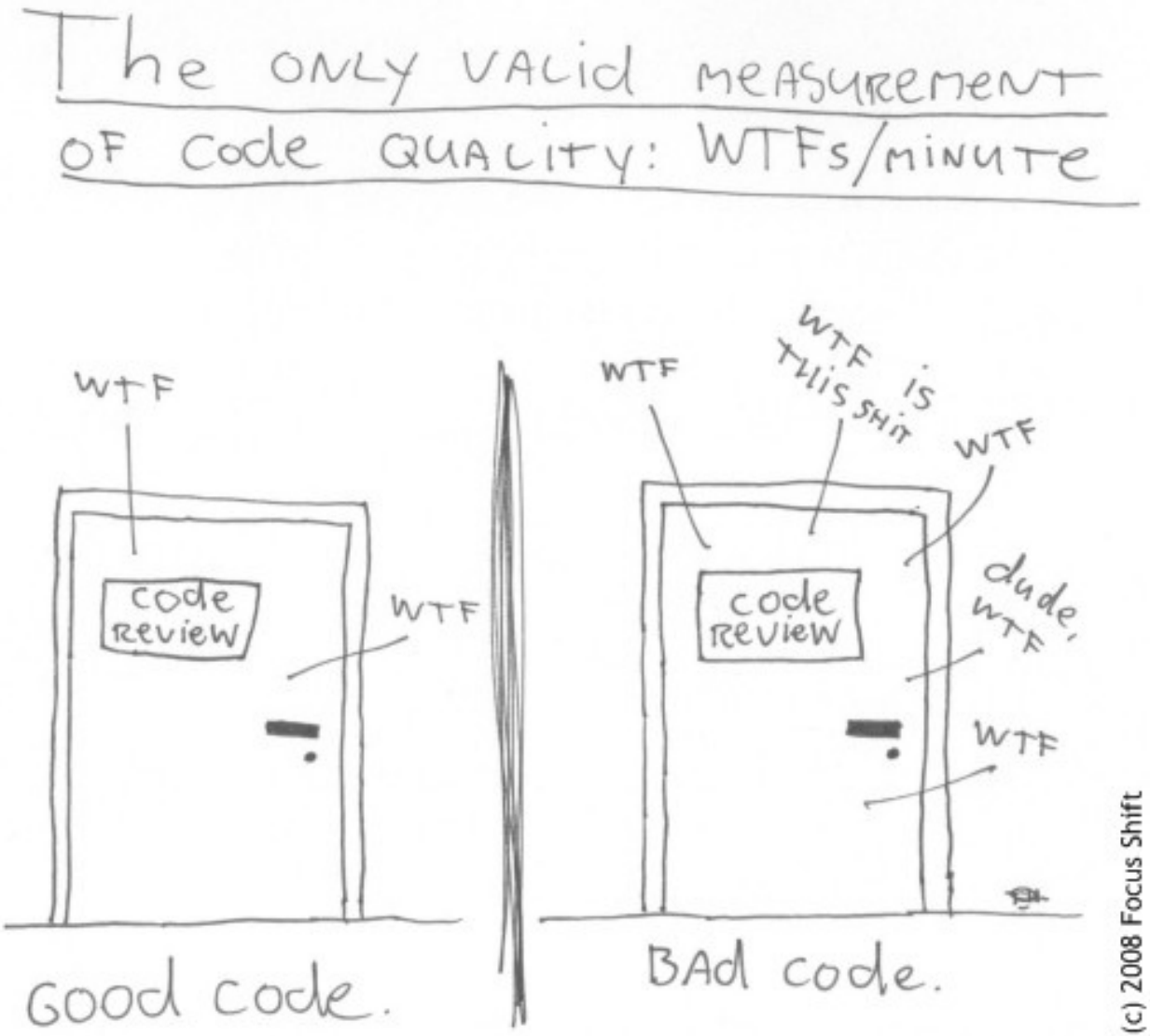
Summary

- Measurement is assigning values to attributes of objects
  - There are different scale types for the values: Beware!
- Quality attributes of measures: validity, reliability, precision
  - For most of the interesting attributes of SW and SW processes, it is very difficult to define highly valid measures!

- Common measures of software size:
  - Lines-of-code, Function points
- Common measures of software quality are often based on number of defects
- Most measures of productivity are dubious,
  - because they are based on size rather than value

- Process measures are often more interesting than product measures

Thank you!


The ONLY VALID MEASUREMENT OF CODE QUALITY: WTFs/MINUTE
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Good code.
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