Coping with Change and Risk

CMPT 276
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Based on slides from Software Engineering 9th ed, Sommerville.
Topics

• How can software projects manage change?
  – What is prototyping?
  – What is incremental development?
Coping with change

• Change is inevitable in all large software projects:
  – Business changes lead to new (or changed) system requirements.
  – open up new possibilities.

• Cost of change = Cost of reworking completed work
  (re-analyzing requirements, design, re-coding) + Cost of..
Reducing the cost of rework

• Change avoidance:
  – software development process includes..
  
  before significant rework is required.
  – Example: develop a prototype system to show a key (uncertain?) features to customers.

• Change tolerance:
  – software development process is designed to..
  
  – Usually incremental development.
  – Changes may be in a future increment (no rework), or may have to alter part of existing system.
Change avoidance with

(Throwaway)

Software Prototyping
Throwaway Software Prototyping

• Prototype:
  
  used to try out options.

• "Throw-away" code:
  
  Prototypes could ignore things like code quality, error-handling, or testability.
  
  Built to answer a specific question, not to see if the whole system will work.
Software prototyping

- A prototype can be used in:
  - to help with requirements elicitation and validation;
  - to explore options;
  - For example, a paper prototype of the UI.

Prototyping Process:
Benefits of prototyping

- Benefits of Prototyping:
  - Improved system usability.
  - A closer match to users’ real needs.
  - Improved design quality.
  - Improved maintainability.
  - Reduced development effort.
Prototype development

- Focus on poorly understood areas of the product;
- Error checking and recovery may be omitted;
- Focus on rather than requirements.

Ex: Accessing hardware, screen layouts, database access.

Ex: Security, performance, etc.

● Prototypes are not a good basis for a production system:
  - Likely below software quality standards.
  - Normally undocumented;
  - Degraded structure from rapid change (no refactoring)
  - Hard to tune it to meet non-functional requirements.
Change tolerance with

Incremental Delivery
Incremental delivery

- Development and delivery are
  - Each increment delivers some required functionality.

- Prioritized user requirements
  - highest priority ones included in early increments.

- Requirement changes
  - Once the development of an increment is started,
    - Requirements for later increments continue to evolve.
Incremental development and delivery

- Incremental development
  - Develop the system in increments.
  - increment before proceeding to development of next increment;
  - Normal approach used in..

- Incremental delivery
  - Deploy an increment for..
  - More realistic evaluation because of..
  - Difficult to implement for replacement systems as increments have less functionality than old system.
The increment could fit into a larger system plan (BDUF), or be developed on the fly with evolutionary planning (Agile).
Incremental delivery advantages

- Benefits Include:
  - New functionality delivered with each increment so system functionality is available earlier.
  - Early increments act to help elicit requirements for later increments.
  - Lower risk of overall project failure.
  - Highest priority requirements implemented first and...

What is a difference between an early increment and a prototype?
Incremental delivery problems

• Common Functionality:
  - Most systems require a set of basic facilities that are used by different parts of the system.
  - Hard to identify common facilities because requirements are not defined in detail until..

• Contracts:
  - Specification developed iteratively with the software.
  - Complete system specification can be needed as part of the..
Summary

• Processes should cope with change.
  - Change avoidance:
    • Throwaway prototyping helps avoid poor decisions on requirements and design.
  - Change tolerance:
    • Iterative development and delivery allows changes without disrupting whole system.