Quality Management of Software and Systems

Terminology

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Contents

- System, technical system
- Quality, quality requirement, quality characteristic, quality measure
- Safety, technical safety
- Correctness, completeness
- Robustness
- Reliability, availability
- Failure, fault, error

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Definition of Terms

- System
  - Technical and organizational means for the autonomous fulfillment of a task (based on Birolini, ETH)
  - Generally, a system can consist of hardware, software, people (service and maintenance personnel) and logistic assistance
- Technical System
  - System where influences by people and logistics are ignored

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Definition of Terms

- Quality
  - Property of an entity concerning its qualification to fulfill defined and derived requirements (quality requirements) /DIN 55350-11/
- Quality Requirement
  - Total of single requirements of an entity which concern the property of this entity /DIN 55350-11/
- Quality Characteristic
  - Property of an entity on the basis of which its quality is described and estimated, but which makes no statement about the degree of fulfillment of the characteristic
  - A quality characteristic can be refined incrementally into partial characteristics
- Quality Measure
  - Measure which allows to draw conclusions on the fulfillment of specific quality characteristics

Definition of Terms

- Safety
  - State where the danger of a personal or property damage is reduced to an acceptable value (DIN EN ISO 8402)
  - Birolini defines safety as a measure for the ability of an item to endanger neither persons, property nor the environment
  - A distinction is drawn between the safety of a failure-free system (accident prevention) and the technical safety of the failure afflicted system
- Technical Safety
  - Measure for the ability of a failure afflicted item to endanger neither persons, property nor the environment

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Definition of Terms

- Correctness
  - Correctness has a binary character, i.e., an item is either correct or incorrect
  - An fault-free realization is correct
  - An artifact is correct if it is consistent to its specification
  - If no specification exists for an artifact, correctness is not defined
- Completeness
  - A system is functional complete, if all functions required in the specification are implemented. This concerns the treatment of normal cases as well as the interception of failure situations

Definition of Terms

- Robustness
  - Property to deliver an acceptable behavior also in exceptional situations (e.g. ability of a software to detect hardware failures)
  - A correct system – as measured by the specification – can have a low robustness, actually
  - Accordingly, robustness is rather a property of the specification than of the implementation
  - A robust program is the result of the correct implementation of a good and complete specification
  - Robustness has a gradual character

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Definition of Terms

- Reliability
  - Part of the quality with regard to the behavior of an entity during or after given time periods with given working conditions (DIN 40041)
  - Collective term for the description of the power concerning availability and its influencing factors: power concerning functionality, maintainability and maintainability support (DIN EN ISO 8402)
  - Property of an entity regarding its qualification to fulfill the reliability requirements during or after given time periods with given application requirements (DIN ISO 9000)
  - Measure for the ability of an item to remain functional, expressed by the probability that the required function is executed failure-free under given working conditions during a given time period (based on Birolini, ETH)
- Availability
  - Measure for the ability of an item to be functional at a given time

Definition of Terms

- Failure, Fault, Error
  - Failure: Inconsistent behavior w.r.t. specified behavior while running a system (happens dynamically during the execution) ➔ Each failure has a time-stamp
  - Fault, defect: Statically existent cause of a failure, i.e. a „bug“: Usually the consequence of an error made by the programmer)
  - Error: Basic cause for the fault (e.g., misunderstanding of a particular statement of the programming language)

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