# **Defect Reporting** and Triage

Prof. Kochunas EECS 481 (W23) THE OFFICIAL STORY OF 9-11 IS FULL OF HOLES. TAKE THE —

PLEASE, STOP, BECAUSE SEEING THIS HAPPEN TO YOU BREAKS MY HEART.



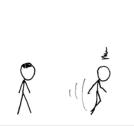
CONSPIRACY THEORIES REPRESENT A KNOWN GLITCH IN HUMAN REASONING.
THE THEORIES ARE OF COURSE OCCASIONALLY TRUE, BUT THEIR TRUTH
IS COMPLETELY UNCORRELATED WITH THE BELIEVER'S CERTAINTY,
FOR SOME REASON, SOMETIMES WHEN PEOPLE THINK THEY'E UNCOVERED A
LIE, THEY RAISE CONFIRMATION BIAS TO AN ART FORM. THEY
CUT CONTEXT AWAY FROM FACTS AND ARGUMENTS AND ASSEMBLE THEM
INTO REASSURING LITANIES. AND OVER AND OVER I'VE ARGUED
HELPLESSLY WITH SMART PEOPLE CONSUMED BY THEORIES THEY WERE SURE
WERE IRREPUTABLE. THEORIES THAT IN THE END PROVED COMPLETE FICTIONS.



YOUNG-EARTH CREATIONISTS, THE MOON LANDING PEOPLE, THE PERPETUAL MOTION SUBCULTURE— CAN'T YOU SEE YOU'RE FALLING INTO THE SAME PATTERN?

YOU DON'T SERIOUSLY BELIEVE WE LANDED ON THE MOON, DO YOU?

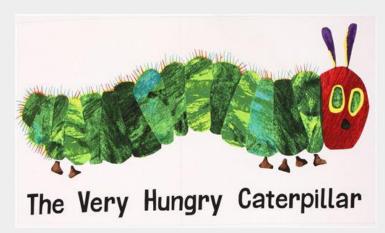






#### The Story so far...

- We still want to deliver high-quality software fast cheap and on time.
   We can be more efficient in this endeavor if we plan to use a software development process
  - . Good planning needs good decision making which requires information obtained by measurements to combat uncertainty and mitigate risk
- Quality assurance is critical to software engineering
  - Testing is the most common dynamic technique for software quality assurance
    - Testing is very expensive and not testing is even more expensive
    - And there are other types of dynamic analysis
- We also have static analysis techniques for QA
  - Code Review ("passaround") and code inspection ("formal") are the most common static approaches to QA.
- Remember our processes should consider that humans are involved
- We do all this analysis to find bugs, but users still report them.
  - What happens to all those bugs we find?





#### **One-Slide Summary**

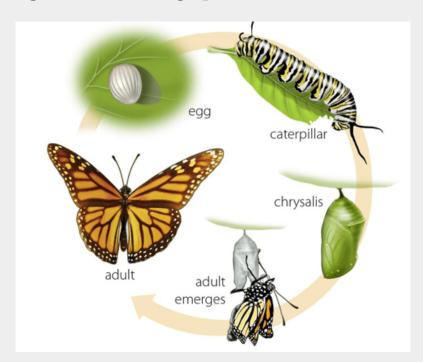
- A software defect report includes information and communications related to addressing a software issue.
- Defect reports have many components
- Defect reports are subject to triage based on severity and priority information.
- Defect reports have a lifecycle that is complicated and non-linear with multiple possible resolutions.



### Outline (the emotional journey)

Bugs! What's the problem?

- Defect Lifecycle
  - Reporting
  - Triage
  - Assignment
  - Resolution





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

- 1. (value) believe that managing defects is a full time job
- 2. (knowledge) explain the components of a defect report
- 3. (knowledge) list the steps in a typical defect lifecycle
- 4. (knowledge) explain how to triage a defect
- 5. (knowledge) list ways that a defect can be resolved



# Is this really a problem? (and terminology)





#### Is This Really a Problem?

 "Every day, almost 300 bugs appear that need triaging. This is far too much for only the Mozilla programmers to handle."

-Mozilla Developer





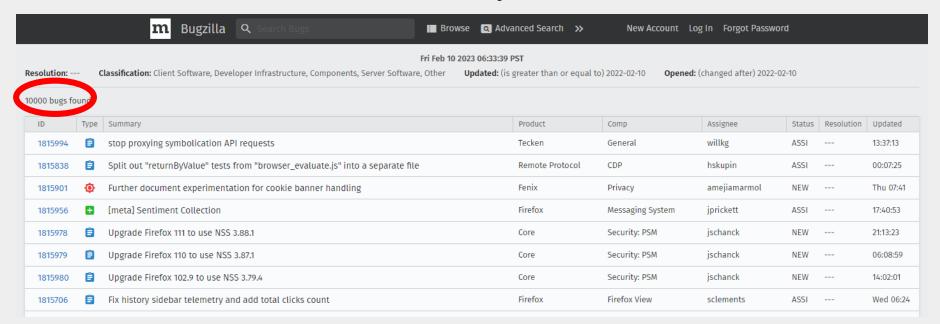
### Is This Really a Problem?

- "Every day, almost 300 bugs appear that need triaging. This is far too much for only the Mozilla programmers to handle."
  - -Mozilla Developer, 2005



#### Plus ça change ...

What about last in the last year?





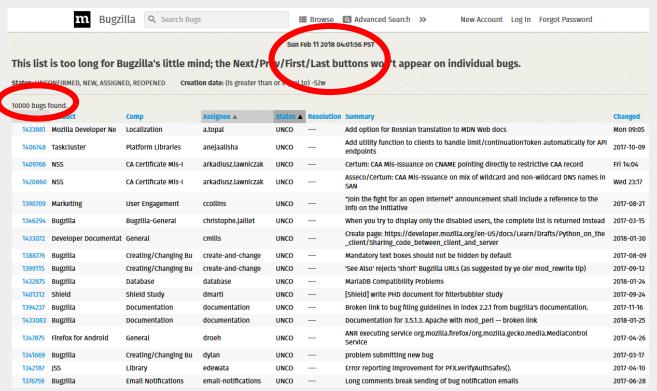
#### "Just Yesterday"

100,000/year = 270/day: same rate for 18 years in!

		m Bugzilla Q Search Bugs ■ Browse	Advanced Search >	New Account	Log In Forgot Pa	ssword		
Resolution:		Fri Feb 10 2023 Classification: Client Software, Developer Infrastructure, Components, Server Software, Other		is greater than or equal to) 2023-02-09 <b>Opened:</b> (changed after) 2023-02-09				
262 bugs four	nd.							
ID	Туре	Summary	Product	Comp	Assignee	Status	Resolution	Updated
1815978	Ê	Upgrade Firefox 111 to use NSS 3.88.1	Core	Security: PSM	jschanck	NEW		21:13:23
1815979	Ê	Upgrade Firefox 110 to use NSS 3.87.1	Core	Security: PSM	jschanck	NEW		06:08:59
1815980	Ê	Upgrade Firefox 102.9 to use NSS 3.79.4	Core	Security: PSM	jschanck	NEW		14:02:01
1815994	Ê	stop proxying symbolication API requests	Tecken	General	willkg	ASSI		13:37:13
1815838	Ê	Split out "returnByValue" tests from "browser_evaluate.js" into a separate file	Remote Protocol	CDP	hskupin	ASSI		00:07:25
1815901	<b>@</b>	Further document experimentation for cookie banner handling	Fenix	Privacy	amejiamarmol	NEW		Thu 07:41
1815956	+	[meta] Sentiment Collection	Firefox	Messaging System	jprickett	ASSI		17:40:53
1816074	Ф	Crash in [@ nsINode::IsInNamespace]	Firefox	Menus	nobody	NEW		02:35:59



#### Same slide from 2019 ...



# Terminology (1/2)

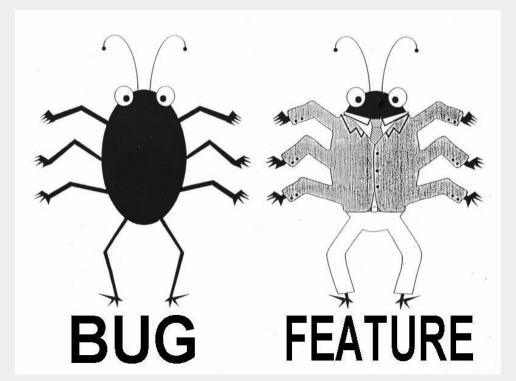
- The software maintenance lexicon is fraught with ambiguity
- Terms adapted from "standard" engineering, etc.
- A fault is an exception situation at run time
  - In EE: "short circuit", "stuck-at fault"
  - In CS: "trap", "exception"
- A defect is any characteristic of a product which hinders its usability for its intended purpose
  - IRL: "design defect", "manufacturing defect"
  - In CS: a bug is a static defect in the source code

### Terminology (2/2)

- A bug report provides information about a defect
  - Created by testers, users, tools, etc.
  - Often contains multiple types of information
  - Often tracked in a database
- A feature request is a potential change to the intended purpose (requirements) of software
  - In CS: an issue is either a bug report or a feature request (cf. "issue tracking system")
- Not used here: "mistake", "error", etc.

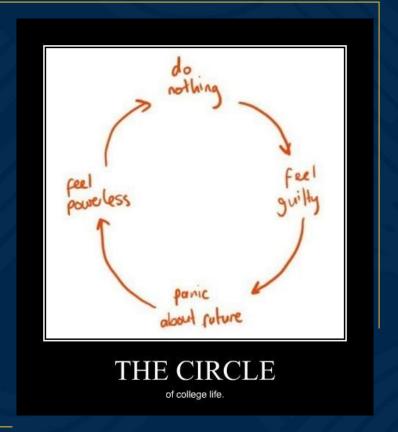


### These Terms are Somewhat Subjective





### **Defect Lifecycles**



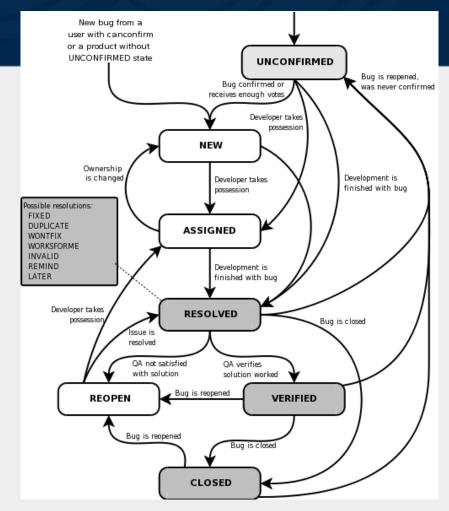
#### **Defect Report Lifecycle**

- The defect report lifecycle consists of a number of possible stages and actions, including, reporting, confirmation, triage, assignment, resolution, and verification.
  - Not every defect report follows the same path.
  - The overall process is not linear
    - There are multiple entry points, some cycles, and multiple exit points (and some never leave ...)
- The status of a defect report tracks its position in the lifecycle ("new", "resolved", etc.)



#### Report Lifecycle

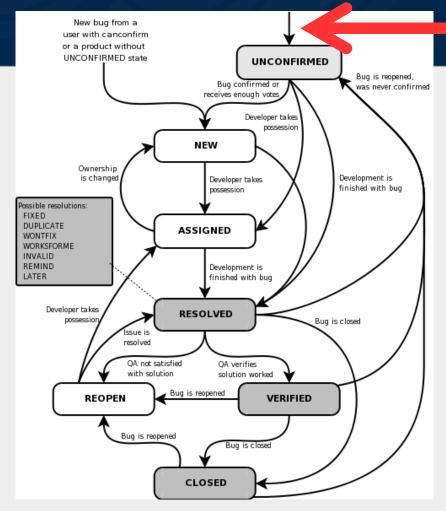
- Bugzilla is a widely-used open-source issue tracker
- Github's built-in issue tracker is similar (less structured)
  - But customizable
  - Same for gitlab





### **Bug is Reported**

 New bug reports enter the system



# **Bug Report Sources**

- Internal
  - Developers
  - QA / Testers
  - Reports are usually detailed, sophisticated
- External
  - Beta testers
  - End users
  - Reports are usually more general

#### STARTING A NEW JOB

AFTER 1ST WEEK

AFTER 1ST YEAR











### Do End Users Submit Bug Reports?

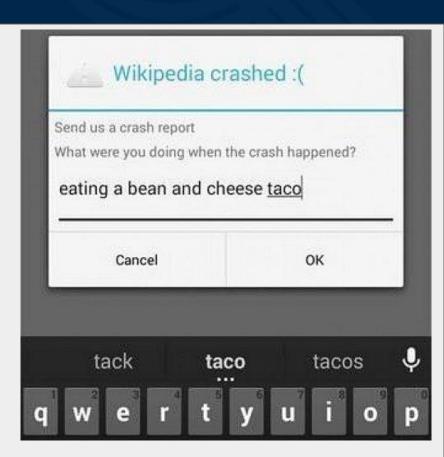
#### Sending an error report to Microsoft





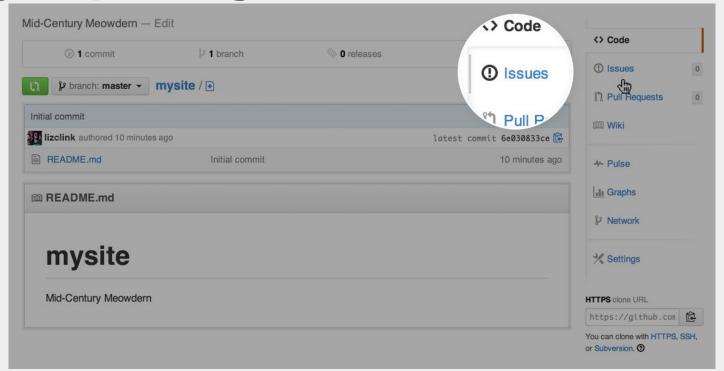
#### **End-User Bug Reports**

- Modern view: cannot count on end users to describe bugs in a helpful manner
- The larger your user base is or the more of a "margin" business model you have, the truer this becomes
- Instead: these are aggregated.

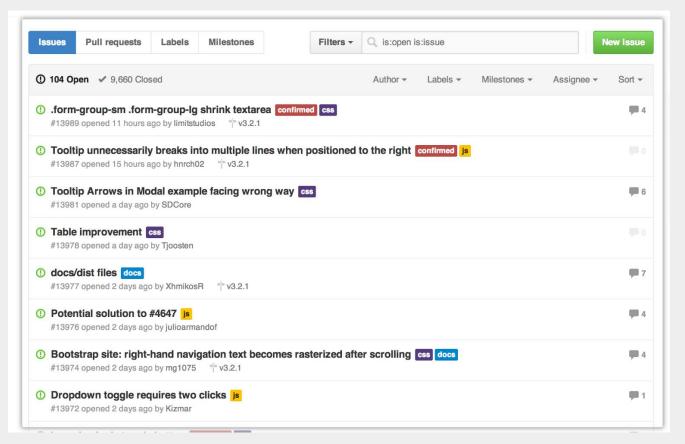




### **Bug Reporting: Github**



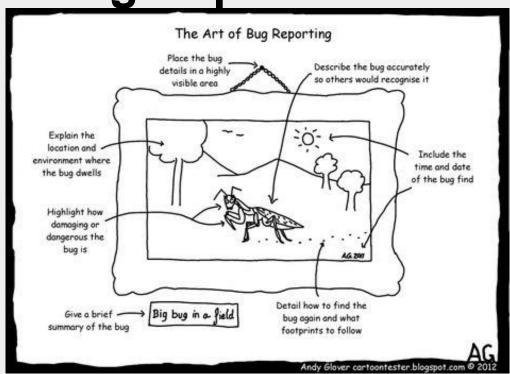






The Anatomy of a Bug Report

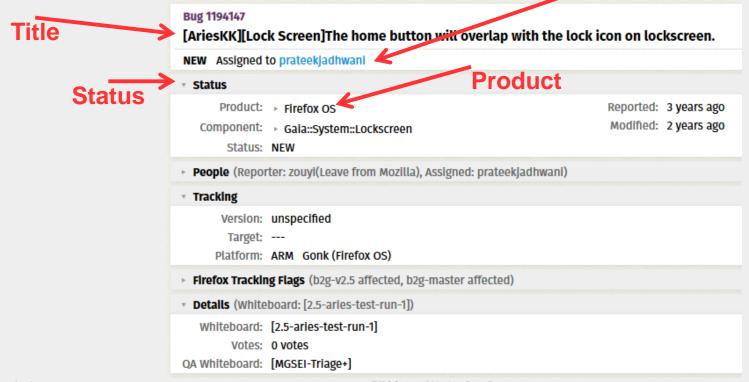
 What should be in a bug report? What is?





### Defect Report Components

#### Assignee





#### Defect Report Attachmen

- Screenshots
- Videos
- Stack Traces
- Data Files
- Inputs
- Note: rarely present
- Note: may come from multiple sources

#### Attachments (6 attachments)

#### ArlesKK\_v2.5.3gp

3 years ago zouyi(Leave from Mozilla) 3.71 MB, video/3gpp

#### AriesKK\_v2.5.png

3 years ago zouyi(Leave from Mozilla) 741.35 KB, Image/png

#### Arieskk\_v2.5\_1.3gp

2 years ago zouyi(Leave from Mozilla) 7.50 MB, video/3gpp

#### logcatl\_1110.txt

2 years ago zouyi(Leave from Mozilla) 388.33 KB, text/plain

#### Bug log: logcat\_1412.txt

2 years ago SandKing 287.58 KB, text/plain

#### Bug video: Aries\_v2.5.3GP

2 years ago SandKing 3.45 MB, video/3gpp

#### "Ideal" Defect Report Comment

```
[1.Description]:
[AriesKK v2.5][Lock Screen]Enable PIN, and enter the EMERGENCY CALL from lockscreen, then launch camera by tapping HW-camera
key, and return to EMERGENCY CALL again, tap home button, you will find the home button overlaps with lock icon.
See attachment: AriesKK v2.5.3gp and logcat.txt
Found at: 10:33
[2.Testing Steps]:
Precondition: Set the lock screen PIN

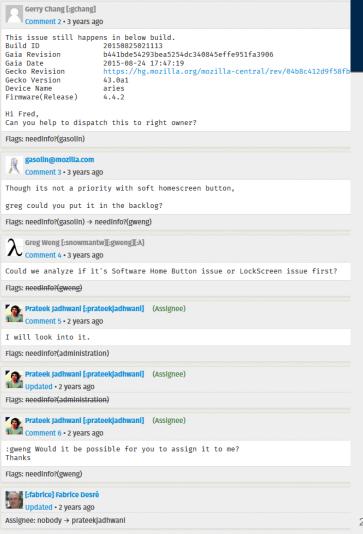
    Lock screen:

2. Slide the circle to unlock icon
3. Tap "EMERGENCY CALL"
4. Long tap HW-Camera key to launch camera
5. Tap home button
6. Repeat step 1~step 3
7. Tap home button
[3.Expected Result]:
7. Return to lock screen, and it is shown normally without any overlap
[4.Actual Result]:
7. Home button will overlap with lock icon
[5.Reproduction build]:
Device: Aries KK 2.5(Affected)
Build TD
                       20150811234258
Gaia Revision
                       c7875bbc8b32e7b95cc55c9690b03b140905d84d
Gaia Date
                       2015-08-11 18:18:36
Gecko Revision
                       https://hg.mozilla.org/mozilla-central/rev/d4f3a8a75577e4af2914a4e899ca2e724f9715c4
Gecko Version
                       43.0a1
Device Name
                       aries
Firmware(Release)
                       4.4.2
Firmware(Incremental) eng.worker.20150811.230622
Firmware Date
                       Tue Aug 11 23:06:29 UTC 2015
Bootloader
[6.Reproduction Frequency]:
Always Recurrence.5/5
```



# **Defect Reports: Conversations**

- Defect reports are not static
  - Instead, they are updated over time
  - Request more info
  - Assign to a dev
  - Discuss solutions
- The report is a log of all relevant activity





#### **Trivia Break**





## **Trivia: Entymology**

 This group of insects (order Coleoptera) have hardened wing-cases. They make of up 40% of all described insects and 25% of all known animal life-forms. They often feed on plants and fungi, break down animal and plant debris, and eat other invertebrates.





#### Trivia: Music

 This 1967 Beatles effort was their best-selling album in the UK (17x platinum). In addition to the eponymous fictionalgroup lead track, it includes With a Little Help from My Friends, Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds, and When I'm Sixty-Four.



"On release, the album was lauded by the vast majority of critics for its innovations in music production, songwriting, graphic design, for bridging a cultural divide between popular music and legitimate art, and for providing a musical representation of its generation and the contemporary counterculture."



#### **Trivia: Movies**

 This giant, lumbering paranormal monster from the Ghostbusters franchise appears when Gozer tells the heroes that it will take the form of the next thing they think of. Ray tries to think of "the most harmless thing ... that could never possibly destroy us."



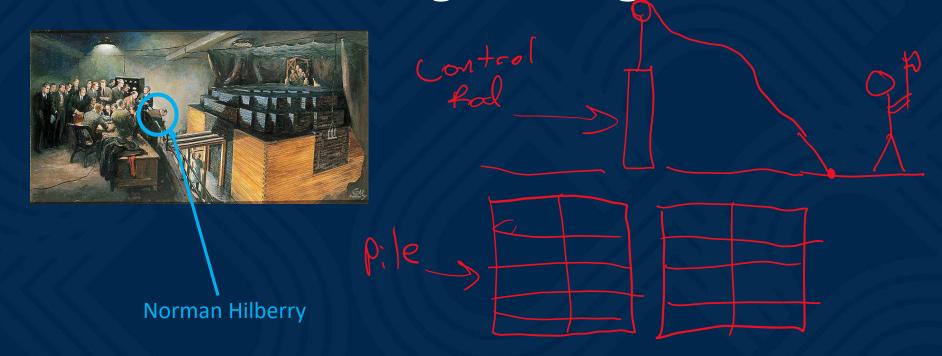


### **Trivia: Nuclear Engineering**

 With nuclear reactors, there is a big red button in the control room that says "SCRAM" that when pressed, will immediately shutdown the reactor. What does the acronym SCRAM stand for?



**Trivia: Nuclear Engineering** 





# **Psychology: Delayed Gratification**

- A child is offered a choice between one reward now or two rewards 15 minutes later.
- Over 600 children took part.
- Some would "cover their eyes with their hands or turn around so that they can't see the tray, others start kicking the desk, or tug on their pigtails, or stroke the marshmallow as if it were a tiny stuffed animal," while others would simply eat the marshmallow as soon as the researchers left.



# **Psychology: Delayed Gratification**

- Results:
  - A minority choose the single reward immediately
  - A majority attempted to wait 15 minutes
    - One-third of those who attempted succeeded
    - Age was a major correlated factor
    - Trust/belief in reward was also a major factor
- This work is well-known because of the associated follow-up studies and correlations.





# **Psychology: Delayed Gratification**

- The ability to delay gratification also correlates with higher SAT scores
- Brain imaging study of a smaple of the original Stanford participants when they reached mid-life showed key differences between those with high delay times and those with low delay times in two areas: the prefrontal cortex (more in high delayers) and the ventral striatum (more active in low delayers) when they were trying to control their responses to temptations.



## **Psychology: Delayed Gratification**

 Also correlates with educational attainment, bodymass index, cognitive and academic cpmetence, and ability to cope with frustration and stress in adolescence

[Mischel, Walter; Ebbesen, Ebbe B. 1970. "Attention in delay of gratification". Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 16 (2): 329–337 ]

 Implications for SE: "quick and dirty" fix (aka kluge) or desire to "just start coding" vs. planning and using an SE process



## Triage

A tester's vain attempt to make their bug stand out in the next bug triage meeting



cartoontester,blogspot,com © 2013

40



# **Medical Triage**

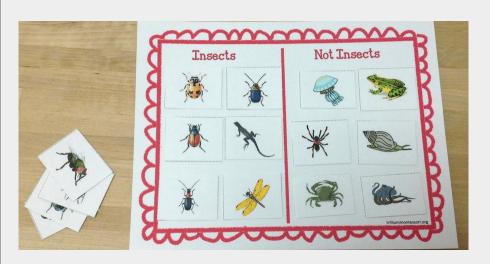
 Which patients should we address first?

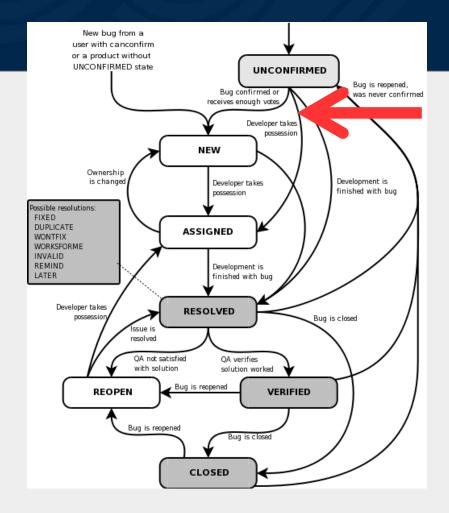




### **Bug Triage**

 Which bugs should we address first?







### **Triage**

- Triage is the assignment of degrees of urgency to wounds or illnesses to decide the order of treatment of a large number of patients or casualties.
- There are always more defect reports than resources available to address them.
- Cost-benefit analysis
  - How expensive is it to fix this bug?
  - How expensive is it to not fix this bug?

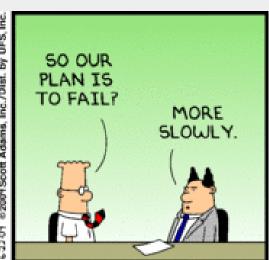


## Which Bugs should we fix?

Common Myth:







### Severity

- Severity is the degree of impact that a defect has on the development or operation of a component or system
  - "cost of not fixing it"
  - Bugzilla severity labels

Severity	Meaning
Blocker	Blocks further development and/or testing work.
Critical	Crashes, loss of data (internally, not your edit preview!) in a widely used and important component.
Major	Major loss of function in an important area.
Normal	Default/average.
Minor	Minor loss of function, or other problem that does not affect many people or where an easy workaround is present.
Trivial	Cosmetic problem like misspelled words or misaligned text which does not really cause problems.
Enhancement	Request for a new feature or change in functionality for an existing feature.

## **Priority**

- Defect Priority (Bug Priority) indicates the importance or urgency of fixing a defect.
- Phabricator examples:
  - Needs Triage Default option, priority has not yet been determined
  - Unbreak Now! Something is broken and needs to be fixed immediately, setting anything else aside
  - High Someone is working or planning to work on this task soon
  - Normal Less than High, but someone still plans to work on it
  - Low Less than Normal, but someone still plans to work on it
  - Lowest Nobody plans to work on this task

### **Priority Assignment Example**

- Phabricator Agile example:
  - High priority for tasks committed for the current sprint, or that need to find an owner who can start working on them soon
  - Normal priority for tasks that are not critical for the current sprint or candidates for a next spring
  - Low priority for tasks that we can live without, usually sitting in the backlog, sometimes added to a sprint
  - "As a rule of thumb, limit High priority task assignments for a single person to three, five in exceptional times."

### Severity vs. Priority

- Severity and Priority are often correlated, but are officially independent
  - A "Normal" Severity issue could currently be "Low" Priority if there are many outstanding "Critical" Severity issues, etc.
- Severity and Priority are used together (along with complexity, risk, etc.) to evaluate prioritize and assign the resolution of reports
  - Distributed on-line voting (e.g., in open source)
  - In-person meeting (e.g., commercial)



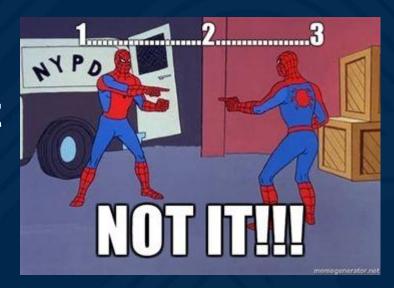
### Simple Lie

- Supply + Demand → Price
- Severity + Priority → Triage





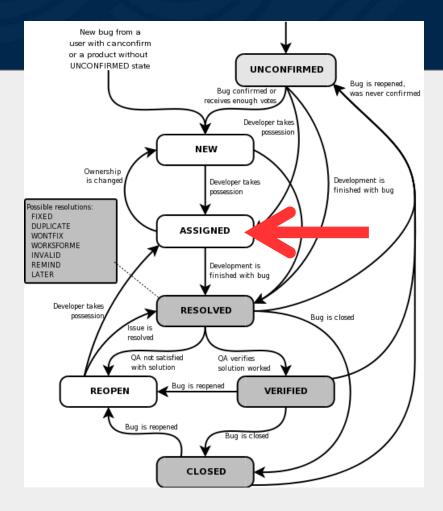
# **Bug Assignment**





### **Bug Assignment**

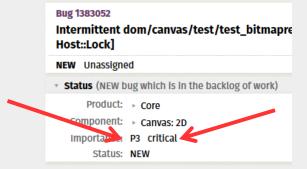
• Who should fix this bug?





### **Example**

- Severity and Priority discussions
- Assignment discussions





### **Defect Assignment**

- An assignment associates a developer with the responsibility of addressing a defect report.
- The current state of the art is "manual"
  - Distributed: developers watch the incoming bug report queue and claim defects for themselves
  - Centralized: one or more people in QA watch the incoming bug report queue and assign reports to a pool of developers
- Usually based on who "owns" the implicated code

### Near Future: Automagic Assignment

### Who Should Fix This Bug?

John Anvik, Lyndon Hiew and Gail C. Murphy
Department of Computer Science
University of British Columbia
{janvik, lyndonh, murphy}@cs.ubc.ca

#### **ABSTRACT**

Open source development projects typically support an open bug repository to which both developers and users can report bugs. The reports that appear in this repository must be triaged to determine if the report is one which requires attention and if it is, which developer will be assigned the responsibility of resolving the report. Large open source developments are burdened by the rate at which new bug reports appear in the bug repository. In this paper, we present a semi-automated approach intended to ease one part of this process, the assignment of reports to a developer. Our approach applies a machine learning algorithm to the open bug repository to learn the kinds of reports each developer resolves. When a new report arrives, the classifier produced by the machine learning technique suggests a small number of developers suitable to resolve the report. With this ar proach, we have reached precision levels of 57% and 64% on the Eclipse and Firefox development projects respectively.

However, this potential advantage also comes with a significant cost. Each bug that is reported must be triaged to determine if it describes a meaningful new problem or enhancement, and if it does, it must be assigned to an appropriate developer for further handling [13]. Consider the case of the Eclipse open source project over a four month period (January 1, 2005 to April 30, 2005) when 3426 reports were filed, averaging 29 reports per day. Assuming that a triager takes approximately five minutes to read and handle each report, two person-hours per day is being spent on this activity. If all of these reports led to improvements in the code, this path be an acceptable cost to the project. However, sin many of the reports are duplicates of existing reports, much of this work does improve the product. For instance, of the 3426 reports for Eclipse, 1190 (36%) were marked either as invalid, a duplicate, a bug that could not be replicated, or one that will not be fixed.

As a means of reducing the time spent triaging, we present

# Near Future: Auto*magic* Assignment

### Who Should Fix This Bug?

### Seven Years Later

#### ABSTRAC

Open source develop. bug repository to which port bugs. The reports t be triaged to determine attention and if it is, wh responsibility of resolving velopments are burdened ports appear in the bug re a semi-automated approa process, the assignment proach applies a machine repository to learn the k solves. When a new repe by the machine learning of developers suitable to proach, we have reached

Abstract—Large software development projects receive many bug reports and each of these reports needs to be triaged. An important step in the triage process is the assignment of the report to a developer. Most previous efforts towards improving bug report assignment have focused on using an activity-based approach. We address some of the limitations of activity-based approaches by proposing a two-phased location-based approach where bug report assignment recommendations are based on the predicted location of the bug. The proposed approach utilizes noun extraction process on several information sources to deter sine bug location information and a simple term weighting scheme to povide a bug report assignment recommendation. We found by using a location-based approach, we achieved an accuracy of 89.41% and 59.76% when recommending five developers for the Eclipse and Mozilla projects, respectively.

Index Terms—Bug Report Assignment, File Activity Histories, Named Entity Recognition, POS Filtering, Mining Software Artifacts.

the Eclipse and Firefox development projects respectively.

As a means of reducing the time spent triaging, we present



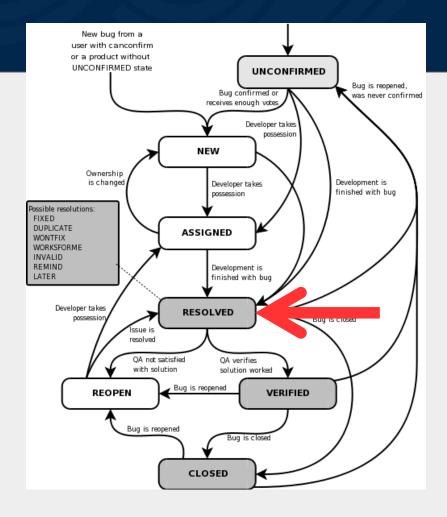
### Resolution



### **Bug Resolution**

• Did we fix it?

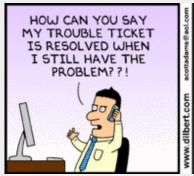






### **Defect Resolution**

- Now that the defect report has been assigned to a developer, it can be localized, debugged, etc. Those are future lecture topics!
- A defect report resolution status indicates the result of the most recent attempt to address it.
  - Important: resolved need not mean "fixed"







### **Possible Resolutions**

- Bugzilla resolution options:
  - FIXED (give commit #)
  - **INVALID** (bug report is invalid)
  - WONTFIX (we don't ever plan to fix it)
  - **DUPLICATE** (link to other bug report #)
  - WORKSFORME (cannot reproduce, a.k.a. "WFM")
  - MOVED (give link: filed with wrong project)
  - NOTABUG (report describes expected behavior)
  - NOTOURBUG (is a bug, but not with our software)
  - INSUFFICIENTDATA (cannot triage/fix w/o more)

### **Possible Resolutions**

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Thought question:
What fraction of
bug reports
end up with each
Resolution?



### **Duplicate, Invalid**

A significant fraction of submitted bug reports are spurious duplicates that describe already-reported defects. Previous studies report that as many as 36% of bug reports were duplicates or otherwise invalid [2]. Of the 29,000 bug reports used in the experiments in this paper, 25.9% were identified as duplicates by the project developers.

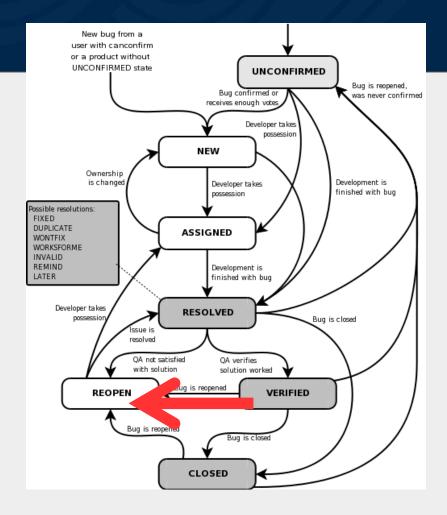
[ Jalbert et al. Automated Duplicate Detection for Bug Tracking Systems. DSN 2008. ]



### Reopen?

• I though we fixed it!





### Reopened

- A defect report that was previously resolved (e.g. "FIXED") may be reopened if later evidence suggest the old resolution is no longer adequate
  - "We though this fixed it, but now others are reporting it."
  - "We thought this was out of scope, but now we really need to address it."
- Compare: regression testing
- Surely this only happens rarely?

Many Fixes are Wrong Even on Mature, Critical

Software

This paper presents a comprehensive characteristic study on incorrect bug-fixes from large operating system code bases including Linux, OpenSolaris, FreeBSD and also a mature commercial OS developed and evolved over the last 12 years, investigating not only the mistake patterns during bug-fixing but also the possible human reasons in the development process when these incorrect bug-fixes were introduced. Our major findings include: (1) at least 14.8%~24.4% of sampled fixes for post-release bugs <sup>1</sup> in these large OSes are incorrect and have made impacts to end users. (2) Among several common bug types, concurrency bugs are the most difficult to fix correctly: 39% of concurrency bug fixes are incorrect. (3) Developers and reviewers for incorrect fixes usually do not have enough knowledge about the involved code. For example, 27% of the incorrect fixes are made by developers who have never touched the source code files associated with the fix. Our results provide useful guidelines to design new tools and also to improve the development process. Based on our findings, the commercial software

### **Bug Report Characteristics**



"DUSK! WITH A CREEPY, TINGLING SENSATION, YOU HEAR THE
FLUTTERING OF LEATHERY WINSS!
BATS! WITH GLOWING RED
EYES AND GLISTENING FANGS,
THESE UNSPEAKABLE GIANT
BUGS DROP ONTO ..."





### Large Study of Bug Reports

- 2000 defect reports in Linux, Mozilla, Apache
- Memory Bugs: ~15%, Semantic Bugs: ~75%, Concurrency Bugs: ~10%
- Bug → Crash: ~20%; Bug→Wrong Behavior: ~80%
  - Why Crash? Memory Bugs ~55%
- Most common? ~50% of Mozilla bugs are GUI issues
- Whence security bugs? 30% memory bug causes (severe), 70% semantic bugs causes

[ Tan et al. Bug Characteristics in Open Source Software. EMSE 2014.]

### The Story so far...

- We still want to deliver high-quality software fast cheap and on time.
   We can be more efficient in this endeavor if we plan to use a software development process
  - . Good planning needs good decision making which requires information obtained by measurements to combat uncertainty and mitigate risk
- Quality assurance is critical to software engineering
  - Testing is the most common dynamic technique for software quality assurance
    - Testing is very expensive and not testing is even more expensive
    - And there are other types of dynamic analysis
- We also have static analysis techniques for QA
  - Code Review ("passaround") and code inspection ("formal") are the most common static approaches to QA.
- Remember our processes should consider that humans are involved
- Bugs are tracked in Defect reports following a lifecycle
  - How do we know which part of a program to change to repair a bug or improve the program?

When you write more code to fix ...introduces more defects which... defects

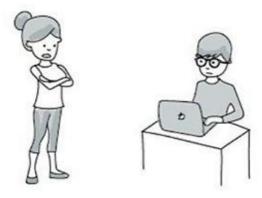




### **Questions?**

Homework looms ...





for the last time, simply closing a bug report doesn't fix the bug