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Regression Test Selection to Reduce Escaped Defects

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Abstract

Software development encompasses an extreme competitive market. Given that the system quality is an important factor to guarantee the company position in the market, great effort has been dedicated to ensure the product quality and customer satisfaction. Due to the enormous possibility of injecting human failures and its associated costs, a really careful and well planned testing process is definitely necessary. The main role of software testing is to find defects in the product so that the development team can fix them on time, before the product reaches the customer. In this context, the concept of escaped defects emerges. An escaped defect is a defect that was not found by the test team in a specific step of the process. As the companies need to keep their deadlines, when a new build (version) of the product is released it becomes impracticable the re-execution of all test cases in order to reduce the escaped defects. Because of that, there are teams responsible for selecting manually a subset of all test cases to guarantee the software correctness and reduce the escaped defects. This work focuses on the definition of five criteria (metrics) that permit a more systematic test case selection from a suite in order to increase the probability of finding bugs and, hopefully, reduce the number of defects to escape. This work is done as part of the research project collaboration between CIn-UFPE and Motorola, in the context of Brazil Test Center (BTC).

Keywords: Software Testing, Regression Test Selection, Escaped Defects

Resumo

O desenvolvimento de software engloba um mercado de extrema competitividade. Tendo em vista que os sistemas que apresentam melhor qualidade garantem seu espaço no mercado, as empresas que os desenvolvem têm investido bastante esforço para assegurar a qualidade do produto e a satisfação do cliente. Devido à grande possibilidade de injeção de falhas humanas e dos custos associados a estas falhas, um processo de testes bastante cuidadoso e bem planejado se faz necessário. O principal objetivo dos testes de software é encontrar defeitos no produto final, para que a equipe de desenvolvimento os corrija a tempo, antes que o produto chegue ao cliente. Dentro deste contexto, surge o conceito de *escaped defects* (defeitos escapados), que nada mais são do que defeitos que não foram encontrados pelo time de teste, em uma etapa específica do processo. Devido à necessidade das empresas cumprirem seus prazos, quando uma nova build (versão) é liberada, torna-se inviável a re-execução de todos os testes para diminuir a quantidade de defeitos escapados. Por isso, geralmente existem equipes responsáveis por selecionar manualmente um grupo mínimo de casos de teste que sejam capazes de garantir o correto funcionamento do software. Este trabalho dá enfoque na definição de cinco critérios (métricas) que permitam uma seleção mais sistemática dos casos de teste de uma suíte, de modo que esta seleção aumente as chances de se encontrar defeitos e, possivelmente, reduza a quantidade de defeitos que escapem. Este trabalho é parte do projeto de pesquisa do CIn-UFPE em cooperação com a Motorola no contexto do Brazil Test Center (BTC).

Palavras Chaves: Teste de Software, Seleção de testes de regressão, *escaped defects*.

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1 Introduction

Software development encompasses an extreme competitive market. Given that the system quality is an important fact to guarantee the company position in the market, great effort has been dedicated to ensure the product quality and customer satisfaction.

To ensure product quality, software engineering processes like RUP (Rational Unified Process) [1] are often used during the product development, also aiming at higher productivity. Figure 1 shows an overview of the RUP. It has two dimensions: the horizontal axis represents time and shows the lifecycle aspects of the process, and the vertical axis represents disciplines, which group activities logically according to their nature.

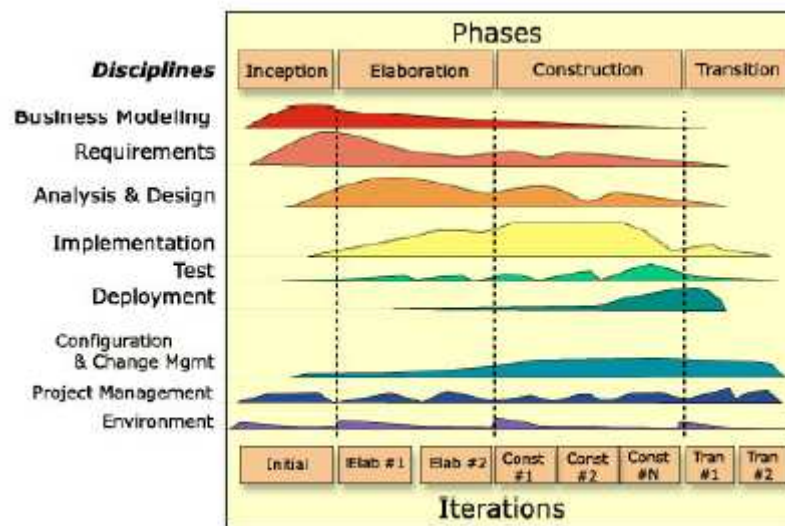


Figure 1 - The Rational Unified Process

The horizontal axis represents the dynamic aspect of the process, i.e. how activities are distributed over time. It is expressed in terms of Phases and Milestones. The vertical axis represents the structural aspects of the process: how it is described in terms of disciplines, workflows, activities, artefacts and roles. Figure 1 also shows how the emphasis on one activity can vary over time.

Nowadays, a discipline that has shown great importance is the Test discipline, which this work focuses on. Due to the enormous possibility of injecting human failures in the products and its associated costs, a really careful and well planned testing process is definitely necessary.

The main role of software testing [4], [5] is to find defects in the product, so that the development team can fix them on time before the product reaches the customer. This might be done by verifying whether all requirements are implemented according to their specification, and also by producing test cases that present high probability of revealing a fault that was not identified yet, with a minimum amount of time and effort.

Knowing that problems exposed to customers are quite costly, it is necessary to develop preventive solutions by creating effective tests that aim to find as many errors as possible. In this context, the concept of escaped defects [3] emerges. An escaped defect is a defect that was not found by the test team, in a specific step of the process.

A research and development project that emerged from a partnership between CIn-UFPE and Motorola, located in Recife, as part of the Brazil Test Center (BTC) project, is responsible for conducting tests of the Motorola cell phones with focus on the software testing execution activities.

In this particular context, defects that are classified as escaped defects are the ones which were not found by the BTC, appearing in a later phase, say, at system testing or even in the user hands. The problem characterized as escaped defects [3] may be addressed by using the idea of Regression Test Selection [6] [7], but, all of the researches existent in the literature assume availability of the source code. As this is not the case for the BTC, we have to look at black-box bug prediction techniques to define our own strategy for regression test selection.

1.1 Objectives

Due to the needs of big companies, like Motorola, to meet their deadlines, when a new build of a product is released, it becomes impractical the re-execution of all test cases. Because of that, there are teams responsible for selecting manually a group of test cases that could be able to guarantee the software correct operation.

Within the presented context and based on the Motorola needs of identifying errors more efficiently, this work aims to propose a solution that allows a more systematic test cases selection from a suite, so that this selection might allow the reduction of possible defects to escape.

Particularly, this work is focused on the definition of criteria (metrics) responsible for promoting a test case selection that will be used to the regression tests, when a new build

(version) is already available. Based on a particular intention for each criterion, each of them provides a different relevance order among the tests existent in the suite. The team manager can then compare the results of each criterion and select the test cases based on the needs of each particular build, giving more emphasis to the criteria that seem to be the most important.

1.2 Document Structure

This work is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 2** presents a detailed description of software testing, focusing on the RUP test discipline, and also explaining the concepts of escaped defects and regression test selection, used in this work;
- **Chapter 3** explains the concepts of debugging and testing, and shows how strategies for debugging can be used in software testing;
- **Chapter 4** describes the regression test selection strategy proposed; it describes each of the defined criteria in detail, also presenting a formal specification for them;
- **Chapter 5** shows the conclusion of this research, also presenting the related and future works.

2. Software Testing

Software testing is “any activity aimed at evaluating an attribute or capability of a program or system and determining that it meets its required results” [8]. In a simple way, one of the main purposes of software testing is to execute a developed system in order to find bugs. This contrasts with the other purpose of testing: to ensure that the system does what it is suppose to do.

Software testing is therefore important to analyse whether the implementation meets the system requirements, to reduce the costs associated to maintenance and rework, to verify the correct integration among all software components, and especially, to ensure the client satisfaction.

The idea of finding bugs has the intent of reporting them back to the development team, so they can fix them. In this way, the final product shall have as few bugs as possible, guaranteeing its quality and reliability. It is impossible to find all bugs existent in a program with testing, so it is important to know that software will always have bugs. Then, the objective is to provide systems in which the remaining bugs are neither critical nor essential and which do not compromise the system integrity.

There are two main testing approaches: white box and black box. The former is characterized by knowing the internal functionalities of the software components; so it is necessary to have programming skills to understand all possible logical paths. On the other hand, differently from the white box approach, the latter approach regards software as a black box, where its internal structure is not considered. Given the input data, its aim is to verify whether the given outputs are as expected.

The moments in the software life cycle in which tests are performed can be defined by four test phases: Unit testing, Integration testing, System testing and, finally, Acceptance testing [9]. Unit testing is the act of testing isolated components, ensuring their individual correctness in order to make much easier the Integration testing, which is responsible to test the integration among the unit parts. System testing verifies the whole system functionality, and in general, black box tests are executed with this intention. Finally, the system is tested by the user in order to approve it (Acceptance testing).

When changes are made to the software, a new build is released, and regression tests must be performed. They are responsible to verify whether previously-working functionality did not regress and to verify whether the changes are working as expected.

2.1 RUP Test Discipline

As shown in Figure 1 of Chapter 1 the RUP Test discipline already begins in the Inception phase, during project planning. Here, the initial planning of the tests is done based on the project plan and also on the elicited requirements, which are one of the first inputs for identifying which tests to perform. In the next phase – Elaboration – the focus is on the design and execution of integration tests based on the Analysis & Design artefacts. In the Construction phase, the purpose is to design and execute system tests. Finally, in the Transition phase, the responsibility is to get the customer’s approval, guaranteeing the software correctness and the expected functionality.

As the RUP has the principle of iterative development, the RUP test discipline follows this idea too. This is important because the development team can have an early concrete feedback about crucial testing information and the whole test planning can evolve over time, until getting a good maturity level. As said before, the purpose of Testing is to ensure software quality, and according to [10], this is achieved through a number of core practices:

- Finding and documenting defects in software quality.
- Generally advising about perceived software quality.
- Proving the validity of the assumptions made in design and requirement specifications through concrete demonstration.
- Validating the software product functions as designed.
- Validating that the requirements have been implemented appropriately.

Figure 2 [13] shows the default workflow of the RUP test discipline during a typical RUP iteration. “This workflow may require variations based on the specific needs of each iteration and project” [12].

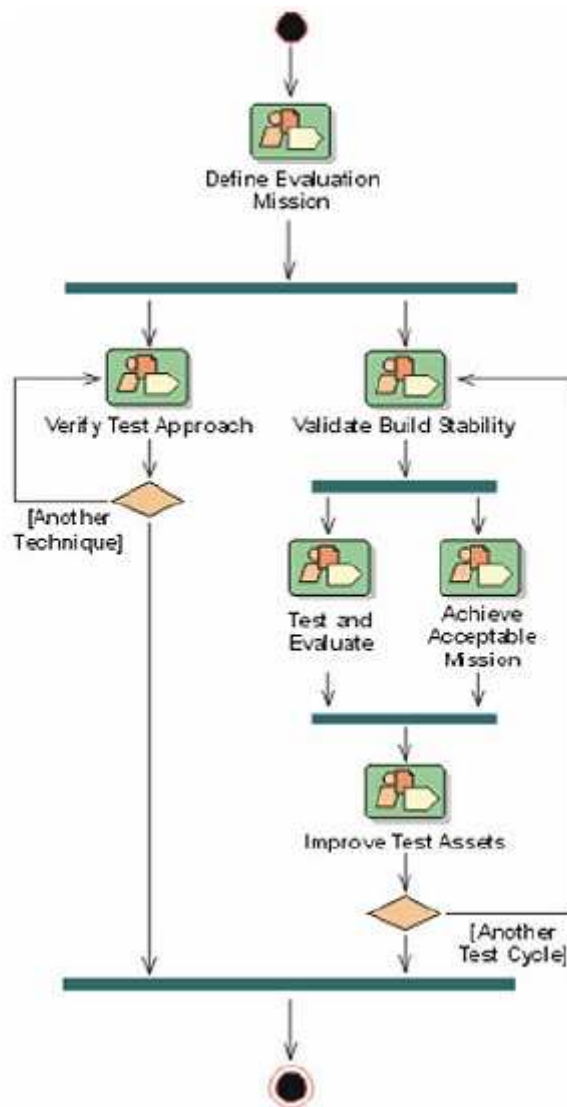


Figure 2 – Test discipline workflow

The Test discipline workflow starts with the Define Evaluation Mission workflow detail, followed by two tasks concurrently: Verify Test Approach (for each existing technique) and Validate Build Stability (for each test cycle). From the first one, it is possible to go back to itself, with a different technique. The latter allows achieving the next two workflow details concurrently: Test and Evaluate and Achieve Acceptable Mission. From both of them, the next step is the Improve Test Assets.

According to [12], the roles that can be assigned in software testing are: Test Manager, Test Analyst, Test Designer, and Tester. The possible activities associated to each of them can be seen in Figure 3 [12].

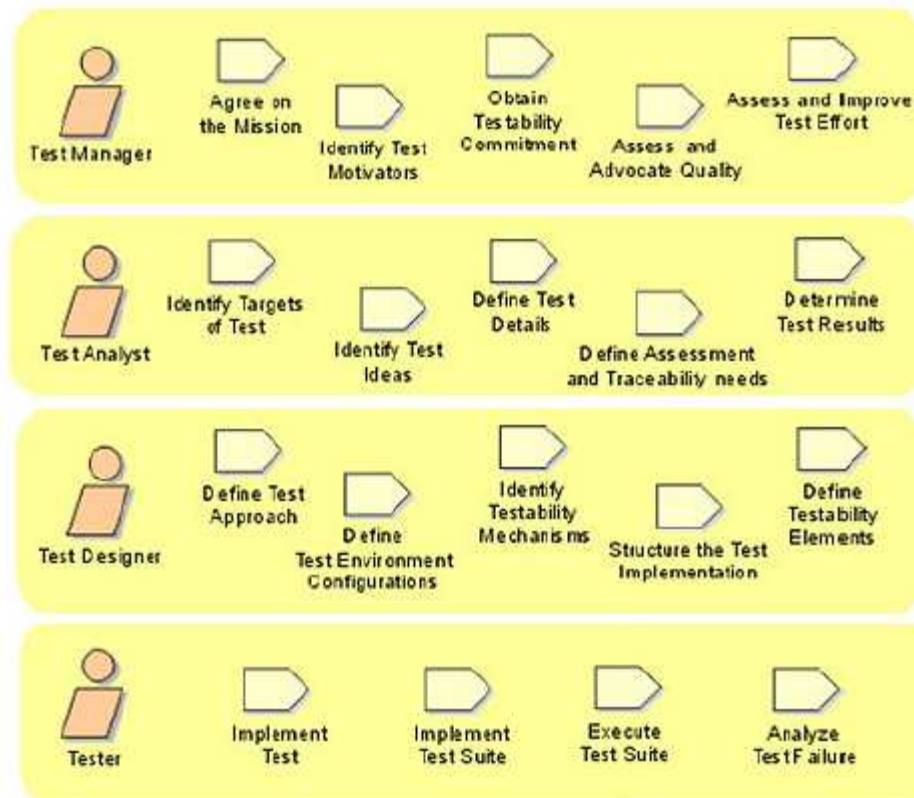


Figure 3 – Test discipline activities

Each of these activities has a template that defines its structure, and can be composed by: purpose, steps, input artefacts, output artefacts, frequency, role, tool mentors, and additional information. An example is shown in Table 1 [11], describing the activity Agree on the Mission.

All of these activities can also be divided into groups that compose every workflow detail of Figure 2. Table 2 shows the association between the activity groups and the workflow details. Note that the same activity can be associated to more than one workflow detail.

Table 1 - Agree on the Mission Template

Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To negotiate the most effective use of testing resources for each iteration. • To agree on an appropriate and achievable set of objectives and deliverables for the iteration. 	
Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand iteration objectives • Investigate options for the scope of the assessment effort • Present options to stakeholders • Formulate mission statement • Identify test deliverables • Gain stakeholder agreement • Evaluate and verify your results 	
Input Artifacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iteration Plan • Quality Assurance Plan • Risk List • Work Order • Issues List • Vision • Software Development Plan • Test Automation Architecture • Change Request • Test Plan 	Output Artifacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test Plan
Frequency: This activity is typically conducted multiple times per iteration.	
Role: Test Manager	
Tool Mentors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing Test Activities Using Rational Test Manager 	
More Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test Plan 	

Table 2 - Activities that compose each workflow detail

Workflow Details	Activities
Define Evaluation Mission	Identify Test Motivators, Identify Targets of Test, Identify Test Ideas, Define Assessment and Traceability Needs, Define Test Approach, Agree On Mission
Verify Test Approach	Define Test Environment Configurations, Identify Testability Mechanisms, Define Testability Elements, Define Test Details, Implement Test, Implement Test Suite, Obtain Testability Commitment
Validate Build Stability	Define Test Details, Execute Test Suite, Implement

	Test, Analyze Test Failure, Determine Test Results, Assess and Advocate Quality
Test and Evaluate	Identify Test Ideas, Define Test Details, Define Testability Elements, Implement Test, Implement Test Suite, Structure the Test Implementation, Execute Test Suite, Analyse Test Failure, Determine Test Results, Assess and Improve Test Effort
Achieve Acceptable Mission	Identify Test Ideas, Implement Test, Implement Test Suite, Analyse Test Failure, Determine Test Results, Assess and Improve Test Effort, Assess and Advocate Quality
Improve Test Assets	Develop Test Guidelines, Define Testability Elements, Structure the Test Implementation, Identify Test Ideas, Define Test Details, Define Assessment and Traceability Needs, Implement Test Suite, Implement Test

2.2 Escaped Defects

Escaped defects can be defined as software defects that should be found by a test team in a specific step of the process, and for some reason they have escaped. The escaped defects analysis is the process of investigating these escapes, in order to discover why they have escaped, prevent future escapes and then, making preventive plans to avoid these future similar escapes [3]. This is important to improve software quality, get better customer appreciation and also to reduce costs, since whenever critical faults are exposed to the customers, there are great costs to make software correction and maintenance.

The escape analysis process requires a lot of effort to get the best return. So, if the development and test teams could both be involved, the process would produce better results. According to [3], the objectives of escape analysis are to:

- Separate escapes into useful categories for further, more in-depth analysis.
- Run statistics on the categorized data.
- Identify and implement overall process changes needed based on the statistics.
- Identify and implement low-level (department-level) changes needed

based on in-depth analysis of specific escapes.

- Use metrics to demonstrate effectiveness of process changes.

There is also another preventive direction that can be followed with the intention of reducing the escaped defects. This perspective considers the test cases investigation, examining all existent test cases in a test suite and analysing, based on defined criteria, which of them are more likely to allow as few escaped defects as possible, in the context of a particular test suite execution.

Getting into this perspective, there are some possible ways to pursue: for example, add more test cases to the group executed in the previous build, but this is not the focus of this work; and select the most appropriate test cases from a suite (to be explained in next section).

2.3 Regression Test Selection

Regression testing is the activity of testing a new version of a system in order to validate this version, detecting whether bugs have been introduced due to the changes made in the software, and thus, guaranteeing the correctness of the modifications. Since the re-execution of all test cases in a suite is very expensive, researchers have proposed techniques for reducing this expense, like *regression test selection* [2], [6], [7] [14] [15], [16] and *test suite minimization* [17], [18] [19], [20], [21] techniques.

Often there is a confusion between these two techniques, and in fact, they are related but distinct. So, it is important to understand their differences. The test suite minimization technique considers only the program and a test suite, and is responsible to reduce the size of a test suite while still guaranteeing the same coverage of the system functionalities. Regression test selection “reduces the cost of regression testing by selecting an appropriate subset of the existing test suite, based on information about the program, modified version, and test suite” [22].

Although these techniques are distinct they can be applied together, if the objective is to attend both of their purposes, which is to select the minimal subset from a test suite to validate a new build.

Both of these techniques can be unsafe. For instance, regression test selection, which is the focus of this work, can have substantial cost, and worse, can disregard test cases that could find bugs or consider tests that do not reveal faults at all, reducing fault detection

effectiveness. “This trade-off between the time required to select and run test cases and the fault detection ability of the test cases that are run is central to regression test selection.” [23]

Note that we can apply different approaches to this problem based on the needs of the system. We can easily find researches that propose methods for regression test selection, but almost all of them follow the white box strategy. Looking for solving the Motorola company needs of reducing the escaped defects (in a black box context) and making test case selection more efficient, this work is inspired by the regression test selection idea, but considers a black box approach used in the debugging field. We propose metrics that will be capable of selecting a subset of test cases from a suite to validate a new version of the system. The solution proposed is taken from research on debugging, in particular the fault prediction analysis. This is explained in details in Chapter 4.

3. Debugging and Testing

Debugging is the process of locating and reducing the number of bugs in a computer program code or the engineering of a hardware device, thus correcting its wrong behaviour. Or, in few words, it is the process of “diagnosing the precise nature of a known error and then correcting it” [29]. The most difficulty in debugging is when the system is integrated, and various parts of the system are dependent on each other, as changes made in one can interfere in another, introducing bugs to it.

Associating the activity of debugging with the RUP disciplines, it can be said that debugging acts essentially in three disciplines, with different analysis to the location of the failure for each one [30]. The first is the implementation discipline, where developers introduce some errors that must be found quickly during implementation or during the unit tests.

The next is during the test discipline, when the integration and system tests are performed and some incorrect behaviour may happen. Here there is a careful task to execute, before tracking the problem, which is to make sure that the problem is with the system and not due to a bad test case specification or badly chosen data, for example.

The last phase is the deployment, when the software product is tested to be validated and finally available for the end users. Some specific undesirable behaviours of the software can appear in this phase, such as inappropriate performance or unsatisfactory recovery from a failure [30]. Thus, the portion of the code that contains the problem needs to be found and fixed before it reaches the customer.

So, as can be seen, the concept of debugging is, in some way, close to testing. Software testing aims to validate the software. There are teams responsible to find the system bugs and report to the development team, so they can solve these problems. On the other hand, debugging is essentially performed by the developers, where programmers often make use of debugging tools to help in program inspection in order to find out what has caused the problem and how it might be solved.

Zeller [34] proposes the basic steps in debugging, whose initial letters form the word TRAFFIC:

- **Track the problem.** The first step in debugging is to track the problem, i.e., to track and manage problem reports, that are archived in a problem database – a document containing all problems found, and information such as the situation that it has occurred

(in order to understand how to reproduce it), its severity level, and all known information that might contribute to find the problem.

- **Reproduce the failure.** This step is responsible for creating instructions to reproduce the problem. We have to specify a test case to be performed in order to cause the program to fail as specified in the bug report. There are two reasons for that [34]. The first is that you keep the problem under control, since you can observe it whenever wanted. The second is that after fixing the bug, its correctness can be verified.

- **Automate and simplify.** The objective here is to simplify the test case specified, firstly trying to automate it, if necessary. Then, it is important to try to simplify the test case inputs to acquire a smallest test case.

- **Find infection origins.** This step is the process of trying to discover the possible causes of the problem. The source code of the program is needed to determine its origins, and therefore, requires a good knowledge of the system. There is a great difficulty in this step, since the location of the bug is not always the same as its symptom.

- **Focus on likely origins.** The motivation here is to keep focus on the most likely origins of the problem. Some rules that help following the problem cause are: focus on infections, focus on causes, focus on anomalies, focus on code smells, and focus on dependences. For more information about each of them, see [34].

- **Isolate the infection chain.** The challenge here is to isolate the origin of the infection. Then, continue isolating origins transitively until you have an infection chain from the incorrect program code to its incorrect program behavior [34].

- **Correct the defect.** This step is where the debugging phase itself is left and programming and testing is returned, in order to apply the fix to correct the defect. The testing is really important, as there is the need to make sure that the system is performing the correct behavior and has not inserted new bugs.

After fixing the bug, an important task that might be done is to learn anything you can from that bug. For example, in [33] there are some suggestions, where a first attempt may be to see whether the same programming error occurs in other parts of the system, and whether new faults might be introduced after fixing the bug. Then, you can ask yourself if that error could be prevented. In this case, how you could have done differently to prevent it. Finally, you can analyze whether the bug could be detected sooner and how to improve the test cases.

In this direction, there are some researches on debugging that provide studies about how to predict faults [24], [25], [26], [27]. The basic idea of this approach is to find locations where to focus the testing effort. Based on the idea summarized by Ko et al. [28], which considers cognitive breakdown as the causes for faults introduced by programmers, Kim et al. [25] assume that faults do not occur individually, but rather in bursts of other related faults. Thus, they suggest that bug occurrences have four different kinds of locality:

- **Changed-component locality:** If a component was changed recently, it has a great probability of introducing faults soon. This happens because any code modification is considered a risk to introduce new faults, as we explained previously.
- **New-component locality:** If a component has been added recently, it has a great probability of introducing faults soon. A component added has the same principle as the changed component, since it is also a code modification.
- **Temporal locality:** If a component introduced a fault recently, it has a great probability of introducing faults soon. An explanation for this assumption is that programmers make their changes without knowing the correct or complete specification of the system, thus injecting multiple faults [25].
- **Spatial locality:** If a component introduced a fault recently, other components that are close to that have a great probability of introducing faults soon. The explanation for that is the same as for the temporal locality, since changes introduced due to incorrect system knowledge, can be propagated over the rest of the system.

There are a lot of ways to calculate closeness. For example, components that belong to the same file or directory are considered close components, in the sense of physical locality. On the other hand, using logical coupling [31], [32], “two components are close to each other (logically coupled) when they are frequently changed together” [25]. Logical coupling is the method used in one of the criteria defined for the selective regression test described in Chapter 4.

Based on that observations about bug localities, Kim et al. [25] developed an algorithm, experimented on seven open source projects, that is 73%-95% precise at predicting future faults at the file level. At the function/method level it can cover about 46%-72% of future faults. Observing these statistics, this accuracy seems to be really good, especially if compared with other experiments published. Thus, the concept of bugs localities suggested is well indicated in order to predict faults, and consequently, trying to prevent them.

Taking a deep look at the fault prediction approaches was possible to create a bridge between debugging and testing, where fault prevention solutions shall be an important practice to be used in software testing, and thus, obtaining great results. To the best of our knowledge, there is no previous work in the literature addressing this use of debugging concepts to improve the test process. So, this work might provide an original contribution to that.

4. Test Selection Strategy

Looking for attending the Motorola needs of reducing escaped defects, a strategy for test case selection was developed based on researches about debugging, since, as already explained, no work found in literature about regression test selection supports the black box technique. Thus, based mostly on interviews with two members of the Motorola Execution Team and on the idea of preventing bugs, five criteria (metrics) for selective regression test were proposed with the intention of increasing coverage and, consequently, reducing the escaped defects.

The idea is to produce the relevance calculation of all test cases, based on each metric, which is explained in details below. We also present their formal specification. It is important to understand that every metric is treated independently of the others, where each of them takes into account its own criterion. Thus, the test case selection is done by using all metrics together. The most important criterion depends on the current needs of the execution team. Each section below presents one of the five criteria.

4.1 Test Case History

This metric considers the history (the number and status of the past executions) of all test cases existent in the test suite. Table 3 shows a generic template for this metric, containing its inputs, the solution proposed to get a selective regression test based on this criterion, and the outputs. We use the same template for the other four criteria defined in this section.

Table 3 - Generic structure of Test Case History metric

<p>The inputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each test case, there is a history of its past executions (passed, failed, blocked, etc).
<p>The solution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each test case from the suite, calculate: $f_T = \begin{cases} \frac{N^{\circ} \text{ bugs}}{ HT } * 100\%, & \text{if } HT \geq N \\ 50\%, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$ <p style="text-align: right;">where HT = list executions size and N = minimum size to be considered</p>
<p>The outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test cases relevance order, based on the calculation result of each test case.

The solution for this metric is to calculate the number of times in which the given test case has been executed and found an error, relative to the number of times it was performed. The purpose is to treat the test cases with higher relevance as good test cases to find errors, since they have a history tending to that. We only consider tests which have run more than N times, where N is given by the user. Tests that have not been executed at least N times are assigned to 50% chances of been selected.

4.1.1 Example

Suppose the test case “3” has a history as shown bellow. For the Motorola Regression Test Team, the possible statuses of the test cases when they are performed are: failed, blocked, passed and indeterminate. I will represent the status failed as “x” and passed as “ok”. We assume N=5.

Test 3							
x	ok	x	blocked	x	ok	x	x

The calculation result for the Test 3 using equation above is:

$$f_{T_3} = \frac{5}{8} * 100 \% \therefore f_{T_3} = 62,5\%$$

This indicates that the Test 3 has a relevance of 62, 5% for the first criterion. This is the percentage of failed status in the whole test case history. Remember that every test case from the suite contains a history, and therefore, has their specific relevance percentage like the exemplified Test 3. Thus, with the result of all test cases calculation, it is possible to select the most essential test cases for this criterion.

4.2 Changed and New Components

This metric follows the principle of Changed-component locality and New component locality presented in Chapter 3. Interviewing two members of the Motorola Execution Teams, it was possible to notice that these approaches are also used intuitively by them. Table 4 presents the generic structure for this metric.

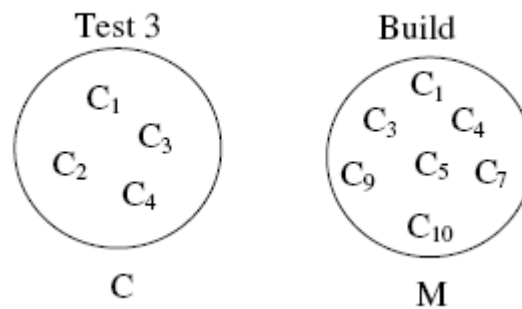
Table 4 - Generic structure of Changed and New Components metric

<p>The inputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each test case: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C: the set of components visited by the test case. - M: the set of changed and new components for the current build.
<p>The solution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each test case from the suite, calculate: $f_T = \frac{ C \cap M }{ M } * 100\%$
<p>The outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test cases relevance order, based on the calculation result of each test case.

This solution considers the percentage of changed and new components for the current build that a given test case covers. In this way, it is possible to know which test cases are more relevant for this criterion, namely, the ones that present the higher percentages.

4.2.1 Example

We show below the sets “C” and “M”. “C” is the set of components the test 3 visits. “M” is the set of modified and new components of the current build. Note that the components “C1”, “C3” and “C4” are the intersection between “C” and “M”.



The calculation result for the Test 3 using the equation presented is:

$$fT_3 = \frac{3}{7} * 100\% \therefore fT_3 = 42,86\%$$

This shows that the test case “3” visits 42,86% of the changed and new components for the current build. Again, this is an example for just one test case. This calculation has to be done for all test cases from the suite. Finally, with the result of all calculations, the more relevant test cases can be selected.

4.3 Recent Failures

Again, this metric was defined based on the interviews with the Motorola Execution Team members, which naturally follow the idea of preventing future faults by paying attention to the more recent failures that appeared at the system under test. If you can remember, this approach has the same intention of the temporal locality presented in Chapter 3, which considers any component with recent failures as suspects to fail again.

Now, it is important to know the concept of a CR (Change Request): a documentation that indirectly contains a report about a bug occurrence by requesting a system modification to correct it. Table 5 shows the structure for this criterion.

Table 5 - Generic structure of Recent Failures metric

The inputs

- The components that failed in the previous build.
- For each of these components, the percentage of CRs opened in build (already normalized).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each of these components, the set of associated test cases.
The solution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each test case from the suite: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calculate the sum of all percentages associated to that test case.
The outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test cases relevance order, based on the calculation result of each test case.

This solution is very simple: it just adds the percentage associated to each test case from the suite. Note that if some test case does not visit any recently failed component it will receive 0% of relevance for this metric.

4.3.1 Example

Suppose that, in the previous build, the system under test presented failures at the components shown in the Table 6 (first column). The second column contains the percentage of CRs opened in the previous build for each of those components. We assume they are already normalized, since a CR can be associated to more than one component. Finally, in the third column there are the test cases that, in some way, visit the associated component. Note that the second and third column do not have any relation between them; they are associated just with the components of the first column.

Table 6 - Example for the Recent Failures metric

Components that failed in the previous build	CRs that were opened in the previous build (%)	Test Cases
C ₂	10%	T ₁ T ₂ , T ₉ , T ₁₀
C ₄	50%	T ₂ , T ₃ , T ₄ , T ₆
C ₅	25%	T ₁ T ₃ , T ₄ , T ₅
C ₉	15%	T ₃ , T ₅ , T ₆ , T ₈

Choosing the test case T1 (highlighted with circle) as an example, its calculation result is:

$$T_1 = 10 + 25 = 35\%$$

So, the calculation proposed in this metric is just to sum all the percentages associated to each of the test cases. In this way, every of them will going to have their percentage of relevance to the context of this metric.

4.4 Escaped Defects

This is a more specific attempt of reducing the escaped defects. The idea is to try to prevent that the same components which presented escaped defects, present it again. Based on the strategy defined for the previous metric, this one is very similar to that, and there are two differences due to its context: here we consider components that presented escaped defects at a specific period of time, while the other criteria considered just the previous build. The test cases to be considered are just the ones that were not performed (the test cases that were performed are not important for this metric and can be considered as they received 0% of relevance).

The justification for these differences is, firstly, that the Motorola Execution Team makes a survey of escaped defects and creates a graph containing the percentage of CRs that escaped from the BTC per components in a certain period of time. This graph provides the inputs for this metric.

The second difference is that we consider only test cases that were not performed due to the fact that we are not interested in test cases that were executed in the specific period of time but did not found the defects that escaped. All that matters here is to try to avoid the escapes. The idea is to include some test cases from the suite that were not executed and which can possibly find some of those defects. Table 7 shows the structure for this metric.

Table 7 - Generic structure of Escaped Defects metric

<p>The inputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The components that presented escaped defects at a specific period of time. • For each of these components, the percentage of CRs (also already normalized) that escaped BTC (Brazil Test Center). • For each of these components, the set of associated test cases, that was not performed at that specific time.
<p>The solution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each test case that was not performed at the specific time:

- Calculate the sum of all percentages associated to that test case.

The outputs:

- Test cases relevance order, based on the calculation result of each test case.

As you can see, the solution for this metric is the same as the previous one. The only difference is that the test cases to be considered are not the whole test suite, but just the ones that were not performed in the specified time. The remaining test cases are not important for this metric, thus, can be considered as test cases with 0% of relevance.

4.4.1 Example

Suppose that the system under test presented, at a specific time, escaped defects at the components shown in the Table 8 (first column). The second column contains the percentage of CRs opened – also already normalized - at a specific time for each of those components. Finally, the third column shows the test cases that were not executed in that specific time and, in some way, visit the associated component. Once more, the second and third columns do not have any relation between them; they are associated just with the components of the first column.

Table 8 - Example for the Escaped Defects metric

Components that escaped BTC	CRs that escaped BTC (%)	Test cases that were not performed
C ₁	20%	(T ₁) T ₂ , T ₅ , T ₇
C ₂	15%	(T ₁) T ₂ , T ₉ , T ₁₀
C ₅	35%	(T ₁) T ₃ , T ₄ , T ₅
C ₉	30%	T ₃ , T ₅ , T ₆ , T ₈

Again, choosing the test case T1 (highlighted with circle) as an example, the calculation result for it is:

$$T_1 = 20 + 15 + 35 = 70\%$$

So, the calculation proposed in the solution for this metric is just to sum all them percentages associated to each of the test cases. Just like the Recent Failures metric does.

4.5 Spatial Locality

This metric is based on the Spatial locality suggested by Kim et al. [25] (see Chapter 3). Recall that components very close to components that failed recently are considered suspects to fail too. So, once the set of components that failed recently is known, the task here is to analyze the remaining components in order to discover which of them are the suspects of introducing errors.

In order to calculate the distance between two components, the notion of logical coupling is used (also explained in Chapter 3). The distance formula we present here is a little bit different from the one presented by Kim et al. [25] (we do not use infinite values as opposed to Kim et al. See more details below). By using the equation, we calculate the distance between every component that failed recently and every remaining component.

After calculating those distances, the purpose is to analyze the components closer to the recently failed components. The relevant test cases are those associated to the suspect components. The structure of this metric is shown in Table 9, which explains the solution in detail.

Table 9 - Generic structure of Spatial Locality metric

<p>The inputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V1, V2 ... Vn: History of versions, where each version is the set of new and changed components of that version. • C': the set of components that failed in the previous build. • C'': the remaining components. • Every set of test cases associated to each C''.
<p>The solution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate the distance between every C' and C'' using equation:

$$distance(C_1, C_2) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{count(C_1, C_2)}, & \text{if } count(C_1, C_2) > 0 \\ 2, & \text{if } count(C_1, C_2) = 0 \end{cases}$$

where $count(C_1, C_2)$ = number of times C_1 and C_2 have been changed together

- Calculate the average distance related to every C'' .
- Calculate the percentage related to every C'' by assigning the value “2 - average” and then, normalizing to 100%.
- For each test case from the suite:
 - Calculate the sum of the percentages associated to that test case.

The outputs:

- Test cases relevance order, based on the calculation result of each test case.

As said before, the solution consists, firstly, of calculating the distances between every component $c' _ C'$ that failed in the previous build and every remaining component $c'' _ C''$. The distances are calculated using the equation shown in the solution of Table 9, which considers the number of times two components have been changed together. The closer they are the smaller the distance between them. Due to this fact, the distance is the inverse of count.

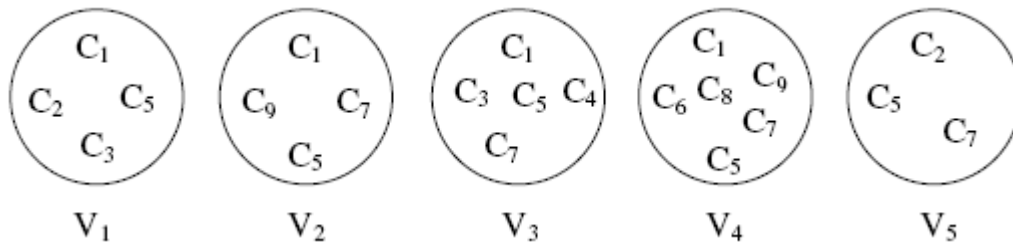
Kim at al. [25] considers that the distance between two components that have count equals to zero is infinite. We are assigning 2 instead of infinite, because as we need to calculate the average distance, it would be impracticable to use infinite. Since the greater result possible is 1 (whenever count is 1), using 2 for very distant components seems to be a good compromise.

After calculating all distances, the next step is to investigate the components of C'' that are very close to the components of C' by calculating their average distance. Remember that we are considering just the distances of every C'' and not the distances of the components in C' , because this metric considers only the components that are close to the components that failed recently, treating them as suspects too. Note that the components of C' are already covered in the Recent Failures metric (section 0).

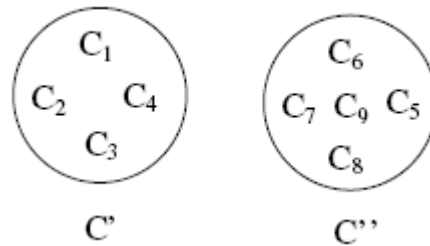
Now, with the average distances in hands, the next step is similar to the two previous metrics. We have to normalize these averages to 100%, and then, we build a table like Table 6 and Table 8. The procedure to generate this final step is the same from the previous metric. The example shall clarify this metric.

4.5.1 Example

Suppose that the system under test has a version history (V1, V2 ... V5) like this one shown below.



Then, suppose that C' and C'' are:



Now, we calculate the distance between every $c' _ C'$ and $c'' _ C''$ by using the equation presented in the field solution (Table 9). As an example, let's calculate the distance between C1 and C5. Firstly, we have to count the number of times in which these components have been changed together (see the count in the equation shown in Table 9). Looking to the versions (V1 ... V5) we can see that they appear together four times, that is:

$$\text{count}(C_1, C_5) = 4$$

So, the distance is:

$$\text{distance}(C_1, C_5) = \frac{1}{4} = 0,25$$

Continuing the calculation of the distances between every C' and C'', the Table 10 is produced. The distance between C1 and C5 is highlighted with circle.

Table 10 - Distances

$C' \backslash C''$	C_5	C_6	C_7	C_8	C_9
C_1	0,25	1	0,33	1	0,5
C_2	0,5	2	1	2	2
C_3	0,5	2	1	2	2
C_4	1	2	1	2	2

Having all distances calculated for every $c'' _ C''$, it is time to calculate their respective averages. For example, the average distance for C_5 will be:

$$average(C_5) = \frac{0,25 + 0,5 + 0,5 + 1}{4} \cong 0,56$$

After calculating the averages for every $c'' _ C''$, we can build the Table 11 below.

Table 11 - Averages of every $c'' _ C''$ and the associated test cases

Components (C'')	Averages	Test cases
C_5	0,56	T_1, T_2, T_9, T_{10}
C_6	1,75	T_2, T_3, T_7, T_6
C_7	0,83	T_1, T_3, T_4, T_5
C_8	1,75	T_3, T_5, T_6, T_8
C_9	1,62	T_2, T_5

After that, we have to calculate the relevance of every test case, normalized to 100%. Note that the smaller the average distance a certain component has, the closer it is to a recently

failed component. For that reason their associated test cases should have greater relevance. We illustrate below how the percentages related to the average distance of the component C5 is calculated.

$$percentage(C_5) = \frac{2 - 0,56}{(2 - 0,56) + (2 - 1,75) + (2 - 0,83) + (2 - 1,75) + (2 - 1,62)} * 100\%$$

$$percentage(C_5) \cong 41,26\%$$

By calculating the percentage of every c'' _ C'' as shown above, we can build the Table 12.

Table 12 - Example for the Spatial Locality metric

Components (C'')	Percentages	Test cases
C ₅	41,26%	T ₁ , T ₂ , T ₉ , T ₁₀
C ₆	7,16%	T ₂ , T ₃ , T ₇ , T ₆
C ₇	33,52%	T ₁ , T ₃ , T ₄ , T ₅
C ₈	7,16%	T ₃ , T ₅ , T ₆ , T ₈
C ₉	10,89%	T ₂ , T ₅

Thus, the relevance calculation for every test case might be done just like Recent Failures and Escaped Defects metrics, presented in sections 0 and 4.4, respectively. Again, choosing the test case T1 (highlighted with circle) as an example, its calculation result is:

$$T_1 = 41,26 + 33,52 = 74,78\%$$

5. Conclusion

This work has proposed a method to regression test case selection in order to reduce escaped defects. Tending to that, five metrics were defined to be used on the test case selection, separately. They were based mostly on interviews with the Motorola Execution Team and researches on debugging, more specifically on faults prediction. In this way, preventing bugs shall be an interesting idea to reduce defects to escape.

The major contribution of this work is the use of debugging techniques to increase the reliability of software testing, in this case, regression test selection. The five metrics were also implemented in the Python language in order to exemplify these metrics and take a deep look on how they work. Analysing carefully each of them, and prioritizing the most relevant ones for the particular situation, appropriated test case selection shall be possible.

5.1 Related Work

Once we have made use of predicting fault techniques to regression test case selection, there are two kinds of related work. In [36], for example, the authors have proposed three regression test selection methods with the purpose of reducing the number of selected test cases. In addition, they have also suggested two regression test coverage metrics to address the coverage identification problem, based on McCabe [37]. To study the veracity of their proposed methods they have empirically compared the three methods with other three reduction and precision-oriented methods.

In [25], Kim et al. developed an algorithm based on the concept of bug occurrence locality, like was already explained in section 3. Following the idea of [38] they used the notion of a cache from operating systems to predict faults by caching locations with great probabilities of having faults. They have experimented their algorithm on seven open source projects and the cache selected 10% of the source code files where these files account for 73%-95% of faults.

5.2 Future Works

The future works that can be highlighted for this work are:

- To do more experiments in order to validate the metrics defined. Mostly, it is important to do a case study within Motorola, using real examples to experiment.
- Introduce the new metrics defined to the Motorola Execution Team, thus they can use them and report any problem or suggestion of improvement if necessary.
- Mechanise everything, which seems to be a big challenge, once the job of join all the inputs to be used for the metrics is really hard. This fact is due to these inputs being very disperse in the Motorola documents.

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