There is no code so big, twisted, or complex that maintenance can't make it worse.

- Gerald M. Weinberg
Just put the technical debt on my credit card

Moving Fast and Breaking Things
Fragile Development Guide

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Software Maintenance

Anti-Patterns:
- Informal bug tracking
- Not allocating post-release staffing
  - Bad prior release distracts team
- Not paying off technical debt

Code maintenance during and after development
- You need a process to identify bugs and track to resolution
- Most software is an update, not a clean-slate project
- Ongoing effort is required to repay “technical debt”
Managing Bugs

- Map reported issue to an actual bug
  - L1/L2/L3 support to capture bug report
  - Sorting out duplicate reports takes effort

- Prioritize the bug fix (e.g., risk table)
  - Combination of frequency, business cost

- Find someone with right skills to fix it
  - Does this derail new development tasks?
  - Quick and dirty? Or a solid re-engineer fix?

- Validate the fix
  - Did you inject a new fault with the fix?

- Package the fix and deploy it
  - Hot patch? Defer to future schedule release?

- Risk table example:
  - High consequence defect
  - With low probability of occurrence
    ➔ Medium risk / medium priority bug
Most SW work is on existing code, not a clean slate
- “Clean slate” often works with COTS components

60/60 rule [Glass, IEEE Software May 2001]
- Maintenance can average 60% of lifecycle cost
- About 60% of maintenance is adding new features

Maintenance is harder than development
- Need to understand existing system
  - Motivation for keeping entire V document chain up to date
  - Optimized code is more painful to maintain
- Need to modify system without breaking things
  - Complete rewrite usually impractical – and might be worse

Maintenance Matters Most

https://goo.gl/1CqN9f
Managing Technical Debt

- **Technical debt**: messy code/design/architecture that hasn’t been cleaned up
  - Some signs of debt:
    - Degraded code quality (spaghetti code, globals, warnings, …)
    - Skipped process steps (missing peer reviews, unit tests, …)
    - High fault reinjection ratio (new bugs when fixing old bugs)
  - You incur debt by taking a shortcut
    - Short-term debt can be useful (e.g., meet a deadline)
  - Repay debt by refactoring the system

- **Technical debt incurs interest**
  - Shortcuts often lead to bugs, fragility
  - Accumulated debt becomes unsustainable

- **Use the right amount of debt**
  - It’s like using a credit card responsibly
  - Devote part of each development cycle to repaying technical debt

https://goo.gl/cFXrD9
Most development is maintenance
- Plan for and staff maintenance
  - Most development is on the next revision
  - Plan for high priority emergency fixes
- Keep up with technical debt payments

Maintenance pitfalls
- Not allocating time for bugs, maintenance & technical debt
  - For example, need perhaps 10% budget for technical debt repayment
  - Leave slack in deadlines for fixing urgent previous-version bugs
- Evaluating programmers only for clean-sheet development skills

Best Practices for Maintenance
https://goo.gl/DDZfcY
Changes in version 10.17:
The CPU no longer overheats when you hold down spacebar.

Comments:

LongtimeUser4 writes:
This update broke my workflow! My control key is hard to reach, so I hold spacebar instead, and I configured emacs to interpret a rapid temperature rise as "Control".

Admin writes:
That's horrifying.

LongtimeUser4 writes:
Look, my setup works for me. Just add an option to reenable spacebar heating.

Every change breaks someone's workflow.

https://xkcd.com/1172/