

ESUG 2015

Write everything only once.
Smalltalk in government.

The subject of my talk is to illustrate the power of choosing “Write everything only once” as the guiding thought for development. This means always look out for duplicate code and eliminating it. My discovery came while over a period of five years I spent on and off probably two years in the (re)development of an application for the RJV. The RJV is a Belgian government agency that pays the vacation allowance for the workers. In fact I threw away much more away than what was finally left.

Overview

- RJV application highlights
 - Smalltalk implementation
 - Metrics of different implementations
 - How to be successful
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RJV application

- Input
 - Days and associated salary
 - Certificates
 - Addresses
 - Bank accounts
- Verification
- Output
 - Vacation allowance payment

Salary and days are reported each trimester.

Certificates (for example illness, technical unemployment, ...) confirm validity of salary or days reported.

Addresses and bank accounts are needed to execute payments.

Smalltalk implementation: Two container hierarchies

- Unique identifier of basic entries
 - Year
 - Occupation
 - Trimester
 - Attest number
 - Version
- Container structure built on the fly with bi-directional pointers
 - Navigation to find info
 - Making totals
 - Verification

- Two container hierarchies:
 - Salary and days
 - Certificates
- Navigation is mainly to retrieve information from higher in the container hierarchy. Some info is available at the trimester, occupation, year or worker level.
- Totals are required at all container levels, worker, year, occupation, trimester.
- Verification uses both hierarchies.

Show container structure

- Entity
 - BasicEntry
 - Container
 - Identifier
 - LatgIdentifier
 - VersionedEntry with history
 - AttestEntry
 - CareerEntry
 - Navigation
-
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Verification – Delegation pattern squared

LatgEntity implements:

```
exceptions  
  ^ RJVExceptionFinder new returnExceptionsOn: self.
```

RJVExceptionFinder implements:

```
possibleExceptions  
  ^ self target possibleExceptions collect:  
    [:exception | exception asClass new target: self target; yourself].  
  
returnExceptionsOn: anRJVLatgSubset  
  self target: anRJVLatgSubset.  
  ^self possibleExceptions select: [:exception | exception isValid] .
```

Every real LatgEntity subclass implements:

```
possibleExceptions  
  ^ #(RJVExceptionB005 RJVExceptionB006 RJVExceptionB010)
```

Show implementation

- Show code Exceptions B0036, B0038, B0039, B0048, B0049

Show implementation

- Show code Exceptions B0036, B0038, B0039, B0048, B0049

Making totals: CarreerTotal

- CarreerTotal collects required totals over container structure
- Both container and each subclass of basicEntry implement carreerTotal method:

```
carreerTotal
  ^self entries inject: RJVCarreerTotal new into: [:a :b | a + b carreerTotal]
```

```
carreerTotal
  RJVCarreerTotal new
  daysWorked: self days;
  daysVacation: self days;
  daysVacationLengthCalculation: self daysVacationLengthCalculation;
  daysCalculationFictif: self days;
  daysFictifSalaryPaid: self days;
  salaryCalculationBrut: self salary;
  salaryCalculationFictif: self salary;
  yourself
```

Each real subclass of basicEntry implements its own version of carreerTotal which is a reduced copy of the one shown.

ErrorFreeCarreerTotal

Making total of error free entries

```
errorFreeCarreerTotal
|errorFreeEntries |
errorFreeCarreerTotal isNil ifTrue:
[
errorFreeEntries := self entries select: [:entry | entry isErrorFree].
self errorFreeCarreerTotal: (errorFreeEntries inject:
RJVCarreerTotal new into: [:a :b | a + b errorFreeCarreerTotal])
].
^errorFreeCarreerTotal
```

This message is sent repeatedly in the vacation allowance calculation.

For performance reasons errorFreeCarreerTotal uses lazy initialization.

Adding an entry to one of the container structures resets this total.

Advantages of implementation

- Duplicate code eliminated
- Simple navigation
- Yearly change limited
 - New days
 - New exceptions

Command pattern – Access control

- Command pattern supports undo-redo
 - Commands used for access control
 - Commands used in DB support
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Access control

- UserProfile
- ServiceProfile
- Special users
 - System
 - Finder

- A user profile is a collection of service profiles
- A service profile is a collection of commands
- A user can execute a command if it is included in one of its service profiles
- User System, User Profile System and Service Profile System. Service Profile System contains all commands.
- User Finder, User Profile Finder and Service Profile Finder. Service Profile System contains all Find commands.

Database support

- Object Extender
- Glorp



Metrics

- Cobol generator
 - 20 man-year
 - Maintenance team of 10 people
- Smalltalk
 - 352 classes
 - 4133 methods
 - 2 man-year over 5 year period
 - More functionality
- Java
 - Started 2008 – Not yet finished
 - Budget of 8 million euro

- Started with punched cards
- Cobol Generator Implementation was done under time pressure with sliced salami approach. Cut application into small pieces each with their own developer. Big maintenance problem.
- Smalltalk implementation was done by one developer.
- The JAVA implementation is done on a fixed price contract. A conservative estimate sets the effort at 40 man year.

How to be successfull

- I was not successfull
 - Positive technical review
 - Negative "Economic" review
- Code can be reused for many government applications
 - Reporting
 - Verification
- Governments work with bids. With Smalltalk we can offer for fraction of cost
 - Solution
 - Maintenance by educated own staff

– I was not. IBM consultant reviewed implementation and called it an example of what could be done with good OO design.

– An economy professor told management that the application should be written in a mainstream language – Java. It would only take two years