





Business-Driven Technical Debt Management Using Continuous Debt Valuation Approach (CoDVA)

Author: Marek Stochel

Affiliation: Motorola Solutions Systems Polska Sp. z o.o., AGH University of Krakow

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Agenda





- Introduction
- Background
- Literature review
- Continuous Debt Valuation Approach
- Summary
- Future Work





Introduction

Background: Terminology 1/3





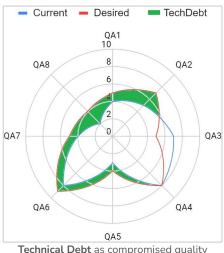
Metaphor	Technical Debt			
 Metaphor: "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" Connects reason and imagination: is a matter of thinking and cognition Trying to enforce certain behaviour we use metaphors from an area in which desirable behavior occurs 	Technical debt metaphor adopted as a promise to enable budgeting of commonly neglected work			
Cognitive processes are prone to individual differences (an experience is usually unique and personal)	 Individuals have different experiences and a sense of "what should have been done" - metaphor evolved, many individual interpretations appeared Struggle with ambiguity begun The effort to reintroduce the metaphor (W. Cunningham) Mutually exclusive interpretations Avoiding its direct adoption (e.g. Scaled Agile Framework) Evolving interpretation in time (SonarQube) 			
 Metaphorical understanding changes and will continue to do The natural process of language evolution 	Effort to limit a metaphor applicability will likely fail An attempt to limit another person in expressing their imagination			



Dagstuhl

Our research

- "The technical debt (TD) term refers to immature software development artifacts which are expedient in the short-term, but introduce delayed consequences, sometimes making the future changes hard or almost impossible."
- "TD embraces a set of actionable product technical debt items (TD Items) indicating these immature artifacts and their deviation from the desired optimal state."
- Change of surrounding solutions (evolving technologies and their adoption by the industry) may be perceived as an act of incurring technical debt against our product, as it results in an evolution of its desired optimal state.
 - **Context is a key:** what is considered TD in one system may not be such in another, for example when particular functionality becomes the core for one system, and is being retired in another as a result of optimizations towards serving a different customer base.



attributes of SW development artifact

Background: Terminology 3/3



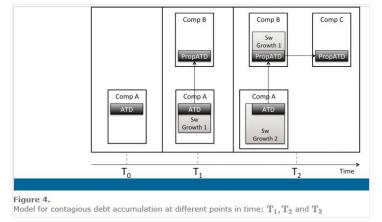


Refactoring, repayment or remediation

- The process of restructuring software artifacts, while not changing their original functionality.
- The act of removing the difference between the current and the desired state.

Contagious debt

- If not addressed, may cause other parts of the system to be contaminated with the same problem.
- Makes both the cost of removing it and its effects growing exponentially.



Introduction: Problem





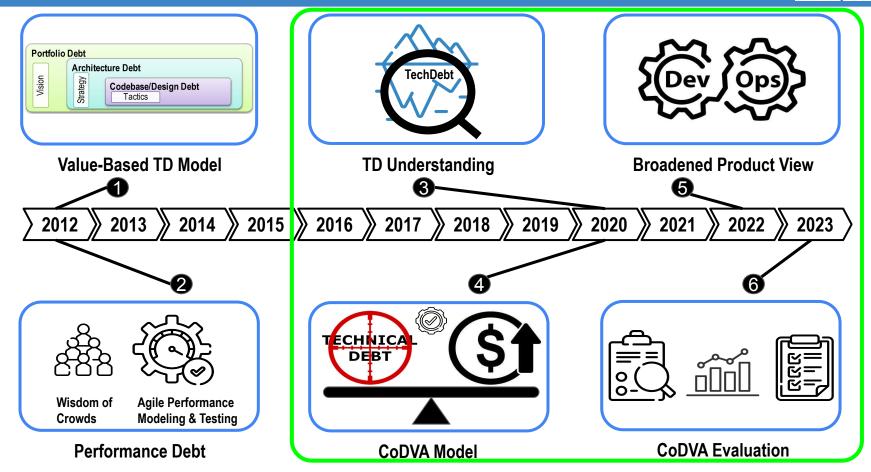
How to propose a **TD management approach** that improves

- Business value
- Productivity of the engineering team
 - Efficiency
 - Effectiveness
- Developer satisfaction

Introduction: Contribution - 1/2







Introduction: Contribution - 2/2





Year	Paper Title and Year of Publication	Overview
2011	Marek Stochel. Reliability of Feedback Mechanism Based on Root Cause Defect Analysis—Case Study. Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio AI, Informatica, 11(4):21–32, 2011.	Stresses the risk of improper aggregation of data derived from engineering assessments.
2011	Marek Stochel. Reliability and Accuracy of the Estimation Process—Wideband Delphi vs. Wisdom of Crowds. In 2011 IEEE 35th Computer Software and Applications Conference, pages 350–359. IEEE. 2011.	Provides comparison of estimation techniques, followed by an overview of the Wisdom of Crowds approach and its applicability.
2012	Marek G. Stochel, Mariusz R. Wawrowski, and James J. Waskiel. Adaptive Agile Performance Modeling and Testing. In 2012 IEEE 36th Annual Computer Software and Applications Conference Workshops, pages 446–451. IEEE, 2012.	Stresses the need for extending the TD perspective towards non-functional requirements (performance). Introduces the Wisdom of Crowds approach for TD management.
2012	Marek G. Stochel, Mariusz R. Wawrowski, and Magdalena Rabiej. Value-Based Technical Debt Model and Its Application. In 7th International Conference on Software Engineering Advances (ICSEA'12), pages 205–212. IARIA Press, 2012.	Embraces our initial work on technical debt, indicating the need of applying the business (value-based) perspective for effective TD management.
2020	Marek G. Stochel, Piotr Chołda, and Mariusz R. Wawrowski. On Coherence in Technical Debt Research: Awareness of the Risks Stemming From the Metaphorical Origin and Relevant Remediation Strategies. In 2020 46th Euromicro Conference on Software Engineering and Advanced Applications (SEAA), pages 367–375. IEEE, 2020.	Contains the TD research assessment; provides a refined perspective on technical debt (understanding of the term), stressing the need for clarity while defining the research scope in the TD field.
2020	Marek G. Stochel, Piotr Chołda, and Mariusz R. Wawrowski. Continuous Debt Valuation Approach (CoDVA) for Technical Debt Prioritization. In 2020 46th Euromicro Conference on Software Engineering and Advanced Applications (SEAA), pages 362–366, 2020.	Describes the initial version of the CoDVA methodology, which was a result of an exploratory case study.
2022	Marek G. Stochel, Piotr Chołda, and Mariusz R. Wawrowski. Adopting DevOps Paradigm in Technical Debt Prioritization and Mitigation . In 2022 48th Euromicro Conference on Software Engineering and Advanced Applications (SEAA), pages 306–313. IEEE, 2022.	Stresses the need for TD management in a~broadened product context (including DevOps artifacts), as a result of the case study.
2022	Marek G. Stochel, Mariusz R. Wawrowski, and Piotr Chołda. Technical Debt Prioritization in Telecommunication Applications: Why the Actual Refactoring Deviates From the Plan and How to Remediate It? Applied Sciences, 12(22:11347), 2022.	Discusses the preliminary results from an introduction of the enhanced CoDVA methodology (case study), additionally provides a Wisdom of Crowds overview in the context of CoDVA.
2023	Marek G. Stochel, Tomasz Borek, Mariusz R. Wawrowski, and Piotr Chołda. Business-Driven Technical Debt Management Using Continuous Debt Valuation Approach (CoDVA). Information and Software Technology, 164:107333, 2023.	Presents a comprehensive examination of the CoDVA approach, including an empirical investigation involving a case study and a survey, as well as a statistical analysis. The findings demonstrate the usefulness and advantages of the methodology.

Introduction: Research questions





Study	Research Question
	RQ_1 : Terminology. What terms related to technical debt are used in the surveyed research, and are they consistent with Dagstuhl-TD-Definition?
TD Understanding	RQ ₂ : Metaphor. Are there any explicit signs of ambiguity in understanding the technical debt terminology (misused terms, inconsistent meaning, disambiguation strategies applied)?
	$\mathrm{RQ}_3\colon$ Model. Are the research results aligned with Dagstuhl-TD-Model?
Broadened Product View	RQ ₄ : Does prioritization of technical debt following the broadened product view (all software artifacts that are important to create value for the customer) allow us to gain faster return on investment (better quality, lower cost, faster delivery)?
CoDVA Model	RQ ₅ : How may the business perspective (the future feature roadmap) be applied to prioritize technical debt?
	RQ ₆ : Does the CoDVA-based TDM improve the value obtained from TD reduction when compared to pure engineering recommendations?
CoDVA Evaluation	RQ_{7} : Does the CoDVA-based TDM influence positively the productivity of the engineering team?
	$\mathrm{RQ}_8\colon \mathrm{Does}$ the CoDVA-based TDM improve developer satisfaction?



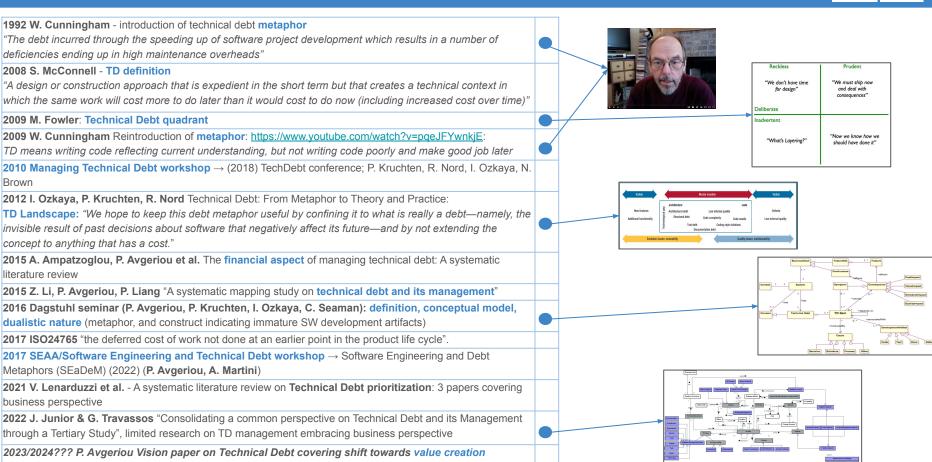


Background

Background: Research context 1/4





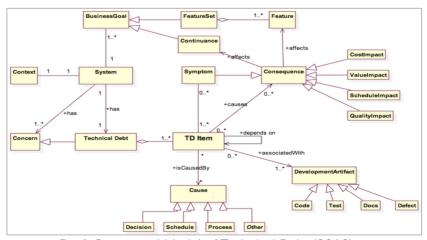


Background: Research context 2/4





- **2010** Managing Technical Debt workshop → **TechDebt conference** (2018)
- 2016 Dagstuhl Seminar on Managing Technical Debt in Software Engineering
 - o Converge on common understanding of the technical debt term
 - Scientific rigor, requires crisply defined terms
 - Overloaded nature of the technical debt term accepted
 - A metaphor facilitates design trade-offs discussions
 - A software development artifact indicates immature artifacts incurring delayed costs in the future
- 2017 Software Engineering and Technical Debt (SEaTeD) → SW Engineering and Debt Metaphors workshop (2022)



Draft Conceptual Model of Technical Debt (2016)

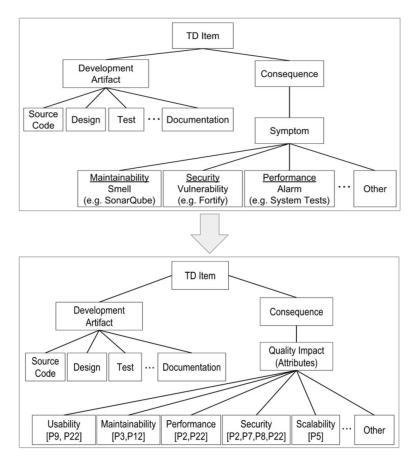
"In software-intensive systems, technical debt is a collection of design or implementation constructs that are expedient in the short term, but set up a technical context that can make future changes more costly or impossible.

Technical debt presents an actual or contingent liability whose impact is limited to internal system qualities, primarily maintainability and evolvability"

Background: Research context 3/4







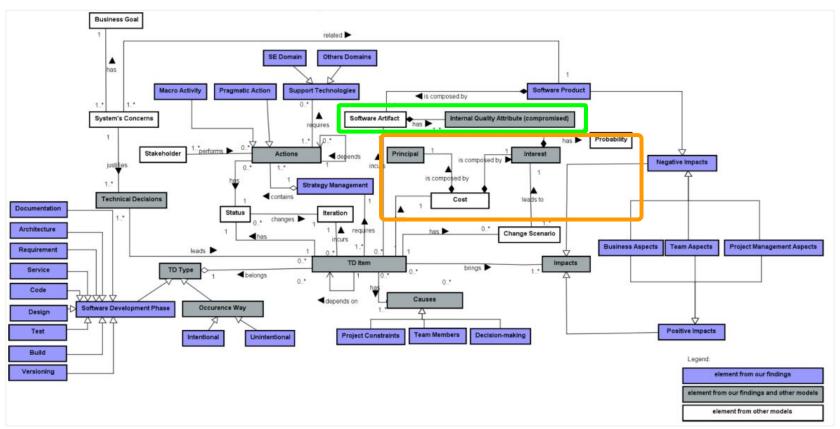
Our work on coherence of TD research (2020)

- The conceptual technical debt model is still relevant
- We propose to aggregate the newly appearing technical debt concepts under Symptom
- Understanding technical debt referring to a set of development artifacts, focusing on quality impact may increase research consistency even further
 - Leading to determining Consequences and their Quality Impact

Background: Research context 4/4







Junior & Travassos: Conjectured conceptual model of TD (2022)

Background: Product context 1/2

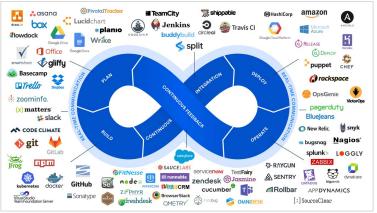




What is a product?

Broadened product view encompasses all development artifacts which enable value creation for a customer. As a result, tools, automated tests, testing environments, logging, and monitoring capabilities become integral components of this perspective.

• The more a product becomes a service, the more such robust perspective is required.

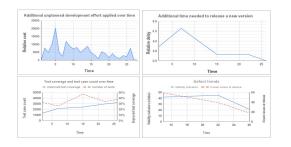


Source: SDTimes: Atlassian unveils new DevOps Marketplace and the Atlassian Stack

Background: Product context 2/2

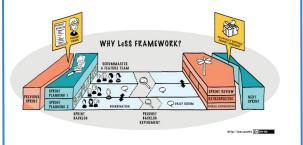






Broadened Product View (embracing DevOps)

- Our Exploratory Case Study (2016-2018) published in 2022
- Major steps
 - o **Protection**: enhanced automated test environment
 - Predictability of development efforts (cost & time)
 - Speed: Improved development environment towards faster turnaround time for any new code change
 - Experiments with more **risky code changes**, possibly causing regression
 - Architectural TD remediation
- Each phase was an enabler/accelerator to the next one
- More artifacts identified (DevOps, DevSecOps, ...)



Large Scale Scrum (LeSS) Framework (2014 - 2023)

- Who are the actual end-customers and what do they consider the product to be?
- What is the original problem that the product is solving?



Bosch Software Defined Vehicle

Euromicro DSD/SEAA '22 Keynote: Dr. Arne Hamann - "Designing Reliable Distributed Systems"

Background: Value 1/2





Technical debt follows the financial debt construct (Ampatzoglou et al, 2015)

- Principal effort required to bring SW development artifacts to the optimal state
- Interest additional effort to be spent on maintaining SW development artifacts in their current suboptimal state (Li, Avgeriou, Liang et al 2013)

Mapping Study on quantifying TD interest (Arvanitou, Ampatzoglou, 2022)

- Lack of mathematical/analytical methods in this area
- Calculating TD interest is challenging anticipating future SW changes and quantifying the additional maintenance effort required
- Scientific problem is far from being resolved

Our proposal to apply business perspective: **TD interest** \rightarrow **value creation**

- Business perspective ensures the **clarity (the product roadmap)** engineering team requires
- No universal formula of determining the exact product value exists
- We prefer business valuation of the feature roadmap to engineering TD interest quantification

Background: Value 2/2





Business Prioritization and Technical Debt Management

- Business prioritization guides the engineering team, led by the Product Owner, on the order and importance of feature development.
- Our proposed approach is relative valuation, which is highly relevant for effective prioritization.
- Among the various approaches discussed in the literature, only our approach offers a specific business-driven formula for managing technical debt.

Year	Author (method)	Business factors
2012	Stochel et al. [183] (Value-Based TD Model)	product vision (portfolio) profitability (sales)
2015	Martini [128]	market attractiveness specific customer value lead time maintenance cost customer long-term satisfaction risk penalty volatility
2015	Ramasubbu et al. [157]	level of reliability required by the business likelihood of technological disruptions customer satisfaction needs
2016	Gupta et al. [73] ^a	profitability scalability time-to-market core business, i.e. existing workflows
2018, 2019	Rebouças et al. [46, 47] (Tracy initial)	impacted business processes; sample metrics: - availability - cost - customer relationship - market share - revenue - sales efficiency - sales volume
2020	Stochel et al. [186] (CoDVA initial)	profitability
2021, 2022	Rebouças et al. [48], da Silva et al. [44] (Tracy)	core business value sources usage frequency risk perception time flexibility incidents delivery frequency external regulations or certifications market versus internal perspective
2023	Stochel et al. [188, 189] ^b (CoDVA enhanced)	relative business priority, aggregates e.g.: - potential benefits - investment size - strategic aspects - time criticality

^a Even though not explicitly stated in the paper, a few factors were revealed.
^b The second paper covers the final version of the CoDVA methodology, which is presented in Chapter 7 of this dissertation. It was accepted for publication on Sep 17, 2023.

Technical Debt research: product value





Literature Review

Literature: Knowledge Synthesis Studies





- Limited success in searching scientific databases for relevant research
- Three approaches identified considering business perspective (Lenarduzzi, 2021)
- Snowballing technique (Wohlin, 2014) on
 - Systematic Literature Review
 - Systematic Mapping Study
 - Tertiary Study
 - Multivocal Literature Review

ID	Year	Type	Goal
Tom et al. [197]	2012	SLR	Understanding of TD implications for SW development
Tom et al. [198]	2013	multivocal SLR	Consolidated view of TD and implications for SW development
Ampatzoglou et al. [11]	2015	SLR	Financial approaches for managing TD
Li et al. [118]	2015	SMS	TD management, TD classification
Fernández-Sánchez et al. [61]	2015	SMS	TD types, TD management elements
Poliakov [152]	2015	SMS	TD definition
Alves et al. [9]	2016	SMS	TD management strategies, TD taxonomy
Ribeiro et al. [160]	2016	SMS	TD payment prioritization
Behutiye et al. [20]	2017	SLR	TD in Agile development
Fernández-Sánchez et al. [63]	2017	SMS	TD management elements
Besker et al. [23]	2018	SLR	Architectural TD management
Rios et al. [161]	2018	tertiary	TD types, management strategies
Alfayez et al. [7]	2020	SLR	TD effort
BenIdris et al. [21]	2020	SMS	TD types, indicators, and estimators
Khomyakov et al. [97]	2020	SLR	TD tools
Klimczyk and Madeyski [102]	2020	SMS	TD aware estimations
Lenarduzzi et al. [114]	2020	SLR	TD prioritization
Pina et al. [150]	2021	SMS	TD prioritization taxonomy
Arvanitou et al. [14]	2022	SMS	TD interest
Junior and Travassos [94]	2022	tertiary	TD management
Melo et al. [134]	2022	SLR	TD of requirements
Villa et al. [207]	2022	SMS	TD in microservices
Albuquerque et al. [6]	2023	SMS	TD management using intelligent techniques
Kleinwaks et al. [101]	2023	SLR	TD in systems engineering
Murillo et al. [141]	2023	SMS	TD identification and management
Perera et al. [146]	2023	SMS	Quantification of TD
Zabardast et al. [217]	2023	SLR, field study	TD in the context of quality degradation of development artifacts

Technical Debt - knowledge synthesis studies

Literature: Business-driven TD perspective 1/2





Id	Business-Driven TDM (Author, Year)	Description
S1	Net Present Value [49] (Nugroho et al., 2011)	Empirical model of TD and interest, comparing maintenance effort at a specific quality level to the optimal level
S2	SQALE [50,51] (Letouzey, 2012–16)	Software quality assessment based on life-cycle expectations, utilizes ISO25010 quality perspective to evaluate source code quality; it is implemented by several tools including SonarQube, NDepend, and Squore
S3	Architectural debt rework model [52] (Nord et al. 2012)	Metric for architectural TD to optimize development cost Implemented by vFunction platform
S4	Cost-Benefit Analysis, Analytic Hierarchy Process, Portfolio, and Options [53] (Seaman et al. 2012)	Four decision approaches that can be used to incorporate TD information in product release planning
S5	Prioritization of architectural TD [54] (Martini and Bosch, 2015)	Recommendation on prioritization aspects needed by decision-makers to prioritize architectural TD with respect to feature development
S6	Recommendations for managing TD [55] (Ramasubbu et al., 2015)	Three-dimensional prioritization: level of reliability required by the business, customer satisfaction needs, and probability of technology disruption
S7	Pragmatic approach [56] (Gupta et al., 2016)	Repayment of code-based TD that ultimately improved product scalability
S8	TDM framework [57] (Yli-Huumo, 2016)	TDM framework developed as a result of exploratory case study; defines activities, practices/tools, stakeholders, and responsibilities of TDM on three maturity levels
S9	Tracy [58–61] (Rebouças et al., 2018–21) (da Silva et al. 2022)	Business-driven TD prioritization framework
S10	CoDVA [11,12], this paper (Stochel et al., 2020–23)	Business-driven TD management based on Continuous Debt Valuation Approach

TD management studies considering business-perspective

Literature: Business-driven TD perspective 2/2





TDM study Id	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Product perspective considered	1	1	/	1			/	/	1	
Value quantified	✓	✓	✓				/		/	1
Guidelines available (reproduction protocol)	1	/	/	1			1	/	/	/
Empirical evaluation	/	1	✓		/	1	1	/	1	1
Business perspective considered		/	1		/	1	1	1	1	/
Business stakeholders engaged (e.g. product management)									1	1
TDM process (protocol) defined							1	1		1
Broadened product view							3.0			/
Future business focus			/			/				1
Decision-making autonomy (business/engineering)										1
Statistical evaluation of approach/consequences										1

Comparison of the selected TD management studies





Continuous Debt Valuation Approach (CoDVA)

Methodology: CoDVA idea





Keith Eades "The New Solution Selling"

- Streamlining the selling process
- Differentiating from the competition
- Decreasing the time spent between initial Qualifying and a successful, profitable Close.

Table 7.1: Solution selling pipeline milestone chart [56]

Id	Milestone	Win Odds	Revenue [\$]	Yield [\$]
[T]	Territory	0%		
[S]	Qualified Suspect	10%	sales-at-S	$10\% \times \text{sales-at-S}$
[D]	Qualified Sponsor	25%	sales-at-D	$25\% \times sales-at-D$
[C]	Qualified Power Sponsor	50%	sales-at-C	$50\% \times sales-at-C$
[B]	Decision Due	75%	sales-at-B	$75\% \times \text{sales-at-B}$
[A]	Pending Sale	90%	sales-at-A	90% × sales-at-A
[W]	Win	100%	sales-at-W	$100\% \times \text{sales-at-W}$

Alignment

- Evaluating TD in relation to a predicted future company portfolio
- Relative prioritization of technical debt items
- Shift "TD interest" → "value generation"

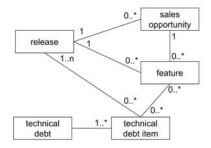


Fig. 7.1: Alignment of the business perspective with the conceptual model for TD [15]

Methodology: Initial Case Study



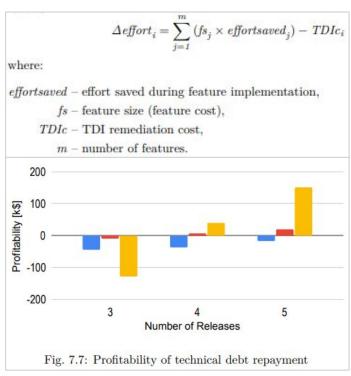


Initial exploratory Case Study

- Cost-benefit analysis
- Monetary-based evaluation
- Retrospective analysis

Suggestion of improvements

- TD items interdependence
- Long-term perspective
- Process: accuracy, cost and adoption



CoDVA - initial study

Methodology: CoDVA (final)





$$CI_{i} = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{m} fp_{j} \times fs_{j} \times rss_{j} \times TDIe_{ij}}{TDIc_{i}} + \sum_{k=1, k \neq i}^{n} d_{ik} \times CI_{k}$$
 where:

```
fp-feature priority,

fs-feature size,

rss-roadmap scope stability,

TDIe-TDI effect,

TDIc-TDI cost,

CI_k-CoDV A_index value for dependent TDIs,

d_{ik}-dependency coefficient between TDI_i and TDI_k,

m-number of features,

n-number of TDIs.
```

CoDVA_index metric (CI): a relative cost-benefit ratio reflecting investment in a given TD item

- Can be computed at any moment
- Determine the priority of allocating effort for TDI reduction

Methodology: CoDVA→Feature Priority





- Roadmap features are prioritized by the Product Manager in Aha!
 - Scope for subsequent releases
- Each feature is assigned to a particular future release and receives a single business prioritization value bp
- Any bp aggregates several aspects, such as: potential benefits, investment size, strategic aspects, and time criticality
- Normalized value for an ith feature fp_i , on a roadmap containing n features, is taken to calculate CoDVA_index

$$f p_i = b p_i / \max\{b p_1, \dots, b p_n\}$$

```
CI_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^m fp_j \times fs_j \times rss_j \times TDIe_{ij}}{TDIc_i} + \sum_{k=1, k \neq i}^n d_{ik} \times CI_k where: fp\text{--feature priority,}  fs\text{--feature size,}  rss\text{--roadmap scope stability,}  TDIe\text{--TDI effect,}  TDIc\text{--TDI cost,}  CI_k\text{--}CoDVA\_index \text{ value for dependent TDIs,}  d_{ik}\text{--dependency coefficient between } TDI_i \text{ and } TDI_k,  m\text{--number of features,}  n\text{--number of TDIs.}
```

From the development perspective each feature has a single priority number *fp*; reflecting the business needs.

Methodology: CoDVA→Feature Size





- Roadmap features are estimated using T-shirt sizing
 - XL scaled to fit in a single release
 - L greater than half of the release
 - o M 1/5 of the release
 - \circ S 1/10 of the release

Hence {S; M; L; XL} correspond to coded values {0.1; 0.2; 0.6; 1}

- If a feature cannot be realized in one release, it is split and released in consecutive ones
- A half-done feature might be hidden behind a feature flag if the scope is insufficient for the customers to use

$$CI_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{i} (J)^{T} J^{T} J^{T}}{TDIc_i} + \sum_{k=1, k \neq i} d_{ik} \times CI_k$$
 where:
$$f_{P}\text{-feature priority,}$$

$$f_{S}\text{-feature size,}$$

$$rss\text{-roadmap scope stability,}$$

$$TDIe\text{-TDI effect,}$$

$$TDIe\text{-TDI cost,}$$

$$CI_k\text{-}CoDV A_index \text{ value for dependent TDIs,}$$

 d_{ik} -dependency coefficient between TDI_i and TDI_k ,

T-shirt sizing

- Used to focus on high-level project goals
- Rough estimation of the effort involved
- Involves assigning relative T-shirt size estimates {S; M; L; XL} to different tasks or features based on their perceived complexity or the required effort

m–number of features, *n*–number of TDIs.

 Low-cost and quick (enables evaluation of a high number of items)

Planning Poker (Scrum Poker)

- Used for short-term sprint planning
- Uses story points
- More detailed estimation

Methodology: CoDVA→Roadmap Scope Stability





- Roadmap scope stability (rss) the prediction to what extent the originally planned scope can be achieved in a future release.
- Calculation
 - Releases have roughly constant cadence
 - Value determined retrospectively based on the completed releases, using a simple moving average (percentage of unchanged scope) from the preceding year releases.

$$rss = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} s_i$$

• For ith release in the future we decrease rss value according to the formula:

$$rss_i = rss^{i-1}$$

For current release $rss^0 = 1$; if feature belongs to the next: rss^1 , etc.

```
CI_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^m f p_j \times f s_j \times rss_j \times TDIe_{ij}}{TDIc_i} + \sum_{k=1, k \neq i}^n d_{ik} \times CI_k where: fp\text{-feature priority,} \\ fs\text{-feature size,} \\ rss\text{-roadmap scope stability,} \\ TDIe\text{-TDI effect,} \\ TDIc\text{-TDI cost,} \\ CI_k\text{-}CoDV A_{index} \text{ value for dependent TDIs,} \\ d_{ik}\text{-dependency coefficient between } TDI_i \text{ and } TDI_k, \\ m\text{-number of features,} \\ n\text{-number of TDIs.}
```

In a **continuous delivery approach**, the rss parameter can be used to gauge scope stability over a set period, e.g. a quarter. Scope is determined based on the predicted capability of the engineering team.

Methodology: CoDVA→TDI Effect





- TDI Effect impact of a TDI on a new feature, indicating relative potential benefits:
 - Mitigation of risks
 - Potential decrease in the feature implementation effort
 - Quality
- Estimated by the development team using T-shirt sizing, serving as an input for prioritization.
- Values {S; M; L; XL} corresponds to coded values {0.1; 0.2; 0.6; 1}, following the pattern established for feature size

$$CI_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^m fp_j \times fs_j \times rss_j \times TDIe_{ij}}{TDIc_i} + \sum_{k=1, k \neq i}^n d_{ik} \times CI_k$$
 where:
$$fp\text{--feature priority,}$$

$$fs\text{--feature size,}$$

$$rss\text{--roadmap scope stability,}$$

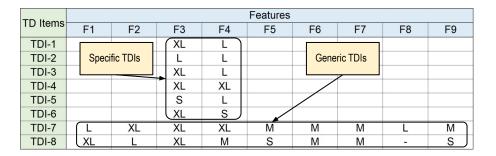
$$TDIe\text{--TDI effect,}$$

$$TDIc\text{--TDI cost,}$$

 CI_k - $CoDVA_index$ value for dependent TDIs, d_{ik} -dependency coefficient between TDI_i and TDI_k .

m-number of features.

n-number of TDIs.



Generic TD item - may have a positive impact on a high number of the product roadmap features. Its prioritization is minimally affected by changes in the product roadmap.

Specific TD item - may only have a positive impact on a small number of the product roadmap features. It is susceptible to prioritization changes when business priorities evolve

Methodology: CoDVA→TDI Cost





- TDI Cost cost of TDI reduction
- Estimated using T-shirt sizing
 - Values {S; M; L; XL} corresponds to coded values{0.1; 0.2; 0.6; 1} for consistency
 - XL scaled to fit in a single release
 - L greater than half of the release
 - M ½ of the release
 - \blacksquare S \Box of the release

```
CI_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^m f p_j \times f s_j \times rss_j \times TDIe_{ij}}{TDIc_i} + \sum_{k=1, k \neq i}^n d_{ik} \times CI_k where: fp\text{-feature priority,} fs\text{-feature size,} rss\text{-roadmap scope stability,} TDIe\text{-TDI effect,} TDIc\text{-TDI cost,} CI_k\text{-}CoDV A \text{-}index \text{-}value \text{-}for \text{-}dependent \text{-}TDIs,} d_{ik}\text{-}dependency \text{-}coefficient \text{-}between \text{-}TDI_i \text{-} and \text{-}TDI_k,} m\text{-}number \text{-}of \text{-}features,} n\text{-}number \text{-}of \text{-}TDIs.
```

For TDIs, our empirical experience is that they have to be split even if they are of size L, and XL. Otherwise, they would be postponed indefinitely, as the budget allocated for TD reduction is a fraction of the budget allocated for the release (usually 20% of effort).

Methodology: CoDVA→Dependent CIs





CoDVA_index value for dependent CIs

- Involves evaluating the dependencies between TDIs
- Typical in high-complexity projects where large elements need to be decomposed to identify enablers

Enablers

- A collection of smaller TDIs forms a tree structure where independent TDIs (enablers) are located at the leaves
- Enablers can be addressed quickly, allowing for iterative corrective actions

Dependency indication

 \circ The coefficient d = 1 when a dependency exists, or d = 0 when there is none

$$CI_{i} = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n} f p_{j} \times f s_{j} \times r s s_{j} \times r D I e_{ij}}{TDIc_{i}} + \sum_{k=1, k \neq i}^{n} d_{ik} \times CI_{k}$$
 where:
$$f p_{-} \text{feature priority,}$$

$$f s_{-} \text{feature size,}$$

$$r s_{-} \text{roadmap scope stability,}$$

$$TDIe_{-} \text{TDI effect,}$$

$$TDIe_{-} \text{TDI cost,}$$

$$CI_{k} - CoDV A_{i} \text{index value for dependent TDIs,}$$

 d_{ik} -dependency coefficient between TDI_i and TDI_k ,

m-number of features,

n-number of TDIs.

Methodology: CoDVA Example





Preparation

- Two planned product releases R1, R2 that include three new features F1, F2, and F3, of size: M, L, XL.
- The Product Manager provides normalized feature priorities: fp1=1, fp2=0.9, fp3=0.5.
- Four TDIs whose impact (TDIe) on the features and cost (TDIc) is estimated by dev team.
- Roadmap scope stability, rss = 60%.

	release	F	R1	R2	
	rss	1	1	0.6	
	fp	1	0.9	0.5	
	fs	М	L	XL	
Ī	TDIcost	F.	F2	F3	CoDVA
TDI1	S	-	-	XL	3.00
TDI2	S	-	L	-	3.24
TDI3	S	L	XL	L	8.40
TDI4	S	М		L	2.20

(a) Initial	state.
-------------	--------

	release	R1		R2			
	rss	1	1	0.6			
	fp	1	0.6	0.5			
	fs	M	L	XL			
TDI	TDIcost	Ε	F2	F3	CoDVA		
TDI1	S	-	-	XL	3.00		
TDI2	S	-	L	-	2.16		
TDI3	S	L	XL	L	6.60		
TDI4	S	М	-	L	2.20		
(I) D: :: I C Do							

(b) Priority change of F2.

Scenario (a) - initial

$$CI_1 = (fp_3 \times fs_3 \times rss^{2-1} \times TDIe_{f_3, TDI_1}) / TDIc_{TDI_1}$$

 $CI_1 = (0.5 \times 1 \times 0.6^1 \times 1) / 0.1 = 3.00$

$$CI_1 = 3.00$$
, $CI_2 = 3.24$, $CI_3 = 8.40$, $CI_4 = 2.20$

Prioritisation: TDI₃, TDI₂, TDI₁, TDI₄

Scenario (b)

feature F2 priority value drops (fp2: $0.9 \rightarrow 0.6$).

$$CI_1 = 3.00$$
, $CI_2 = 2.16$, $CI_3 = 6.60$, $CI_4 = 2.20$

Prioritisation: TDI₃, TDI₁, TDI₄, TDI₂

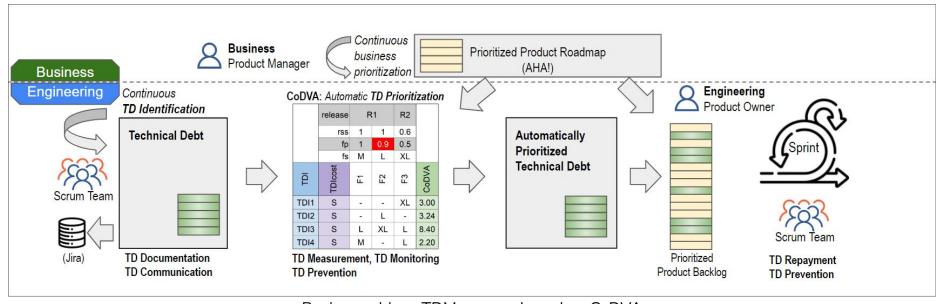
Generic TDI

Specific TDI

TD Management Process







Business-driven TDM process based on CoDVA

CoDVA: Evaluation

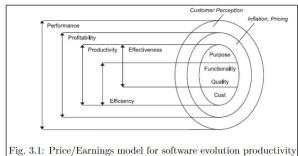




How to evaluate effectiveness of the methodology?

- Technical debt valuation is context-dependent
- Concept of cost (principal, interest) hard to incorporate

Solution: shift towards *value creation*, and observing the *consequences* on the application of the methodology



Wagner and Deissenboeck, 2019

Profitability (value creation)

- RealizedBusinessValue metric, represented by the CoDVA_index, a relative benefit—cost ratio reflecting investment in a given TDI. TD repayment activities, influence value generation - relative valuation derived from the business perspective of the feature roadmap.

Productivity

- Efficiency
 - **Velocity** the amount of work delivered by the engineering team in a sprint, measured in story points.
 - **DefectFixTime** the active resolution time for a defect (time spent in the *In Progress* state).
- Effectiveness
 - **DeliveryPredictability** the ratio of fully successful sprints in the release, where all sprint completion criteria are consistently met, including the sprint goal.
 - **Releasability** a leading indicator of the final product quality, indicates the effort needed to maintain an acceptable level of quality, measured by the number of full regression test runs required until the quality criteria are met.

Developer morale (satisfaction)

Countermeasure for efficiency and effectiveness.





Case study

- Three-year-long case study (Jan. 2020–Mar. 2023)
- Large international company that creates, maintains and operates mission-critical telecommunication systems
- A single, embedded case study in which the case was defined as introduction of the CoDVA-based TDM by an engineering team focused on development and maintenance of software managing a fleet of devices for a video surveillance system
- The units of analyses were phases of the introduction of the method (sub-units were product releases)

Case study phases vs. product releases.

Phase	Release	Description					
Forming	R1	The team members joined and learned the codebase.					
Init	R2-R3	The first features were delivered and plans for TD reduction were created.					
Repayment	R4–R7	Active TD reduction according to CoDVA was applied together with new feature development.					
Monitor	R8-R9	No significant TD reduction happened, the prior TD reduction changes were stabilized, and the results were analyzed.					

Survey

- Focused on aspects of developer satisfaction
- Built in a way to avoid response bias
 - Neutral wording
 - Question order randomly chosen
 - Used a 7-point Likert type answers (more nuanced responses, ability to discriminate)
- Pilot run executed to ensure the survey is capable to answer research questions

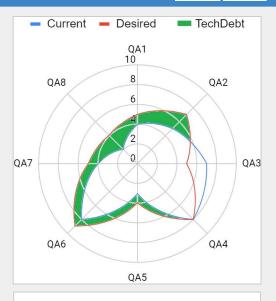
CoDVA: Evaluation - Identified TD items





TDI	Main Quality Characteristics
TDI01	Maintainability Testability
TDI02	$Maintainability \rightarrow Testability$
TDI03	Maintainability Modifiability
TDI04	${\bf Maintainability}{\rightarrow} {\bf Testability}$
TDI05	Maintainability Testability
TDI06	$Maintainability \rightarrow Modularity$
TDI07	Security→Integrity
TDI08	$Maintainability \rightarrow Testability$
TDI09	${\bf Maintainability} {\rightarrow} {\bf Analysability}$
TDI10	Portability→Adaptability
TDI11	$Security \rightarrow Confidentiality$
TDI12	${\bf Maintainability} {\rightarrow} {\bf Modifiability}$
TDI13	$Maintainability \rightarrow Modifiability$
TDI14	Maintainability Modifiability
TDI15	${\bf Maintainability} {\rightarrow} {\bf Modifiability}$
TDI16	$Maintainability \rightarrow Analysability$
TDI17	$Maintainability \rightarrow Testability$
TDI18	Maintainability→Analysability
TDI19	Maintainability→Testability
TDI20	${\bf Maintainability} {\rightarrow} {\bf Analysability}$
TDI21	$Reliability \rightarrow Recoverability$
TDI22	Security Integrity
TDI23	Maintainability→Reusability
TDI24	Maintainability→Testability
TDI25	Portability→Installability
TDI26	Maintainability→Testability
TDI27	Maintainability→Testability
TDI28	Maintainability→Testability
TDI29	Maintainability→Analysability
TDI30	Maintainability→Analysability
TDI31	Usability→UI aesthetics ^a
TDI32	Suitability→Func. completeness ^b
TDI33	Usability→UI aesthetics ^a
TDI34	Usability→Operability

TDI	Quality Characteristics					
TDI08	Maintainability → Testability Performance efficiency → Time behavior Performance efficiency → Resource utilization Performance efficiency → Capacity					
TDI12	$\begin{aligned} & \text{Maintainability} {\rightarrow} & \text{Modifiability} \\ & \text{Maintainability} {\rightarrow} & \text{Modularity} \\ & \text{Maintainability} {\rightarrow} & \text{Testability} \end{aligned}$					
TDI15	${\it Maintainability} {\rightarrow} {\it Modifiability} \\ {\it Maintainability} {\rightarrow} {\it Testability}$					
TDI16	$\label{eq:Maintainability} \begin{split} &\text{Maintainability} {\rightarrow} &\text{Analysability} \\ &\text{Maintainability} {\rightarrow} &\text{Testability} \end{split}$					
TDI18	${\it Maintainability} {\rightarrow} {\it Analysability} \\ {\it Maintainability} {\rightarrow} {\it Testability}$					
TDI29	$\label{eq:maintainability} \begin{split} & \text{Maintainability} {\rightarrow} & \text{Analysability} \\ & \text{Performance efficiency} {\rightarrow} & \text{Resource utilization} \end{split}$					
TDI32	Suitability→Functional completeness Usability→Operability					



Technical Debt as compromised quality attributes of SW development artifact

CoDVA: Evaluation (RQs)





RQ1: Does the CoDVA-based TDM improve the value obtained from TD reduction when compared to pure engineering recommendations?

- Evaluation of practical implementation of the proposed approach
- Assessment of realized business value

RQ2: Does the CoDVA-based TDM influence positively the productivity of the engineering team?

- Efficiency velocity and defect-fixing time
- Effectiveness delivery predictability and time-to-market while maintaining a desired quality level

RQ3: Does the CoDVA-based TDM improve developer satisfaction?

Developer morale (affected by TD presence)





RQ1

① Null Hypothesis $H1_0$ assumes both approaches: $CoDVA_real$ and Eng-Choice are equally capable of realizing business value. Whereas Alternative Hypothesis $H1_A$ assumes they differ and $CoDVA_real$ results in faster accumulation of business value.

- ② Null Hypothesis $H2_0$: assumes Velocity of the engineering team does not change. Whereas Alternative Hypothesis $H2_A$: assumes Velocity increases in the monitor phase after the CoDVA-based TD reduction has happened, in comparison with the init phase.
- \bigcirc Null Hypothesis $H3_{\theta}$: assumes the CoDVA-based TD reduction does not impact positively DefectFixTime. Alternative Hypothesis $H3_A$: assumes there is a positive difference (decrease) in the time to resolve a defect in the monitor phase in comparison with the *init* phase.
- \bigcirc Null Hypothesis $H4_0$: assumes there is no difference between the ratio of successful sprints between the *init* and *monitor* phases, meaning that the CoDVA-based TD reduction does not impact *DeliveryPredictability*. Alternative Hypothesis $H4_A$: assumes there is a difference and the percentage of successful sprints is higher in the *monitor* phase.
- \bigcirc 5 Null Hypothesis $H5_0$: assumes there is no difference in the effort spent on the final regression tests between the *init* and *monitor* phases, meaning that the CoDVA-based TD reduction does not impact the *Releasability* value. Alternative Hypothesis $H5_A$: assumes there is a positive change (effort decrease) in the *monitor* phase.

RQ2

RQ3

 \bigcirc Null Hypothesis $H6_0$: assumes the cumulative developer perception of trends during their assignment to the product is neutral, meaning that the CoDVA-based TD reduction did not impact their satisfaction. Alternative Hypothesis $H6_A$: assumes there is a positive difference.

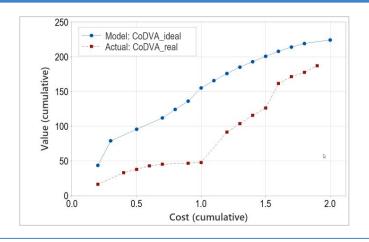




Hypothesis	Results
1 H_A	The CoDVA_real approach is able to generate business value faster than pure engineering recommendations EngChoice. The perceived business value from TD refactorings raised by 27%.
$2H_A$	Engineering velocity increased by 39%.
\bigcirc	DefectFixTime: Even though the time spent on fixing issues grew, we concluded that the change was positive from the product quality perspective: easy-to-fix issues were resolved in early phases of the project, better test coverage prevented the issues from escaping in the added or modified code, the new code was developed with higher scrutiny, and engineers started proactively looking for hidden bugs which might be harder to investigate and resolve.
(4) H _A	DeliveryPredictability improved by 60%.
\bigcirc	Releasability: The effort spent on product stabilization decreased by 50%.
(6) H _A	DeveloperSatisfaction: developer satisfaction grew, the majority of the developers perceived the applied TDM strategy beneficial across the technical decisions made, ability to develop new functionality, and experience while working with the product code.







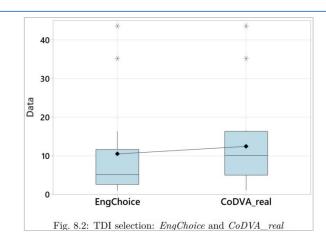
Actual implementation did not follow exactly CoDVA recommendation (reasons):

- Continuous refactoring
- TDIs interdependency
- Cost

Comparison

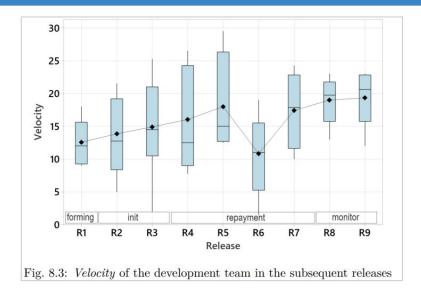
- CoDVA_real Actual TD repayment according to CoDVA
- EngChoice Expected budget allocation if the CoDVA recommendation not implemented

- The median of EngChoice (5.14) is almost equal to the first quartile of CoDVA_real (5.02), and twice smaller than the CoDVA_real median (10.11).
- In comparison with the pure engineering choice (CumulativeValue = 147), the relative business return on engineering investment grew by 27% when the CoDVA-based TDM was used (CumulativeValue = 187).
- Comparing the mean values of EngChoice (10.51) and CoDVA_real (12.46), we observe that the difference between them (1.95) is two-and-a-half smaller than the difference between the median values (4.97).









- Velocity gradually growing, some turbulences in the time of changes Interpretation: some changes (process/product) need to stabilize
- Velocity data does not show the signs of autocorrelation.

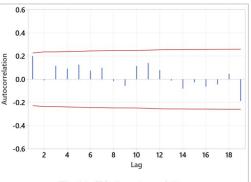


Fig. 8.4: Velocity: autocorrelation

Lag	\mathbf{ACF}^*	Z-Statistic	LBQ^{**}	χ^{2***}
1	0.199817	1.75	3.20	3.841
2	-0.009235	-0.08	3.20	5.991
3	0.115849	0.98	4.31	7.815
4	0.090812	0.76	4.99	9.488
5	0.125637	1.04	6.33	11.070
6	0.073873	0.60	6.79	12.592
7	0.099085	0.81	7.65	14.067
8	-0.016408	-0.13	7.67	15.507
9	-0.055724	-0.45	7.95	16.919
10	0.114105	0.92	9.13	18.307
11	0.139384	1.11	10.92	19.675
12	0.078850	0.62	11.50	21.026
13	-0.010821	-0.08	11.51	22.362
14	-0.080596	-0.63	12.14	23.685
15	-0.026288	-0.20	12.21	24.996
16	-0.064063	-0.50	12.62	26.296
17	-0.044918	-0.35	12.82	27.587
18	0.045897	0.35	13.04	28.869
19	-0.186938	-1.44	16.71	30.144

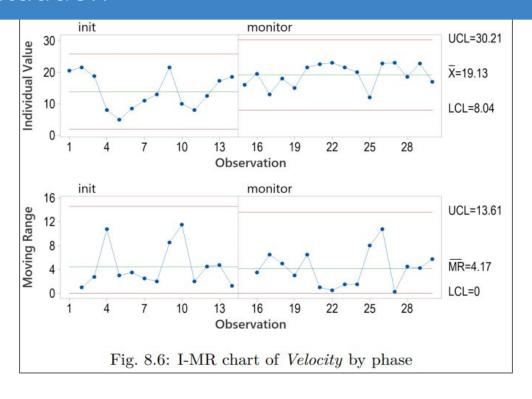
^{*} ACF: Autocorrelation Function

^{**} LBQ: Ljung-Box statistic

^{***} Chi-square right-tail probability ($\geq \chi^2$) for significance level $\alpha = 0.05$.



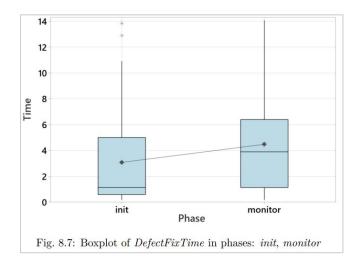




- Team able to deliver more (shifting the mean), 39% increase (13.8 \rightarrow 19.3)
- Team slightly more stable sprint-to-sprint (reducing variance) negligible







Phase	Mean	StDev	Q1	Median	Q3	IQR
init	3.083	3.570	0.593	1.144	5.006	4.413
monitor	4.480	3.406	1.136	3.898	6.400	5.263

Observations

- More time needed to fix a single issue???
- The median from an init phase is actually lower than the first quartile (Q1) for monitor phase, with unproportionally narrow both lower quartiles (Q1 and Q2)

Interpretations

Easy-to-fix issues discovered and addressed early?





"Effort required to work on bugs increased because now we have regular meetings where we look for bugs and we find them more often. I think that we also became more strict when we're testing our PRs. So despite that effort increased, I think it's a good change."

"(...) looking at the recently added features they are covered by automated tests. Adding changes to these areas is easier than it was at the beginning"

"(...) I think that all of us are focused on improvement of the code's quality and readability. Some of the needed changes have been made, but still we need to do some more in the future."

Interpretation

- Increased focus on quality / craftsmanship
- Defect fixes embrace more complex refactorings





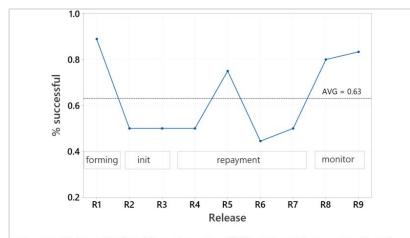


Fig. 8.8: DeliveryPredictability: the ratio of fully successful sprints in the subsequent releases



Fig. 8.9: DeliveryPredictability (proportions of fully successful sprints) in phases: init and monitor

Observation

- **Team more predictable** (by 60%)





Table 8.8: Releasability: stabilization cycles required to release a new version of the product

Stabilization Cycles per Product Release									
Phase	form	ir	nit	repayment			monitor		
Release	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9
Test runs	6	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
Effort [%] ^a	600	100		75			50		

^a Relative effort spent on product release stabilization against the *init* phase.

Observation

Less regression cycles required to release, i.e. effort on product release stabilization decreased by 50%

Interpretation

- Faster time-to-market
- Lower cost, better predictability & quality





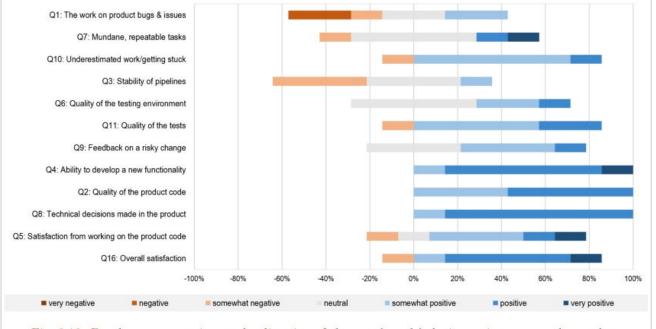


Fig. 8.10: Developer perspective on the direction of changes (trends) during assignment to the product

- **Leaned towards positive answers**, summarized by overall satisfaction
- Median neutral at least
- Favourable direction of changes: technical decisions, ability to develop new functionality, quality of the product code
- Interquartile range starting w/ negative: time spent on the work on bugs/issues





Summary

CoDVA-based TDM: Summary





- Perceived **business value** from TD refactorings raised by 27%
- **Engineering velocity** increased by 39%
- Delivery predictability improved by 60%
- Effort spent on **product stabilization** decreased by 50%
- In 86% of the cases overall **developer satisfaction** grew

The majority of the developers perceive the applied TDM strategy beneficial across

- Technical decisions made
- Ability to develop new functionality
- The experience while working with the product code

CoDVA: Implications for Researchers





- CoDVA-based TD management is a new methodology that has yet to gain wider adoption
- To determine the efficacy of TD management approaches, it is important to focus on the consequences of TD presence (developer morale and productivity)
- Potential ambiguity of TD repayment consequences
- TDM activities not only impact the product but also affect the behavior of the developers conducting them

CoDVA: Implications for Practitioners





- Engineering view (TD identification) balanced with the business view (TD prioritization)
- Aligning the TDM process with Agile Scrum increases the likelihood of the engineering team driving it
- CoDVA enhances architectural cohesion by strategically investing in the product areas that support new feature development
- The positive outcomes of TD repayment may not be immediately evident, but these activities can cause temporary deterioration in process measurements during periods of intensive changes
- The **development team is more motivated** to engage in TD management activities when they perceive the benefits of the approach

CoDVA: Generalization→Prerequisites





- Business

- Systematic Business Process (tracked/managed)
- Long-term prioritized feature roadmap

- Engineering

- Product
 - Version-controlled SW artifacts
 - Broadened product view is desired

- Process

- Prioritization: one SW development queue
- Communication: SW development team, PO, PdM
- Adaptive SW development process
- Engineering feedback elicitation and aggregation (Wisdom of Crowds)
- The approach works well irrespectively of the setting (remote or on-site work)

CoDVA mapping

Any worksheet could do

CoDVA: Generalization—Threats/Mitigation





Threats

- Case study related: the generalization power is limited by the selected case
- Context-dependence: the purpose determines the evaluation measures for business prioritization

Mitigations

- The length of the case study reinforces the significance of the obtained results
- Methodological triangulation: collating the data from the case studies and the survey
- More generic approach to profitability (business value generation)
- Used widely adopted techniques and standards: Scrum, TDM activities, ISO quality models, WoC

I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been. Wayne Gretzky





Future Work

Future Work - ideas





- TD management tipping point
- Volatility of the desired state of the product
- Sociological aspects of TD management





Thank you





Q & A





Backup slides





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