Software Reliability and Safety

CSE 8317 — Spring 2013

Prof. Jeff Tian, tian@engr.smu.edu
CSE, SMU, Dallas, TX 75275
(214) 768-2861; Fax: (214) 768-3085
www.engr.smu.edu/~tian/class/8317.13s

SSE.1: SSE Basics and SSP

- Motivation and Concepts
- Defining Embedded Systems
- Software Safety Program (SSP)

Software Safety Engineering

- SSE.1: SSE basics and SSP
  - ▷ SSE basics: “Safeware” Parts I-III
  - ▷ SSP (software safety program)
    – “Safeware”, Part IV (Ch.11-18)

- SSE.2: Hazard analysis and resolution
  - ▷ Focus: accidents and pre-conditions (hazards), not other failures
  - ▷ “Safeware” Ch.13-16 & SQE Ch.16.4
  - ▷ Identification and analysis
  - ▷ Resolution: elimination/reduction/control

- Formal verification related:
  - ▷ Main part: SSE.3, SQE Ch.15.
  - ▷ PSC: SSE.4, SQE Ch.16.5

Safety: Why?

- Risk in modern society:
  - ▷ Serious accidents:
    - "Safeware" Appendix A-D
    - medical/aerospace/chemical/nuclear/etc.
    - more recent accident from diverse sources
  - ▷ Techniques for reducing risks

- Risk factors in industrialized society:
  - ▷ new technology ⇒ new hazard
  - ▷ increasing complexity
  - ▷ interdependency ⇒ exposure ↑
  - ▷ increasing amount of energy
  - ▷ automation ↑ of manual operations
  - ▷ increasing centralization and scale
  - ▷ increasing pace of tech. change

Computers and Risk

- Computer in safety-critical systems
  - ▷ controller/control subsystem:
    - – application-specific computer
    - – general-purpose computer
  - ▷ functionality and flexibility
  - ▷ fact of life
  - ▷ critical functions (later)

- Software safety: difficulties
  - ▷ continuous vs. discrete states
  - ▷ the "curse of flexibility"
    - – "Safeware" Fig.2.4 (p.35)
  - ▷ complexity and invisible interface
  - ▷ lack of historical usage information
  - ▷ pure SE approach inadequate ⇒ SSE

SSE: Pure SE?

- Pure SE (S/w Eng.) approach
  - ▷ Safety constraints ⇒ requirements
  - ▷ Carried/verified in development stages
  - ▷ Fig. 18.1 (a)
  - ▷ Basis: myths below.

- Software myths ("Safeware" Ch.2.2):
  - ▷ lower cost than other devices
  - ▷ software is easy to change
  - ▷ computers provide greater reliability
  - ▷ software reliability ↑⇒ safety ↑
  - ▷ testing/formal-veri. eliminate defects
  - ▷ reusing software ⇒ safety ↑
  - ▷ computers reduce risk over mechanical systems

SSE: Problems and Solutions

- Assumptions and problems
  - ▷ Level of quality (LoQ) required
  - ▷ LoQ provided by existing practice (SRE?)
  - ▷ Fault-tolerant techniques
    - – particularly NVP, intrinsic problems
    - – LoQ still not enough
  - ▷ Formal verification
    - – LoQ/rare-events/scalability problems

- Problems and solutions:
  - ▷ Scalability and coverage
  - ▷ Correctness of *everything*?
  - ▷ Not focus on safety-related artifacts
  - ⇒ SSE, particularly Leveson's SSP

Basic Definitions

- Accident or mishap:
  - ▷ unplanned (series of) events
  - ▷ leading to unacceptable loss
    - death, injury, illness
    - equip./property/environment damage
  - ▷ excess energy/dangerous substance
  - ▷ computers relatively safe
  - ▷ but computer control $\Rightarrow$ accidents

- Hazard:
  - ▷ a set of conditions leading to accidents under certain environmental conditions
  - ▷ e.g.: guard gates at rail-crossing
  - ▷ safety focus: control factors (vs. env. factors beyond control)
  - ▷ analysis and resolution $\Rightarrow$ SSE

Basic Definitions

- Risk: function of 3 elements
  - ▷ likelihood(hazard)
  - ▷ likelihood(hazard $\Rightarrow$ accident)
  - ▷ worst possible loss due to accident (compare to expected loss)

- (System) safety engineering:
  - ▷ ensuring acceptable risk
  - ▷ scientific/management/engineering
  - ▷ reducing risk factors
  - ▷ context for software safety
  - ▷ hazard identification, assessment, analysis, and resolution

Safety and Embedded Systems

- *Safety:* The property of being accident-free for (embedded) software systems.
  - ▷ Accident: failures with severe consequences
  - ▷ Hazard: condition for accident
  - ▷ Special case of reliability
  - ▷ Specialized techniques
  - ▷ Focus on prevention and tolerance
- Embedded systems
  - ▷ Failure and consequences
  - ▷ Interaction among sub-systems
  - ▷ Safety: software vs. system

System/Software Definitions

- System (general vs embedded):
  - ▷ Physical systems or processes
  - ▷ A set of components
  - ▷ Common purposes/objectives
  - ▷ Description: input/output/time
  - ▷ Self-regulating vs. controlled

- Controller/Control subsystem:
  - ▷ Providing control to system
    - – order events
    - – regulate variable values
  - ▷ Help achieve overall objectives
  - ▷ Example control systems
  - ▷ Use of computers in control

System Definitions: Control Function

- Function (mathematical?) to be achieved
  - ▷ input, output and time
  - ▷ dynamic (differential) equation(s)
  - ▷ state variables and matrices
  - ▷ traditional vs. modern analysis
  - ▷ use of computers for system analysis

- Traditional analyses
  - ▷ single input, single output
  - ▷ transformations: Fourier & Laplace
  - ▷ stability criteria
  - ▷ performance and other analysis
  - ▷ pre-requisite for safety

System Definitions: Control Function

- Modern control system analyses
  - ▷ state variables and set of equations
  - ▷ controllability & observability
  - ▷ other concerns:
    - – optimality, robustness, adaptability, etc.
  - ▷ computer controller
  - ▷ continuous vs. discrete system
  - ▷ Z-transformation for discrete systems

- Example control systems
  - ▷ traditional feedback control
  - ▷ state variable based
  - ▷ sampling and discrete systems
  - ▷ computer control (examples later)

Analysis and Constraints

- Previous analyses unconstrained (provide necessary but not sufficient condition for safety)

- Constraints on operating conditions
  - ▷ quality considerations
    - effect of defects in system
    - performance and other measures
  - ▷ equipment capacity
    - time and/or energy constraints
    - volume, rate, etc.
  - ▷ process characteristics
    - above factors fit into process
    - given vs. adjustable aspects
  - ▷ safety constraints (next)
    (derived from analysis of above)

System Definitions: Safety Constraints

- Safety constraints:
  - ▷ Derived from safety process
    – particularly hazard id. FTA & ETA
  - ▷ Example: pressure threshold
  - ▷ Integration to other functions?
  - ▷ Discrete vs. continuous functions

- Handling of safety constraints:
  - ▷ Constrained optimization
    – feasibility and practicality problems
  - ▷ Usually handled separately:
    – different/conflicting concerns
    – different characteristics
    – feasibility of functional representation?
    – liability and regulatory concern

System Definitions: Software Safety

- Software functions in control systems:
  - ▷ data logging
  - ▷ control function implementation
    - – direct digital control (via actuators)
    - – supervisory control (values/parameters)
  - ▷ maintenance of safety conditions
  - ▷ example: nuclear plant

- Relating safety constraints to software:
  - ▷ data logging: no direct impact
  - ▷ other two: possible safety problems
  - ▷ subsequence analysis

Software Safety Program (SSP)

- Leveson's approach
  - ▷ Limited goals
  - ▷ Safety analysis and hazard resolution
  - ▷ Safety verification: Fig. 18.1 (c)
    – few things carried over (dotted line)
  - ▷ Part IV, "Safeware"
    – particularly Chapters 15-18.

- Software safety program (SSP)
  - ▷ Formal verification/inspection based
  - ▷ But restricted to safety risks
  - ▷ Based on hazard analyses results

SSP in Software Lifecycle

- Major activities
  - ▷ Hazard identification and analysis
  - ▷ Hazard resolution (design for safety)
  - ▷ Safety verification
  - ▷ Change analysis and operational feedback
  - ▷ Fit in s/w process; Fig. 13.2 (p.293)

- Safety constraints and verification
  - ▷ Identify problems early
  - ▷ Carry over as design/code constraints
  - ▷ Distributed verification effort
  - ▷ Cascading:
    - – using safety/design/code constraints
    - – represented as formal specs
    - – verifying req./HLD/LLD/code

SSP in Software Lifecycle

- SSP in early (concept formation) phase:
  - ▷ Initial risk assessment: identify
    – critical areas/hazards/design criteria
  - ▷ Preliminary hazard list
  - ▷ Audit trail: tracking/evaluating
  - ▷ Hazard analysis of previous accidents
- SSP in requirement stage
  - ▷ SRS (s/w req. specifications)
  - ▷ SRS consistent/satisfy safety constraints
  - ▷ Conflicts and tradeoffs?
  - ▷ SRS in a formal language
    – able to handle timing and failure

SSP in Software Lifecycle

- SSP in High-Level Design (HLD)
  - ▷ Identify safety-critical items
    – based on FTA, ETA, etc.
  - ▷ Design for safety: key!
    – isolation/encapsulation
    – protection and security, etc.
  - ▷ Use of safety invariants for modules
  - ▷ Link to pre/post safety verifications

- SSP in Low-Level Design (LLD)
  - ▷ Safety invariants/etc. preserved
  - ▷ (dynamic) interconnection properties
  - ▷ Same design for safety issues
    – but finer granularity/less flexibility

SSP in Software Lifecycle

- SSP in code analysis
  - ▷ Further refinement
  - ▷ Preserving safety invariants/properties?
  - ▷ Combination of techniques
    - – testing/inspection/formal veri., etc.
    - – safety-focus: based on FTA&ETA
  - ▷ Yih/Tian approach later

- SSP in configuration control/maintenance
  - ▷ Change during verification/operation
  - ▷ Change effect analysis:
    - – how does it affect safety
    - – problem identification and resolution
    - – use FTA/ETA/etc with modifications
  - ▷ Importance of separation/isolation
  - ▷ Above ⇒ informed safety management

Perspectives

- State-of-the-Practice:
  - ▷ Computer used in safety-critical appl.
  - ▷ S/w Eng.: V&V, SRE, FT, FM
  - ▷ Gap between safety goal and QA
- SSE: Augment S/w Eng.
  - ▷ Overall framework: Leveson's SSP
  - ▷ Analysis to identify hazard
  - ▷ Design for safety/hazard resolution
  - ▷ Safety constraints and verification
- Link to other topics:
  - ▷ In addition to: V&V, TQA, SRE
  - ▷ Important elements: FM and FT
  - ▷ New development: prescriptive specs