

# CS 4530: Fundamentals of Software Engineering

## Lesson 7.3 Code Reviews

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# Learning Objectives for this Lesson

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- By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:
  - Articulate what a *code review* is;
  - List the roles of people in code reviews;
  - Explain an appropriate time for code reviews;
  - Illustrate one way to hold a code review;
  - Describe the benefits of a culture of code review.

# Linus's Law motivates Code Review

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Given enough eyeballs,  
all bugs are shallow

- Coined by Eric Raymond in honor of Linus Torvalds.
- “Mantra” of Open-Source Movement
- (*pace* “Heartbleed”, and others.)

# Code Should be Read, not Just Run

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- Requirements and design documents are usually read by multiple people - who often didn't write them
- There are meetings, discussions
- Customers, managers, developers, Q&A provide input
- Should code get released having been read just by its author?
- Think of books: nothing is commercially published without scrutiny and input from editors

# Code *Inspection* is Heavier Weight

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- Formal process of reading through code as a group;
- Applied to all project documents;
- A 3-5 person team reads the code aloud and explains what is being done;
- Each person has a specific role (moderator, reviewer, reader, scribe, observer, author)
- Note, the author does not present their code
- Usually a 60 minute meeting;
- Less efficient (defects/cost) than modern review processes.
- Very waterfall.
- Traceable, measurable

# Code Review: What

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- A code review is the process in which the author of some code is asked to explain it to their peers:
  - What purpose the code has;
  - How the code accomplishes this purpose;
  - How the author is confident of this information,
    - E.g., show results of running tests.
- A code review often concerns a code *change*.
- A code review doesn't assume anything is wrong.
- A code review isn't “selling” the code.
- See [Chapter 9](#) in SoftEng @ Google

# Code Review: Who

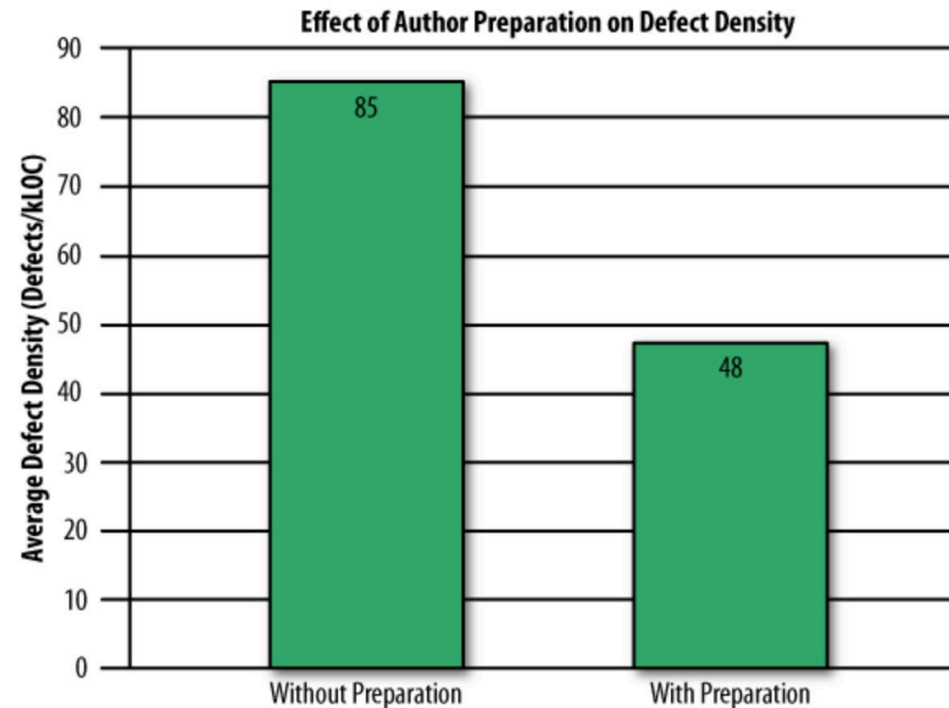
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- The author of the code is the presenter.
- An owner of the code being changed or added to
  - May sometimes be the same person as presenter.
- Someone to verify that the code meets standards.
- Someone to ensure documentation is consistent.
- Other people:
  - Interested in this code base;
  - Experts in the code base.

SEAD Google:  
At least one person  
other than author

# Self-Review Less Effective than Peer Review

Study of 300 reviews at Cisco in 2006



Even if developers pre-review their code, many defects still found in peer review

“Best Kept Secrets of Peer Code Review”, Jason Cohen, SmartBear Software, 2006



# Code Review: When

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- SE @ Google recommends reviews at commit:
  - **Every** commit must be reviewed;
  - Best time to ensure code is good:
    - Once code is in production, hard to justify;
    - Before code is ready to use, review superfluous.
  - Reviews need to be done quickly.
- Code review for new developers:
  - Helps them understand standards;
- Code review of established code:
  - Spread understanding of algorithms/techniques.

# Code Review: How


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- At Google, reviewers get access to changes, explanation and all relevant test results: review is asynchronous.
- Elsewhere reviews can be in person:
  - More heavyweight, cannot be as common.
- Review must be professional and impersonal:
  - No one is being “attacked” (or, no one *should* be).
- Don’t rehash design arguments (defer to author).
- All suggestions and criticisms must be addressed:
  - At least in the negative.


# Code Review: Example on Pull Request

...re-api/src/main/java/org/apache/maven/surefire/booter/CommandReader.java Hide resolved


```
case BYE_ACK:
    //After SHUTDOWN no more commands can come. Hence, do NOT go back to blocking in IO
    callListeners( command );
    return;
default:
    callListeners( command );
```

 **Tibor17** on Nov 12, 2019 Contributor 😊 ...


The listeners are called here. But we can put IF condition:  
IF BYE\_ACK -> return at the end of the default case.

 **Tibor17** on Nov 12, 2019 Contributor 😊 ...


Instead of calling the return we can make softer exit with `CommandReader.this.state.set( TERMINATED )`.

 **eolivelli** on Dec 17, 2019 Contributor 😊 ...

Yes, I came to this same conclusion, change the state to TERMINATED.

 **jon-bell** on Dec 19, 2019 Author Contributor 😊 ...

Changed.



Unresolve conversation **jon-bell** marked this conversation as resolved.

# Code Review: Sample Check-List

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- Am I able to understand the code easily?
- Does the code follow our style guidelines?
- Is the same code duplicated more than once?
- Is this file (or change) too big?
- Does this code meet our non-functional requirements?
- Is this code maintainable?
- Does this code have unintended side-effects?

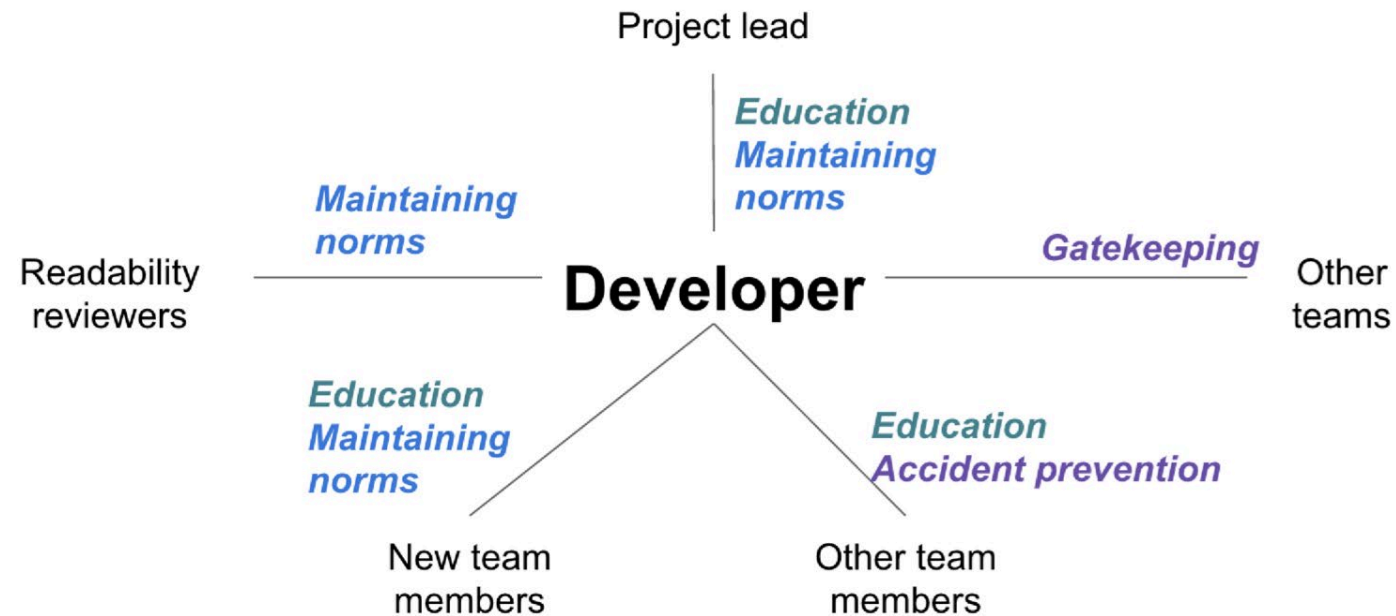
# Code Review: Why

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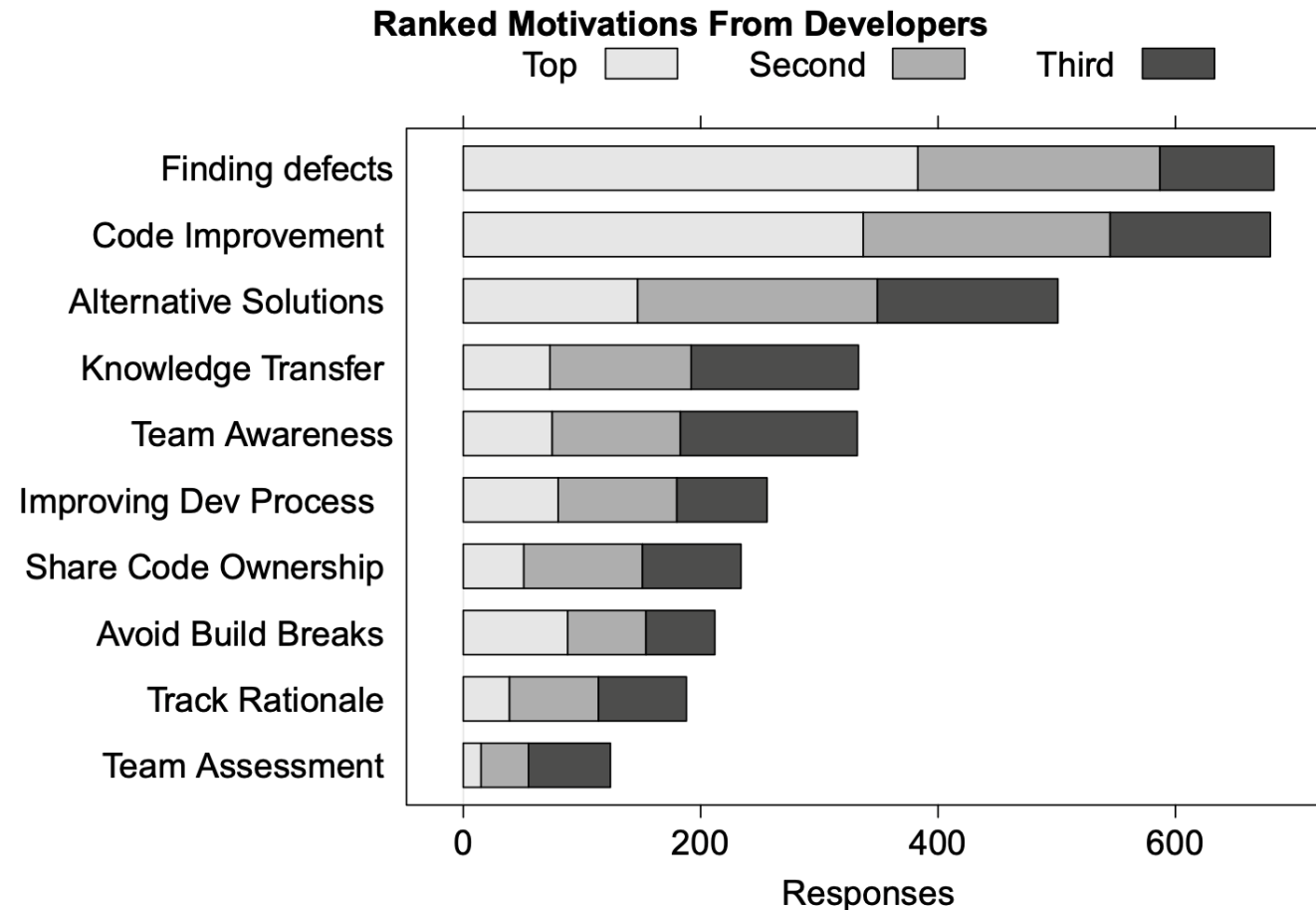
- Code review increases breadth of knowledge of code:
  - Other people "know" the code;
  - Easier to handle someone cycling off project.
- Verbalizing decisions improves their quality:
  - The process of writing an explanation encourages critical thinking.
- Code reviews improve quality of code base:
  - Knowing code will be reviewed pushes developers to make code more presentable and understandable.

# Code Review: Why (Google)

Different team members have different motivations and bring different benefits



# Code Review: Why (Microsoft)



# Code Reviews and Programmer's Ego

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- Code review means someone's looking over your work
- You might have some attachment to it
- Criticisms: sometimes hard not to take personally
- Acknowledge a criticism and move on
- Acknowledgment doesn't imply that the author agrees with the content of the criticism
- Remember: The review is not about *you*, the goal is to improve code



# Review: Learning Objectives for this Lesson

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