IBM Debuts 'Grammar Checker' Approach to Catching Software Bugs

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Bug-ridden, poor quality software costs businesses billions of dollars annually and the cost of identifying and repairing a software defect in a product that is already being used by consumers can cost upwards of $16,000 for each defect. Recognizing these challenges, IBM is introducing new software that intelligently catches bugs and other defects while software code is being written -- rather than after a product that is powered by software has already been shipped to customers.

Currently, most software developers test applications for defects right before the application goes into production -- when 90 percent of the software code is already written. The new IBM software -- IBM Rational Software Analyzer -- scans software code for quality and defects before the application is built, thereby reducing the amount of defects hitting the marketplace by 15 to 20 percent.

"The world is increasingly dependent on software, and in turn business processes and new products represent the majority of new requirements levied on development teams," said Daniel Sabbah, general manager, IBM Rational Software. "Software project failures impact the bottom line and as levels of complexity in software continue to rise, software developers need to create more stable software in less time. This is the business reality of software and systems delivery."

Demand for on time and under budget IT projects is not a new phenomenon, nor is the challenge of creating high caliber software code. IBM Rational Software Analyzer will help companies produce higher

quality software that contains fewer bugs. The new software will also reduce the time development teams spend on time consuming and error-prone manual testing processes, allowing them to devote more time to building software programs. For example, the new software has functions similar to a grammar checker commonly found in word processing programs that can help developers find code and style errors rather than grammar mistakes. The new IBM software also provides suggestions on how to fix bugs.

Built as a plug-in for the latest version of Eclipse, Eclipse version 3.3, IBM Rational Software Analyzer finds software errors, flags them and makes suggestions, reducing time spent reviewing software code prior to a software build. Similar to how an author follows rules and proofreads a story to ensure it is understandable and cohesive, IBM Rational Software Analyzer can automatically scan each line of code up to 700 times, "grammar checking" the code before it goes into production. Just as in book publishing, where there is a great need to catch mistakes before a book appears in bookstores, the cost of identifying and fixing errors in software code rises exponentially the further along a programmer is in the development process.

To be competitive in today's fast-paced business environment requires increased visibility and automation of governance and compliance measures. Software developers can use the new IBM software to provide insight to their management team through detailed reporting on software code status and to offer direction into governance and compliance of corporate coding guidelines and requirements. IBM partners and customers can build an adaptor to use the code scanning technology in IBM Rational Software Analyzer to improve the code quality and development of their custom-built offerings.

IBM Rational Software Analyzer is currently available. Pricing for the Developer Edition is US$3,500 per user while pricing for the Enterprise

Edition is US$50,000 per server with unlimited users.

For more information, please visit www.ibm.com/software/rational

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