

PowerPoint* and Complexity

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Abstract

Everyone talks about software bloat, feature creep and the ever-increasing complexity of software. Each new version of a software package adds in new features. Very rarely, features are removed. But what really happens as software evolves?

This animated film illustrates the evolution of PowerPoint over seven versions from 1987-2001. With each version the user has faced increasing application complexity. Knowing how software evolves is of increasing importance as we move to building ultra-large scale software and developing software in the context of software ecologies.

This film uses abstract graphical representations of the application features and relationships between features. Time-lapse animation of these abstract representations are used to convey an understanding of how this application has evolved. This animation is based on data from a project that is mapping the user interface and application functionality available in every release of Microsoft PowerPoint for the Macintosh. To date this study spans 7 releases of this application.

Categories and Subject Descriptors D.2.m [Software Engineering]: Miscellaneous; D.2.8 [Software Engineering]: Metrics; D.2.9 [Software Engineering]: Management

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* PowerPoint is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

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