Techniques for understanding legacy software systems
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Preface

The work presented in this thesis was performed over a period of four years at the Center for Mathematics and Computer Science (CWI) in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Over this period, more and more interest in our group's research was expressed by various companies. A number of people in the group had been toying with the idea of starting a company to aid in the technology transfer of the CWI research for some years, and this seemed like the ideal situation to actually start this company. I am very fortunate to have been part of both the research group, and the start-up company. In fact, I moved from CWI to the Software Improvement Group (the startup) after my four years at CWI, when all I had to do to finish this thesis was to "write the preface".

It took me over a year to actually finish it, and the fact that I did can hardly be attributed to me. I would like to thank the people who it can be attributed to profoundly: Arie van Deursen was the project leader of the project I first joined at CWI. He was my mentor, and taught me how to write research papers. He has become a good friend and (less important) a partner in the aforementioned company. Paul Klint taught me how to finish a thesis, mainly by not asking when I was going to finish it. Apart from that, he was one of the most accessible thesis advisors I know, and has been an inspiration. I fondly remember the seemingly random state-of-the-world talks we had (and still have).

Other people at CWI that need to be applauded are Joost Visser, who knows how to separate the important stuff from the less important stuff, thus making you go twice as fast on a good day. Especially our long discussions over dinner (after long discussions on where to eat) have been very educational (We need more coasters!). Leon Moonen has been there since we started, we shared a room as assistants at the UvA. Leon prefers rooms at least 5 degrees colder than I do, so we didn't share rooms at CWI. We did have a lot of very productive discussions, over even more coffee, however (Let's go skating when I'm done). Merijn de Jonge was an instrumental part of the team who always asked whether what you were doing couldn't be done better. He has written a number of very elegant software packages I use everyday. Furthermore, he got us home when we went sailing and the rudder fell off.
Dinesh was my first roommate, and the first to go. Dinesh showed me that it was okay to have non-conventional ideas (at least for him). He has become a good friend, at which point he packed his stuff and moved half way across the world. I did visit him in California, after which he moved to yet another continent. Let’s see what happens when I visit him there. Jeroen Scheerder showed me lots of cool Mac stuff, which made me buy the one I’m typing this on now. Apart from that, he produced some of the software that was needed to do the research in this thesis. Jurgen Vinju took my place as the weekly talk organizer. He manages to buy all the nice gadgets at the right time, although he should be legally barred from buying cars. He, too, wrote some of the software I still use everyday. I hope he keeps calling me telling me he bought me a ticket to this cool show at the Paradiso (Hou het werkelijk!).

I enjoyed working at CWI and like to thank the rest of the group for providing such a nice environment: Mark van den Brand, Ralf Lammel, Jan Heering, Pieter Olivier and Hayco de Jong, thanks!

I need to congratulate Eelco Visser on becoming a daddy, and need to thank him for being instrumental in my pursuing a research job in the first place. Let’s do something together, now that I have a bit more time.

Over at the Software Improvement Group, I have to thank you all! Guys, we are doing good! Marjo Wildvank has taught me more about business then I ever thought I’d wanted to know. He is a master story teller, and I am starting to believe that his stories are true, too. Alex van den Bergh has rescued me on more than one occasion. Thank you for putting up with me, and for the great work you do, even though being cool is not a part-time job. Visit checkdef.com! Other SIG people: Steven Klusener, Gerard Kok, Indra Polak, Ernst Verhoeven, and more recently Albertine Frielinck, thank you very much for your sense of humor, and for your nice work (and the bedrijfsuitjes).

Fortunately, I still seem to have sort of a life, which is largely due to various friends calling and demanding to go have a beer somewhere, or come over for dinner. You know who you are.

Rap9 is such an institution that I almost feel I don’t need to mention it. I am grateful that I can be part of a football team with such a history, and such brilliant players. We will become champions, although I fear who will tattoo what where, when it happens.

My Mom and Dad were there first, and apparently will support me, no matter what. What can I do in return, but to install and fix their computer? The fact that they moved to just a couple of blocks from our place make my visits more frequent and always fun, especially when dinner is involved (I still haven’t had the worteltjesspaghetti!). I also thank my little big brother for being my brother. Let’s hang out more.

Johan Prins and Maria Sindram, thank you having me visit you in the US, lastly in Charleston, S.C., where part of this thesis was written.
Finally, the one person who actually did all the work, supported me throughout my time at CWI and SIG, while graduating, starting her own career, getting a new job, taking me on beautiful holidays to Brittany and finding the time to actually marry me in between... Maartje, thank you for making me a better person.