Correlation Does Not Mean Causation: Improving Army Software Maintenance Cost Estimates

Presented to
Joint Software and IT Cost Forum
September 2020

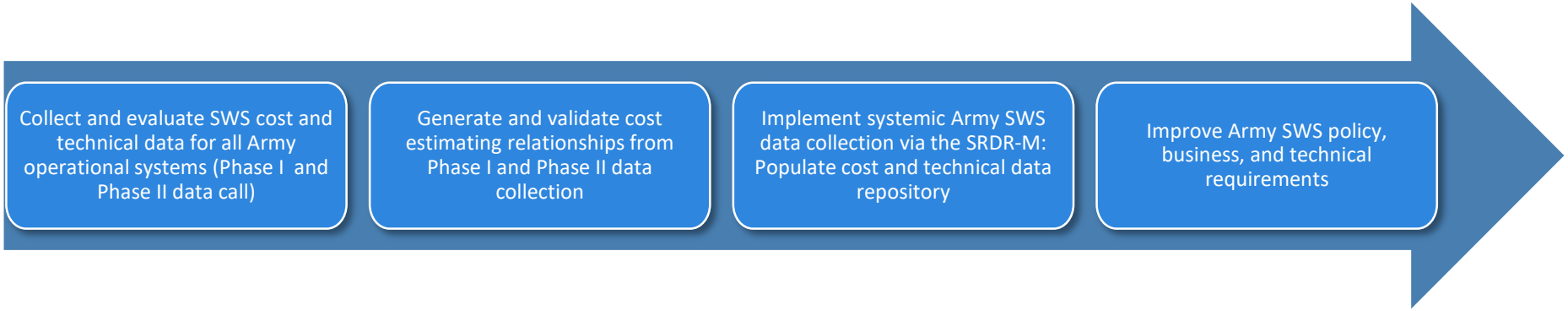
Presentation Overview

- Objectives and Strategy
- Data Demographics
- Causal Relationship Driven CER
- Next Steps

SWS Initiative Objective and Strategy

Accurately estimate Army system Software Sustainment (SWS) costs to:

- Effectively estimate and justify software and system life cycle costs
- Objectively evaluate Army system software sustainment execution costs
- Inform and optimize the allocation of available sustainment resources across the Army

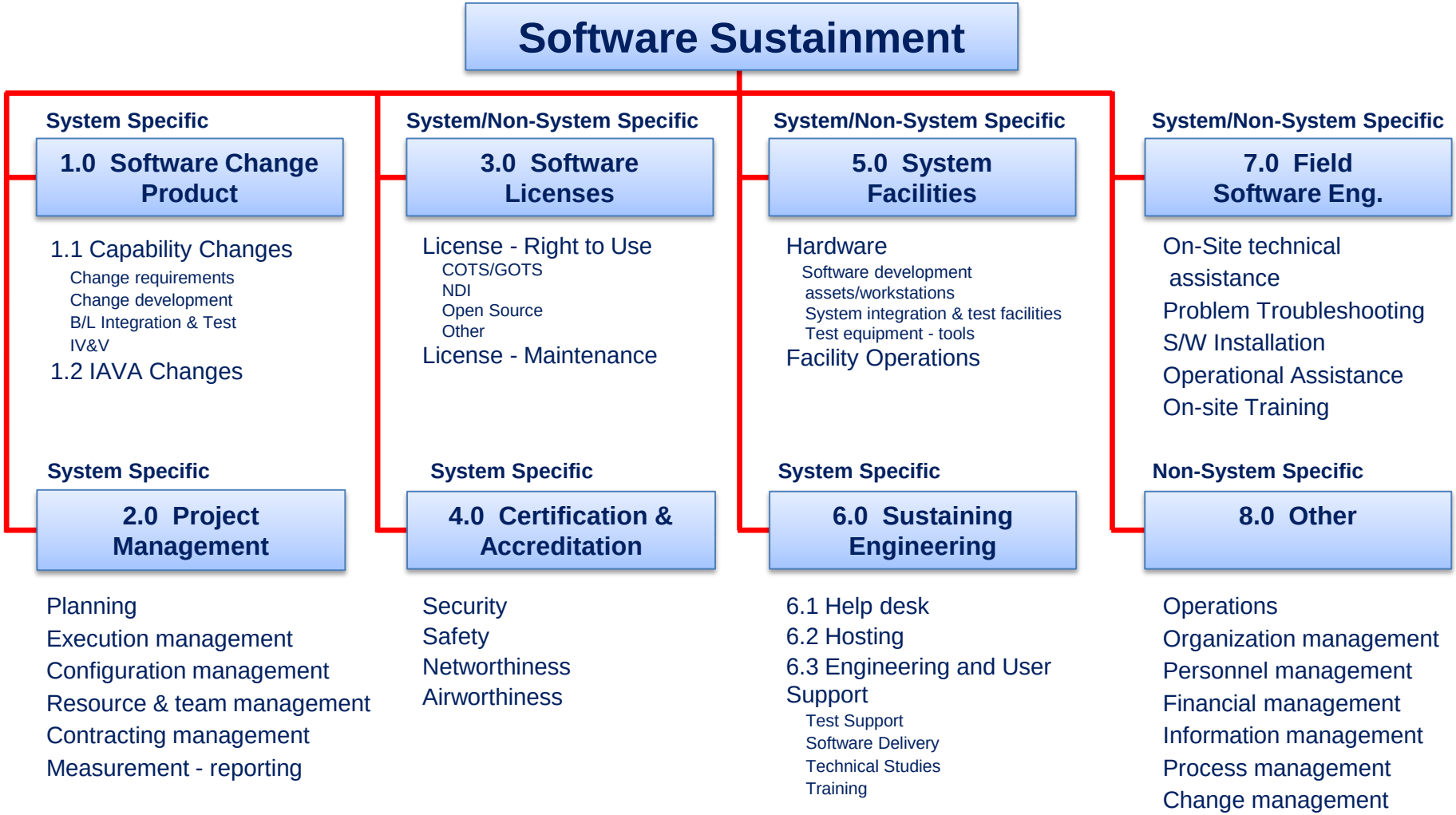


Effective software sustainment cost estimation is the basis for Army system software life cycle cost management

Summary of Accomplishments

- Established Software Sustainment Data Collection Mechanisms
  - Army Software Data Collection Questionnaire
  - Software Sustainment WBS Used to Collect Sustainment Costs
  - Annual Data Collection
- Created Comprehensive Software Sustainment Data Repository
  - 192 Systems
  - 700 Capability Releases
  - 300 IAVA Releases
  - 3,200 records on software license data
- Established Robust Foundation for Software Sustainment Fact-Based Decisions
  - Allocations of Costs by WBS Elements
  - Continue to improve Software Sustainment Cost Estimating Relationships
- Data and Analysis Results provided to DoD Community

DASA-CE SWS WBS



Version 5.0

Army Software Sustainment Definition

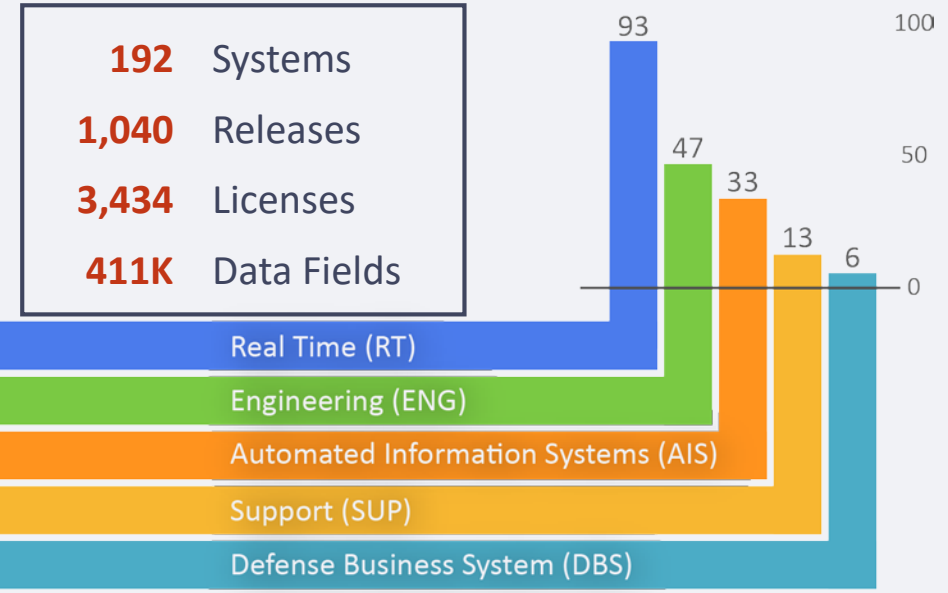
- Software sustainment (SWS) includes all software change activities and products associated with modifying a software system after a software release has been provided to an external party
- The release is the primary SWS change product - a composite of one or more changes - it can be either a formal release or an engineering release
- SWS includes software enhancements, software maintenance, and cybersecurity updates
- Software maintenance includes defect repair, rehosting, adaptations, updates, and reconfiguration
- SWS may be funded by multiple funding sources
- Costs include both Fixed and Variable costs accrued at both the system and organizational levels
- Costs include both organic (government) and contractor resources

Data Demographics

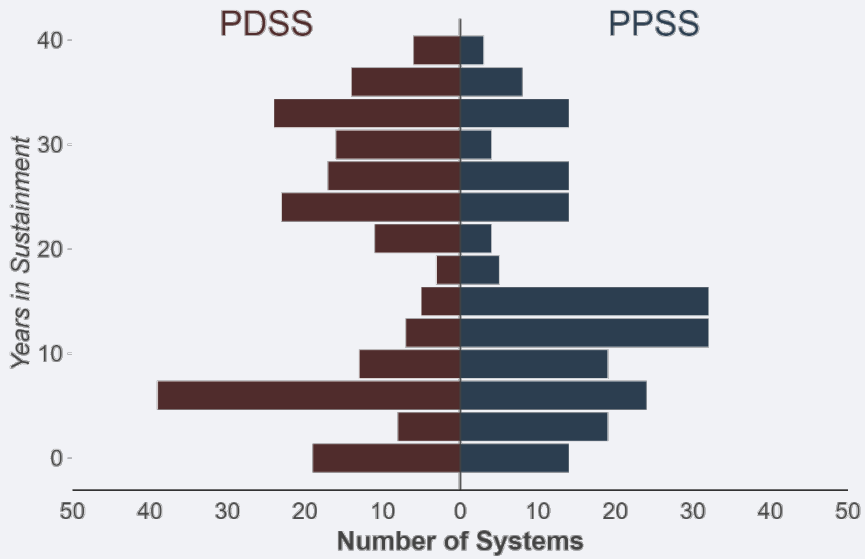
Overview

192	Systems
1,040	Releases
3,434	Licenses
411K	Data Fields

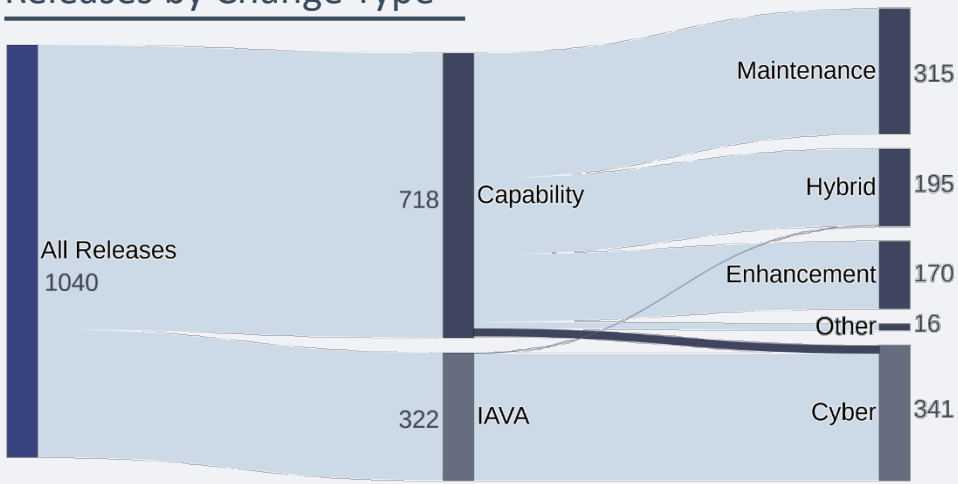
Systems by Super Domain



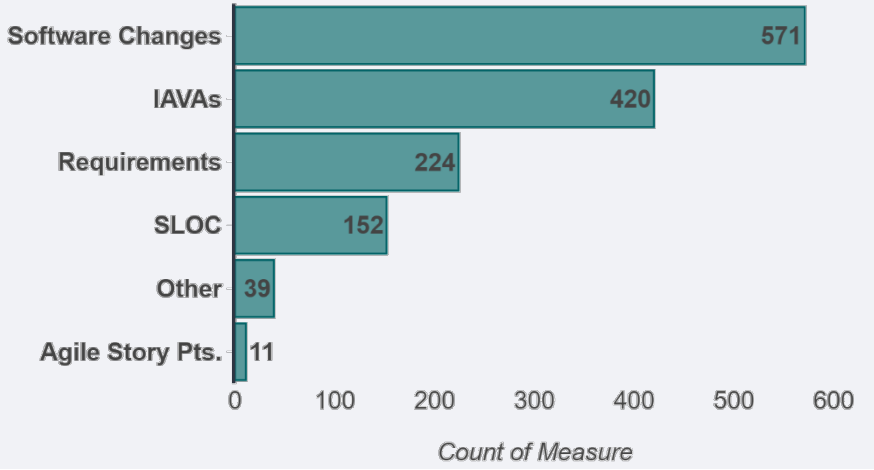
Distribution of System Age



Releases by Change Type



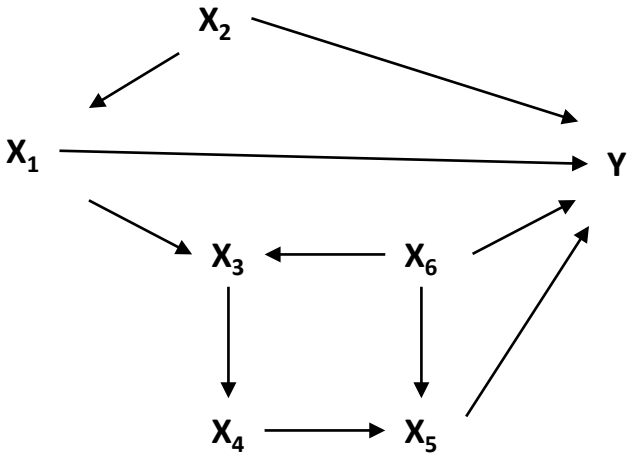
Releases by Size Measure



Causal Relationship Driven CERs

Correlation versus Causation

- It is well known that *correlations* among factors does not necessarily mean *causation*.
  - For example, an increase in ice cream sales is correlated with shark attacks
- Because of this, regression models are often the wrong tool to use for causal search, i.e., identifying which factors affect the outcome.
- These models may use predictor variables that are influenced by variables outside the model, *confounding* variables. The model may have a good fit to the data but will not be accurate making estimates



Confounding Variable Example

- X_2 influences both X_1 and Y and X_1 influences Y. A change in X_2 will produce a change in both X_1 and Y
- X_6 influences Y as does X_5 but X_6 also influences X_5. A change in X_6 will produce a change in both X_5 and Y
- Conclusion: choose only 2 of the 4 influencing factors on Y

Causal Relationship Analysis

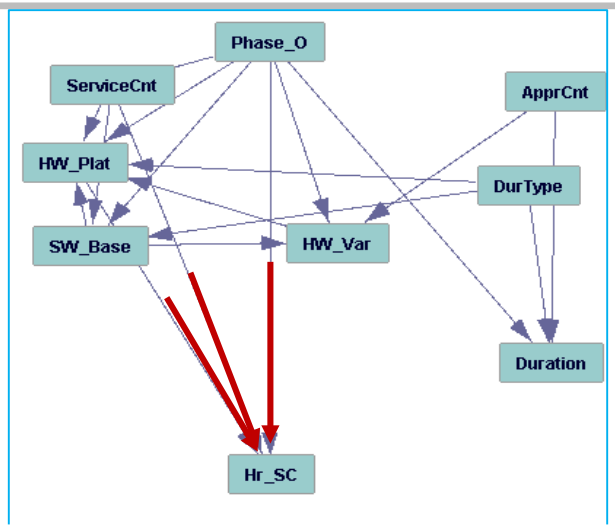
- The Army Software Maintenance Initiative collaborated with the Software Engineering Institute (SEI), Pittsburgh, PA, to investigate cause and effect relationships in collected maintenance data.
- The large number of factors in the software maintenance data make it challenging to identify which ones are useful for grouping data
- As a result of causal analysis, the data was segmented into two tiers
  - First tier was data segmented by Super Domain
  - Second tier was segmented by ACAT level within each super domain
- Unit cost (total release hours per software change) was used as the variable of interest, Y, in the analysis
- Different factors appear in different groups meaning different predictors are used in CERs
- This presentation only shows the causal relationship graphs and CERs for the Real-Time super domain and the three ACAT level releases

Causal Analysis Influencing Factors

Super Domain	ACAT I	ACAT II	ACA III+
RT	• Phase • Inter-Service Partner Count • HW Platforms	• Inter-Service Partner Count	• Hardware Variants • Maintenance Phase • Software Baseline
ENG	(None)*	• Number of Appropriations • Hardware Variants • Maintenance Phase • Inter-Service Partner Count • Software Baseline	• Duration Type • Hardware Variants • Maintenance Phase
AIS	• Inter-Service Partner Count*	(No info)	• Duration Type • Inter-Service Partner Count

** There were very few observations in two of three ACAT I datasets making casual effects harder to analyze.*

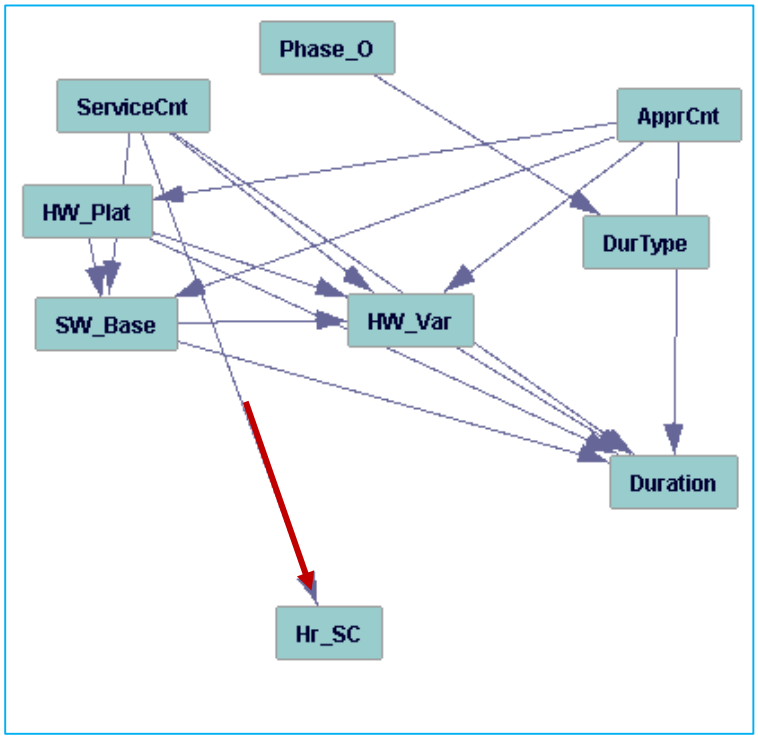
Real-Time ACAT I Releases



Data Model		Conditions	Obs	Adj R^2
ACAT I ACAT II ACAT III+	Thr = 399 * $(TSC)^{0.91}$ Thr = 364 * $(TSC)^{0.91}$ Thr = 569 * $(TSC)^{0.91}$	10% | RT | ACAT Levels	68	0.71*
THrs = 577 * $(TSC)^{0.81}$		10% | RT | ACAT I	23	0.74
THrs = 164 * $(TSC)^{1.0}$ * $ServCnt^{1.10}$		10% | RT | ACAT I | ServCnt	23	**0.84**
THrs = 91 * $(TSC)^{0.94}$ * $HW\_Plat^{0.18}$		10% | RT | ACAT I | HW_Plat	22	**0.80**
MS C MS C - FRP O&S	THrs = 260 * $(TSC)^{0.74}$ THrs = 394 * $(TSC)^{0.74}$ THrs = 787 * $(TSC)^{0.74}$	10% | RT | ACAT I | Phases (Ordinal)	23	0.71
THrs = 161 * $(TSC)^{1.00}$ * $ServCnt^{1.05}$ * $HW\_Plat^{0.0011}$		10% | RT | ServiceCnt | HW_Plat	22	0.84*

** High P-Values for one or more coefficients*

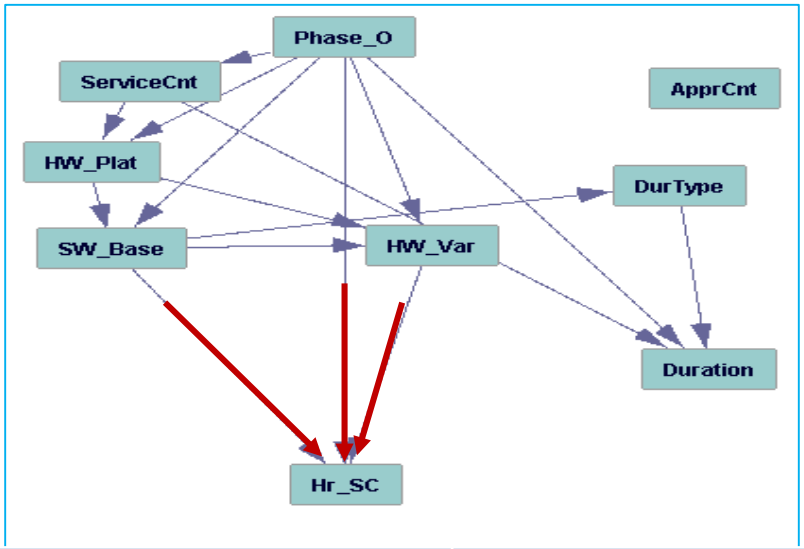
Real-Time ACAT II



Data Model		Conditions	Obs	Adj R^2
ACAT I ACAT II ACAT III+	Thr = 399 * $(TSC)^{0.91}$ Thr = 364 * $(TSC)^{0.91}$ Thr = 569 * $(TSC)^{0.91}$	10% | RT | ACAT Levels	68	0.71*
THrs = 308 * $(TSC)^{0.95}$		10% | RT | ACAT II	23	**0.75**
THrs = 298 * $(TSC)^{0.94}$ * $ServCnt^{0.86}$		10% | RT | ACAT II | ServiceCnt	23	**0.75**

***** *High P-Values for one or more coefficients*

Real-Time ACAT III+



Data Model		Conditions	Obs	Adj R^2
ACAT I ACAT II ACAT III+	Thr = 399 * $(TSC)^{0.91}$ Thr = 364 * $(TSC)^{0.91}$ Thr = 569 * $(TSC)^{0.91}$	10% | RT | ACAT Levels	68	0.71*
THrs = 467 * $(TSC)^{0.99}$		10% | RT | ACAT III+	22	0.61
THrs = 280 * $(TSC)^{1.02}$ * $SW\_Base^{0.46}$		10% | RT | ACAT III+ | SW_Base	22	0.65
THrs = 252 * $(TSC)^{1.01}$ * $HW\_Var^{0.74}$		10% | RT | ACAT III+ | HW_Var	22	0.64*
MS C - FRP MS C - LRP O&S	THrs = 272 * $(TSC)^{0.92}$ THrs = 465 * $(TSC)^{0.92}$ THrs = 776 * $(TSC)^{0.92}$	10% | RT | ACAT III+ | Phases (Ordinal)	22	0.67*
MS C - FRP MS C - LRP O&S	THrs = 138 * $(TSC)^{1.07}$ * $SW\_Base^{0.51}$ THrs = 70 * $(TSC)^{1.07}$ * $SW\_Base^{0.51}$ THrs = 328 * $(TSC)^{1.07}$ * $SW\_Base^{0.51}$	10% | RT | ACAT III+ | SW_Base | Phases (Ordinal)	22	0.67*

** High P-Values for one or more coefficients*

Conclusions on Causal-driven CERs

- Causal relationship analysis provided insight into which independent variables should be examined for predicting total release hours
- This saved a lot of random analysis time
- The discovered relationships also suggested other relationships that could answer different information needs such as which data does not contribute to CER formulation and can be eliminated from data collection
- Segmenting data as suggested by causal analysis generally shows more CER accuracy in each segment versus trying to find a one-size-fits-all CER.
- It also highlights poor performing members in the segment that need further investigation.
- Causal analysis should proceed regression analysis to save time and eliminate confounding variables

Next Steps

- Next Steps
- Annual data collection
  - Collection of FY18 PPSS actual execution data by Army G4
  - Development of Army OSMIS data repository for data collection and storage
  - The Software Resources Data Reporting for Maintenance (SRDR-M*) closely aligns to the DASA-CE SWS WBS and data requirements
    - Moving forward, the SRDR-M will be utilized to collect SWS data from Army programs and perform analysis
- Annualized release data will continue to be analyzed for benchmarks, annual changes in software changes, and for estimating relationships with the other WBS elements
- The causal relationships will be updated using both new and old data and the CERs will be revised based on the discovered relationships

*See http://cade.osd.mil/policy/dids for more information

Contributors

Cheryl Jones

Software Measurement Analyst
US Army AFC
973-724-2644

Paul Janusz

Software Measurement Analysis
US Army AFC
973-724-2644

Dr. Bradford Clark

Vice President
Software Metrics, Inc.
(703) 754-0115

Mr. James Judy

U.S. Army DASA CE
703-697-1612

Dr. Robert Charette

President
ITABHI Corporation
(540) 972-8150

Dr. Christian Smart

Chief Scientist
Galorath Federal
256-457-3354

Kimberly Roye

Senior Analyst
Galorath Federal
703- 966-3192

Acronyms -1

ACAT	Acquisition Category
AIS	Automated Information System super domain
BL	Software Change Backlog
BY	Base Year
C&A	Certification and Accreditation
C5ISR	Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
CADE	Cost Assessment Data Enterprise
CER	Cost Estimating Relationship
COTS	Commercial Off The Shelf
CRED	Uncertainty Estimation Determination
CSCI	Computer Software Configuration Item
Cyber%	Percent of the release that is Cybersecurity updates
DASA-CE	Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of the Army for Cost and Economics
DBS	Defense Business System commodity
DIACAP	DoD Information Assurance Certification and Accreditation Process
DISA	Defense Information Systems Agency
DoD	US Department of Defense
DSLOC	Delivered Source Lines of Code
ECP	Engineering Change Proposal
El_Mod	External Interfaces Modified
ENG	Engineering super domain
Enh%	Percent of the release that is Enhancements to the system
EW	Electronic Warfare

Acronyms -2

FSE	Field Software Engineering
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
IAVA	Information Assurance Vulnerability Alert
IAVM	Information Assurance Vulnerability Management
ICEAA	International Cost Estimating and Analysis Association
Maint%	Percent of the release that is Maintenance changes
NVD	National Vulnerability Database
O&S	Operations and Sustainment
ODC	Other than Direct Costs
OMA	Operations and Maintenance Army funding
OPA	Other Program Army funding
OSMIS	Operation/Sustainment Management Information System
PDSS	Post-Deployment Software Support
PEO	Program Executive Office
POM	Program Objective Memorandum
PPSS	Post-Production Software Support
PTR	Problem Trouble Report

Acronyms - 3

RDT&E	Research, Development, Testing, and Evaluation
RMF	Risk Management Framework
RT	Real-Time super domain
SC	Software Changes
SEC	Software Engineering Center
SER	Schedule Estimating Relationship
SLOC	Source Lines of Code
SRDR	Software Resources Data Report
SRDR-M	Software Resources Data Report for Maintenance
STIG	Security Technical Implementation Guides
SUP	Mission Support super domain
SW	Software
SWBase	Software Baseline SLOC
SWS	Software Sustainment
TDEV	Time to Develop
THrs	Total release hours
TReqts	Total Requirements in a system
TReqts_Imp	Total Requirements Implemented in a release
TSC	Total Software Changes for a release
WBS	Work Breakdown Structure