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# Software Engineering for Collective Autonomic Systems

The ASCENS Approach



Springer

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# Preface

A collective autonomic system consists of collaborating autonomic entities that are able to adapt at runtime, adjusting to the state of the environment and incorporating new knowledge into their behavior. These highly dynamic systems are also known as ensembles. To ensure the correct behavior of ensembles it is necessary to support their development through appropriate methods and tools that can guarantee an autonomic system lives up to its intended purpose; this includes respecting important constraints of the environment.

This book addresses the engineering of such systems by presenting the methods, tools, and theories developed within the ASCENS project. ASCENS<sup>1</sup> was an integrated project funded in the period 2010–2015 by the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) of the European Commission as part of the Future Emerging Technologies Proactive Initiative (FET Proactive). The ASCENS Consortium consisted of 14 partners of seven countries and one third party, from which nine are universities, three research organizations, and three companies (two SMEs). The project was coordinated by the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. ASCENS participated in the coordination actions AWARENESS<sup>2</sup> and FOCAS<sup>3</sup>.

The ASCENS approach is both formal and pragmatic. Formal means that it provides a range of foundational theories and methods that support requirements engineering, modeling, programming, formal reasoning, validation and verification, monitoring and dynamic adaptation of autonomic systems. As a guide for performing these tasks, ASCENS has defined a process model for systems development called the Ensemble Development Life Cycle (EDLC). The EDLC takes both the design and runtime of an autonomic system into account, and includes mechanisms for enabling design changes based on the system's and environmental awareness obtained during runtime.

The pragmatic nature of the ASCENS approach manifests itself in three case studies: autonomic robot swarms performing rescue operations, autonomic cloud computing platforms transforming numerous small computers into a supercomputing environment, and autonomic e-mobility support that addresses decision making in transportation systems.

This book is divided into four parts corresponding to the research areas of the project and their concrete applications: (I) language and verification for self-awareness and self-expression, (II) modeling and theory of self-aware and adaptive systems, (III) engineering techniques for collective autonomic systems, and, last but not least, (IV) challenges and feedback provided by the case studies of the project in the areas of swarm robotics, cloud computing, and e-mobility.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ascens-ist.eu/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.aware-project.eu/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://focas.eu/>

Many people contributed to the success of the ASCENS project. We extend our sincere thanks to all of them. We are particularly grateful to the EC project officers Wide Hogenhout, Dagmar Floeck, and Dalibor Grgec. We thank the reviewers Richard Anthony, Jim Davies, Paola Inverardi, Fernando Orejas, Ralf Reussner, and Carles Sierra for their always constructive criticism and helpful suggestions. We are also grateful to Springer for the assistance in producing this book. Our sincere thanks go to all authors for the high quality of their scientific contributions and to the reviewers of the book chapters for their careful reading and suggestions for improvements. Finally, we thank all ASCENS members for the excellent work, their inexhaustible effort and never-ending enthusiasm for achieving the goals of the project and even going further in their research activities.

February 2015

Martin Wirsing  
Matthias Hözl  
Nora Koch  
Philip Mayer

## Project Partners

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# Table of Contents

## Part I: Language and Verification for Collective Autonomic Systems

Introduction . . . . .	1
The SCEL Language: Design, Implementation, Verification . . . . .	3
<i>Rocco De Nicola, Diego Latella, Alberto Lluch Lafuente, Michele Loreti, Andrea Margheri, Mieke Massink, Andrea Morichetta, Rosario Pugliese, Francesco Tiezzi, and Andrea Vandin</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	3
2 The Parametric Language SCEL . . . . .	6
3 Knowledge Management . . . . .	21
4 A Policy Language . . . . .	27
5 A Full-Fledged SCEL Instance . . . . .	35
6 A Runtime Environment for SCEL . . . . .	44
7 Quantitative Variants of SCEL . . . . .	50
8 Verification . . . . .	57
9 Concluding Remarks . . . . .	67
Reconfigurable and Software-Defined Networks of Connectors and Components . . . . .	73
<i>Roberto Bruni, Ugo Montanari, and Matteo Sammartino</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	73
2 Software-Defined and Overlay Networks . . . . .	74
3 Network Conscious $\pi$ -Calculus (NCPi) . . . . .	75
4 Formal Definition and Properties of the PASTRY Distributed Hash Table System . . . . .	83
5 Networks of Connectors and Components . . . . .	85
6 Connector Algebras for Petri Nets . . . . .	87
7 From BI(P) to Petri Nets and Vice Versa . . . . .	91
8 Reconfigurable and Dynamic BIP . . . . .	94
9 Concluding Remarks . . . . .	104
Correctness of Service Components and Service Component Ensembles . . . . .	107
<i>Jacques Combaz, Saddek Bensalem, Francesco Tiezzi, Andrea Margheri, Rosario Pugliese, and Jan Kofroň</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	107
2 Verification Techniques for BIP Models . . . . .	109
3 Alternative Approaches to Ensure System Correctness . . . . .	135
4 Conclusion . . . . .	154

**Part II: Modeling and Theory of Adaptive and Self-aware Systems**

Introduction . . . . .	161
Reconciling White-Box and Black-Box Perspectives on Behavioral Self-adaptation . . . . .	163
<i>Roberto Bruni, Andrea Corradini, Fabio Gadducci, Matthias Hözl, Alberto Lluch Lafuente, Andrea Vandin, and Martin Wirsing</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	163
2 A Robot Rescue Case Study . . . . .	165
3 Black-Box and White-Box Adaptation . . . . .	166
4 Reconciling Black-Box and White-Box Adaptation . . . . .	173
5 Related Work . . . . .	181
6 Conclusion . . . . .	182
From Local to Global Knowledge and Back . . . . .	185
<i>Nicklas Hoch, Giacomina Valentina Monreale, Ugo Montanari, Matteo Sammartino, and Alain Tcheukam Siwe</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	186
2 Constraints Programming . . . . .	188
3 E-mobility Optimization Problems . . . . .	192
4 Smart GRIDS for Renewable Electrical Power Production/Consumption . . . . .	203
5 Conclusion and Future Work . . . . .	217
Knowledge Representation for Adaptive and Self-aware Systems . . . . .	221
<i>Emil Vassev and Mike Hinchey</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	221
2 KnowLang – Language for Knowledge Representation of Self-adaptive Systems . . . . .	222
3 KnowLang Reasoner . . . . .	234
4 Awareness in Software-Intensive Systems . . . . .	237
5 Related Work . . . . .	243
6 Conclusions . . . . .	244
Reasoning and Learning for Awareness and Adaptation . . . . .	249
<i>Matthias Hözl and Thomas Gabor</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	249
2 Awareness and Self-expression . . . . .	252
3 Extended Behavior Trees . . . . .	257
4 Reinforcement Learning . . . . .	268
5 Passing Knowledge to Other Components: Teacher-Student Learning . . . . .	282
6 Related Work . . . . .	285
7 Conclusions and Future Work . . . . .	286



Supporting Performance Awareness in Autonomous Ensembles . . . . .	291
<i>Lubomír Bulej, Tomáš Bureš, Ilias Gerostathopoulos, Vojtěch Horký, Jaroslav Kezníkl, Lukáš Marek, Max Tschaikowski, Mirco Tribastone, and Petr Tůma</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	291
2 Instrumentation for Performance Monitoring . . . . .	293
3 Expressing Performance Properties . . . . .	295
4 Coding for Performance Awareness . . . . .	303
5 Modeling Performance . . . . .	307
6 Performance Aware Ensembles . . . . .	311
7 Designing Performance-Based Adaptation . . . . .	315

### Part III: Engineering Techniques for Collective Autonomic Systems

Introduction . . . . .	323
The Ensemble Development Life Cycle and Best Practices for Collective Autonomic Systems . . . . .	325
<i>Matthias Hözl, Nora Koch, Mariachiara Puviani, Martin Wirsing, and Franco Zambonelli</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	325
2 Software Development Life Cycle for Ensembles . . . . .	327
3 Engineering Feedback Control Loops . . . . .	328
4 A Pattern Language for Ensemble Development . . . . .	339
5 Related Work . . . . .	348
6 Conclusions . . . . .	349
Methodological Guidelines for Engineering Self-organization and Emergence . . . . .	355
<i>Victor Noël and Franco Zambonelli</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	355
2 Emergence, Engineering and Decomposition . . . . .	357
3 Following the Problem Organisation . . . . .	362
4 Engineering a Swarm of Bots . . . . .	368
5 Related Works and Discussion . . . . .	372
6 Conclusion . . . . .	375
Engineering Requirements for Autonomy Features . . . . .	379
<i>Emil Vassev and Mike Hinchey</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	379
2 ARE – Autonomy Requirements Engineering . . . . .	380
3 Capturing Autonomy Requirements for Science Clouds . . . . .	386
4 Related Work . . . . .	398
5 Conclusions . . . . .	400

The Invariant Refinement Method . . . . .	405
<i>Tomáš Bureš, Ilias Gerostathopoulos, Petr Hnetynka,</i> <i>Jaroslav Kezníkl, Michal Kit, and Frantisek Plasil</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	405
2 Running Example . . . . .	406
3 The Need for a Tailored Design Method for ACEs . . . . .	409
4 Invariant Refinement Method . . . . .	411
5 IRM Abstraction Levels and Invariant Patterns . . . . .	416
6 Conclusions . . . . .	426
Tools for Ensemble Design and Runtime . . . . .	429
<i>Dhaminda B. Abeywickrama, Jacques Combaz, Vojtěch Horký,</i> <i>Jaroslav Kezníkl, Jan Kofroň, Alberto Lluch Lafuente,</i> <i>Michele Loreti, Andrea Margheri, Philip Mayer, Valentina Monreale,</i> <i>Ugo Montanari, Carlo Pinciroli, Petr Tůma, Andrea Vandin, and</i> <i>Emil Vassev</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	429
2 Design Cycle Tools . . . . .	431
3 Runtime Cycle Tools . . . . .	440
4 Summary . . . . .	444
 <b>Part IV: Case Studies: Challenges and Feedback</b>	
Introduction . . . . .	449
The ASCENS Case Studies: Results and Common Aspects . . . . .	451
<i>Nikola Šerbedžija</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	451
2 Application Challenges . . . . .	454
3 Common Approach . . . . .	458
4 Generic Set of Common Tools . . . . .	461
5 Application Deployments . . . . .	462
6 Conclusion . . . . .	466
Adaptation and Awareness in Robot Ensembles: Scenarios and Algorithms	471
<i>Carlo Pinciroli, Michael Bonani, Francesco Mondada, and</i> <i>Marco Dorigo</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	471
2 Scenario: Disaster Recovery . . . . .	473
3 The Robotics Scenario and the EDLC . . . . .	479
4 Implementation and Demonstration . . . . .	482
5 Conclusions . . . . .	492

The Autonomic Cloud . . . . .	495
<i>Philip Mayer, José Velasco, Annabelle Klarl, Rolf Hennicker, Mariachiara Puviani, Francesco Tiezzi, Rosario Pugliese, Jaroslav Kezníkl, and Tomáš Bureš</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	495
2 Influencing Areas of Computing . . . . .	496
3 Handling Awareness and Adaptation . . . . .	498
4 Implementation . . . . .	506
5 Evaluation and Demonstrator . . . . .	508
6 Summary . . . . .	510
The E-mobility Case Study . . . . .	513
<i>Nicklas Hoch, Henry-Paul Bensler, Dhaminda Abeywickrama, Tomáš Bureš, and Ugo Montanari</i>	
1 Introduction . . . . .	514
2 System Design . . . . .	515
3 Goal-Oriented Requirements Engineering for Self-adaptive Autonomic Systems . . . . .	519
4 Implementation and Deployment . . . . .	526
5 Runtime Simulation . . . . .	528
6 Summary . . . . .	531
<b>Author Index . . . . .</b>	<b>535</b>