Abstract

With demands for increased software reuse, a market for buying and selling generic software functionality is emerging. This generic software functionality is usually referred to as Commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) software. Generic functionality has greater commercial viability than specialized functionality, and can be used in diverse application domains, including systems with high-assurance requirements. A problem arises, however, in that the quality of COTS software cannot be guaranteed past what the developing organization certifies, which is usually little. This puts the onus on the buyer to determine whether the quality of the COTS software is sufficient for their application.

This panel will discuss various means for qualifying the reliability of COTS and third-party software. This panel may also discuss some of the legal and certification issues that are associated with trying to standardize on a fixed set of assessment techniques to reduce this concern.