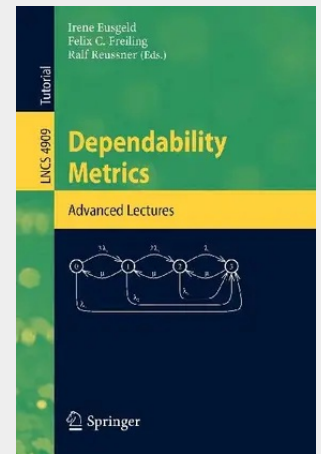


Dependability Metrics

GI-Dagstuhl Research Seminar, Dagstuhl Castle, Germany, October 5 - November 1, 2005, Advanced Lectures

With the growing ubiquity of computing systems it is essential that we can place reliance on the services they deliver. This is particularly obvious and important in areas like aircraft avionics, global financial transaction processing, or nuclear power plant control where human lives or large financial values are at stake. But also the worldwide daily nuisances of computer viruses or data corruptions caused by crashing operating systems collectively impose high costs on society, which are beginning to become economically relevant. Within computer science, the term dependability has been introduced as a general term to cover all critical quality aspects of computing systems. Following the terminology of Laprie [26, 293], a system is dependable if trust can justifiably be placed in the service it delivers (we will define dependability and related terms more precisely later in this book). In the early days of computer science, researchers thought that program correctness was the key to dependability meaning that a program always terminates and satisfies its postcondition if it is started in a state where its precondition holds. Today we know that many other factors influence the well-functioning of a computer system. Examples of these factors are: – Hardware reliability: The occurrence of hardware faults, which cannot be neglected in critical systems. – Non-functional properties: The growing importance of properties which cannot be expressed so easily as pre- and postconditions. As an example, consider the performance requirement that the average response time should be below some value.

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