Legacy Software

Legacy software systems . .are those which . were developed decades ago and have been continually modified to meet changes in business requirements and computing platforms. The proliferation of such systems is causing headaches for large organizations who find them costly to maintain and risky to evolve. legacy systems remain supportive to core business functions and are 'indispensable' to the business." Hence, legacy software is characterized by longevity and business criticality.

There is sometimes one additional characteristic that is present in legacy software— poor quality. Legacy systems sometimes have inextensible designs, convoluted code, poor or nonexistent documentation, test cases and results that were never archived, a poorly managed change history.

Legacy systems often evolve for one or more of the following reasons:

- The software must be adapted to meet the needs of new computing environments or technology.
- The software must be enhanced to implement new business requirements.
- The software must be extended to make it interoperable with other more modern systems or databases.
- The software must be re-architected to make it viable within a evolving computing environment.

When these modes of evolution occur, a legacy system must be reengineered so that it remains viable into the future.