

Browser's Corner

It's still a happening place

The book is a well-timed and well-deserved addition to the 'core' books that comprise the growing literature on managing large, complex software development projects that are developed by professional teams distributed across the globe. There are a number of texts dealing with the 'engineering' aspects of software development; there is a dire need for books that address the needs of 'managing' global software projects and the book under review admirably fills this void.

The credentials, credibility and rich experience of the author gives the right stamp of approval for the work reported in this book; the author has demonstrated his ability to execute high-quality, large-scale project for Oracle — the global 'thought leader' in software — using teams that span multiple time-zones, cultures and languages during some of the most exciting and most difficult periods. The book can be looked at under the following heads.

Setting the scene

This section introduces the product life cycle and de-mystifies alpha, beta, production and the not-so-glamorous maintenance phase; project life cycle with a framework that addresses the waterfall model, prototyping model, RAD (Rapid Application Development) model and the spiral model of software development; and, process models including the ISO 9001 model and the SEI Capability Maturity Model (CMM).

Umbrella activities

Under this classification, the more technical issues are introduced. This includes metrics (performance measures) and process control using the idea of 'control charts'; software configuration management, that captures the essence of baselining, change management and configuration audit; software quality assurance (SQA) including testing,



◆ Managing Global Software Projects

By Ramesh Gopalswamy

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verification, SQA audits and the upcoming area of risk management.

Engineering activities

The chapters address the key engineering issues; requirements gathering that deals with the capturing of user needs; effort estimation that helps project managers to size up the project for bidding, human resource planning and costing using the time tested metrics that include lines of code, and the famous 'function points' as well as the CO-COMO model; design & development phase that includes many core issues that are driven by technology including the emerging software architecture paradigms, re-usability, component-based architecture, standards issues, portability, user-interface issues, inter-operability, stability and performance.

Emerging trends

In this section, the author addresses the globalisation issues and the well-known 'off-shore', 'on-shore' and 'hybrid' models on which there is a global interest. Impact of Internet on Project Management addresses both the technical challenges (call centres, web centres, automated software distribution) and people challenges are covered too; and, finally the people capability maturity model (P-CMM).

This book focuses on managerial issues of project management, using fairly uncommon, yet enormously powerful "common sense". Coming from an author associated with a company that is deeply technical it is surprising that the book does NOT get into technical details of the many topics that we generally associate rather routinely with software

engineering and software project management — UML, CASE tools, RUP, function point analysis, estimation, source control and version control tools, RAD tools, debuggers, testing tools, UI tools, performance tools etc. By keeping away from many of the purely technical issues the author has created a 'new generation' book; obviously there will be both due and undue criticism, for such an unconventional approach.

IT professionals, particularly those in middle and senior levels would find the book enjoyable, insightful and worth reading many times; purely technique-oriented students and academics may not enjoy this book, though I would strongly advise them to get out of their shell and learn some real world wisdom from this book. ■

Sowmyanarayanan
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Picture by G.R.N. Somashekar