

ECE 321: Software Requirements Engineering

Assignment 1

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1 “Passing the word” Review

1.1 Main Contributions

- describes the importance of a manual, or written specification
- describes good manual style
- formal definitions
- the importance of meetings
- importance of multiple implementations
- product testing

1.2 Criticisms

Shouldn't be too bad...

1.3 Answers to questions

1.3.1 Good manual style

- It describes and prescribes every detail of what the user sees

- it refrains from describing things the user does not see
- For the sake of implementers it is important that the changes be quantized—that there be dated versions appearing on a schedule
- consistency
- precise language

1.3.2 Effective meetings

- The first is a weekly half-day conference of all the architects, plus official representatives of the hardware and software implementers, and the market planners. The chief system architect presides. Anyone can propose problems or changes, but proposals are usually distributed in writing before the meeting. A new problem is usually discussed a while. The emphasis is on creativity, rather than merely decision. The group attempts to invent many solutions to problems, then a few solutions are passed to one or more of the architects for detailing into precisely worded manual change proposals. Detailed change proposals then come up for decisions. These have been circulated and carefully considered by implementers and users, and the pros and cons are well delineated. If a consensus emerges, well and good. If not, the chief architect decides. Minutes of Conferences and Courts §7 are kept and decisions are formally, promptly, and widely disseminated. Decisions from the weekly conferences give quick results and allow work to proceed. If anyone is too unhappy, instant appeals to the project manager are possible, but this happens very rarely. The fruitfulness of these meetings springs from several sources: 1. The same group—architects, users, and implementers—meets weekly for months. No time is needed for bringing people up to date. 2. The group is bright, resourceful, well versed in the issues, and deeply involved in the outcome. No one has an “advisory” role. Everyone is authorized to make binding commitments. 3. When problems are raised, solutions are sought both within and outside the obvious boundaries. 4. The formality of written proposals focuses attention, forces decision, and avoids committee-drafted inconsistencies. 5. The clear vesting of decision-making power in the chief architect avoids compromise and delay.
- annual supreme court sessions, lasting typically two weeks. (I would hold them every six months if I were doing it again.) These sessions were held just before major freeze dates for the manual. Those present included not only the architecture group and the programmers’ and implementers’ architectural

representatives, but also the managers of programming, marketing, and implementation efforts. The System/360 project manager presided. The agenda typically consisted of about 200 items, mostly minor, which were enumerated in charts placarded around the room. All 68 Passing the Word sides were heard and decisions made. By the miracle of computerized text editing (and lots of fine staff work), each participant found an updated manual, embodying yesterday's decisions, at his seat every morning. These "fall festivals" were useful not only for resolving decisions, but also for getting them accepted. Everyone was heard, everyone participated, everyone understood better the intricate constraints and interrelationships among decisions.

1.3.3 Independent product-testing organization

In the author's view, an independent product-testing organization acts as a "surrogate customer", which allows for early detection of bugs and departure from the design. I mostly agree with this viewpoint, since programmers are human, and are prone to making mistakes like everyone else. Although it might slow development time, having a dedicated team for finding these flaws before deployment is important, so that the customer has a better overall experience.

2 "Requirements Engineering: The State of the Practice Review"

2.1 Main Contributions

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2.2 Criticisms

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2.3 Answers to questions

2.3.1 Most frequently used lifecycle model

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2.3.2 Prototyping

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2.3.3 Elicitation of users' requirements

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2.3.4 Informal modelling of requirements

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2.3.5 Are longer projects less often finished on time and within budget?

Yes/No one sentence answer ok cool.