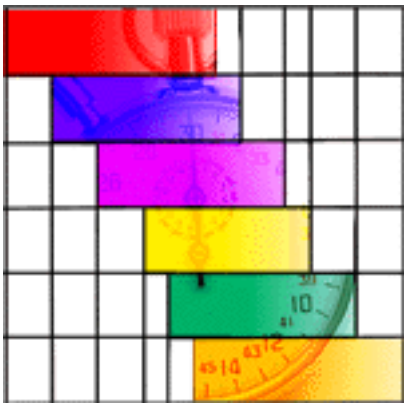
Book Reviews



Managing Your Software Project

Author: Ian W. Ricketts
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Reviewed by Kim Moorman

Students are usually somewhat apprehensive about attempting a major project, whether it actually involves software or not. Some students procrastinate, and many others are unsure of the best way to organize the project. Ian W. Ricketts has written a guide for those students. *Managing Your Software Project* is a brief (100 pages, not including the index) and understandable aid for students beginning a major project, which covers topics ranging from initial planning to possible publication of the finished work. This book is intended for students rather than professionals.

Another appropriate title for this book could be *Project Management of Your Student Project*. Ricketts has included many illustrations and examples, and the text itself is very easy to read. The book begins with an outline for planning the student project -- probably the most difficult area of project management for the inexperienced student. Ricketts describes one method of estimating a plan for a sample 20 week project. Screen shots of the resulting plan (developed using Microsoft Project) are presented. General organizational tips and some limited direction regarding future publication of the work and oral examinations are also discussed.

Ricketts includes an overview on the use of various research resources such as the Internet, and then devotes aproximately one-third of the book to discussing the production of a professional-quality report. The use of various Microsoft products in report production is described, and sample output is included. One chapter provides useful tips pertaining to tools that may be unfamiliar to a casual computer user. The process of structuring the report is covered in detail, including word processor usage for the preparation of elements such as the table of contents, the glossary, and the index.

The final chapter is concerned with the development of the software. This includes a general overview of all of the steps involved in the creation of software, from the preparation of a statement of requirements to coding and testing. The appendix shows a sample statement of requirements, project plan, project report, project meeting agenda and report, and curriculum vitae.

Managing Your Software Project provides a comprehensive outline of the elements of a successful student project; however, several additional resources are mentioned to provide more detailed answers to students' questions. Ricketts consistently reminds the reader that one of the best resources available to the student is the student's advisor. Much of the information presented is applicable to any type of student project, and students tackling another type of major project may appreciate this book.