Bob's Minutes of Meeting Protocol: Incentive and a Description

by Robert S. Laramee
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Minutes of meeting are a very important management tool in order to give meetings structure. They provide the following benefits:

- **Structure:** They provide every meeting with structure and time itself is organized in a structured way. Minutes are organized into three parts: (1) *topics* discussed, (2) *progress* since the previous meeting, and (3) *a todo list* of goals for the next meeting.

- **Continuity and Memory:** Minutes provide continuity over time. Each meeting starts out by reviewing the previous minutes of meeting. This helps attendants remember precisely what topics where discussed at the last meeting. People tend to forget what was discussed at the last meeting because they have so many other things going on.

- **Aid in Progress:** Since each minutes has a *todo* list of goals before the next meeting, the progress of every project can be monitored in structured fashion. Also, larger tasks that may require months (or years) of work are broken down into smaller units of time which are much more manageable. Attendants at meetings are more-or-less forced to decide what can be done between the current and next meetings.

Minutes should contain the following information:

1. the **date** of the meeting, it's **starting time**, and the **ending time**,

2. the **name** of each person present at the meeting,

3. a **list of topics** that were discussed at the meeting,

4. a **list of progress**, i.e., the things that were accomplished (and not accomplished) since the last meeting,

5. a **todo list**, i.e., a list of things that are to be worked on prior to the next meeting,

6. the **date and time** of the *next* meeting

The minutes are typed up as a **text file**. A copy of the minutes file is then placed on the Computer Science web server in a folder called "minutes" within **3** (three) hours of the meeting. Instructions on how to place files on the CS web server can be found on Bob's teaching web page. Optionally, a copy of the minutes file can be **emailed** to:

```
r.s.laramee ``at'' swansea.ac.uk
```

In the case of a group meeting, a link to or a copy of the minutes notes is sent to each member of the group. It is *important to note* that in the case of a group, every action on the **todo** list is associated with a group member's name. That is, each task is assigned to a person. Tasks not assigned to an individual will not be fulfilled (aka diffusion of responsibility). What you may discover is that any large project can be broken down (simply) into a series of minutes. They provide a history of the project.

Sample Minutes

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Minutes of Meeting: Bob, Malim, Andy
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date: 16 Oct '06
start time: 13:30
end time: 15:00

date and time of next meeting:  23 Oct '06, 13:30

topics discussed:
  -- structure of initial 3rd year project document
  -- presentation of 3rd year project
  -- timeline of 3rd year project

progress since last meeting:
  -- Bob: 3rd project plan refined
  -- Malim: initial document started
  -- Andy: entry clearance to linux lab authorized

TODO (for next meeting):
  -- Malim: place a copy of the minutes on the CS
            web server in a folder called ''minutes''(w/in 3 hrs)
  -- Malim: work on title page title page: title, author, current date
  -- Malim: include table of contents
  -- Bob: place copy of project guidelines on CS web
          server on teaching web page
  -- Andy: call Sally and ask her if she would like to
            join us at the next meeting
```