This week's discussion topic is designed to allow you to better understand the advantages and disadvantages of the various software estimation methods described during this module.  Please choose one software estimation method discussed this week and list one advantage and one disadvantage of using that method.  Then, you should respond to the post of one classmate who discussed a different software estimation method; compare the two software estimation methods based on the advantages and disadvantages described by you and the classmate whose post you're responding to.

Click the "Module 04 Discussion" link to access the Module 04 Discussion Forum.

One software estimation method, and sometimes the simplest, is the lines of code estimation technique. This technique offers up an estimation of the number of lines of code to meet a predetermined list of functionality, and then works off the assumption that a team will generate a fixed number of lines of code per day per contributor. From this information, it should be simple to calculate the schedule based on specific staffing numbers. You can then ramp up or down staffing to meet a product deadline using the lines of code estimation technique.

Some advantages of the technique is that lines of code are not unitless entities (like function points) thus they have physical meaning in the real world. Another advantage is that the lines of code estimation technique is easy to convey even to people outside of a software background. Breaking down a project into subcomponents is a way to be even more accurate with the lines of code estimation technique.

Some disadvantages of the lines of code estimation technique lie in some of the underlying assumptions made. If a component is too big, it can be difficult to successfully estimate the number of lines of code needed. Also the lines of code technique assumes a linear output of lines of code for each programmer, however typically code is written much faster at the beginning of the project when everything is being built than at the end of the project where integration and debugging are primary activities.

Thus, there are pros and cons to the lines of code estimation technique, but if used correctly it can give a good estimation of the level of effort needed to complete a given project.