

Gotterbarn's late launch + calendar

EXTRA

From GOTTERBA@ETSU.EAST-TENN-ST.EDU Sat Apr 6 18:25:55 1996  
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id SAA26083; Sat, 6 Apr 1996 18:25:51 -0600  
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N-ST.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTMP id 2789; Sat, 6 Apr 1996 19:24:20 -0500  
Date: Sat, 06 Apr 96 19:23:32 EST  
From: Don Gotterbarn <GOTTERBA@ETSU.EAST-TENN-ST.EDU>  
Organization: East Tennessee State University  
To: Professional Competence working group <prfcmp-1@utkvm1.EAST-TENN-ST.EDU>,  
Michael Davis <CSEP>, weil

Dear Working Group Members:

I appreciate your patience in getting to work on this important project. There were several meetings in February related to the work of the task forces and I am now optimistic that the work of our task force will be a significant contribution to the entire project on the professionalization of software  
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contribution to the entire project on the professionalization of software engineering. It has been so long since we first solicited your support that I will provide some reminders of the large picture and how our working group fits in it.

The process started in 1993 when both the ACM and the IEEE-CS started initiatives related to software engineering. By the end of 1993 there was a joint set of recommendations from the two societies. These recommendations included three tasks, each assigned to a different task force --TO DEFINE THE REQUIRED BODY OF KNOWLEDGE, TO DEFINE EDUCATIONAL CURRICULA, and TO DEFINE ETHICAL STANDARDS.

Initial formation and planning for the third task force took place in Spring and Summer of 1994. In October of 1994, the Joint IEEE Computer Society / ACM Project on Software Engineering: Ethical and Professional Standards of Practice published a call for participation. The purpose of SEEPP is given in that call:

The purpose of the SEEPP task force is to document the international consensus for minimally acceptable ethical/professional responsibilities and obligations  
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for minimally acceptable ethical/professional responsibilities and obligations of software engineers.

The scope is given as:  
1.0 SCOPE

The standards to be established shall document generally accepted principles for identifying and resolving ethical conflicts relevant to the discipline of software engineering.

Consideration shall be given to the responsibilities and obligations of the

Software Engineer to peers and laypersons, employer, customer(s), the profession and society/humanity. Additionally, consideration shall be similarly given to the obligations and responsibilities of these various entities towards the Software Engineer.

#### 1.1 GLOBAL APPLICATION

The SEEPP task force recognizes that the design, development and application of software often transcend national boundaries. We feel that it is vitally important that the global computing community have the means to insure that

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important that the global computing community have the means to insure that this project produces a product which is as reflective of the global computing community's wisdom as can be reasonably achieved. The participation of individuals from throughout the world is important to achieving this goal.

These standards are intended to document the consensus of the global software engineering community. From time to time, consensus on an issue may not be clearly recognized. Accordingly, these standards shall also document various recommended practices and guidelines when no clear consensus can be established.

#### \* OUR WORKING GROUP:

Later in the call, there was this description for our working group:

Professional Competence	truth about skill, obligation to keep
Chair: Donald Gotterbarn	current, truth about code, what should
d.gotterbarn@computer.org	be produced? (end-use consequences),
	keep staff current, appropriate knowledge
	base, non-generalization of expertise

expertise,

educational issues: certification, registration,  
and licensure

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\* At a meeting of the various SEEPP working group leaders we developed a general approach to getting the work of the task force started.

To get the material to work with we should begin by brainstorming via email about what standards we can discover and articulate that have to do with standards of professional competence. We have an email list prfcmp-1@utkvm1.utk.edu. You can access this simply by using an automatic reply to

this message. The ideal is that what you enter will be seen by others and fertilize

their ideas. To help encourage contributions, for the first few passes of information please expend your efforts expanding on what others say and reserve your critical comments for a later date when I have organized most of the inputs and redistribute them to you. If you would rather not contribute in such a public fashion you can email directly to me at d.gotterbarn@computer.org.

Here are a few discussion starters from me:

1. Standards of Professional competence should probably include the gamut of software engineering. The project manager should be held as accountable for

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software engineering. The project manager should be held as accountable for

their work as the test specialist. This may mean that we have different standards for those primarily in management and those primarily in technical application areas. Several computing codes of ethics list separate sets of obligations for different computing roles.

2. We should tie standards of competence to a common set or sets of standards. There are a number of ways to do this. One way is to tie minimal general sets of competence to curricula as defined by universities or by professional organizations. Another way is encourage vendors to continue certifying competence in their software.

3. On the technical side, competence implies the possession of an adequate skill set, but on the ethical side competence implies a disposition to act in a certain way, to apply these skills in a certain way. The ethical side also seems to include commitments to being honest to others about one's abilities and limitations in software development. Some have argued that a customer should not have to pay for a professionals education if they could get an already trained specialist

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specialist  
for less money.

I offer these points as conversation starters. There is a distinction in most professions between standards of ethics, conduct, and practice. These standards

include a range of statements, Standards of ethics are generally broad and aspirational and do not prescribe specific behaviors -prevent harm-do not mislead others about your skills. Standards of conduct are more specific and standards of practice are regulative-do not release a product which has not been

adequately tested. Violating this later type of standard is generally a foundation

for legal action. These three types of standards exist for people as members of a profession, employees, and as individuals. I mention these standards to give you

an idea of the range of statements we are looking for. We are looking for a range of statements and examples of these types of standards as they apply to professional competence. Don't worry which category they into which you ideas might fall. I give this distinction simply to make clear the breadth we are

interested in.

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interested in.

\* HOMEWORK:

I. Please send email to the list or to me that describes YOUR view of possible standards in the area of Professional Competence. We are brainstorming here, so don't be shy.

II. Send email or paper mail to me of examples of ethics standards, standards of

conduct, and standards of practice that you think are appropriate to our working

group. These could come from professional organizations, from employers, from individuals, from scholarly literature, or from the popular press.

III. Later I will organize these ideas and email edited version for the whole group. Then we can begin to refine the ideas presented.

\* SCHEDULE

APRIL 22: Soft deadline for group submitting materials. At this date I'll start editing the submitted stuff. (Soft means I'll continue to include your ideas. --More--  
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editing the submitted stuff. (Soft means I'll continue to include your ideas.

MAY 6: I send information back to the group, organized (I hope) around standards of ethics, standards of conduct, and standards of practice and organized according to other suggestions from the group.

Open discussion and debate about materials I send out.

MAY 20: Additions and corrections sent back to me.

JUNE 3: I make another pass at editing the document incorporating additions and corrections and send it to the group.

JUNE 10: Group responds to the latest version.

JUNE 17: Don sends revised document to the general SEEPP Task Force members and to the working group.

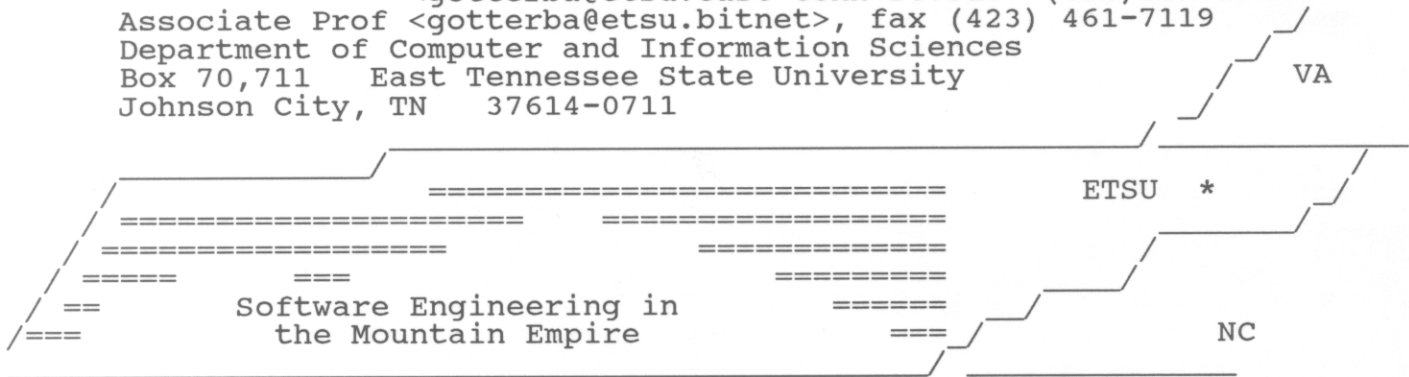
JULY 15 and beyond: Task Force combines working group documents, shapes them into a coherent package, and starts selling it to IEEE and ACM.

The "beyond" includes more work for the working group, but we'll get into that later. I know the rythm of this schedule sounds daunting, but we are eager to --More--  
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The "beyond" includes more work for the working group, but we'll get into that later. I know the rythm of this schedule sounds daunting, but we are eager to make progress after the painful delays we've experienced.

don

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