Rereading the Classics

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IT SEEMS THAT IN ALL SCIENTIFIC FIELDS THERE ARE WORKS AND PEOPLE that one cannot avoid mentioning. The current living champion is probably Noam Chomsky. According to an April 1992 article in the MIT *Tech Talk*, Chomsky was one of the most cited individuals in works published in the previous 20 years. The full top 10 roster of the *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* included Marx, Lenin, Shakespeare, Aristotle, the Bible, Plato, Freud, Chomsky, Hegel, and Cicero. In the *Science Citation Index*, he was cited 1,619 times in the period from 1972 to 1992.

In software engineering, oak leaf clusters must probably go to *Design Patterns: Elements of Reusable Object-Oriented Software* (a.k.a. the "Gang of Four" book [Gamma et al. 1994]). A Google search on the exact book title returns about 173,000 results (in spring 2008). If we turn our attention to a more academic context, a search in the ACM Digital Library returns 1,572 results. The design patterns community has been one of the most vibrant communities in software engineering in the last 20 years. It is difficult to think of a software engineer plying her trade today who would not be familiar with this important body of work.

The present contribution happily pays its dues where it should by adding one to each of those citation counts.

The Gang of Four book can be credited with bringing design patterns to the masses. It can also be credited with not only providing a starting point for the design patterns movement, but a returning point as well: the material related to design patterns is extensive, yet most discussions