

Book Reviews

Software Configuration Management Strategies and Rational ClearCase(r)

Brian A. White

Software Configuration Management Strategies and Rational ClearCase(r) is written by Brian A. White, and published by Addison-Wesley, 2000 (paperback), ISBN 0-201-60478-7, 310 pp., \$39.95

The book introduces the practice of Software Configuration Management (SCM). The approach selected in this book is eminently practical: the book is based on Rational ClearCase, a popular tool for SCM. This book is part of the "Object Technology" series; the series aims at presenting a comprehensive view on developing object-oriented software, with a particular slant towards the Unified model. The book starts with a general approach to SCM based on the Unified Change Management model. Chapter 1 introduces SCM, while Chapter 2 describes the various approaches to SCM and how companies are affected by rapidly changing requirements. Chapter 3 centers on the Unified Change Management model. It is at this point and in Chapter 4 that ClearCase is introduced, although for understanding it fully, one must read the whole book. In Chapter 5 to Chapter 11, the knowledge on ClearCase is enriched with start-up activities, the definition of SCM in a company, its application to different projects, and software development with ClearCase. Somewhere in the middle of these chapters, ClearQuest is mentioned. This is a system to manage change requests, and it seems to be an integral part of ClearCase.

This book is definitely informative for everyone seeking to understand ClearCase, but the change management process is introduced in a way that people without access to the tool might have difficulties to follow. After all, the general concept for version control is extremely simple to grasp: to keep track of different versions of a source file. Configuration management, however, has more to it – and the book does not offer sufficient insight into it. The book attempts to bridge the general concepts on SCM found in other publications with the very detailed, specialized view of ClearCase, but sometimes this makes things very difficult for the readers, as they struggle between contingent practical necessities and theoretical models.

I like the style of the book, although I found it difficult to read the book from cover to cover, especially because I lack the tool to try on a project. It also seems that ClearCase was in a transitional phase when the book was written, since many of the instructions refer to different interfaces depending on the operating system that is under ClearCase. The author shows a thorough knowledge of SCM tools, and of ClearCase in particular, but readers might not have his knowledge, and so the many references to the tool manual might defy the purpose of having a single reference for the tool and the process.

The biographical information on the author in the back cover is missing at least one line, and this makes me think that the book was published in a real hurry. All in all, this book will not shed light on SCM all by itself: it needs to be complemented by the tool it refers to. Readers who already use ClearCase will find this book useful for its references and its connection to the more basic definitions of SCM.

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Calendar of Future Events

'* \implies ' SIGSOFT sponsored event;

' \implies ' SIGSOFT in cooperation event

2002

14-15 Jan, PEPM'02: ACM SIGPLAN WS on Partial Evaluation and Semantics-Based Program Manipulation, Portland, Oregon. Contact: www.informatik.uni-freiburg.de/~thiemann/pepm02

16-18 Jan, POPL'02: 29th Annual ACM SIGPLAN-SIGACT Symp on Principles of Programming Languages, Portland, Oregon. Contact: www.acm.org/sigplan/pop1.htm

19-20 Jan, PADL'02: 4th Int Symp on Practical Aspects of Declarative Languages, Portland, Oregon, USA. Co-loc. with POPL'02. Contact: (cram@cs.sunysb.edu) www.cs.sunysb.edu/~padl2002

28 Jan - 1 Feb, ACSC'02: Australasian Comp Sci Conf, Bond, Queensland, Australia. Contact: www.csa.edu.au/csa/CSA/ACSC2002

28-30 Jan, AUIC'02: 3rd Australian User Inter-

Conference/Location	Affil.	Date
– 2002 –	– 2002 –	– 2002 –
Coordination'02: York, UK	in-coop.	8-11 Apr
ETAPS'02: Grenoble, France	in-coop.	8-12 Apr
SPIN'02: Grenoble, France	spons.	11-13 Apr
AOSD'02: Enschede, NL	in-coop.	23-26 Apr
ICSE'02: Buenos Aires	spons.	19-25 May
PLDI'02: Berlin, Germany	in-coop.	17-19 Jun
CD'02: Berlin, Germany	in-coop.	20-21 Jun
ISTA'02: Rome, Italy	spons.	22-24 Jul
WOSP'02: Rome, Italy	co-spons.	23-26 Jul
PASTE'02: Charleston, SC	co-spons.	18-19 Nov
FSE-10: Charleston, SC	spons.	20-22 Nov

Table 1: SIGSOFT Supported Conferences