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# Product-Focused Software Process Improvement

20th International Conference, PROFES 2019 Barcelona, Spain, November 27–29, 2019 Proceedings



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Silverio Martínez-Fernández Fraunhofer Institute for Experimental Software Engineering Kaiserslautern, Germany

Tomi Männistö 

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#### **Preface**

On behalf of the PROFES Organizing Committee, we are proud to present the proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Product-Focused Software Process Improvement (PROFES 2019) held in Barcelona. The hosting institution was the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya - BarcelonaTech in Spain. Since 1999, PROFES has established itself as one of the top recognized international process improvement conferences. In the spirit of the PROFES conference series, the main theme of PROFES 2019 was professional software process improvement (SPI) motivated by product, process, and service quality needs.

PROFES 2019 provided a premier forum for practitioners, researchers, and educators to present and discuss experiences, ideas, innovations, as well as concerns related to professional software development and process improvement driven by product and service quality needs. At PROFES 2019, solutions found in practice and relevant research results from academia were presented.

A committee of leading experts in software process improvement, software process modeling, and empirical software engineering selected the technical program. This year, 65 full research papers were submitted. At least three independent experts reviewed each paper. After thorough evaluation, 24 technical full papers were finally selected (37% acceptance rate). In addition, four out of nine industrial papers were selected to the program.

Furthermore, we received 30 short paper submissions. Each submission was reviewed by three members from the PROFES Program Committee. Based on the reviews and overall assessments, 11 short papers were accepted for presentation at the conference and for inclusion in the proceedings (37% acceptance ratio).

Continuing the open science policy in the previous PROFES 2017 and PROFES 2018, we encouraged and supported the authors of all accepted submissions to make their papers and research publicly available.

The topics addressed in this year's papers indicate that SPI is still a vibrant research discipline, but is also of high interest for industry. Several papers report on case studies or SPI-related experience gained in industry. The accepted papers of PROFES 2019 addressed, for example, the following topics:

- Continuous Delivery and Experimentation
- Software Testing
- Software Development
- Technical Debt
- Estimations
- Microservices

Since the beginning of the PROFES conference series, the purpose has been to highlight the most recent findings and novel results in the area of process improvement. We were proud to have Professor Neil Maiden (City, University of London) and

Jennifer Nerlich (Vogella), two renowned keynote speakers from research and industry, at the 2019 edition of PROFES.

Further relevant topics were added by the events co-located with PROFES 2019: the Third International Workshop on Managing Quality in Agile and Rapid Software Development Processes, the 4th International Workshop on Human Factors in Software Processes, and four tutorials addressing themes relevant to industry. The role of two European space co-chairs was added to the Organizing Committee. Responsibilities included providing an opportunity for researchers involved in ongoing and/or recently completed research projects (national, European, and international) related to the topics of the conference to present their projects and disseminate the objectives, deliverables, or outcome. Complementing the main scientific program, these events were included in the program to bring together researchers and representatives from industry by providing researchers with the opportunity to attend industry tutorials and providing practitioners with the latest research.

We are thankful for the opportunity to have served as chairs for this conference. The Program Committee members and reviewers provided excellent support in reviewing the papers. We are also grateful to all authors of submitted manuscripts, presenters, and session chairs for their time and effort in making PROFES 2019 a success. We would also like to thank the PROFES Steering Committee members for the guidance and support in the organization process. Furthermore, we thank everyone in the organization team as well as the student volunteers for making PROFES 2019 an experience that will live on in the participants' memory for years to come.

November 2019 Xavier Franch
Tomi Männistö
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# Intertwining Creative and Design Thinking Processes for Software Products (Keynote Abstract)

#### Neil Maiden

Cass Business School, City, University of London, 106 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8TZ, UK
N.A.M.Maiden@city.ac.uk

**Abstract.** Most software development processes still pay little attention to creativity and creative thinking, even though creative outcomes are pre-requisites for innovation. The recent interest in design thinking methods places shifts the focus to both software products and processes, but still does not address the creativity deficit of most design thinking practices. This keynote presentation and paper proposes an alternative and more effective framing of design thinking – as situated uses of creativity techniques and design artefacts, opportunistically, in agile development processes. It will introduce the role of design thinking as creative thinking for specific ends. It will summarize common characteristics of high-performance design behaviours – behaviours that are often impeded by software development methods. It will then demonstrate, with multiple examples, how coupling creativity techniques with playful artefacts for design thinking can lead to original design outcomes, often more productively, than with existing software development processes and models.

**Keywords:** Software development · Software product · Creativity

## 1 Creativity, Design Thinking and Innovation

Creativity and creative thinking have emerged as essential capabilities of most businesses. It has become a strategic, macro-economic activity, replacing the focus on information at the end of the last century. The World Economic Forum identified it to be a top-three need for economic growth in the next decade, alongside complex problem solving and critical thinking. It is identified as a precondition for business success – for example an IBM survey of 1500 CEOs identified creativity as the leading need and differentiator in their businesses [3]. It is also recognized as a critical pre-condition to effective innovation, generating new forms of creative capitalism based on knowledge and talent. And as digital technologies have become critical to the functioning of many organizations, creativity assumes a more important role in the specification and design of these technologies. Unfortunately, few methods and techniques for software product development explicitly support creative thinking by developers or stakeholders.

Outside of software product development, creative thinking is core to early design activities. For example, the United Kingdom's Design Council defines design as shaping ideas to become practical and attractive propositions for users or customers, and it can be described as creativity deployed to a specific end. Design is both a creative and user-centred approach to problem solving that cuts across different professions, from art and design to engineering and architecture. As such, creativity is needed to generate new ideas that design can shape to become the practical and attractive propositions for users or customers [2].

To deliver more creative design processes over the last decade, design thinking has become accepted practice for many forms of product and service. Design thinking is a human-centred innovation process that involves observation, collaboration, fast learning, the visualization of ideas and rapid prototyping, all of which run concurrent to business analysis activities [4]. It has been successfully used in projects to design new workplaces, consumer products and even brands.

However, one criticism that can be leveled at most design thinking processes is the lack of explicit use of creativity techniques from creative problem solving communities. Indeed, we observe an increasing disconnect between design thinking and creative problem solving, and believe that new techniques and tools that bridge the outputs of these communities are needed. More connected creative problem solving and design thinking methods and techniques can impact on the development of many forms of service and product, including software products.

This keynote proposes an alternative and more effective framing of design thinking – as situated uses of creativity techniques and design artefacts, opportunistically, in agile and other software development processes. It will introduce the role of design thinking as creative thinking for specific ends. It will summarize common characteristics of high-performance design behaviours – behaviours that are often impeded by software development methods. It will then demonstrate, with multiple examples, how coupling creativity techniques such as constraint removal [5] and creativity triggers [1] with playful artefacts for design thinking such as storyboards and desktop walkthroughs [6] can lead to original design outcomes, often more productively, than with existing software development processes.

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# **Contents**

Testing
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When Applying Test-Driven Development	3
Applying Surveys and Interviews in Software Test Tool Evaluation	20
Test-Case Quality – Understanding Practitioners' Perspectives	37
Test Reporting at a Large-Scale Austrian Logistics Organization:  Lessons Learned and Improvement	53
Software Development	
Embracing Software Process Improvement in Automotive Through PISA Model	73
Establishing a User-Centered Design Process for Human-Machine Interfaces: Threats to Success	89
Combining GQM+Strategies and OKR - Preliminary Results from a Participative Case Study in Industry	103
Software Development Practices and Frameworks Used in Spain and Costa Rica: A Survey and Comparative Analysis	112
Does the Migration of Cross-Platform Apps Towards the Android Platform Matter? An Approach and a User Study	120

Software Knowledge Representation to Understand Software Systems Victoria Torres, Miriam Gil, and Vicente Pelechano	137
When NFR Templates Pay Back? A Study on Evolution of Catalog of NFR Templates	145
Sylwia Kopczyńska, Jerzy Nawrocki, and Mirosław Ochodek	
Improving Quality of Data Exchange Files. An Industrial Case Study Günter Fleck, Michael Moser, and Josef Pichler	161
Containers in Software Development: A Systematic Mapping Study Mikael Koskinen, Tommi Mikkonen, and Pekka Abrahamsson	176
Technical Debt	
Empirical Analysis of Hidden Technical Debt Patterns in Machine	
Learning Software	195
Constraining the Implementation Through Architectural Security Rules:	
An Expert Study	203
Technical Debt and Waste in Non-functional Requirements Documentation:	
An Exploratory Study	220
Technical Debt in Costa Rica: An InsighTD Survey Replication	236
Estimations	
Exploring Preference of Chronological and Relevancy Filtering	
in Effort Estimation	247
Automated Functional Size Measurement: A Multiple Case Study	
in the Industry	263
Can Expert Opinion Improve Effort Predictions When Exploiting	
Cross-Company Datasets? - A Case Study in a Small/Medium Company Filomena Ferrucci and Carmine Gravino	280

C	•	Dali
t .oni	iniiolis	Delivery
COLLE	iii a o a o	

Excellence in Exploratory Testing: Success Factors in Large-Scale  Industry Projects	299
Torvald Mårtensson, Antonio Martini, Daniel Ståhl, and Jan Bosch	277
Comparison Framework for Team-Based Communication Channels  Camila Costa Silva, Fabian Gilson, and Matthias Galster	315
DevOps in Practice – A Preliminary Analysis of Two  Multinational Companies	323
Implementing Ethics in AI: Initial Results of an Industrial Multiple Case Study	331
Agile	
How Agile Is Hybrid Agile? An Analysis of the HELENA Data	341
Challenges of Scaled Agile for Safety-Critical Systems	350
On the Benefits of Corporate Hackathons for Software  Ecosystems – A Systematic Mapping Study	367
Agile in the Era of Digitalization: A Finnish Survey Study	383
Project Management	
What's Hot in Product Roadmapping? Key Practices and Success Factors Jürgen Münch, Stefan Trieflinger, and Dominic Lang	401
Integrating Data Protection into the Software Life Cycle	417
Revisiting the Product Configuration Systems Development Procedure for Scrum Compliance: An i* Driven Process Fragment	433

## Microservices

Kuksa: A Cloud-Native Architecture for Enabling Continuous Delivery in the Automotive Domain	455
Ahmad Banijamali, Pooyan Jamshidi, Pasi Kuvaja, and Markku Oivo	100
Inputs from a Model-Based Approach Towards the Specification of Microservices Logical Architectures: An Experience Report	473
A Modular Approach to Calculate Service-Based Maintainability  Metrics from Runtime Data of Microservices	489
Consumer-Driven Contract Tests for Microservices: A Case Study	497
Continuous Experimentation	
Data Driven Development: Challenges in Online, Embedded and On-Premise Software	515
Continuous Experimentation for Software Organizations with Low Control of Roadmap and a Large Distance to Users: An Exploratory Case Study Robin Sveningson, David Issa Mattos, and Jan Bosch	528
Deep Unsupervised System Log Monitoring	545
Enablers and Inhibitors of Experimentation in Early-Stage Software Startups	554
European Project Space	
European Project Space Papers for the PROFES 2019 - Summary	573
Application of Computational Linguistics Techniques for Improving  Software Quality	577

Contents	xvii
Monitoring ArchiMate Models for DataBio Project	583
Showcasing Modelio and pure:variants Integration in REVaMP <sup>2</sup> Project Alessandra Bagnato, Alexandre Beaufays, Etienne Brosse, Kaïs Chaabouni, Uwe Ryssel, Michael Schulze, and Andrey Sadovykh	590
DECODER - DEveloper COmpanion for Documented and annotatEd code Reference	596
DECIDE: DevOps for Trusted, Portable and Interoperable Multi-cloud Applications Towards the Digital Single Market	602
Q-Rapids: Quality-Aware Rapid Software Development – An H2020 Project	608
IMPRESS: Improving Engagement in Software Engineering Courses Through Gamification	613
Software Governance in a Large European Project - GÉANT Case Study Marcin Wolski and Toby Rodwell	620
AMASS: A Large-Scale European Project to Improve the Assurance and Certification of Cyber-Physical Systems	626
3rd International Workshop on Managing Quality in Agile and Rapid Software Development Processes (QuASD)	
Do Internal Software Quality Tools Measure Validated Metrics?	637
A Unique Value that Synthesizes the Quality Level of a Product Architecture: Outcome of a Quality Attributes Requirements Evaluation Method	649
Comparison of Agile Maturity Models	661

# 4th International Workshop on Human Factors in Software Development Processes (HuFo)

Dealing with Comprehension and Bugs in Native and Cross-Platform Apps: A Controlled Experiment	677
Maria Caulo, Rita Francese, Giuseppe Scanniello, and Antonio Spera	077
Understanding How and When Human Factors Are Used in the Software Process: A Text-Mining Based Literature Review	694
Working Conditions for Software Developers in Colombia:  An Effort-Reward-Imbalance-Based Study	709
Towards a Better Understanding of Team-Driven Dynamics in Agile Software Projects: A Characterization and Visualization Support in JIRA Fabian Kortum, Oliver Karras, Jil Klünder, and Kurt Schneider	725
Evaluating the Utility of the Usability Model for Software  Development Process and Practice	741
Short Tutorials	
PROFES 2019: Tutorial Summary	761
DevOps Practices Tutorial	764
Conformance Checking: Relating Processes and Models: A Tutorial for Researchers and Practitioners	766
Benefitting from Grey Literature in Software Engineering Research (Tutorial Summary)	768
Tutorial: Data Preparation – Tackle the Most Effort-Prone Phase in Data Projects	<b>77</b> 0
Author Index	773