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Software Engineering Approaches for Offshore and Outsourced Development

First International Conference, SEAFOOD 2007
Zurich, Switzerland, February 5-6, 2007
Revised Papers

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Preface

SEAFOOD for Thought

Headline-grabbing though it may be, the software industry's large-scale allocation of work to developing countries has not so far generated much technical analysis. Attention is usually limited to the possible political and economic consequences, in particular the fears of loss of employment in the West. The aim of the present volume is different. We recognize that offshore development is here to stay, and not just a result of cost considerations. It is – more accurately – a form of distributed development, relying on advances in communications to let the software industry, in our globalized world, benefit from the wide distribution of human talent. But it is also the source of a new set of challenges, to which accepted software engineering principles and techniques have not completely prepared us. Producing high-quality software on time and within budget is hard enough when the QA team is across the aisle from the core developers, and the customers across the street; what then when the bulk of the development team is across an ocean or two?

The first SEAFOOD – Software Engineering Advances For Outsourced and Offshore Development – conference (prompted by an earlier article¹) was an attempt not only to bring software engineering to outsourcing but also to bring outsourcing into the collective consciousness of the software engineering community. This is beneficial to both sides: successful outsourcing requires strong software engineering guidance, but research in the field must for its part account for the new world of software development. Whatever direction outsourcing takes in the coming years, we will never be just in one location any more.

SEAFOOD was held at ETH Zurich on 5–6 February 2007 and provided an opportunity for participants from academia and industry to confront experiences, ideas and proposals. The articles that follow are the result of this encounter. As can be expected of the first conference in such a novel field, we are still in the process of defining what constitutes a proper object of study on the topic; but the contributions already show a number of promising developments, which we are sure will be taken further in future conferences, starting from SEAFOOD 2008 to be held in the same venue in the first week of July 2008. The conference site at <http://seafood.ethz.ch> includes information on this conference, as well as past and future SEAFOOD events.

We hope that you will enjoy the results of SEAFOOD 2007 and that this volume will give you many useful ideas to understand and improve the engineering of outsourced software.

¹ Bertrand Meyer: Offshore Development: The Unspoken Revolution in Software Engineering, IEEE Computer, January 2006, pages 124, 122-123.

Many people contributed to making SEAFOOD 2007 a success. We are particularly grateful to the authors who submitted their work in a new and quickly evolving area; to the Program Committee members who reviewed the papers in time and through sometimes extensive discussions. (We extend our special wishes to Gio Wiederhold, who suffered an accident while in Zurich.) The role of Andrei Voronkov's excellent EasyChair conference system is gratefully acknowledged.

The conference benefited from four outstanding keynote presentations by Krishnamurti Ananthkrishnan, Chief Technology Officer of Tata Consultancy Services, Stuart Feldman, Vice President for computer science of IBM, Watts Humphrey from the Software Engineering Institute and Andrey Terekhov, from the State University of Saint Petersburg.

Martin Nordio from ETH played a key role in organizing the conference and helping prepare this volume; we are also grateful to Claudia Günthart for outstanding organizational support and to Christian Hunziker from ELCA for his work in publicizing the conference throughout Switzerland.

August 2008

Mathai Joseph
Bertrand Meyer

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