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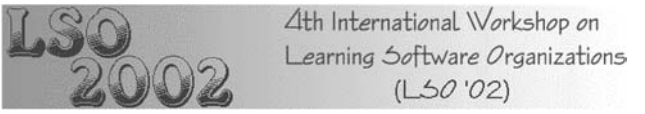
Preface



The theme of the 4th International Workshop on Learning Software Organizations (LSO 2002) was "Balancing Agile Processes and Long-Term Learning in Software Organizations." The LSO Workshop series focuses on technical, organizational, and social solutions to problems of learning from past experiences and codifying the resulting best practices so they can be systematically used in subsequent software development efforts.

Through paper presentations, panels, and discussions, the workshop explored the issues of managing knowledge in dynamic domains requiring significant differences between organizations and between projects. Challenges discussed ranged from realistic assumptions on the added documentation burden LSO techniques may require to how effectively repositories have been used in the past to the team and social issues involved in applying solutions created by others. Experience-based approaches were discussed extensively and some reports of initial successes were given along with some instances where the experience base was underutilized.

Enabling organizational learning involves more than repositories, search engines, and training. At its core, it involves creating new work practices that value current practices while searching for improvements. The issues involved are both technical and behavioral, as effective technology may entice utilization, but experience has shown that other factors weigh in just as heavily.

There are currently no profound or final answers on these questions, nor are they expected for some time to come, if at all. Hence the need for continued research into these difficult issues. This workshop, and others to follow hope to begin to shed light on the issues so an effective and fruitful dialog can begin that can lead to significant contributions to the software engineering and knowledge management fields, amongst others.

The LSO workshop series has been designed as a communication forum that addresses the questions of organizational learning from a software point of view and builds upon existing work on knowledge management and organizational learning. It aims at bringing together researchers and practitioners for an open exchange of ideas and real-world experiences. Fostering interdisciplinary approaches is a key concern of this workshop series.

This year's workshop, held in conjunction with the XP/Agile Universe conference, emphasized the relationship between organizational learning and agile methodologies. The conference and workshop complemented each other and provided groundbreaking insights into current approaches used to establish learning software organizations.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who worked to help make this happen. Laurie Williams was instrumental in working with Frank Maurer to make workshop arrangements for the XP/AU conference. The program committee made the time and effort to provide valuable reviews of the papers. The authors should also be thanked for their willingness to revise and improve their papers into the forms found in this volume. Special thanks go to our keynote speaker, Günther Ruhe; his expertise spans the gap between LSO and decision support systems, and the full paper he submitted on

the topic is found in this volume. Thanks also go to Scott Ambler; his time and expertise provided valuable insights and promoted useful discussion in our "Can Agile Methods and Learning Software Organizations Support Each Other?" panel.

The LSO conference series continues to provide valuable discussions and exchanges of ideas which we are certain will have an impact on the future of software engineering techniques and practices. This year's conference was no exception, and it is expected that the discussions and contacts established at the workshop will pay dividends for years to come.

February 2003

Scott Henninger
Frank Maurer

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