



## Confessions of a Used Program Salesman: Institutionalizing Software Reuse

Will Tracz

*Confessions of a Used Program Salesman: Institutionalizing Software Reuse* written by Will Tracz, Loral Federal Systems – Owego, published by Addison Wesley, Copyright 1995, ISBN 0-201-63369-8, ISBM, price \$19.50.

Will Tracz, our esteemed editor and Used-Program salesman, has written an entertaining, non-technical book dealing with the practice (and lack of) of software reuse. Its a collection of essays, mostly rehashed (reused?) and updated from various columns and papers published over the years.. Its a short (a bit over 200 pages) easy reading and enjoyable book (I read most of it in one sitting). Some of the essays discuss what was printed in the past and a discussion of the current status of the points.

One of the advantages of the book is it is a collection of short stories about reuse. Most of the chapters and stories within the chapters will hold up on their own, trying to make a point. The stories are easy to share with others – your manager and/or coworkers.

There's a cartoon panel at the beginning of each chapter. I find the artwork quite interesting (I didn't find any credits for the artist except they were signed Wick). On of the short essays I find entertaining was called "My Personal Profiles of Programmer Personnel", where most programmers fit into one of the following classes:

- **Novices** – New, Overzealous, Very Inquisitive Computer Students
- **WIMPS** – Well-Intentioned, Mediocre Programmers
- **PROS** – Perceivably Reliable, Omnipotent Software Engineers
- **PRIMA DONNAS** – PerManently IMmuAble Software Developers of Notorious Narcissistic Attitude
- **DOPEs** – Dangerous Optimistic Programming Eccentrics

This is a book full of little lessons and pithy sayings. Sub-headings like "The most Important Quality of Reusable Software is that it is Quality Software" are sprinkled throughout. A little more of the productivity advantages of using "Little Languages" would have been in order, the best way to reuse software is not to have to deal with low-level software. The book also makes the important point "before you can reuse something, there has to be something to reuse." Unfortunately, there is little said about the technical aspects of finding software on the Internet. My experience is this is more of a black art than programming, and is something which is fairly recent (the Internet is full of software to reuse).

In a short book, there are a large number of important and humorous points made. There is an extensive bibliography

about reuse, which practitioners will find very useful. I enjoyed reading it.

Reviewed by Marty Leisner, Xerox Corporation, leisner@sdsp.mc.xerox.com. Copyright (c) Marty Leisner 1995

## Software Inspection

Tom Gilb and Dorothy Graham

*Software Inspection* is written by Tom Gilb and Dorothy Graham, and published by Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1993, ISBN 0-201-63181-4.

If you think the software inspection process is an inexact one, then you need to read and implement the processes described this book. It begins with a self-assessment quiz of your current inspection/review process and then proceeds into a wealth of inspection process, documentation and anecdotal detail.

The book covers the following aspects of software inspection: history, benefits and costs, initiation of the process, proper documentation, process completion, process improvement, training and anticipated difficulties. It goes as far as to describe the agenda for various meetings the inspection process entails. It also discusses the software inspection process at a number of companies including Applicon, Cray Research, Thorn EMI, Recal Redac, Sema Group and IBM.

In summary, I found this to be a very readable book. It brought together information from a variety of sources (73 references) and includes a glossary for beginners and sample forms for implementation.

Reviewed by Ronald B. Finkbine, PhD., finkbine@babbage.sosu.edu.

## Safeware: System Safety and Computers

Nancy G. Leveson

*Safeware: System Safety and Computers*, written by Nancy G. Leveson, published by Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass, 1995 01867-3999. ISBN 0-201-11972-2.

If you have ever been seriously concerned with developing systems that must satisfy stringent safety requirements, or expect to be sometime in the future, you *must* read this book. It is immediately the definitive work on software safety, and has a system perspective that is really important. After careful consideration of the fundamentals, requirements analysis, hazard analysis (including models and techniques), and human interfaces are examined with loving care. Many cases familiar to RISKS and SEN readers (Therac-25, Apollo 13, the Challenger, Bhopal, Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, and others) are treated in considerable detail in the appendices, and much new information is revealed. The book is useful as