

Another Millennium Issue!

By Robert Cochran

But this millennium issue is more local to us here at CSE. As readers will be aware, CSE receives some public funding from the National Software Directorate within Enterprise Ireland. This grant is part of the Structural Funds support from the EU to Ireland, and as such, like all such funding it is not guaranteed beyond 1999.

Given this, we are currently planning our future strategy taking this into account. To assist us in this process, we have engaged external consultants to undertake a strategic review of CSE, and the options for the future. I would also be keen to receive wider comments on this issue, and I invite you to send them to me at robert@cse.dcu.ie.

While the precise shape of this future strategy is thus not yet determined, some elements are clear. An important component must be the continuation, in some form, of our policy of providing training and other assistance to companies seeking to ensure that their standard of software engineering practice is up to the recognised level of international best practice. In addition, we will continue to aim to address newly emerging issues of importance within the spectrum of software engineering, in order to assist companies in their technological progression.

We look forward to continuing to serve the software community in Ireland for many years to come.

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INTRODUCING A NEW TECHNOLOGY

By Michael O'Duffy

The means by which software organisations become more competitive is through innovation. In its technical operations this means addressing process, product, and people issues (the 3Ps). It is typically associated with the adoption of or the improvement of a certain practice. The Capability Maturity Model (CMM) describes these as key process areas. Because it invariably includes tool support, it is often described as a technology.

A company may consider special ways of addressing new or improvements in a technology. It will almost certainly include aspects such as information on latest developments in the market, automated tools

support, skills acquisition, and the implications of change and management of change.

The CSE provides seminars to increase awareness. It also provides workshops and training courses to increase skills and provides forum opportunities to share experiences. These events have proven to be very beneficial to many companies. However some companies require a greater level of support with a new technology. By joining a cluster at the CSE a company works with a number of other companies in the step by step process of adoption.

In more recent times the CSE has provided services to individual

companies in the adoption of a new technology. This has included advice and in-company training for the staff involved in the first project that will benefit from the technology. The continuing availability of expertise, assistance when needed by the company, and addressing the special needs of the company, ensures a high level of success.

If your company has special needs that are not addressed by a public seminar or training course, please contact the Centre about a more personal level of assistance, michael@cse.dcu.ie.

Productization

By Michael O'Duffy

Do you have a bespoke software system that may have a potential for resale? This has been the origin of a number of software products in Ireland that have proven to be commercially successful.

The marketing challenge is the same as with the alternative ways of achieving a software product. It is still necessary to research the market. The decision to launch the product must be justified in terms of market demand, the nature of competition, the market channels that will be employed, and the market segments that will be addressed.

There may be an advantage in timing in that the conversion of bespoke software to a packaged product form may be faster than developing from scratch. This advantage may also favourably influence the initial sales and 'reference sites'.

The technical challenge should be given very careful consideration. The nature of the application and its market will influence the nature of packaging of the product. The process of productization can be very significant, and if this is the first product from the company the nature of the transformation to a software product business can be quite demanding.

The CSE provides services to assist in addressing this challenge. If such a bespoke system is available to your organisation, do not be fazed by the challenge in bringing it to market. Consider the potential opportunity. Consider steps needed to avail of the opportunity. Look for expert advice and support. Consider the financial supports available. And go for it!

Training

By Jackie Berkery

Many organisations experience similar problems in meeting increasing market demands to produce high quality software. With the current growth trend in the software industry and the adaptation of continually changing technologies, the importance of applying best practices to the development, maintenance and support of software is becoming more and more important.

By introducing improved controls into all aspects of the software development process – the elicitation and management of software requirements, the management of the software project itself, testing and inspections, configuration management activities etc., organisations can increase their capability to develop high quality

software.

Also, through the introduction and exploitation of new technologies like Object Orientation, and through the application of new methods like **Rapid Application Development**, organisations can develop software more efficiently.

In recent years, the CSE has focused on these areas, providing the Irish Software Industry with the skills to meet these growing demands. The content of our training courses has primarily been aimed at senior software professionals requiring specialised training, and also at decision makers and change agents in software development organisations and in-house IT Departments.

Many organisations have found that effective training in these areas has equipped their staff with the skills and techniques to produce high quality software. Organisations have achieved the business benefits of introducing improved controls and new technologies to their development process, reducing costs and increasing profits.

We have received positive feedback from most delegates who have attended our training courses and have incorporated all feedback into our training programme.

We are re-visiting our training programme to ensure that it meets the current needs of our members. We also intend to introduce a number of new training courses in the near future. We wish to ensure that the training we provide reflects the changes in technology that are pertinent to the industry which we support.

To help us to achieve our objective, please complete the enclosed faxback sheet, outlining your training requirements. If you wish to discuss these further, please e-mail me at jackie@cse.dcu.ie or phone me at 7045612. I look forward to hearing your views.

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The CSE Newsletter will soon be available from our website <http://www.cse.dcu.ie>. To receive notification of new issues and other CSE announcements, subscribe to our mailing list by sending an email to:

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We would encourage you to contact us to discuss issues arising from articles in this newsletter or with any other queries you might have, all CSE emails follow the same pattern, <firstname>@cse.dcu.ie.

Spire Update - Dissemination Phase

By Jill Pritchett



The SPIRE project is now reaching its final stage – dissemination. All but one of the thirteen participating companies have completed their projects which, given the very tight time-scales, is a considerable achievement.

The wealth of valuable information about Software Process Improvement

in Small Companies is being gathered and the resulting Case Studies will be made available to interested parties.

Shortly we will be organising a number of events for companies to hear first hand how the projects went and what lessons you can learn for your improvement projects. Details of the events in Ireland will be advised

in mailings and also via the SPIRE web site <http://www.cse.dcu.ie/spire>.

Work on the SPIRE Handbook is also well underway. It will provide practical guidance for SPI, based on real experience in small companies.

Software in Focus

By Julie McMullan

Those of you who are members of the Centre or who are currently undertaking an ESSI PIE project should have received the first three issues of Software in Focus. As mentioned in an earlier CSE newsletter, Software in Focus is produced through the ESSInews project and aims to provide high quality information on ESSI and other SPI activities across Europe, in

particular to SME's. In addition to reporting on PIE project results we have covered issues like:

- The role of SPI in the next millennium
- Testing
- The human factors affecting SPI
- Business benefits of OO
- Risk and the software process

and got the opinions of experts like Tom DeMarco, Bill Hetzel, Annie Combelles and Marco Maiocchi.

To find out more why not visit the website, <http://www.cse.dcu.ie/swinfocus>, where you can download copies of the current and previous issues.

ESPINODE Update

By Ian Lawthers



PIE Club

An ESPINODE – Ireland PIE Club has been set up. The first event, on the theme of SPI, featured a presentation by the internationally respected expert Sami Zahran, of IBM. The event was well received by the delegates. Further events will cover Software Testing, Requirements Management and Project Management.

ESPINODE – Ireland Web Site

A web site has been set up for the project. The site gives a general

description of the project, and the services that it provides. The address is <http://www.cse.dcu.ie/espinode>.

Attached PIE News – Office Integrated Solutions

Office Integrated Solutions, in collaboration with Kaleidoscope Consultants, have recently been awarded an EU ESSI contract for the enhancement of their JAVA based Verification and Validation capabilities.

According to Eoin Maguire, Managing Director, “We are delighted to be involved with the European Commission and

Kaleidoscope. Our motivation for the project stems from the fact that, as a result of market interest and demand identified by our European distributor, we foresee a dramatic increase in the adoption of Internet Commerce, not just in the selling process, but also in managing and controlling the procurement process. The latter is our focus. We are preparing for substantial growth in our business. Time to market and flexibility are the key success factors. We have to get it right, first time, or we miss the boat.” The project runs for thirteen months.

PUBLIC Events Listing 1998

Nov/December

October

1st October

Use Case Seminar

Contact: Jim Rook, CSE - 704 5640
jim@cse.dcu.ie

5th October

DSDM User Group Meeting

Contact: Jim Rook, CSE - 704 5640
jim@cse.dcu.ie

14th October

An Introduction to CSE Object Technology Clusters (FREE)

Contact: Jim Rook, CSE - 704 5640
jim@cse.dcu.ie

28th - 29th October

Delivering What the Customer Wants System Requirements Workshop

Contact: Jim Rook, CSE - 704 5640
jim@cse.dcu.ie

November

2nd November

Release Strategy Seminar

Contact: Michael O'Duffy,
CSE - 704 5427
michael@cse.dcu.ie

3rd November

Configuration Management – The Key Issues

Contact: Michael O'Duffy,
CSE - 704 5427
michael@cse.dcu.ie

10th November

Creative Decision Making

Presented by Margaret Lawler,
Private consultant
Contact: Jackie Berkery,
CSE - 7045612
jackie@cse.dcu.ie

12th - 13th November

Function Point Analysis MkII Workshop

Contact: Jim Rook,
CSE - 704 5640
jim@cse.dcu.ie

18th - 20th November

DSDM Practitioner Course

Presented by Jennifer Stapleton -
DSDM Consortium Vice Chair
Contact: Jim Rook, CSE - 704 5640
jim@cse.dcu.ie

23rd November

Software Inspections

Presented by Pat Bermingham, IT
Solutions
Contact: Jackie Berkery
CSE - 7045612
jackie@cse.dcu.ie

24th November

Integrating Usability into Design

Presented by Mary Corbett –
Human Factors Interface Design
Ltd
Contact: Julie McMullan,
CSE - 7045245
julie@cse.dcu.ie

25th November

ESPINODE Ireland – PIE Showcase for SPIRE projects

Contact: Ian Lawthers,
CSE - 7045353
ian@cse.dcu.ie

26th - 27th November

Managing Software Quality/Engineering Software Quality

Presented by Joc Sanders, CSE
Contact: Jackie Berkery
CSE - 7045612
jackie@cse.dcu.ie

30th November – 1st December

Facilitation Skills Workshop

Contact: Jim Rook, CSE - 704 5640
jim@cse.dcu.ie

30th November – 4th December

EuroStar98

*changing the way Europe thinks
about software testing.*

For full conference details see the
EuroSTAR web site at
www.aimware.com/eurostar98
or contact Lorraine Murphy at 091
770103 or email
EuroSTAR98@aimware.com

14th – 15th December

Tmap – A structured approach to software testing

Presented by Eric VanVeenendaal,
Improve Quality Services
Contact: Jackie Berkery
CSE - 7045612
jackie@cse.dcu.ie

Dates T.B.C.

Jan '99

Internal Auditing

Presented by Jill Pritchett, CSE
Contact: Jackie Berkery
CSE - 7045612
jackie@cse.dcu.ie

Making the Right Choice!

Programming Languages
Contact: Jim Rook, CSE - 704 5640
jim@cse.dcu.ie

Databases - OO vs Relational

Contact: Jim Rook, CSE - 704 5640
jim@cse.dcu.ie

*Details of CSE events and
registration forms are also
available on our website:
<http://www.cse.dcu.ie> or from
info@cse.dcu.ie*