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## Can Agile be Leveraged to Introduce Good SCM?

Posted by Damon Poole - 2007/05/12 10:54

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I came to the realization a while back that I'm not really an SCM person. In fact, I'm a software development process person who has been focusing on SCM. I've been working on broadening my thinking. As a result, I've decided to change my focus from SCM to Agile Software Development.

I think there's a lot of value to be realized using top-notch SCM tools, but I've come to the conclusion lately that a lot of the value of these tools either sits on the shelf as potential value or goes unrecognized and unappreciated. I think there are two reasons for this. First, I think that most people think of SCM tools as a repository and nothing more. Second, most SCM tools are optimized for being repositories and nothing more.

To put it another way, I've decided to turn my emphasis upside down. I don't think that most developers show up for work thinking about how best to optimize their branching and merging. So, instead of starting there and ending up at the developer benefit only to find that the audience has surfed to another page, I've decided to always start from the developer's point of view and link the discussion back to SCM only when necessary.

This also gets to another point. SCM folks by and large already recognize most of the value of SCM. That's what they do all day! Whereas, developers prefer to just write code all day and keep their interaction with SCM to a minimum. That is as it should be. As a result though, I don't think that developers are getting the full value out of SCM. I'm not saying that developers are thick, just that their focus is on writing code, not playing with SCM tools on the off chance that they might stumble across something that will increase their productivity.

Thus, it is up to folks that do think all day about how to improve developer productivity through better SCM to make the extra effort to pitch things from a developer's point of view so that when a developer does come up for air they see right away that they are being offered a lifeline and not a lead weight.

Right now, developers are very interested in Agile Development. Thus, a great way to get their attention is to focus on Agile Development. The trick is to link Agile back to good SCM practices so that folks don't throw out the baby (SCM) with what they perceive as the bathwater (heavyweight process).

What is your experience with mixing Agile and SCM? Have you had good success? Do you have any tips and tricks to share?

Cheers!

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