SEMAT All Hands Meeting Minutes

Monday Feb 24, 2014

Prepared by Barry Myburgh

Time: 3PM Central European time (9h30PM CST)

Panelists: Ivar Jacobson, June Sung Park, Pontus Johnson, Barry Myburgh

Participants: 23

1. Ivar welcomed participants to the second All Hands Meeting and shared the purpose of the meeting which was to take stock in the context of the draft article: "SEMAT - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" (YTT), a collaborative effort involving Ivar, June and Barry Myburgh.

2. June provided an overview of YTT by means of a PowerPoint presentation. After covering "Beginning", "Yesterday" and "Today", the presentation was paused to allow for interaction with telecon participants.

   Question from Barry Dwolatzky: Provide an update on SEMAT progress towards becoming an OMG standard.

   Reply from June: The Beta version has been released. Beta issues raised are being addressed after which OMG voting will proceed. The third round is due now - and will probably be the final round if suggested changes are accepted. This is followed by the approval process within the OMG after which the Specification will be announced. This could happen by end March.

3. June continued with the presentation, focusing on "Tomorrow" and bringing the presentation to a close.

   Clarification Comment from Carlos: Translation of the Essence book into Spanish is being done in Columbia and not in Spain. The Spanish version is expected to be published in 2 months.

4. **Discussion of SEMAT's future**

4.1 Pontus Johnson provided comments about the Theory Area, saying that Software Engineering Theory is still in its infancy while being quite strong on Method. What is needed is Theory with predictive capacity. We don't know what the

eventual theory looks like - work is still in the exploratory phase. Various proposals have been suggested in the context of the workshop series and it is time to focus on theories that are available or under discussion. Author notifications were today distributed for the 3rd workshop on General Theory of Software Engineering (GTSE) which is to be held in parallel with ICSE in June. 9 papers were accepted, of which 4 are tightly related to Essence. This indicates growing support for Essence. Last years papers resulted in extended papers which are to be published.

Question from June for Pontus: Are formal approaches to SWE theory being put forward?

Reply from Pontus: Yes they are.

Clarification Comment from Bud Lawson: Regarding the new book on SEMAT and Systems Engineering. The book is not just about Systems Engineering - more about systems in general and software engineering in the systems context.

Comment from Ivar: There is a growing appreciation regarding the diversity of interest in SEMAT, leading to a need for going broader and deeper. Going broader means Systems Engineering, Business Engineering, School Education, etc. Going deeper includes the development of theory.

Question from Barry Dwolatzky: The SA Chapter has recognised the importance of growing community and the need to counter the perception that SEMAT is "just another method". To what extent is this an international challenge - or is it mostly a local phenomenon?

Reply from Ivar: On the one hand SEMAT is a framework and any method can be described as a composition of practices on top of the kernel. On the other hand, it provides the ability to measure progress.

Comment from Barry Myburgh: We must avoid SEMAT being seen as another competitor - it is useful to all existing ways-of-working. If SEMAT were to be perceived as just another fashion, it would end up as another round in the long-standing methodology war.

Comment from June: The recently written article on "Scrum powered by SEMAT" (another collaborative effort involving June Park, Paul McMahon and Barry Myburgh) is a good example of how SEMAT can add value without going into competition. He would like to see a paper to show how different methods

can be described using Essence and hence people can understand that Essence kernel is an enabling layer for methods and practices.

Comment from Ivar: Essence is different from past efforts: it changes how we teach, think and practice.

Question from Barry Myburgh: Is SEMAT certification the best thing to do? Will it not stimulate competition between SEMAT and other ways-of-working where certification is available?

Reply from Ivar: A good question to raise.

Reply from June: As long as SEMAT certification does not collide with others such as Scrum and PMP.

Response from Barry Myburgh: SEMAT certification must ensure people go into Industry with the right attitude towards SEMAT.

4.2 June shifted the discussion to consider practices, making the point that practices need effective guides.

Question from June: What is the state of play regarding development of User Guides?

Reply from Barry: The team developing User Guides spent some time in clarifying issues with Activity Spaces. The main issue is that as specified, Activity Spaces identify Completion Criteria related to Alpha States. This linkage will probably pose no problem for Waterfall implementations, but might be the cause of resistance in an Agile environment. A Change Proposal is being prepared that will soften the link between Activity Spaces and Alpha States.

5. Conclusion

Ivar wrapped up the webinar by referring to many things that are in in progress. An exciting time for SEMAT. Everyone is encouraged to send e-mail if further interaction is required.

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