

Coma

Gunnar Schaefer Marcel Kyas Martin Steffen

Christian-Albrechts University Kiel

Wintersemester 2004/05



Intro

Raw results

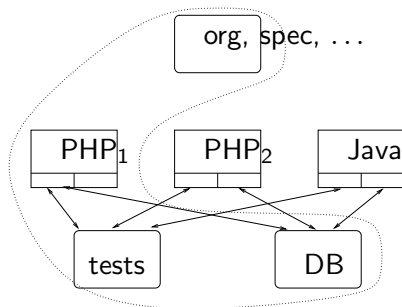
Evaluation

Coma

Conference Manager: a web-based conference manager assistant tool

- rather standard kind of (small) web application
- rather standard kind of techniques
 - apache ...
 - JAVA
 - php ...
 - *mysql*
- given informal spec, discussion with us
- to be done:
 1. concept, specification, choice of tool (platform ...)
 2. implementation,
 3. presentation & roll-out: today!

Results & structure



- **Structure:** 4 + 1 groups
- 3 installable¹, runnable², tested (sort of) tool(oids), all modules integrated (ah, well)
 - common **data model** as core
 - (perhaps) common **test data** (in principle)
- no **CD-Rom** this time ...

¹I'm optimistic, this is a prophecy as of the 7th of February ...

²stuttering

Raw and mindless statistics

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| work directory | 30M | |
| revisions | $\geq 5000^3$ | |
| snapshots | none (!) | |
| files | JAVA | > 50 |
| | php,tpl | > 250, 60 |
| | L ^A T _E X | > 50 |
| communication | | |
| | global meetings | ca. 14 ⁴ |
| | emails ⁵ | > 500 |
| | bugzilla | > 230 reported errors, 40 open |
| | bulletin board | > 400 articles |

³The statistic is rather misleading, since some of the groups “misused” the version management also as “web-space deployment tool”.

⁴Not all where globally important

⁵in my inbox/outbox

Tools

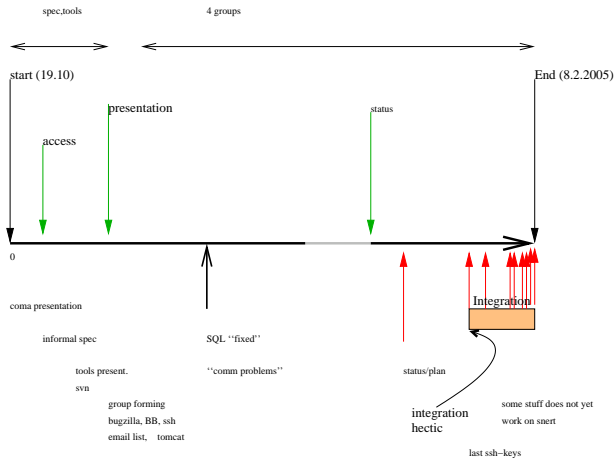
| name | version | description | installed at | | needed by | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|------|-----|--------|-----------|---|---|
| | | | snert | lab | developers | | | | customers | | |
| | | | p ₁ | p ₂ | j | test | org | server | client | | |
| common development | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ant | 1.6.2 | build tool | + | + | o | o | + | [+] | o | + | - |
| gnu make | 3.80 | build tool | + | + | o | o | - | o | + | + | - |
| subversion | 1.0.9 | CM | + | [+] | + | + | + | + | + | o | - |
| common basis | | | | | | | | | | | |
| apache | 2.0.51 | web server | + | [-] | + | + | + | + | - | + | - |
| mysql | 3.23.58 | data base | + | [-] | + | + | + | + | - | + | - |
| "java" | | | | | | | | | | | |
| jakarta tomcat | 5.0.30 | web server | + | - | - | - | + | + | - | + | - |
| java | 1.5.0 | language | + | + | - | - | + | + | - | + | - |
| java lib's | various | further libs | [+] | [+] | - | - | + | + | - | + | - |
| "php" | | | | | | | | | | | |
| php | 4.3.8 | scripting lang. | + | - | + | + | - | + | - | + | - |
| php doc | | doc generation | + | - | o | o | - | o | - | - | - |
| common testing | | | | | | | | | | | |
| junit | | unit testing | + | + | - | - | + | + | - | - | - |
| php unit | | unit testing | + | + | [+] | [+] | - | + | - | - | - |
| puretester | | web app. test | - | + | - | [-] | - | + | - | - | + |
| common spec + doc | | | | | | | | | | | |
| jude | | design | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | - | - |
| L ^A T _E X | tetex 2.0.2 | doc | + | + | o | o | o | o | + | o | - |
| hevea | 1.07 | doc/html | - | + | o | o | o | o | + | - | - |

Development process

- [subversion](#) for version management⁶
- [bug tracking](#) with Bugzilla
- email-list(s), bulletin board,
- common public [web-page](#)
- (almost) weekly progress [report](#)
- 3 [review](#) meetings, including this one.

⁶some CVS descendant

Timeline



What's good?

- it's over!

What's good?

- it's over!

What's good?

- it's **over**!
- we have running tools ready-oid and shipped
- not a single **drop-out** during semester (that was a **serious!** problem in previous F-Praktika)
- the **task** as such was ok
- **snert** (despite it's age and performance limitations) did quite **ok**, little down-time, **no data loss**
- quite some heterogenous environment/tool sets \Rightarrow lots of (well, practical) stuff to cope with, to find ones way

Neutral/beyond our control

- many participants
- some communication overhead: Yes! that beyond our control. Even with 1 person there's communication overhead⁷
- little theory (some people like that, some don't)
 - in addition to (fail to) work together and get organized etc, we did not learn anything theoretical
 - + more effort into other stuff.
- lot's of tiny little problems: well, that how it is ...

⁷if the task is big enough/long enough, the programmer at some point during of the task has to communicate with the programmer later state (himself, only older), for instance via documentation.

Things we did not like

- **passivity**
- some internal **in-fighting** within some groups
- “**death march**” or at least monstrous hectic at the end (year after it’s the same)⁸
- **laaaate** integration/testing on the target platform (year after year, it’s the same)⁹
- we did not manage to have a **common spec**
 - the common **data model** costed too much sweat/time/friction already, the course was on the brink of breaking!
 - we (as org) did not had the **time** to hunt after that issue as we tried for the **data-model spec**.

⁸Actually, it seems almost to be a universal constant for all human endeavor

...

⁹In this year, it was in some of the groups in particular postpone **till the veeerry end** to try out *snert* even if it was said from the beginning: there is exactly/only **one platform** which counts, namely *snert*. Note that even if we pretended that we intend to do it platform-independent, announcing a predefined machine in advance is of course the opposite of platform-independence

Other remarks, heard

- the task is **too small** for so many people?¹⁰
 - well, could indeed be ...
- **too many comm. channels** actually, we don't exactly know what to leave out
 - indispensable: **svn**, also **bugzilla**¹¹
 - **bulletin board**: you will have noticed: the BB went much out of use lately, when the hacking effort became harder!
- **global meetings**:
 - perhaps one should make meetings smaller,
 - sometimes they seem to be a **waste of time** for most participants, but no: **I'm not talking about the data-base discussions!**

¹⁰remarked by more than one participant. E.g. in the form "If I were alone, I could ... "

¹¹Some did not like bugzilla, but I think it was more important to have some bug tracking

Other remarks, heard

- the task is **too small** for so many people?¹⁰
 - well, could indeed be ... **But think again!** This implies either
 - only projects with **less people** are possible, or
 - **adding** more requirements/tasks/feature would have made it **simpler!**
- **too many comm. channels** actually, we don't exactly know what to leave out
 - indispensable: **svn**, also **bugzilla**¹¹
 - **bulletin board**: you will have noticed: the BB went much out of use lately, when the hacking effort became harder!
- **global meetings**:
 - perhaps one should make meetings smaller,
 - sometimes they seem to be a **waste of time** for most participants, but no: **I'm not talking about the data-base discussions!**

¹⁰ remarked by more than one participant. E.g. in the form "If I were alone, I could ... "

¹¹ Some did not like bugzilla, but I think it was more important to have some bug tracking

What about the org group?

- **be harder/stricter** (deadlines, requirements, whatever) ??
- **specify** exactly what you want, and we do it
 - can be advantageous. On the other hand: the challenge here was: we (the org) are the *clients* we know (a bit) what we want, you have to find a solution
- **monitor** exactly what's going on, repair ...
 - not really possible with > 20 participants
- **repeat** the *Praktikum*
 - + less effort for us, more time for monitoring etc
 - + better feeling for the hard parts, better assistance in “load-balance” etc.
 - less “realistic”, later your boss/manager ... will not exactly know what you are doing, there won't be “Musterlösungen” in your later life.

Things to do/org better

- not two spec groups?
 - avoids bickering/merging/friction/disappointment which spec to take
 - we cannot have all the rest as tools-groups, because the tools groups where wasted time
- testing
 - the integration/set-up for the testing **must** be organized differently, this year the set-up did not work out
- tools/platform choice:
 - largely a **waste of time, just do it/document it** and that's it¹²
- some small stuff:
 - we **lost** some weeks:
 - for instance after the first demo,
 - because of protracted SQL-discussion
 - after X-mas, delay in the status/plan
 - hard **deadline/milestone** around X-mas

¹²In realistic situations, the choice of weapons and platforms is of course not a waste of time. In our case, I'd say it was.

Famous quotes from development hell

We collected those during this semester (sources kept [anonymous](#))

“if the testers/some others needs a Readme to understand what’s going on in my code, then they are free to let it be”^a

^aSee again the foil with the “raw and mindless statistic” and think of an answer to that yourself.

Famous quotes from development hell

We collected those during this semester (sources kept [anonymous](#))

"of course we have a spec; it's not written down, however, because we have it all in our head"^a

^aYa, ya

Famous quotes from development hell

We collected those during this semester (sources kept [anonymous](#))

year after year our all-time favorite: "it's not my fault. At my machine it works . . . "^a

^ashorter still: "Ah, [trust me](#), you don't need to try it. It works!". A variant is "we don't need to test it [there](#), because it works [here](#)". still shorter: it's [compatible](#)!

Famous quotes from development hell

We collected those during this semester (sources kept [anonymous](#))

integration will be a piece of cake, don't worry.

Famous quotes from development hell

We collected those during this semester (sources kept [anonymous](#))

Request from group-X to their tester: “additionally, an [in-stallation](#) test^a would be handy, such that our tool is installed in a “Weissbrotwelt” as well”^b

^a1. February

^bin the same bug thread a comment is again the classic: “bei mir aufm Laptop funktioniert alles”.

Famous quotes from development hell

We collected those during this semester (sources kept [anonymous](#))

Request from group-X to their tester: “additionally, an [in-stallation](#) test^a would be handy, such that our tool is installed in a “Weissbrotwelt” as well”^b and please note down exactly what steps are needed [. . .]. We have the problem that [we](#)^c have forgotten what we did to install our tool.”^d

^a1. February

^bin the same bug thread a comment is again the classic: “bei mir aufm Laptop funktioniert alles”.

^cthe programmers/developers!

^dRemember the “*Real-programmers-don't-need-Readme's*”-comment 2 minutes ago?

Why is it not a tool?

The result/the process is not “professional”, why is this?^a

^aProfessional in the sense of “good” (best-practice/state-of-the-art, or whatever jargon word you prefer). “Professional” is not meant in the sense of making a living out of it. After all, rather soon **you are professional** computer experts/scientists! Also it does not imply that all tools that one can sell/buy are better than yours ...

Why is it not a tool?

- well, we listed some points which we think did not work/haven't been organized too well
 - almost everyone was mainly busy with **his module**, little serious effort outside one's own home ground field.¹³
 - **symptom**: in the general meetings: desinterest or even “**bad vibes**” if “**forced**” to discuss things beyound one owns interest¹⁴
- ⇒ **much more** effort into “boring” stuff] e.g., 2 persons (or more) in a group doing nothing else than **integrating**, checking whether all **fits together**, having an **technical overview** over the **interplay**, perhaps group “sub-leader”
- difficult in a course: “what's my contribution?”, “do I pass the exam without a line of code written?”, who is the subleader
 - one single semester afterwards: just **testing/documenting/making it usable?**

¹³we don't know directly, it's an impression: especially the PHP1 group, they kept problems —if they had any— under the carpet.