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Why SCM Patterns Is in Patterns Format

ARTICLE

By Steve Berczuk | September 5, 2011

SUMMARY

Too often people associate SCM with tools and techniques without considering what techniques work well for the team. SCM Patterns puts the solutions in context with your organization, process, and architecture and (hopefully) provides you with some guidance on the steps to build an environment where people can code together effectively.

I recently had an opportunity to speak to an undergraduate software engineering class. The professor for that class, Danny Dig has a very interesting practice of asking practitioners to speak to the class over Skype when an appropriate topic presents itself. Danny invited me to join then when they were discussing software configuration management and version control.

During the session Danny asked me why we used pattern form for the material in Software Configuration Management Patterns: Effective Teamwork, Practical Integration was in pattern format. At the time I might have quickly answered that I was interested in patterns and the book was based on patterns we'd written. But aside from being a too flippant and not terribly profound, that answer isn't actually right.

There are two aspects of patterns that make them well suited for software configuration management practices, especially those at a team level:

- Patterns describe things people have done successfully, and we wanted to document the practices that worked well, and which, when they were missing, caused problems. We wanted to catalog the things that we found ourselves explaining again and again in different organizations. If you read the book, much of what you read will sound obvious. But it's only obvious if you know it, and may people don't.

- The pattern form makes it very clear than everything fits into a context, which includes other decisions you've made and the environment your working in. People often get captivated by solutions without really thinking about whether the solution

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The other thing I realized shorty after writing the book is that, while the book was in it's final stages just as the **Agile Manifesto** was being worked on, the book had a lot to say about agile collaboration. The SCM Patterns book, to me, is really about how to work together more effectively. SCM is just the means.

Topics: configuration management,

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Steve Berczuk is a Principal Software Engineer with experience as a manager, Scrum Master and technical lead in Boston, MA. The author of *Software Configuration Management Patterns: Effective Teamwork, Practical Integration*, he is a recognized expert in software configuration management and agile software development. Steve is passionate about helping teams work effectively to produce quality software. He has an M.S. in operations research from Stanford University and an S.B. in Electrical Engineering from MIT, and is a Certified ScrumMaster. Contact Steve at steve@berczuk.com or visit berczuk.com and follow his blog at blog.berczuk.com.

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