Agile Methods: eXtreme Programming (XP)

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- XP basic values
  - Communication, Simplicity, Feedback, Courage, Respect
- XP practices
  - XP1 vs. XP2
  - Sit together, whole team, informative workspace, energized work, pair programming, stories,
  - weekly cycle, quarterly cycle, slack, ten-minute build, continuous integration, test-first programming, incremental design
- Criticism
- When (not) to use XP
- Empirical results: a survey
- XP and CMMI
Learning objectives

• Understand the basic idea of eXtreme Programming (XP) and where the name comes from

• Understand the values of XP

• Roughly understand the individual practices that make up XP

• Roughly understand when to and when not to use XP
History

- XP is based on ideas that have been around for a long time
- XP was developed into a method in the context of one single software project (using Smalltalk)
  - "C3": *Chrysler Comprehensive Compensation*, a project to develop a payroll system for the 87000 employees of Chrysler Corporation.
  - 1995-01: C3 starts
  - 1996-03: C3 has not delivered any working functionality. Kent Beck is hired as an advisor, brings in Ron Jeffries, reduces project staff, and starts putting C3 into XP mode
  - 1996-1998: A period of very high productivity in the project
  - 1998-08: C3 system is piloted and paysrolls 10 000 employees
  - 2000-02: C3 project is canceled after Chrysler/Daimler-Benz merger
XP sources


• However, there is now a 2nd edition (2004)
  • Complete rewrite (with Dirk Andres)
  • Fairly different set of practices:
    • Some removed (too difficult or too easy),
    • some made more precise (e.g. by quantification),
    • some added
  • Thus, the modified method is sometimes called XP2

• Overview of the differences:

• Many more books and articles have been written about XP
XP basic values

XP's set of rules and practices is based on five fundamental ideas (called "values"):

- Communication
- Simplicity
- Feedback
- Courage ("Mut")
- Respect
Basic values: Communication

- Very many problems in projects are related to communication that failed or simply did not happen
  - e.g. tacit assumptions about requirements
  - e.g. uncoordinated technical decisions
  - e.g. missing information about design ideas
  - e.g. missing notification about technical changes

- Therefore, XP uses practices that enforce early, frequent, successful communication
  - pair programming
  - continuous integration
  - effort estimation in the planning game
Basic values: Simplicity

- Simple solutions have many nice properties:
  - they are easy to design
  - they are easy to implement
  - they are easy to test and debug
  - they are easy to communicate and explain
  - they are easy to change
- This is true for both product and process

- Therefore, XP requires to always use the simplest solution that is sufficient for today's requirements
  - and not build something more complicated in the hope that it will be needed later.
- Slogan: YAGNI (You Ain't Gonna Need It)
Basic values: Feedback

• It is immensely helpful for a project if it always gets quick feedback about the consequences of actions or plans
  • How expensive would it be to realize this new requirement?
  • Is this new piece of code correct?
  • Does it fit with the rest of the system?
  • How useful is the system overall?

• Therefore, XP integrates concrete and immediate feedback into the process wherever possible
  • Immediate effort estimation for each storycard
  • Unit tests for each piece of code
  • Continuous integration
  • Short iterations and frequent releases
Basic values: Courage

- Many aspects of making the first three values a reality require courage:
  - Communicating that one needed to change an oft-used interface
  - Building a simple solution only, although one firmly expects it to become insufficient later
  - Facing negative feedback about incorrect code, incompatible interfaces, infeasible requirements, or impractical aspects of a delivered system
- Therefore, XP both uses a culture that encourages courage
  - e.g. with pair programming and the planning game
- and creates an infrastructure that allows to be courageous or even bold
  - in particular with automated testing
Basic values: Respect

- Respect
  - of one developer for another,
  - of developers for customer, and
  - of customer for developers

- is an important basis for continually realizing
  - communication,
  - feedback, and
  - courage

- Therefore, respect underlies all of XP as a kind of continuous admonition
  - although it was not explicitly listed as a value in the 1999 book
XP practices

- XP as a method consists of a set of practices
  - Their manner of application can be adapted
  - but all of them are mandatory for a real XP process
    - although in practice very often not all are used.
    - Just picking your favorite five is not XP in any case!
  - They mutually reinforce each other

Graphic: K. Schneider

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Practices of XP and XP2

**XP 1 practices ("traditional"):**
1. The Planning Game
2. Small Releases
3. Metaphor
4. Simple Design
5. Testing
6. Refactoring
7. Pair Programming
8. Collective Ownership
9. Continuous Integration
10. 40-Hour Week (sustain. pace)
11. On-Site Customer
12. Coding Standards

**XP 2 practices ("evolutionary"):**
1. Sit Together
2. Whole Team
3. Informative Workspace
4. Energized Work
5. Pair Programming
6. Stories
7. Weekly Cycle
8. Quarterly Cycle
9. Slack
10. Ten-Minute Build
11. Continuous Integration
12. Test-First Programming
13. Incremental Design

Furthermore, XP2 has 11 "Corollary Practices"
The XP practices, old and new

Graphic: S. Roock

Note: Some connections are missing
Practice: Sit Together

• The whole team should work as close together as possible, ideally in a single large office.
  • This greatly simplifies communication and makes it more likely to succeed
    • This also contributes to simplicity and courage
  • It greatly increases informal communication
    • by overhearing other pairs working

• Criticism:
  • 10 people in one room leads to high background noise and reduces concentration
Practice: Whole Team

- All qualifications and competences required should be represented in the team
  - this includes special technical knowledge
  - as well as business/requirements knowledge
    - (replaces and extends the former "on-site customer")
  - as well as project-level responsibilities (coach, plan tracker)
- Thus, the team can always proceed without interruption

- Criticism:
  - It is often impossible to find a single person representing all requirements knowledge
    (or to bring several into the team)
  - All members must be full-time, but very specialized (thus rare) technical knowledge
    may be needed in multiple projects
Practice: Informative Workspace

- All important information about the project status should be available directly in the workspace, e.g.
  - currently open tasks
  - build and test status
  - architectural design sketch

- This can often be done by hanging flip chart sheets on the walls
Practice: Energized Work

- All members of the team are motivated and work energetically at any time
  - In particular, there are no extended stretches of working overtime
    - This was formerly called "40 hour week" and was a little too inflexible in practice
  - Also, since Pair Programming (see below) is very intensive, a good routine of breaks and fun interludes is important

- Criticism:
  - Can you really call "working energetically" a practice that you consciously adopt?
Practice: Pair Programming (PP)

- All code is written by two programmers working together at a single computer
  - Thus, a better design can be found,
  - many mistakes can be caught immediately,
  - the partners learn from each other (technology, work style, etc.)
  - at least two people are highly familiar with each piece of code.

- One partner ("driver") is focused on writing code
- the other ("observer") watches for mistakes, gaps, and possible improvements of the design.
- These roles may change frequently
  - e.g. every few minutes

- Pair composition should change frequently
  - e.g. twice a day
Practice: Pair Programming (2)

Criticism:

• For many kinds of task (in particular simple ones), PP may be rather inefficient
• There are a number of studies on this subject and the evidence is unclear:
  • Immediate productivity appears to be lower than with two individual programmers,
  • but the secondary benefits are difficult to quantify
• Some programmers do not accept this style of working
• Pair partners may have incompatible working styles
Practice: Stories

- All requirements are stated in the form of stories
  - A short reminder is written on a card
  - Most of the information transfer is done verbally
  - The number of such cards must be modest
    - Mostly cards for the current iteration, never cards beyond the current release

- Criticism:
  - For some types of functionality, stories are just too imprecise
  - Non-functional requirements cannot be expressed by stories
    - but need to be considered early

www.jamesshore.com/Multimedia/Beyond-Story-Cards.html
Practice: Weekly Cycle

- The finest granularity of project-level planning is the so-called "iteration"
  - Each iteration implements one or more stories
  - An iteration should take about one week, maybe two
- The iteration is the elementary progress step visible for the customer
- During an iteration, requirements are fixed
  - Programmers can work without interruption
  - Programmers can estimate the effort well for work of this size
Practice: Quarterly Cycle

- The larger granularity of project planning is the release
  - There should be about four releases per year
  - A release is deployed into actual use by actual users (at least a pilot group) in actual business processes
- Frequent releases provide regular reality checks of the value generated by the project
  - and provide new directions for the next requirements

- Criticism:
  - Rollout of a release is often very difficult and cannot be done frequently (e.g. because of required process changes)
  - Mixed use of old and new system side-by-side is often impossible
Practice: Slack

• Developers have some freely available time (slack time) to be used for non-project work
  • e.g. learning about new technology.

• Criticism:
  • It is extremely difficult to keep up this practice in normal project reality for most organizations
Practice: Ten-Minute Build

- Building the system and running system-level function tests must not take longer than 10 minutes
  - so that it is realistic that programmer-driven function testing occurs after each significant programming session

- Criticism:
  - This may be impossible for multi-platform products
Practice: Continuous Integration

- Developers check in their work into the common code base several times each day.
- An automated process rebuilds the system after each such check-in and re-runs the system-level function tests.
- This build represents the project state:
  - The build should be fully functional most of the time.
  - A build that remains broken for some time is often an important alarm signal (indicator of bad project health).

- Criticism:
  - It is expensive or impossible to keep up a functional build during larger refactorings.
Practice: Test-First Programming

• **Before** some program element is written (a class, a difficult method), an automated test of this element is **always** written first
  • The test must fail as long as the element is still missing
  • It must succeed before the element is considered finished

• **Advantages:**
  • Clarifies the requirements for the element before coding it
  • Fixes the interface
  • Provides rapid and constant feedback
  • Thus allows courage during refactoring

• **Criticism:**
  • This amounts to a very high degree of test automation which is often inefficient
Practice: Incremental Design

- The design is completed step-by-step, along with the code
  - It is not invented all at once beforehands
  - At each time, the design is oriented only towards the current requirements, not those just expected to come later
    - "Use the simplest design that can possibly work"
  - When design changes are required, refactoring is used as the first step in order to minimize risk

- Criticism:
  - When used naively, this usually leads to very high amounts of rework, as "architecture breakers" then occur frequently
Note: Refactoring

- Refactoring means modifying the structure of a program without modifying its behavior
  - There are a number of well-defined elementary refactoring operations, e.g.:
    - Rename
    - Change Method Signature, Introduce Parameter
    - Convert Local Variable to Field, Encapsulate Field
    - Extract Class/Interf./Loc. Var./Method (opposite: inline)
    - Introduce Factory
    - Generalize Type, Pull Up, Push Down elements in class hierarchy

- XP allows courageous refactoring, because the automated tests make it easy to verify whether a refactoring is correct
- Modern IDEs (such as Eclipse for Java) support or even automate several such refactoring operations
Note: Simplest design

- To build "the simplest design that can possibly work" implies building the system with the smallest possible number of classes and methods in such a way that
  - code and tests together clearly describe what we want to express and
  - there is no redundancy in the code

- Slogan: Do everything once and only once

- Eliminating redundancy automatically leads to a system that is clear, flexible, and that can easily be extended and adapted
  - However, recognizing and eliminating redundancy is difficult!
Note: Simplest design Option costs example

Assume you build the simplest possible design D today:

- Assume change A becomes necessary 1 year later:
  - €1000 D cost today
  - €1500 A cost next year

- Assume incompatible change B does:
  - €1000 D cost today
  - €1500 B cost next year

Assume you build D' anticipating a change A:

- Assume change A becomes necessary 1 year later:
  - €1500 D' cost today
  - €50 interest (10% of D'-D)
  - €500 A cost next year

- Assume incompatible change B does:
  - €1500 D' cost today
  - €50 interest (10% of D'-D)
  - €1000 A rework cost next year
  - €1500 B cost next year

If the uncertainty of A vs. B is high, D' may be a bad idea!
The XP corollary practices

Optional, may be helpful
Criticism

- Gerold Keefer: "Extreme Programming Considered Harmful for Reliable Software Development 2.0",
  (an earlier version appeared in the conference Conquest 2002 by isqi.org)

- Critically reviews the claims and reports about XP and argues that it is recommendable only in rare situations:
  - Requires staff competence far above average
  - Requires unusually high team stability (→ no documentation)
  - Cannot work if finding a suitable architecture is difficult
  - Is applicable only to projects of modest size

- Provides a good overview of the XP-related literature until 2002

- Many other criticisms of XP exist
  - Many of them unbalanced, half-ignorant, and highly polemical
  - Refer to Barry Boehm's balanced judgement as a primary source
When you should not use XP

(These points are from Kent Beck's XP book)

- Too-big teams
  - XP works for teams of 10, can work for teams of 20
  - For teams of 100, integration (that is, design coordination) will become a bottleneck

- Unbelieving customers and organizations
  - XP requires full concentration, it cannot work in a culture of continuous extensive overtime
  - Customers who insist of a thick specification document break the whole XP process

- Change-hampering technology or constraints
  - e.g. replacing a database that absolutely must be compatible with 164 different applications
  - e.g. working with technology that makes builds take 10 hours
  - e.g. working with insufficient opportunity for immediate communication
Introducing XP

• It is difficult to introduce all XP practices at once
  • Most need to be learned!

• They can be introduced one-by-one as follows:
  • Find the worst problem/weakness of the current process
  • Select the XP practice that can help most with this problem
  • Introduce it until the problem is much reduced
  • Find the now-worst problem and start over

• Good candidates for first practice to introduce:
  • Sit Together
  • Quarterly Cycles (→ Planning Game)
  • Continuous Build & Testing
XP roles

- **Developer**
  - the only role with always more than one representative

- **Customer**
  - usually (but not necessarily) a business-only person

- **Tester**
  - helps the customer write function tests

- **Coach**
  - responsible for process as a whole; guides the team to proper XP

- **Tracker**
  - collects and feeds back estimates and plan tracking

- **Customer, Tester, Tracker** need not be full-time and thus may double as developer
A survey of XP projects


A survey of more-or-less-XP projects.
Characterization of respondents and projects:
- 47 respondents
  - reached via mailing lists, the XP 2001 conference, and direct contacts
- Location: 25% US, 20% D, 13% CH, 13% UK, 29% other
- Size (persons): 85% had 10 or fewer (36% had 5 or fewer)
- Domain: 29% web, 16% financial, 16% tool, 38% other
- Language: 73% Java, 18% C++, 11% Smalltalk
- Customers: 56% involved more than one group of customers
A survey of XP projects (2)

Main results:

- More than 90% of the projects were considered successful
  - although 51% used XP for the first time and
    although 51% had no external coach
    - but 69% had filled the coach role
  - although only 42% percent had teams of "all high" competence
  - although several were traditional projects in jeopardy that had been switched to XP
- 100% of XP users wanted to use it again
- Each practice was used by only some of the teams
  ("used" meaning 3-9 on a 0-9 usage intensity scale)
  - 98% Testing, 95% Simple Design, 91% Coding Standards
  - 89% Collective Ownership, 89% Pair Programming, 85% Continuous Integration,
    82% 40-hour week, 80% Planning Game,
  - 54% Metaphor, 53% On-site Customer
A survey of XP projects (3)

- **Success factors and risks:**
  - Testing was usually seen as a major success factor
  - as was Pair Programming.
  - 30% saw lack of on-site customer as a main project risk

- **Perceived improvements due to XP:**
  - 74% said their project was "much better" on schedule with XP than with previous methods
    - meaning answers +5 and +4 on a scale from -5 to +5
    - only 5% saw no improvement
  - Also 74% found work satisfaction "much better"
  - Also 74% found software quality "much better"

- **Most difficulties were due to psychological barriers:**
  - skeptical management,
  - refusal to send on-site customer,
  - developers not accepting Pair Programming
CMMI process areas in XP

Mark Paulk: "Extreme Program'g from a CMM perspective", IEEE Software, Nov. 2001

• Level 2: Managed
  • + Requirements Mgmt
  • + Project Planning
  • + Project Monitoring&Control
  • - Supplier Agreement Mgmt
  • (Measurement and Analysis)
  • o (Process and) Product Quality Assurance
  • + Configuration Management

• Level 3: Defined
  • (Req's. Development)
  • + Technical Solution
  • (Product Integration)
  • + Verification
  • (Validation)
  • o Organizational Process Focus
  • o Organ'l Process Definition
  • o Organizational Training
  • + Integrated Project Mgmt.
  • (Risk Management)
  • (Decision Analysis and Resolution)

• Level 4: Quantitatively Manag'd
  • - Organizational Process Performance
  • - Quantitative Project Mgmt

• Level 5: Optimizing
  • - Organizational Innovation and Deployment
  • o Causal Analysis and Resolution

+ usually available
  o avail. in reduced form
- usually mostly absent
CMMI versus XP

Paulk's summary:

- XP generally focuses on technical work
  - whereas the CMM generally focuses on management issues.
- Both methods are concerned with "culture"
- The CMM element most lacking in XP is "institutionalization"
  - Establishing a culture of "this is how we do things around here"
  - XP largely ignores the infrastructure that the CMM identifies as key to institutionalizing good practices
- As systems grow, some XP practices become more difficult to implement
- Modern software projects should capture XP values
- CMM tells organizations what to do but does not say how
  - XP is a set of best practices with specific how-to information
Further resources

- http://www.agilealliance.com
  - A community portal around the agile approach.
  - Has lots of comments on XP.
- http://www.xprogramming.com
  - Ron Jeffries
  - A section of the original wiki.
  - About many aspects of XP and its development.
Summary

- XP is a set of practices that mutually reinforce and support one another
- It is based on the basic values of
  - intensive and direct communication,
  - simplicity in design and process,
  - early and constant feedback
  - courage in allowing things to change
  - mutual respect
- Successfully using XP requires a highly competent and disciplined team
Thank you!