

***Thanks to everyone
who attended my talk.***

*These slides are the compact
version, containing all the text
but none of the pretty pictures –
making the file one tenth the
size, and no more or less
comprehensible than it already
is without me on hand to talk
about what's on the slides!*

Santa Claus
and
Other
Methodologies

ACCU 2008
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'Ologies'

He gets an Ology and says he's failed!

You get an Ology, you're a Scientist!

Picture of Maureen Lipman as 'Beattie' in the 'exam results' BT advert.

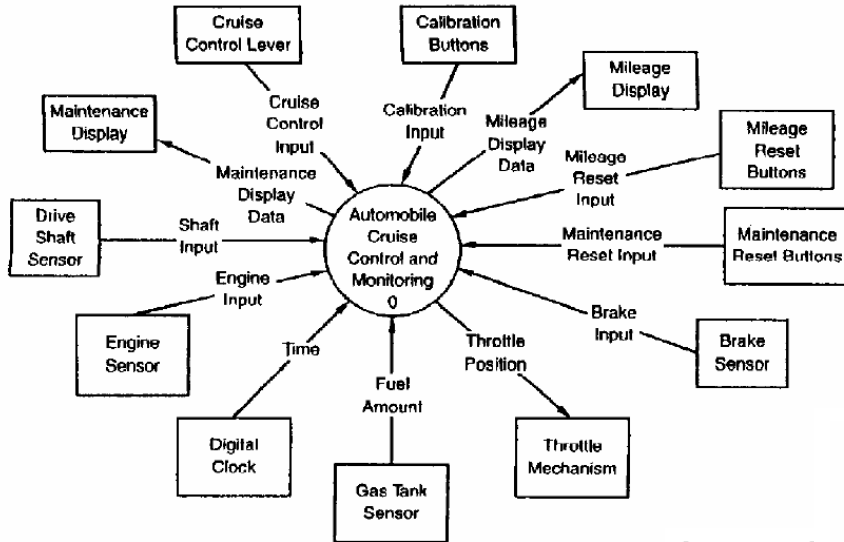
methodology, *n.*

Originally: the branch of knowledge that deals with method generally or with the methods of a particular discipline or field of study; (*arch.*) a treatise or dissertation on method; (*Bot.*) systematic classification (*obs. rare*). Subsequently also: the study of the direction and implications of empirical research, or of the suitability of the techniques employed in it; (more generally) **a method or body of methods used in a particular field of study or activity.**

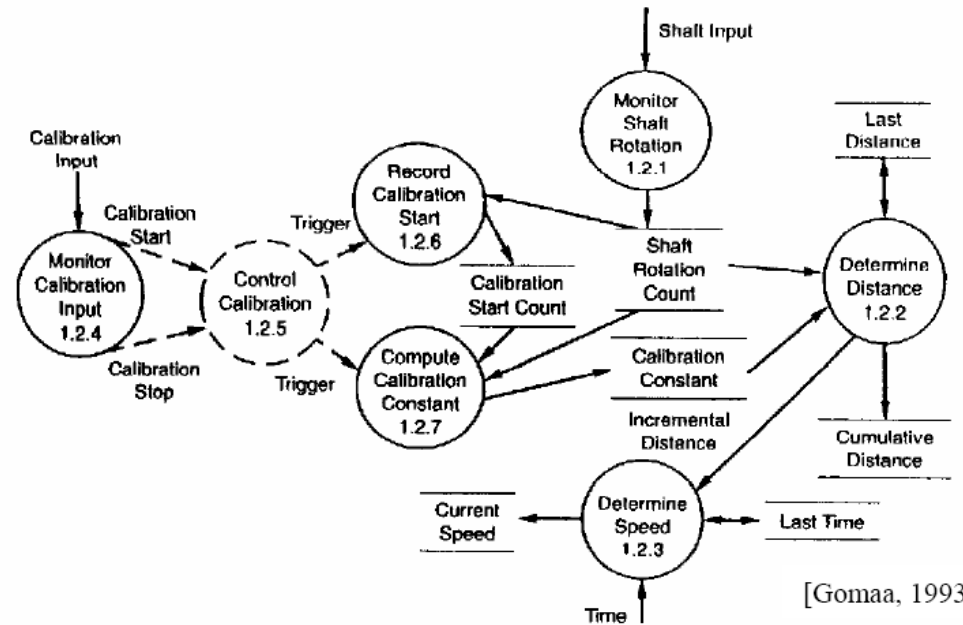
Oxford English Dictionary, 2001

Picture of radar system

RTSASD



[Gomaa, 1993]



[Gomaa, 1993]

RTSASD: my mileage (1)

- Mapping problem domain functions to functional modules
 - Implementation focused
 - Not the same as ‘program close to the problem domain’ (*Hunt&Thomas,1999*)
 - Limits potential expressiveness of analysis

RTSASD: my mileage (2)

- Flouts ‘there are no final decisions’
(Hunt&Thomas,1999)
 - Premature constraints on design
 - Understandable reaction in waterfall

RTSASD: my mileage (3)

- Mapping to well-structured code
 - No support for package partitioning
 - Requires ‘magic happens here’ step
 - One way

*Picture of Sooty
with magic wand*

RTSASD: my mileage (4)

- Tail wagging the dog

TeamWork, *n.*

A tool which causes the
Team a lot of **Work**

*Cartoon of a dog
being wagged by
its tail!*

RTSASD: my mileage (5)

- + Facilitated collaboration
- + Training given
 - Noddy examples
 - Not taken as far as code
- + Serious attempt to address an endemic problem

Picture of Noddy

GDPM: Goal Directed Project Management

Picture of Lego car

GDPM: my mileage (1)

- Powerless against ‘excessive faith in code reuse’ (Ozarin, 2007)
 - Focus on milestone misses big picture
 - The Plan over *Planning* (misinterpretation of method?)

GDPM: my mileage (2)

- + Training given
 - Spurious exercises
- + Investment in consultancy
 - Hierarchy-bound

Dilbert 'etch-a-sketch laptop' cartoon

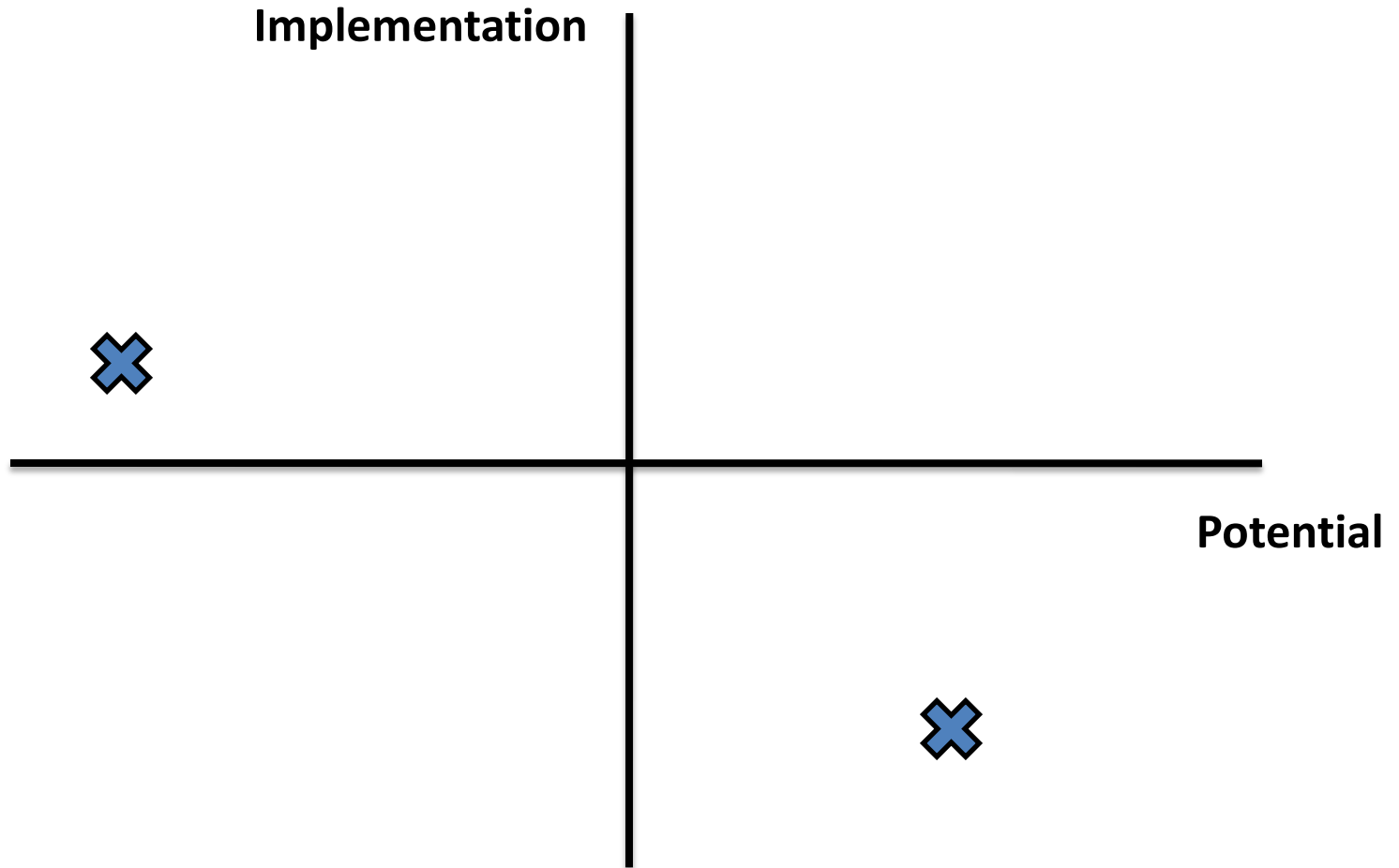
GDPM: my mileage (3)

- + Extended communication
 - + Frequent
 - + Interdisciplinary
 - + Respectful of expertise

“No matter how well thought out it is,
and regardless of which ‘best practices’ it
includes, no method can replace
thinking”

Hunt & Thomas, 1999

Failure modes



meretricious, *adj.* and *n.*

adj.

Alluring by false show; showily or superficially attractive but having in reality no value or integrity.

n.

With *the*. That which is meretricious about a person, creative work, etc.

Oxford English Dictionary, 2001

Cartoon of cat herder: 'I think I'd rather manage a large software development project'

Marks

- Budget holders
- Seekers of the 'One True Way'
- Latest thing
- Grand plan

Hit & miss implementation

Picture of Owl, Piglet & Michel Foucault

Picture of Muppets

What problem
are you trying
to solve?

Cardboard Programmers and Rubber Ducks

Photo of my duck

Visualising

It is a principle of methodology that the power of a method is inversely proportional to its generality... To be powerful, a method must exploit the problem's features very minutely. Because problem features vary widely, we need a repertoire of methods, each suitable for problems of a particular class.

Jackson, 1995

Some questions to ask

- How does this address our specific problem?
- What does this step/artefact/meeting/etc DO for us?
- What demands does it make of us? (eg money, roles, tools)
- Can we integrate the tools smoothly with what we have?
- Does it impede continuous improvement? (Is it the end or the beginning?)

Putting your answer together

- Favourite authors
 - Active reading
- Stories and adaptations
 - Books & screenplays
 - Myths and realities
 - Manageable complexity
 - Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy
 - Local stories

Lies to Children

Picture of Discworld

Picture of child about to make it possible to implement the fireplace process of the Santa Claus methodology by remodelling the lounge with a sledgehammer

*Picture of Santa as
milk drinker*

*Picture of Santa as
sherry drinker*

“Some of my reading was business-related, about the principles of successful living, some of it is understanding the brain and how it works and quite a lot has been more philosophical.

I have, for example, learnt a lot from the doctrines of Buddhism ... I have just been finding a direction, learning different ways of looking at life and taking bits I could use and discarding bits I could not.”

Jonny Wilkinson

The Times, 2007

*Picture of Sigmund
Freud*

Picture of Carl Jung

“There is some resistance in our industry to the idea that people factors dominate in software development.

... I kept discovering that successful teams were still delivering software without using our latest energy-saving ideas.

... the opposite correlation held: Purely people factors project trajectories quite well, overriding choice of process or technology.

I found no interesting correlation ... among processes, languages or tools and project success.”

Cockburn, 2002

*Picture of Santa dressed as Easter Bunny
to illustrate integration of elements
from different stories*

Do you have...

- Insights from a fresh perspective?
- War stories?
- Success stories?
- Strategies to share?

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