Book review

The Rational Unified Process Made Easy: A Practitioner's Guide to the RUP
by Per Kroll and Philippe Kruchten

Addison-Wesley, 2003
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Finally, a book on RUP® (Rational Unified Process®) to my taste! Why am I so enthusiastic?

First, as any process engineer who has been involved in a RUP implementation, customization, or training project can tell you, certain critical questions will inevitably arise as you proceed:

- How can I determine the number and duration of iterations in my project?
- How can I plan the content of an iteration?
- What does it mean to baseline an iteration at the end of the Elaboration phase?

In addition, team members will inevitably have misconceptions that the process engineer must be prepared to explain away. People will say things like: "Oh, I get it! In the Inception phase you do all the requirements, in Elaboration you do the high-level design, in Construction you write the code, and in Transition you finish the testing," or "RUP is a heavyweight and bureaucratic process."

One reason I like this book so much is that it provides simple, clear answers to such questions and remarks. For example, Part I has a whole chapter dedicated to explaining how to plan an iterative project, and it gives insight into how to determine the number and duration of iterations. Another chapter on the Elaboration phase clearly defines what is involved in baselining an architecture as well as designing, developing, and testing it.
Part II further clarifies some of the points covered in Part I, explains the spirit of each RUP phase, and emphasizes that, contrary to common belief, the differences between RUP and Waterfall phases are far more significant than simple differences in naming. The chapter comparing RUP with other process frameworks and methods such as CMM, CMMI, agile methods, and so forth, clearly explains that RUP is an adaptable process framework and shows how it can provide just the right level of ceremony for different projects.

I've described just a few of the insights you will find in this excellent book - I hope it is enough to whet your appetite.

Another reason I like this book is that it operates effectively on two levels. A book about a process like RUP has a difficult mission: First, it must provide enough conceptual information to permit readers to fully understand the process and understand how they might apply and adapt it to their specific context. Second, on a more practical level, it must also provide enough real-life examples to illustrate these key concepts and actually help make process instantiation easier.

Per Kroll and Philippe Kruchten manage to fulfill this complex mission in *The Rational Unified Process Made Easy*. They clearly explain and detail not only the spirit and purpose of RUP, but also how to implement and customize the process framework. And they illustrate all of these explanations with examples drawn from many different kinds of projects. For example, illustrations for RUP phases come from three different projects -- Ganymede, Mars, and Jupiter -- each with its own unique properties. Project Ganymede represents green-field development for a small application, project Mars illustrates green-field development for a larger application, and project Jupiter represents an evolution cycle for a large application.

The last part of the book is a great practical reference that describes five of the main roles in a RUP project: project manager, analyst, architect, developer, and tester. It gives clear, comprehensive guidelines on how to play these roles effectively and how to improve your skills so you can perform your role more efficiently. Now, for the first time I can confidently refer colleagues to a book that will help them understand their role in a RUP project.

Because it delivers effectively on both a conceptual and practical level, this is a multi-use book. You can read it straight through from beginning to end, or you can use it as a reference when you participate in or direct a RUP project. If you're a practitioner seeking to build a solid understanding of RUP as well as reliable ways to implement it and avoid common pitfalls, then this book will be a great companion for you.

-Celso Gonzalez
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