

A U S T R A L I A N
S O F T W A R E M E T R I C S A S S O C I A T I O N
N E W S L E T T E R N U M B E R F O U R

A joint publication

by

ASMA and ASMA (Victoria)

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EDITORIAL

This will, hopefully, be the last Newsletter for 1990 in its current format. The final newsletter will be a 'bumper' edition.

For 1991, with your, our members', help we will try to make this Newsletter and ASMA truly National. There is growing interest in both Canberra and Brisbane.

This month's meeting (9/10/90) in Sydney will be at yet again another venue. This time at Westpac in Martin Place - it it proves to be congenial, it will the regular venue for 1991. The guest speaker Mr Bernard Wong will tell us how to write and target surveys. This is an area very important to ASMA as we try to build up knowledge of Metrics usage. Last month's Panel Session was very successful and another two have been planned for next year.

The Victorian Chapter will hold its next meeting on 24th October at the Shell Theatre. Implementing Measurement Practices is the theme. Membership is continuing to grow (an extra eight since last month) showing the need for a professional organisation with a focus on metrics in all aspects of software.

A special request to all ASMA members; articles of any length on any area of metrics will be most welcomed by the editor of the Newsletter. This is your Newsletter and it needs your active support to make it one that everyone will look forward to receiving and reading.

FUNCTION POINTS in the ESTIMATION and EVALUATION
of the SOFTWARE PROCESS

Graham Low and Ross Jeffery

This paper appeared in IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering, January 1990. The following is the Abstract.

Measures of project size are a prerequisite to successful quantitative management of software projects. One such measure that is gaining acceptance with commercial organisations is function points.

This paper reports the results of an empirical research project into the consistency and limitations of function points as an 'a priori' measure of system size compared to the traditional lines of code measure.

The paper concludes that function points are a more consistent 'a priori' measure of system size. The results also indicate that the function point estimate of size is lower for analysts experienced both in software development and in function point estimation.

OCTOBER'S MEETING (NSW)

The featured speaker at the October 9th general meeting will be **Mr Bernard Wong** of the Consulting Division of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Mr Wong has agreed to speak to us on the topic of **Surveys**. His talk will address such issues as determining the target group for the survey, compilation of the survey, carrying out the survey, analysing the results and where to get help.

Mr Wong's talk will be of interest to anyone in Software Development who is interested in measuring client satisfaction. Many I.S. groups now have a client/supplier relationship with their users. In such a relationship, the level of Client Satisfaction with services and products offered is an essential element of performance that should be measured. Surveys offer a way to measure satisfaction with some degree of objectivity. Mr Wong has a particular expertise in this area as, prior to joining the ABS, he spent a number of years with a large multinational organisation that produced goods for the consumer market.

Mike Berry

STANDARDS GROUP

Chairman - Mr Hugo Rehesaar, Phone: 268 6167
Fax: 268 8094

Preliminary findings of the Standards survey were presented at the August meeting and met with an enthusiastic response. We are currently attempting to increase the number of responses from around 25 to at least 50. We feel that number will make the results more credible. A paper will then be prepared on the findings.

The Estimates Group is lending a hand by combining our survey with theirs for distribution to Victoria. Many thanks.

If anyone is interested in joining the Standards Working Group just phone me (Hugo) on 268 6167 or fax on 268 8094.

DATA COLLECTION GROUP

Chairman - Dr Graham Low, Phone: 697 4638
Fax: 662 4061

Three survey questionnaires have been completed and are currently on trial at the Water Board and AGC. They are concerned with new projects, enhancements, and defect maintenance.

We are expecting that the trial questionnaires will be returned by early October, and this will enable the preparation of the final questionnaire for circulation to all members of ASMA early November.

- participate in a management evaluation of an existing metrics program.

THE PRESENTER

Dr June Verner, Senior Lecturer in the School of Information Systems, University of New South Wales, has research interests in the Software Engineering area. Her research is mainly concerned with software productivity, software cost estimation, project management and software metrics, and their application in software development environments including Fourth Generation, CASE and Object Oriented.

Dr Verner spent 1989 in the United Kingdom working with the ESPRIT II research and development project MERMAID (Metrication and Resource Modelling AID) which is concerned with developing advanced automated software project management tools. She has published papers which report on software cost and schedule estimation including 4GL development, risk analysis, software size metrics, CASE metrics, incremental development and prototyping.

COST: \$300 (\$250 for ASMA members)

MORE DETAILS: Hugo Rehesaar Phone 268 6167
Fax 268 8094

WORKING GROUP NEWS (NSW)**ESTIMATING GROUP**

Chairman - Mr Terry Lynch, Phone: 284 7329
Fax: 284 7203

During the past month, the Estimates Working Group has been beavering away at our three current projects. Just to jog your memory what they are, we are currently working on extending our survey audience to Victoria: a paper on the various Function Point counting techniques and the estimation tools survey and evaluation.

The Survey. Since last reporting, a database has been established with the survey results we have to date. In addition, the Team is working on a task to merge the Estimates and Standards surveys to use as a mailout to a second wave of interested parties as well as for distribution to Victoria.

Function Point Paper. Andy Doldissen, who was originally preparing this paper, has been seconded into the Qantek Think Tank and as such had his time available to help us seriously curtailed. However, we see his task as being important and fortunately Dick Peachey from the Commonwealth Bank has offered to complete the task.

Estimation Tools. Research work has begun on this project. Since last reporting, we have compiled a list of estimating tools. This was made easier by our Victorian counterparts, who in their last newsletter published a list of such tools. We will be providing them with an update on some tools not listed such as CLAIR and N*SITE. It has also meant that we can now switch to reviewing each tool in turn. It is planned over the coming months to present a paper in each newsletter on the results of evaluation studies conducted on the various tools.

Estimation Methodology. Recently, we have been receiving requests from a number of organisations requesting information regarding estimation methodologies. In response to this demand, a working party has been established to investigate the feasibility of developing such a product.

On a lighter note, the Working Group welcomed Melissa Fong to the Team. Melissa is a systems analyst with Zurich Insurance. As you can see, we have a number of interesting projects underway and new members are more than welcome. We meet at 5:00pm on the first Thursday of every month at the 12th Floor, St Martins Tower, 31 Market St, Sydney. So if you would like to learn more about us, just come along to our next meeting or call me (Terry) on 284 7357 or our secretary, Steve Harris, on 437 5511.

METRICS FOR MANAGERS

A Course for Project Managers and their Managers.

Date: 21st November, 1990.

Venue: City Tattersalls Club, Pitt St, Sydney.

Presenter: Dr June Verner

Sponsor: ASMA

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this intensive course, managers concerned with software, should be able to:

- identify the purpose for which metrics are needed, and hence the strategic role of the software metrics.
- be aware of the most important types of metrics in common use and know their main advantages and disadvantages.
- take an informed part in the selection of metrics to fit particular purposes.
- be aware of who is affected by metrics and how, so that everyone can get something worthwhile out of a metrics program.
- participate in planning the effective introduction of metrics or the enhancement of an existing metrics program, including the matching of metrics to organisational maturity.

AUGUST'S MEETING (NSW)

It was decided to try a different format for the general ASMA meeting in August. Rather than have a guest speaker, an opportunity was provided for general discussion around two questions which had been raised by members of the Metrics Association as being particularly difficult. As usual, the meeting commenced with brief reports from the three working groups. These all showed that the groups have been very successful during the course of the year and that we should expect to see some substantial results by the beginning of 1991.

The venue provided at the Water Board, along with the generous refreshments, created an environment which was conducive to the sharing of experiences. The two questions addressed during the course of the evening were:-

1. How do you ensure the consistency of Function Point counts?
2. Is the original Albrecht method still valid or should we use alternatives like Feature Points and IFPUG Version 3?

At the end of the meeting, it was the general conclusion of all who had attended that we needed more opportunity in 1991 for this type of meeting at which we could learn from the experiences of others.

Ross Jeffery

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VICTORIAN CHAPTER OF ASMA

ASMA Victoria is now almost four months old. In this time they have managed to form a steering committee to handle some of the administrative aspects of running the Association, but attempted to devote most of their time to tackling software measurement and control issues of interest to the members.

Copies of past presentations may be obtained by contacting Phil Hain on (03) 612 1666 and leaving details with the Receptionist.

All enquiries regarding the Victorian Chapter are to be directed to:

Phil Haine
 1 Southeast Blvde, Level 8,
 Riverside Quay,
 South Melbourne, Victoria, 3205

Tel: (03) 612 1666

Additional Represented organisations since the previous listing are:

Australian Airlines
 Bank of Melbourne Ltd
 Board of Works
 DMR
 Ferntree
 IBM
 Logica
 Mark Dewhirst