

Good requirements practices are neither necessary nor sufficient

AlanM.Davis - DidarZowghi

The title of this essay was selected to create controversy among the readers and perhaps cause some of you to become defensive. However, we will try to go about demonstrating why we sincerely believe that good requirements practices are indeed neither necessary nor sufficient, even though we are devoted to the field of requirements as active researchers and practitioners. In fact, after you read this article, we trust that you too will say, "Well, of course, I agree with you."

(...)

Conclusions

- *Do not discard a good requirements practice just because your project failed.* We have seen too many practitioners adopt some "good" requirements practice only to discover that the resulting product failed, and the practice was subsequently abandoned. Without careful and objective post-mortem analyses, you have no way of knowing that the practice in question is the cause of the failure.
 - *Long-term results are more important than short-term results, even though the short-term results are easier to measure.* Do not fall victim to goals displacement. Do not define a successful requirements practice as being one that provides only short-term results (e.g., one that increases the number of requirements agreed to per hour). This could motivate you to permanently adopt a practice that helps in the short-term but causes product failure in the long term.
 - *Requirements are but a small piece of a large whole* -Applying good requirements practices will not guarantee you success, nor will applying bad requirements practices guarantee failure.
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