

Facts and Fallacies of Software Engineering

Robert L. Glass

Fact 39. Postdelivery reviews are important and seldom performed.

Marianne Corvellec, McGill University

May 6, 2013

Fact 39

Postdelivery reviews (some call them “retrospectives”) are generally acknowledged to be important, both from the point of view of determining customer satisfaction and from the point of view of process improvement. But most organizations do not do postdelivery reviews.

Take any software product.

Admittedly

- New release does have problems: Users will somewhat suffer.
- Process did have problems: Developers have somewhat suffered.

In reality, lessons are not learned.

- Programmers move from one project to the next with no room for retrospection.
- Unsurprisingly, same mistakes are made over and over again.
- Fresh, practice-related material is lacking in software engineering textbooks.

Overall experience level in the software field is non-increasing.

Conflict to resolve, optimum to find between:

- Wisdom from older methodologies vs new/popular methodologies
- Developing better vs faster
- Working smarter vs harder

The very industry that can do so well in knowledge management —retrieving, processing, managing all sorts of data— cannot seem to be good at collecting and using reports from a typical project, keeping a dynamic record of what-works or what-does-not and what-you-can-do-about-it.

References (Hope)

- Experience Factory
- Literature based on practice