Wide gap amongst developers' perception

Business

Even within the same IT Department, there are conflicting views regarding the importance of UML tools for Model-Driven Development, DeveloperEye study reveals.

.. London, UK, 20th April 2005 – MediaDev carried out a pan-European study to investigate the usage and importance of Unified Modeling Language (UML) tools within Software Development processes. UML is the industry-standard language for specifying, visualizing, constructing, and documenting the artifacts of software systems. UML can therefore be classified as a Model-Driven Development, where modeling is the designing of software applications before coding.

Developers and Development Teams in France, Germany, Italy and the UK were interviewed to investigate the importance of UML tools. In total, there were 500 participated in the UML survey. Awareness of UML toolsInitially, MediaDev were looking to get a feeling for the awareness of UML within the European Development Communities. Not surprisingly, there was a strong awareness of UML (97%). Even though UML was a familiar tool for model driven system development, only 56% of the respondents claimed to be using UML for their development projects. The reason for this can be seen in relation to the size of the company.

UML tools are most frequently used for large enterprise applications, and the respondents of the survey were a mixture of small, mid-sized and large organisations. Popular UML toolsMost popular UML tools areIBMRational, Borland, Jdeveloper, Netweaver, Open Source, Poseidon, MicrosoftVisio and

Together Soft. However, IBM Rational was the most used UML solution with 57% of the respondents stated that they were using the IBM tool.

IBM Rational is widely used across the European continent, whereas Borland, Jdeveloper and Netweaver were most popular amongst the German developers. Microsoft Vision was also popular across the European development communities. The study also revealed that UML is often used in combination with other development tools. Thus, one of the most prominent solutions was that of IBM Rational solution, where 88% of its users stated that they use this solution alone. Other common UML tools on the market are ARTiSAN's Real-time Studio, I-Logix Rhapsody, MetaMatrix MetaBase Modeler, Telelogic's TAU Developer and TAU Architect, No Magic's MagicDraw UML and Embarcadero Describe.

Acquiring of UML tools in the futureFor the respondents that do not use a UML tools, MediaDev was interested to find out if there were any intensions of acquiring one in the short/mid/long term. The majority (53%) stated that there are no plans to acquire any tools in the short/mid or long term. 14% claimed to be looking for a UML tool in the mid term, whereas 33% intended to acquire one in the long term. Out of the participants who were looking for an UML tool, 68% said that they have not selected a solution at this stage. However, the respondents that are in the process of considering a solution, mentioned IBM Rational Rose, Borland and Microsoft Visio as the ones that they are willing to consider. An essential tool? To investigate the importance of UML within the development processes, the respondents were asked if they regarded UML as an essential tool in their development processes.

Furthermore, participants also had to disclose if they envisaged this importance increasing or declining in the future. Cost was another important aspect with regards to UML. A number of participants stated that they could not justify purchasing a UML solution. Others claimed that due to the high costs, they were not able to utilise a UML tool for their development projects. The majority said that UML tools are not considered as an important part of their development process.

More specifically, 41% of the developers that participated in the survey claimed that they did not regard UML as important to the way they work. 29% regarded the UML tool as important, but emphasised that it was not essential to the development processes. 30% viewed UML as an essential development tool, and that the tool was an important part of their development processes. Conflicting viewsDepending on the complexity of the software they are developing, the study revealed that there are conflicting views even within the same department when it comes to the importance of UML. The various views regarding UML's significant within the development process, disclose that UML views and preferences is a highly individual matter.