Journal of Web Engineering, Vol. 1, No.2 (2003) 183-184

BOOK REVIEW

on

Web Engineering:
Managing Diversity and Complexity of Web Application Development
by San Murugesan and Yogesh Deshpande (Eds.)
Springer-Verlag 2001
paperback $44.00 (357 pages) ISBN: 3540421300

This book is one of the first (and certainly will not be the last) to attempt to define the scope of the emerging field of Web Engineering (WE). It is an outstanding collection of readings important to WE practitioners as well as anyone seeking to understand what WE is about.

The editors have drawn extensively from their research experience in WE at the University of Western Sydney. Their research program was one of the first in the world to recognize the importance of WE and has provided a basis for other WE research. The editors were also responsible for initiating an ongoing successful series of tutorials and workshops on Web Engineering held at several International World Wide Web conferences and International Conferences on Software Engineering. A number of the contributions in this book originated at these workshops.

The book is evolutionary in its organization beginning with a discussion of why a new field of Web Engineering is necessary. This is immediately followed by an argument to those critics of Software Engineering (SE) who would contend that SE (and therefore WE) is not truly an engineering discipline. After a description of the scope of WE as a multidisciplinary field, the book is now ready to discuss details.

The articles in the book are divided into five specific perspectives,

- Web-Based Systems Development: Process and Methodology
- Managing Information on the Web
- Development Tools, Skills and Case Studies
- Performance, Testing and Web Metrics
- Web Maintenance

The editors have done a very good job of blending these perspectives into a unified description of Web Engineering. The contributions selected by the editors for each perspective accurately support the importance of that perspective. The book could perhaps benefit from more case studies to demonstrate not only the importance of these perspectives but also how they might be addressed.

This is not a “how-to” book but rather one with a strong academic and research inclination. It is more accurately addressed to WE researchers rather than practitioners (i.e., Web engineers). As WE

matures, we will hopefully begin to see books for addressing more tools and techniques and less theory.

Critics of Web Engineering are likely to use this book to argue an apparent lack of focus in WE. When the editors list the disciplinary components of WE and the scope of WE activities, it is easy to feel that "everything but the kitchen sink" has been included. Future work will have to focus on those components and activities that are of primary importance.

This book is recommended to anyone who believes that the design, development, and support of Web sites should be a planned and systematic exercise whether they call that exercise Web Engineering or not.

Bebo White
SLAC Computing Services
P.O. Box 20450 MailStop 97
Stanford, CA 94309
E-mail: bebo@SLAC.Stanford.EDU