

Learning and Celebration of Software Engineering History and Impact

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I am wearing my hats of being the SIGSOFT History Liaison and an ACM History Committee Member to write this letter. The main purpose of this letter to inform you that we will initiate the column of “History and Impact” in SEN starting from 2015, as I briefly announced in the FSE 2014 SIGSOFT town hall meeting. To make this column a success, your helps and contributions will be strongly needed. In particular, you are strongly encouraged and welcome to submit contributed articles, suggest discussion topics, etc. to this column. Please send emails (to taoxie@illinois.edu) with your submissions or ideas.

The scope of the column is very broad: any topics related to history and impact of software engineering research, practice, and education will be within the scope. Example contributions can be on the formal and heavyweight side, similar to those publications (<http://www.sigsoft.org/impact/publications.htm>) resulted from the IMPACT project. The IMPACT project was a special SIGSOFT initiative started many years ago to provide a solid and scholarly assessment of the impact that software engineering research has had on software engineering practice [1]. Example contributions can be also on the informal and lightweight side, similar to those blogs from BLOG@CACM (<http://cacm.acm.org/blogs/blog-cacm>) and opinion articles or interviews from Opinion@CACM (<http://cacm.acm.org/opinion>).

Of special interests are reflection and experience sharing about “stories behind the scene” of a paper, a tool/infrastructure, etc., (well) known to the software engineering community. Such reflection and experience sharing can be written by the original authors of such paper/tool/infrastructure, or even can be written by others who interview the original authors or gather reliable information about such paper/tool/infrastructure.

Back in 2011, I co-organized a Symposium on Learning from Experiences in Software Engineering (SLESE) co-located with FSE 2012 (<https://sites.google.com/site/slesesymposium/>). It was a wonderful event where a group of invited distinguished researchers shared their lessons learned from their research experiences in developing a research project, area, or agenda, including lessons learned from their research-development process, strive for high-impact research. Our column of “History and Impact” also welcomes such nature of contributed articles.

It has been observed that computer scientists are hypercritical, as shown in NSF reviewer ratings of computer science proposals in contrast to other research fields’ proposals [2]. Such hypercritical altitude can pose non-trivial barriers for the healthy growth and advancement of our research field. Some other phenomena related to this can be insufficient nominations of colleagues for various awards, insufficient appreciation or celebration of many great impacts that have been happening in our research field: research impact, practice impact, educational impact, societal impact, etc. I hope this column of “History and Impact” can play a positive role in alleviating some of such issues. In summary, let’s learn and celebrate together the history and impact of software engineering,

via the form of this column and other forms that you can think of! Again, please send emails (to taoxie@illinois.edu) with your submissions or ideas.

References

1. Leon J. Osterweil, Carlo Ghezzi, Jeff Kramer, Alexander L. Wolf. Determining the Impact of Software Engineering Research on Practice. IEEE Computer, Volume 41, Issue 3, March 2008 Page(s):39 - 49.
2. Jeannette M. Wing. Yes, Computer Scientists Are Hypercritical. BLOG@CACM. October 6, 2011 <http://cacm.acm.org/blogs/blog-cacm/134743-yes-computer-scientists-are-hypercritical/>