(U) Letter to the Editor: More on Tool Development

FROM: the editor
Unknown
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(U//FOUO) Here's a final reader opinion on the "Roadblocks to Change" article :

(U//FOUO) I'm not surprised about the content of this article. As an analyst I have been on the receiving end of both good and bad developments and the good ones tend to have the following characteristics:

1. They start small with incremental improvements. The large 5 year economic plans didn't work for the Soviet economy and they don't work for tool developments. In the large efforts, serving the project seems to become the goal and the actual product becomes secondary. In addition, large efforts lack the agility to cope with changing targets and technology. It is simply not possible to produce a requirements document that predicts all future needs.

2. They are analyst-directed. The best tools are developed when developers sit with the analysts everyday and see what the analysts really do. The developers take what they learn and the analyst comments and make the improvements without the need for users to fill out lots and paperwork and justifications.

3. They use developer creativity. No customer went to Thomas Edison with the requirements for the light bulb, he saw the need and used his creativity. When item 2 happens, developers see analyst needs and can bring their talents to bear. And the incremental improvement concept in item 1 allows the developer to make it happen.

4. They are user-focused. Research is great, but there is a big difference between a research-based tool concept and a real tool that analysts can use. The 80% solution often means that the developers have done the fun part, leaving the users to suffer the 20%.

-- Anonymous

(U) See also previous Letters to the Editor on this topic.

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