



(U//FOUO) Letter to the Editor: A Tool Developer's Perspective on 'Roadblocks to Change'

FROM: the editor
Unknown
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(U//FOUO) Here's one more reader comment on the topic of tool development (prompted by the ["Roadblocks to Change"](#) article), from the vantage point of a tool developer:

(U//FOUO) The January 10, 2006 article "Roadblocks to Change," was interesting to me only in that it restated many of the already obvious cultural currents we tool developers already know too well. As a tool developer, supporter, maintainer and marketer (for lack of a better word) for a dozen years now, I have seen the resistance to change and reluctance to adopt technology at every level of the agency. Management is only one facet of the problem. Human nature is the fundamental aspect to the challenge we face to deliver new capabilities to the work force.

(U//FOUO) Analysts have grown accustomed to, and are exceptionally skilled at, taking comparatively inferior and/or obsolete products and forcing them, despite the odds, to make them perform incredible feats. As such, these end-users have become developers in their own right and take pride in these legacy systems which have outlived their usefulness in the face of newer technology. Under these circumstances, the deck is stacked against us as we venture out to them and offer promises of "a better way to work." How could we possibly expect to receive anything but skepticism and entrenchment as a response from these analysts, when they not only have something in their hands they believe works, but is also, to some degree, "resculpted" by their own hands after their own specific needs?

(S//SI) Stating this problem is only climbing the mountain to the summit to get a better view of the situation. Once on top of it, the other half of the project is getting back down again and making solutions that work and are adequately implemented. While it is true that a sound and thorough requirements-elicitation phase is essential to get the new product off the ground toward development, this interaction with the customer must be an ongoing communication throughout the design, development and delivery of the new systems. This is something that is usually lacking here, or at best, confined to an extreme minority of the stakeholders.

(U//FOUO) My office develops tools for the needs of approximately 4000 community end users, but we tend to get input and feedback from the same 15 - 20 individuals year after year. We need more buy-in if we are truly to give the majority something that can be readily accepted with satisfaction. Doing so will not only instill trust in the tool-development process, but also speed up the delivery and reduce costs. These are mainstays of the Software Engineering discipline to which this agency has devoted a huge amount of time, money and effort to promote. So far, even after 5 years of trying, the culture hasn't changed much. But I remain hopeful and

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(U) Roadblocks to Change

1. [Study Points Out 'Roadblocks to Change'](#)
2. [Letters to the Editor : About 'Roadblocks to Change'](#)
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4. [Letter to the Editor : A Tool Developer's Perspective on 'Roadblocks to Change'](#)
5. [Letter to the Editor : Getting Buy-In for Tool Development](#)
6. [Letters to the Editor : Still More on Tool Development](#)

optimistic that it can shift toward optimization.

-- [REDACTED]

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

-- [About "Roadblocks to Change"](#)

-- [More on Tool Development](#)

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