

9/13/2002 Software Archive Project Meeting
Computer History Museum
NASA Ames - Mountain View

Attendees

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Grady Booch	Rational	[REDACTED]
John Toole	CHM E.D.	[REDACTED]
Dave Babcock	CHM Volunteer	[REDACTED]
Sharon Brunzell	CHM Librarian	[REDACTED]
Mike Williams	CHM Head Curator	[REDACTED]
Ike Nassi	CHM Board Member	[REDACTED]
Len Shustek	CHM Board Chair	[REDACTED]
Sowmya Krishnaswamy	CHM Cybermuseum DB	[REDACTED]
Mike Walton	CHM Cyberexhibits	[REDACTED]
Lee Courtney	CHM Volunteer	[REDACTED]
Bob Supnik (via phone)	- trailing-edge.org	[REDACTED]

Introductions

Good to keep hardware, also need software and associated paper documentation backing up hardware knowledge.

Project to occasionally archive snapshots of other computer history related web sites.

What are parameters around 'saving' source code?

Need workshop on this topic area - 9 months or so from now. Community workshop to flesh out parameters.

Need to take inclusive approach - source code, executables, documentation, design documents, oral/video history of still living authors. Need thought to organizing principal, what are lines of descent within the community.

Grady's personal focus is in preserving the source code. Much discussion back and forth re. CHM's philosophy regarding software (and more general) preservation.

Mike Williams - How many people have looked at source code 20 years or older? Many in the room have, their own and others. Why preserve software as we have hardware. Doesn't imagine future historians will be interested in looking at the source code - will look at a book or other interpretation. Problem with this assertion is that it pre-supposes we already have the correct answer, and that we have anticipated all questions that will be asked in the future.

How will this community thrive? Hillside Group dealing with how to display software and concepts contained therein ("Design Patterns").

PLOP conferences.

What tools do we need both to interpret and preserve.

Open source like community for preserving computing history. 5 areas to flesh out: 1) why preserve and analyze SW, 2) what should we preserve and do, 3) how do we do this, 4) need some metadata on how to do it, 5) what are the barriers (copyright, IP protection, etc.)?

What have other people done in this area before, what problems have they encountered?

Bob – real problem having to do with decay of software systems in industries that have long lived assets. Can work through a lot of the issues raised by Mike. To understand and study the evolution of a influential system like UNIX need a timeline snapshot and need to examine source material, not just man pages and second hand external views.

How to turn this into something concrete:

- 1) Workshop with critical mass of people to ask questions.
- 2) Grady continuing to ID significant programs (and collecting where can).

Museum wants and will work with Grady on this effort. Dead-on with CHM mission. Focus on what we need to be doing, not resource issue(s).

Ike (et al) to contribute other items and suggestions to Grady for his spreadsheet.

A couple low hanging fruit items Grady needs help with: 1) can CHM help with solicitation letter to be printed via IEEE publications, 2) wants to explode search level. Yes to both – see Action Items.

Different stakeholder views: business vs. software engineering pattern discovery and exploitation.

For CHM on the software/cyber – need a multilayer experience, web layer. Need a multi-layered curatorial process. Couple models can explore – 1) SourceForge model to let us leverage the efforts of others, 2) also Blog type of experience.

What is the taxonomy for software collecting?

Action Items

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1) John T. and Grady to put together a proposal and brainstorm some ideas for moving forward with workshop in Spring (after Appleworld).

2) John to drive IEEE letter. Next 6 weeks.

3) John to facilitate a discussion to identify and enable community and communities.

4) Ike and Grady to exchange taxonomy/classification ideas.

5) Mike Walton, Lee, Dave – create a website forum spec. and discuss with Grady. Done in next week or so.