

Extreme Times Require Extreme Approaches to Software Development

by James A. White

Developing computer software is a time-consuming and tedious exercise in guessing what other people are thinking and how the future will play out. Customers want high quality, but they also want new features yesterday. The competition seems to be just a step away from delivering that critical feature that will steal some market share from you. Often the odds seemed stacked against a successful development outcome, but you still need to go ahead anyway. This is the environment that sees many software projects fail.

Traditional methodologies like the waterfall and rapid prototyping approach have been used repeatedly, but projects still seem to fail in great numbers. Add this high number of failed or terminally late projects to the current environment, where software developers are expensive and often in short supply, and you need a technique that can deliver quality software in a timely manner, delivering the most important features first.

The Mimix R&D organization of Lakeview Technology faced these very issues of cost, quality, time to market, and development scope and determined that a radical new approach to software development was needed in order to stay competitive. We have trailed and then embraced the Extreme Programming (XP) software methodology as pioneered by Ken Beck in the book *Extreme Programming Explained*.

This presentation covers the in and outs of this new XP software methodology also how Lakeview Technology has deployed it successfully.

IEEE Section Meeting

James A. White
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Lakeview Technology, Inc.

Extreme Programming

Monday, October 21, 6:30 pm
Mayo Medical Sciences Building
(321 3rd Avenue SW, Rochester)

⇒ Pizza at 6:30; Meeting at 7:00 ⇐

James A. White is a Senior Product Architect in the Mimix division of Lakeview Technology, and a cofounder of its Rochester development shop. His responsibilities include the existing Mimix product line and new product development. During his eight years at Lakeview, he has helped grow the Rochester development lab from inception to over fifty developers. He was also instrumental in the acquisition of the Praxis company and the re-architecture of the Omni Replicator product line.

James came to Lakeview with more than ten years of experience at IBM, where he specialized in software development tools such as compilers, assemblers, debuggers, and simulators. His projects at IBM included the development of S/36 Control Store Assembler, SQL regression test suite, the Product Estimating Cost Analysis System (PECANS), and the RISC hardware bring-up tools (Piranha -cpu and Piranha -native).

He has lead many projects over the years and has had opportunities to try out many development technologies. He recently adopted the eXtreme Programming methodology with great success, causing Lakeview to adopt XP as its sole software development methodology for the Mimix division.

James earned a bachelor's degree in computer science at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh, and a master's degree in computer and information science (with a graduate minor in electrical engineering) at the University of Minnesota.

James' personal interests include fishing, hunting, Boy Scouts, Junior Achievement, and gardening.

Nominees & Volunteers Needed

IEEE Southern Minnesota Section officers will be elected for the 2003 term at our November section meeting. The following four officers will be elected: chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer.

If you are an IEEE member in good standing, and if you would like to run for one of these offices – or to nominate someone else – please contact section chair Rob Harveland. We are also actively looking for volunteers to serve on various committees.



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