ISSEP '2005

Professional Analysis of the "Abakusz" Software Development Competition

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1. The "Abakusz" Competition

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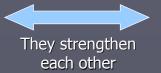
The Abakusz Software Development Competition

- searches for talented students
- examines the student's SD practices (method and technique)
- examines whether students get enough help
- examines whether there are enough material (theory and practice)

http://ww.gdf.hu/abakusz

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Level of Education

The following things help	In Abakusz?
Works are publicly available	YES
Prizes to students and teachers	YES
Good guidance and materials	TOO FEW so far
Continuing education of students and teachers	YES for students (first steps) NO for teachers so far

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Developer's category

- ❖ 3 tasks in every year:
 information process, game, strategy
- *Students have to give
 - Technical documentation
 - User's guide
 - Source code
 - Running code with test data

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Basic concepts: OPENNESS, FAIRNESS, QUALITY

- Open documentation
- Open sources
- Open review considerations
- Open review process
- Open review of winner works

"Our goal is that the presented works **serve education** and the judgment is fair."

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Review Considerations

Review consideration	Score limits
Technical documentation	10
User documentation	7
Deployment, launching	3
Correctness	10
User-friendship	10
Efficiency	5
Source code	5
Test data	3
Ideas	7
Total:	60

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Secondary School Students

In spite of the high requirements, **two-thirds** of the competitors and half of the winners come from **secondary schools**.

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2. "Abakusz" documentations and pattern use

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Documentations are poor!

Some WINNING work's review details:

- "...Adequate design details are missing."
- "The design contains only a data model, and the association representations are not correct."
- "The program's logic is missing, so the system is not understandable and implementable."
- "Diagrams are not correct and are too abstract."
- * A little bit half made and "disintegrated".
- "... concepts are not clear. The design is too simple, not too understandable."
- * "Technical documentation is too small."
- "The logic is not clear enough."

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Where are the patterns?

- ❖ None of the Abakusz competitors used software patterns so far
- ❖ Is it a special Hungarian problem???
- ❖ Is it a problem at all?

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3. "Abakusz" Surveys

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Survey summarizing

Students

- think, that documentation is important, but they have no guidance.
- know nearly nothing about software patterns
- are not satisfied with the teaching materials
- ❖ are not satisfied with the help at all
- do not know and do not use complete SDP-s

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4. Why Software Patterns?

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What is Software Pattern?

The software pattern is the documented solution of a frequently occurring problem in a given software environment, which has been tried out more than once by more than one person.

The pattern contains **everything** which is necessary to understand the problem and the solution, and to solve another, similar problem.

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What is Software Pattern? (2)

"... a pattern is a repeating best practice of what works – in any domain" (Larman, 2002)

"Good programmers know what to write. Great ones know what to rewrite (and reuse)." (Raymond, 1998)

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What is Software Pattern? (3)

The software patterns criteria (1998)

- Rule of three
- Pattern name
- Documentation
- * Teaching
- Review
- Solid solution: the solution answers the "what?" and "how?" questions ... to new software practitioners or experts not practicing this solution. ... There is an abstract description as well as a specific example.
- ❖ Template
- ❖ Practical feedback
- Popular acceptance

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- Analysis pattern: guidance, how to build up the domain model of an address book, a card play, a drawing program etc.
- Architectural pattern: how to organize the software into big blocks. MVC is a base pattern.
- ❖ Design pattern
- **⋄** GUI pattern
- * etc.

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Problems with software patterns

- ❖ Pattern use do not diffuse in general [Manns, 2002]
- There are no good and public pattern repositories with concrete and complete examples, especially for teaching purposes

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Why patterns are important?

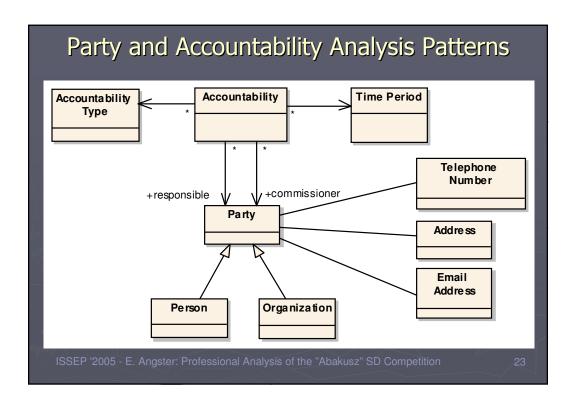
- ❖ A student can build his software more easily, if he has a repository of given components, guidance and ideas.
- ❖ A software pattern is a unit of SD guidance which has a name and a form so that it can be easily understood.
- ❖ A pattern language is a collection of patterns which covers a given domain.
- Everybody needs a pattern repository on his level of knowledge. Also secondary school students, who develop software!

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An example

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Problems

- This pattern is too abstract. Developers (not only secondary school students) cannot (or do not) apply it to a real problem.
- This is the base pattern for an Address Book.
- Can we expect a secondary school student to develop a non trivial Address Book??? The reality: they want to develop it!

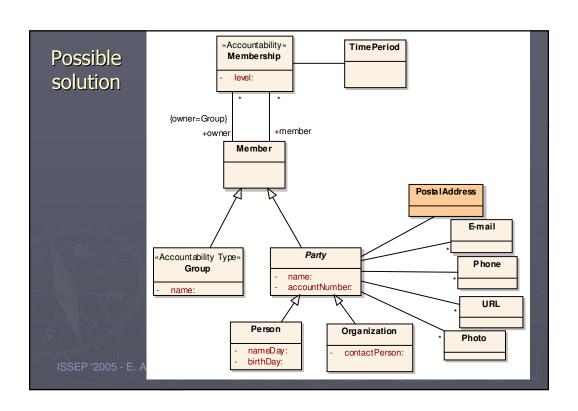
The try and do it!!!

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A new Abakusz task: Remote Member Storage

- Compulsory elements in the task:
 - Person and Organization
 - Memberships in any groups
 - Handling old members
 - Group in group in any deepness
- ❖ Working time: 3 weeks
- Deadline: 4th April, 2005. (next Monday)
- Several secondary school students are working on it! (total: 21, secondary: 12)

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5. Conclusion, plans

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Survey in the near future

- Is it easy and natural to create the concrete model?
- Is it easy and natural to carry out the implementation?
- How easy is it for a student, a teacher or a developer?

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A Possible Solution: a Website with Examples

"Many people know many things but nobody knows everything" (Latin wisdom)

"I provide you, so that you can provide me!" (Bismarck)

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SDP-city

for developers, teachers, students and mamagers

Software patterns

Analysis patterns Architectural patterns Design patterns

Software Development Packages

Vision

Solution (technical documentation, user's guide, model file, source code, application etc.)

Development history

Patterns contained

Teaching material

http://sdp-city.hu

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