

Decisions and Affect in Agile Development

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Software production has become increasingly more complex. For example, the production of a videogame is often more expensive – and more remunerative – than the production of a Hollywood blockbuster. But whereas manufacturing is very tangible, software development involves the creation of a conceptual object that customers can often see only at the end of the development cycle. In the last decade, agile processes have been developed to address its intangible nature. They create software in a more iterative fashion, one piece at a time, and are guided by customer needs. Industry today claims to use agile processes, or parts thereof, for a sizeable part of their development efforts. But human beings are still at the core of this production process, as only they possess the necessary creativity to write new software.

Therefore, human emotions and moods may influence important decisions such as requirements prioritization, architectural and design choices, and implementation strategies. Making a challenging decision can result in conflict among team members, with consequences that may hamper or even prevent a project's successful completion. Yet, the influence of these conflicts on software development has hardly been considered to date. Studying this aspect of software development requires delving into interdisciplinary topics, which this talk will address.