The xDD Game – A State of the Union

A Conspiracy-Driven Design Exploration for a Unified xDD Meta-model: a Position Paper

Michel Zam

KarmicSoft, Paris Dauphine University
m.zam@karmicsoft.com

Abstract

This short position paper introduces a playful agile approach to explore the unification of xDD approaches. Using a controversial conspiracy perspective loosely inspired by the evolution of species of design methods, it proposes a short list of user stories and suggests some useful tools. In conclusion, it uncovers what really drives us when we design models. At least, what we think it does.

Categories and Subject Descriptors D.2.2 [Software Engineering]: Design Tools and Techniques.

General Terms: Design, Experimentation.

Keywords: meta-design, model-driven, domain-specific modeling, traceability, time machine, rapid modeling, cloud computing

1. Introduction

We do not design models. They make us design them and believe we did it. Let's stop pretending for a moment that design is driven by frozen points of view we find in books, papers and workshops and that we are the sole masters of our destiny. Instead, let's embrace Richard Dawking's *selfish gene* theory [1], make a ride with the Susan Blackmore's *meme machine* [2] and reconsider xDD approaches from this bold perspective. Let's analyze hints and try to find if we are manipulated, who might dictates us what we should do and how the whole thing works. But let's check this conspiracy theory with some robust and rational tools we master. That's right, let's design together a unified meta-model of the whole modeling domain using our favorite xDD techniques and see where it goes. Then, let's review our pathways and seek for patterns. If we are really manipulated by models, maybe the emergent model will reflect this. Maybe models are really alive and do not intend to harm us. So maybe they will be happy to communicate with us and tell us their own opinions about xDD approaches and how we should use them efficiently together. Eventually we'll need to write down this theory, address the state of the union of the xDD approaches to the whole community of designers and models, and proudly reveal in a poster the unified meta-model that includes ourselves as instances. But if we fail, then the whole story must be wrong, or models do not want to talk with us yet, or our modeling techniques used to explore the problem are not good enough and we are just doomed to compulsively seek something that drives design. In this case, we'll write down a fable or a poetry slam as an epitaph to decently bury our work and drown our sorrow. Then we'll chat about the source of our inspiration and build new theories 'till the end of the night. So let's give it a try.

2. xDD meta-model user stories

Here are some user stories for our xDD game, noise included:

- **Models**, objects and designers are respectable first class citizens, living happily in a cloud-based collaborative world.

- **Responsibilities** engage citizens through swim lanes in use cases scenarios to do what is expected.

- **Features** and use cases are related. They both eat at Joe's.

- **Tests** are reliable friends that can prove models are innocent.

- **Behavior** is the citizen's response to an interaction scenario.

- **Domains** make citizens believe they live in separate worlds.

- **Contracts** express mutual expectations and commitments between citizens. Lawyers are not allowed. It's a fair game.

Tools to consider: FreeMind, yUML or MyDraft [4]. We prefer the last one because we design it [3]. Or did it make us believe so?

3. Conclusion

Whatever drives us is fundamental. And as usual, it's obvious. If you did not guess it already, you'll have to enroll to the xDD whorkshop to find out. If you did guess, you know you'll like it, so you're more than welcome to join the game. Just bring your web browser.

References

[1] Dawking R. *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford University Press, USA, 1990.

[2] Blackmore S. *The Meme Machine*. Oxford University Press, USA 2000.

[3] Zam M. & al. *Software Objects Fairy Tales: Merging design time and runtime objects into the cloud with MyDraft*, SPLASH 2011 Demo, Portland, Oregon.

[4] MyDraft, a reflective SaaS platform for building data-driven rich web apps: http://www.karmicsoft.com, http://www.mydraft.org