

conclusion I could reach, as the article said the main reason Activity Diagrams (in their more basic form essentially the same as a flowchart) are not used is that they are not well understood by analysts. More likely, the reason is that it's a diagram not easily constructed in Rational Rose, so IT doesn't use it—so the analysts never see it.

I agree that, as Dobing and Parsons wrote, “UML should not be considered exclusively as a language for software professionals.” First, however, software professionals must learn to use it properly, especially before trying to introduce it to their business counterparts.

EDWARD J. FERRARA
Massapequa Park, NY

Cover to Cover

I'VE NEVER WRITTEN TO *Communications* before, but the June 2006 issue with the special section “Hacking and Innovation” was so outstanding I had to share my feelings. I joined ACM as a student member in 1966 and except for a short hiatus have been a member ever since. June is the first issue I've ever read cover to cover. Absolutely first-rate writing by every author.

FREDERICK G. VOLPICELLI
Harwich, MA

Future CS Course Already Here

IN HIS “PRESIDENT'S LETTER” (“Computer Science Education in the 21st Century,” Mar. 2006) David A. Patterson suggested creating a course that would leverage high-quality examples from open source software. I've been teaching just such a course for the past three years at the

Athens University of Economics and Business. The lectures (see www.dmst.aueb.gr/dds/ismr/) focus on how students comprehend, evaluate, maintain, and enhance large software systems. Students' grades are derived by assessing their contribution to an open source project they select based on their own interests. The course's theoretical background is covered in my books *Code Reading* and *Code Quality: The Open Source Perspective* (Addison-Wesley, 2003 and 2006, respectively); all the examples I use come exclusively from large existing open source projects. Two of the software systems I use for drawing examples are the very ones Patterson mentioned in his column: BSD Unix and PostgreSQL. I also use the source code of other systems (such as the Java HSQLDB database engine, the Apache Tomcat application server, the ACE networking framework, the X Window System, ArgoUML, and Perl) to cover subjects like object-oriented programming in Java and C++, networking, language processors, and graphics.

DIOMIDIS SPINELLIS
Athens, Greece

To Attract New Members, Increase ACM Scope and Mandate

I WANT TO THANK DAVID A. Patterson for his leadership during the past two years. His dedication to ACM is appreciated by the membership, especially in light of the difficulty we all have finding time for activities other than work and family. I agree that ACM's greatest challenge today is recruiting new members, as Patterson pointed out in his final “President's Letter” (“Farewell Address:

The Growing and Graying of ACM,” June 2006). But ACM is not the only organization experiencing such difficulty. Most others—whether professional, recreational, political, or religious—report the same.

As professionals and as members of the ACM community, we each decide how to allocate the limited time we have left after fulfilling our family- and income-related obligations. Should we participate in ACM activities or in, say, our town halls, our children's parent-teacher associations, fraternal organizations, ethnic associations, churches, or yet other professional associations? Should we pay for membership in ACM, IEEE, book clubs, or employee associations? What about the hundred or so other worthwhile options we have?

Time and financial resources are limited, and we have no other option but to limit ourselves to what we view as the one or two most important activities. In order to increase ACM membership we must acknowledge the fact that we are competing for our potential members' time. Perhaps if ACM could meet more than just practitioner needs it would be able to attract more members. Perhaps ACM could find a way to play the role of professional, charitable, recreational, spiritual, educational, health, and social organization all at the same time.

C. AUGUSTO CASAS
Sparkill, NY

Please address all Forum correspondence to the Editor, *Communications*, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036; email: crawfordd@acm.org.