

# CM Crossroads

the Configuration Management Community

## National Treasures of Agile Development by [Robert Cowham](#)

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### *Introduction*

Recent research has discovered a very interesting cache of papers about a little known Tribe called the Agile Developers.

The first document is a draft dated July 4th (the year is illegible).

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(Document starts)

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for some developers to dissolve the bands which have connected them with others, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self evident,

- that all agile developers are created equal,
- that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights,
- that among these are Work, Freedom from unnecessary bureaucracy and the pursuit of that Happiness resulting from frequent delivery of working software to the business.
- That to secure these rights methods are implemented by development teams deriving their just powers from the consent of the stakeholders
- That whenever any Form of Process becomes destructive of these needs, it is the Right of the Developer to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Processes, laying their foundation on such principles and organizing their powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Job Safety and Happiness. When a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Process, and to provide new Guards for their future security.
- Such has been the patient sufferance of these Developers; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Processes.

The history of the present Formal High Priesthood is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these Projects. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

They have refused their Assent to Practices, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

They have forbidden Project Managers to allow Practices of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till their Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, they have utterly neglected to attend to them.

They have refused to OK other Practices for the accommodation of groups of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

They have called together Functional and Physical Configuration Audits at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

They have dissolved Standup Planning Meetings repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness their invasions on the rights of the developers.

They have failed to provide their Developers with Private Workspaces to code, integrate, and test in.

They have refused for a long time a Centralized, Automated, Integration Build Process that provides a definitive test of whether the codeline is "good."

They have erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

They have failed to provide Tools to run the application as a whole.

They have combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution and unacknowledged by our laws; giving Assent to their Acts of Legislation:

Removing the ability to commit changes to an appropriate codeline at any time.

Removing freedom to resynchronize with the latest codeline without fear of interrupting work because of things that are broken.

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Processes, and altering fundamentally the Practices of our Projects.

They are at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Outsourcers to compleat the works of implementation, maintenance and CMMI Level 5 certification already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized organization.

They have excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and have endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Process Police, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all unit tests, information radiators and pair programming workstations.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Formal High Priesthood brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to

their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

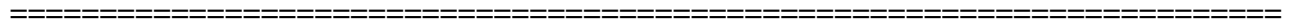
We, therefore, the Representatives of the Agile Developers, in Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by the Authority of the good People of these Projects, solemnly publish and declare, That these Agile Practices are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent Methods, and that government of the developers, by the developers, for the business shall not perish from the earth;

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

*The signers of the Declaration as follows:*

*(document ripped and illegible after this point)*

(Document ends)



**Editors note**

So far, we have only been able to scan some of the other documents discovered in the same cache. During implementation the new world order seems to have become rather less radical than the first draft document would suggest, for example:

Quote:

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“Prudence, indeed, will indicate that Processes long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and experience hath shewn some previously abolished processes to have more value than was initially perceived.”

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Further documents suggest a subsequent rapprochement between members of the Agile and Formal Tribes. These seem to include joint declarations including a "Bill of Rights" and a "Constitution". We are working feverishly to excavate the rest of this obviously important historical archive and hope to be able to publish excerpts at a later date. We welcome help in this important work!

Meanwhile, in latebreaking news we have heard of a new document discovered by our colleague Randy Wagner "Revenge of the SCithM" - more when we know it.



***When not researching in dusty archives:***

**Robert Cowham** has 20 years of experience in software development, has long had an interest in SCM, and has worked with clients around the world in this arena during the last 7 years. He is Chair-elect of the CM Specialist Group of the British Computer Society. He has a BSc(Hons) in Computer Science from Edinburgh University and is a Chartered Engineer (CEng MBCS CITP). You can contact him at [rc@vaccaperna.co.uk](mailto:rc@vaccaperna.co.uk).

**Steve Berczuk** has been developing object-oriented software applications since 1989, often as part of geographically distributed teams. In addition to developing software he helps teams use Software Configuration Management effectively in their development process. Steve is co-author of the book *Software Configuration Management Patterns: Effective Teamwork, Practical Integration*. He has an M.S. in Operations Research from Stanford University and an S.B. in Electrical Engineering from MIT. You can contact him at [steve@berczuk.com](mailto:steve@berczuk.com).

**Brad Appleton** is co-author of *Software Configuration Management Patterns: Effective Teamwork, Practical Integration*". He has been a software developer since 1987 and has extensive experience using, developing, and supporting SCM environments for teams of all shapes and sizes. In addition to SCM, Brad is well versed in agile development, and cofounded the Chicago Agile Development and Chicago Patterns Groups. He holds an M.S. in Software Engineering and a B.S. in Computer Science and Mathematics. You can reach Brad by email at [brad@bradapp.net](mailto:brad@bradapp.net).