[PDF] Writing Effective Use Cases

Alistair Cockburn - pdf download free book

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Description:

Alistair Cockburn's *Writing Effective Use Cases* is an approachable, informative, and very intelligent treatment of an essential topic of software design. "Use cases" describe how "actors" interact with computer systems and are essential to software-modeling requirements. For anyone who designs software, this title offers some real insight into writing use cases that are clear and correct and lead to better and less costly software.

The focus of this text is on use cases that are *written*, as opposed to modeled in UML. This book may change your mind about the advantages of writing step-by-step descriptions of the way users (or actors) interact with systems. Besides being an exceptionally clear writer, the author has plenty to say about what works and what doesn't when it comes to creating use cases. There are several standout bits of expertise on display here, including excellent techniques for finding the right "scope" for use cases. (The book uses a color scheme in which blue indicates a sea-level use case

that's just right, while higher-level use cases are white, and overly detailed ones are indigo. Cockburn also provides notational symbols to document these levels of detail within a design.)

This book contains numerous tips on the writing style for use cases and plenty of practical advice for managing projects that require a large number of use cases. One particular strength lies in the numerous actual use cases (many with impressive detail) that are borrowed from real-world projects, and demonstrate both good and bad practices. Even though the author expresses a preference for the format of use cases, he presents a variety of styles, including UML graphical versions. The explanation of how use cases fit into the rest of the software engineering process is especially good. The book concludes with several dozen concrete tips for writing better use cases.

Software engineering books often get bogged down in theory. Not so in *Writing Effective Use Cases*, a slender volume with a practical focus, a concise presentation style, and something truly valuable to say. This book will benefit most anyone who designs software for a living. *--Richard Dragan*

Topics covered:

- Introduction to use cases
- Requirements
- Usage narratives
- Actors and goals
- Stakeholders
- Graphical models for use cases
- Scope for use cases (enterprise-level through nuts-and-bolts use cases)
- Primary and supporting actors
- Goal levels: user goals, summary level, and subfunctions
- Preconditions, triggers, and guarantees
- Main success scenarios
- Extensions for describing failures
- Formats for use cases (including fully dressed one- and two-column formats)
- Use case templates for five common project types
- Managing use cases for large projects
- CRUD use cases
- Business-process modeling
- Missing requirements
- Moving from use cases to user-interface design
- Test cases
- eXtreme Programming (XP) and use cases
- Sample problem use cases
- Tips for writing use cases
- Use cases and UML diagrams

From the Back Cover

Writing use cases as a means of capturing the behavioral requirements of software systems and business processes is a practice that is quickly gaining popularity. Use cases provide a beneficial means of project planning because they clearly show how people will ultimately use the system being designed. On the surface, use cases appear to be a straightforward and simple concept. Faced with the task of writing a set of use cases, however, practitioners must ask: "How exactly am I

supposed to write use cases?" Because use cases are essentially prose essays, this question is not easily answered, and as a result, the task can become formidable.

In **Writing Effective Use Cases,** object technology expert Alistair Cockburn presents an up-to-date, practical guide to use case writing. The author borrows from his extensive experience in this realm, and expands on the classic treatments of use cases to provide software developers with a "nuts-and-bolts" tutorial for writing use cases. The book thoroughly covers introductory, intermediate, and advanced concepts, and is, therefore, appropriate for all knowledge levels. Illustrative writing examples of both good and bad use cases reinforce the author's instructions. In addition, the book contains helpful learning exercises--with answers--to illuminate the most important points.

Highlights of the book include:

- A thorough discussion of the key elements of use cases--actors, stakeholders, design scope, scenarios, and more
- A use case style guide with action steps and suggested formats
- An extensive list of time-saving use case writing tips
- A helpful presentation of use case templates, with commentary on when and where they should be employed
- A proven methodology for taking advantage of use cases

With this book as your guide, you will learn the essential elements of use case writing, improve your use case writing skills, and be well on your way to employing use cases effectively for your next development project.

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