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CS190

Mythical Man Month Essay

"The programmer builds from pure thought-stuff: concepts and very flxi ble representations thereof. Because the medium is tractable, we expect few diffi ulties in implementation; hence our pervasive optimism. Because our ideas are faulty, we have bugs; hence our optimism is unjustifid "(MMM). In my experience working with programmers I have found many of them to not actually be optimistic. In fact I fid cynicism to be far more pervasive. In general estimations for software tend to be too short, but I don't think that is because of optimistic programmers. It is more likely due to the diffi ulty in the task of calculating the amount of time a large software project will take, due lack of practice or intuition. "Why go to all the trouble working on a schedule if it's not going to be right? There is a perception that schedules are consistently wrong, and only get worse as time goes on, so why suffer for naught?"(Joel on Software). As Joel says, it is more a cynical approach to making schedules than a optimistic belief that the project will take very little time. I've known many programmers to take the time they estimate for any given project and then double it, because given their experience with making schedules that is about how far they are off. Overall I think this section of the *Mythical Man Month* was not well thought out and kind of out there.