

Methods & Tools Survey Confirms Increased Agile Adoption

Articles

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We are transitioning from a period where agile adoption may have been underestimated to another where it could be overestimated. Previously, some developers would not define their practices openly as agile or extreme programming because manager would have considered it a "cow-boy process". Today, some companies will pretend that they are agile, but without implementing the essence of the approach. Comparing the 2008 and 2005 results, we could notice that the level of ignorance of the agile movement has decreased, as only 13% of the organizations are ignorant of it. Full deployment numbers have doubled in the recent years to reach 17% and total rate of various adoption levels is now 56% compared to 41% in 2005.

At what stage is the agile approach (XP, Scrum, TDD, …) adoption at your location? (2005 results)

Not aware 13% (26%)

Not using 13% (16%)

Investigating 14% (14%)

Analysed and rejected 4% (3%)

Pilot projects 8%(4%)

Partial implementation (adoption of some agile practices) 17% (17%)

Partial deployment (some projects are using this approach) 14% (12%)

Deployed (all new projects are using this approach) 17% (8%) Participants: 512 (232) Ending date: February 2008 Source: [Methods & Tools](#) Comparing the 2008 and 2005 results, we could notice that the level of ignorance of the agile movement has decreased, as only 13% of the organizations are ignorant of it. Full deployment numbers have doubled in the recent years to reach 17% and total rate of various adoption levels is now 56% compared to 41% in 2005. This growing adoption rate has also been confirmed by other surveys on this topic. Some critics will naturally discuss the "scientific" nature of this kind of surveys, but I believe that they are useful to give us an idea of the evolution of the software development world. The increased popularity of agile is also visible on the Indeed job request trend. The recent improvement in agile software development process visibility and acceptance should however make us cautious with the current results on agile adoption surveys. When software development practices are more widely accepted, the number of adopting organizations increases, but the substance of valid usage of this practices decreases. The answers to surveys tend then to be biased towards what should be the correct answer instead of reflecting the reality of the software development context. The tendency of upper management to "push" new approaches to people who are more reluctant to change their old habits does usually not produce good results. This is even truer when projects will not be given additional resources to support the transition. We are therefore transitioning from a period where agile adoption level may have been underestimated to another where it could be overestimated. Previously, some developers would not define their practices openly as agile or extreme programming because manager would have considered it a "cow-boy process". A 2006 Forrester's report found that agile adoption in the US and Europe was 17% according to a survey of 1078 IT decision-maker. They however precised that "because Agile processes are often adopted at the grassroots level, they frequently fly below the

radar. This makes it unlikely that a single IT decision-maker knows what methodology every development team is using. For this reason, Forrester believes that Agile adoption is actually higher than reported in this study. Today, some companies will pretend that they are agile, but without implementing the essence of the approach. It is also interesting to notice that the rate of rejection is similar in both surveys. This means that the percentage of companies completely opposed to agile practices is still very low. We could also see that the proportion of companies that are in a partial implementation state is still superior to those who are in partial deployment. This confirms that organizations prefer to adopt agile practices by gradually shifting their process towards agility instead of choosing a big bang implementation. Agility is about iteration and incrementation and this should be also applied to process changes. When compared to other surveys performed in 2007 on agile adoption, the results of the Methods & Tools poll are equivalent. The adoption rate of participants is slightly inferior with 56% (48% without pilot projects) compared with 73% for the VersionOne survey and 69% for the Scott Ambler survey. Our percentage of organizations having deployed agile approaches in all projects stands at 17%, which is very close to the 15% rate that VersionOne presents for 100% agile adoption. The importance of the agile approach is surely growing in the software development community. It remains to be determined, with an unbiased perspective, how this evolution will translate in the rate of software development project successes, because at the end, this is what matters the most.

Other agile deployment surveys and agile adoption material

[Indeed.com Job Trends for: agile, scrum, "extreme programming", "test driven"](#); [VersionOne 2nd Annual "State of Agile Development" Survey \(2007\)](#); [Scott Ambler Surveys \(2007\)](#); [Scott Ambler Surveys Presented in Dr. Dobb's \(2007\)](#); [Scrum Alliance Membership Survey Shows Growing Scrum Adoption and Project Success \(2007\)](#); [TDD Survey Results by Stelligent \(2007\)](#); [Boston Roundtable Survey Results by Stelligent \(2007\)](#); [Agile Project Management Tooling Survey by Trail Ridge Consulting \(2006\)](#); [Corporate IT Leads The Second Wave Of Agile Adoption by Forrester \(2005\)](#); [Waterfall Manifesto Agile Software Development Adoption Poll \(ongoing\)](#); [Slowdown in ScrumMaster \(CSM\) Certifications? Low Scrum Adoption Rate in German-speaking world? Adopting an Agile Method](#); [Agile Delivery at British Telecom - A case study on Agile process adoption](#)