Software Engineering — Coming of Age or Reaching Too Far?

Abstract
Some say there is an emerging consensus among us about what a good software development process is, and for that reason we are on the brink of being able to declare ourselves a mature field. In this presentation, I will critically examine the claims and assumptions behind that notion. I will try to show that the emerging consensus is an illusion caused by systematically excluding different ideas. What we need to do is better define and acknowledge the various sub-communities of software engineering, identify the major competing paradigms of software engineering, and find ways to constructively engage each other in real discussion and exchanges of experience. I will offer an example of at least one forum that is doing just that.

Biography
James Bach is an independent testing and software quality assurance trainer and consultant who cut his teeth in Silicon Valley and the world of market-driven software development. James has worked at Apple, Borland, a couple of startups, and a couple of consulting companies. He currently edits and writes the Software Realities column in Computer magazine. Through his models of Good Enough quality, testcraft, exploratory testing, and heuristic test design, he focuses on helping individual software testers cope with the pressures of life in the trenches and answer the questions “What am I doing here? What should I do now?”