Software Support, Management, and Evolution (SSME) in the Coming Decade and Beyond…

Opportunities & Challenges

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( The keynote address, and this summary are humbly dedicated at the Lotus Feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna. )

**The new name of our fields: SSME.** We have not yet come up with a right name of our fields, and probably never will! I have coined the name SSME. The acronym means Software Support, Management, and Evolution. I believe that SSME comes close in naming our fields and will be accepted by both industry and academia.

The term Maintenance has a punch, of course negative to many, but nonetheless it has a punch that the term “Support” lacks. So if you want to preserve the term, let M in SSME mean Maintenance to you. The work of Management is of course implied in Maintenance.

**Software must go on.** I was inspired to create this slogan by the popular one: “The show must go on.” But once in a while if a show stops, we will miss some entertainment, but imagine what will happen if Software stops. In a worst case it can be a disaster costing billions of dollars and/or millions of lives!

The world has become dependent upon proper and continuous working of software products and systems. And with the advent of high technologies such as Internet, networks, web sites and so on, the continents and countries and cities have become interdependent. As we know software gives life to computers and other hardware.

Yes, software must go on. And SSME can not only assure that software goes on but can also enhance, adapt, and continue its evolution.

**SSME in the coming decade: Opportunities and Challenges.** In 1985 I published the 400-page Special Report *There is a Fortune to be Made in Software Maintenance*, subtitled “Opportunities in the $30 Billion Software AfterMarket.” The AfterMarket, which I call acres of computer software diamonds, has now grown to over 100 billion dollars annually worldwide. In the Report I identified over 32 opportunities, most of them are still viable today, and I believe that they will be realized in the coming years. Let me mention 10 opportunities:

Software maintenance service, (Re) documentation, Developing/Maintaining standards and guidelines, Software restructuring, Education and training, Improving and measuring programmer productivity, Research and development, Writing and publishing, Motivating maintenance programmers – changing attitudes, Promoting and marketing.

Even if you are an employee in SSME, you are in SSME business. Like a salesperson should know his or her product or service, you have to know yourself. And as an employee you will have to sell your ideas, proposals, etc. to the management. Effective selling will help enhance your career, and of course your bank balance.

**Some emerging opportunities and challenges in the new century.**
Exploring the acres of software diamonds. The millions of lines of code worldwide are like acres of software diamonds. There are mind boggling opportunities and challenges in the worlds of SSME in the new century.

SSME Economics. I would not be surprised if researchers in Software Maintenance Economics win Nobel Prizes in the coming decades.

Human face of software and SSME. The people side of software and SSME.

Spiritolution. I have coined this word which rhymes with Evolution. Spiritolution means spiritual evolution through one’s chosen field of work, in our case of course SSME.


SSME and Force. There is Force (which can be called by different names) beyond human control. The key to peace of mind: Doing one’s best and leaving the results to the Force.

Conclusion. Lines from a poem by Tagore. Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. He was a mystic poet, and among other walks of life, our SSME can also draw from his mysticism. When I read his poem “The Tune of Thee and Me,” these words flashed in my mind: “The Lines of Software and Me.”

About the dedication. Introducing the patron deity of SSME.