Introduction

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An important influence in the evolution of any form of craft into an engineering discipline is the use that is made of evidence, and the adoption of systematic practices for its collection, analysis and propagation. The availability of evidence makes it possible to use analysis as the basis for making the key transition from knowing how to achieve an effect to understanding why the effect occurs, and any limitations associated with it.

The infancy of Software Engineering and computing in general, from 1968 to around 2000, has been an era in which advocacy and assertion have all too often dominated the use of analysis of experience. However, there are growing signs of change and indeed, we can hope that by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, evidence-based computing will indeed have become established as a major paradigm.

For this to occur, we need to systematise and catalogue our empirical practices; to make them more accessible to users; and to encourage their wider adoption by the wider community. This workshop represents one step on this road and hence a major focus for the workshop was to determine how we might pursue these goals.

The papers that follow consist of a report from the workshop itself, including a description of the process that we followed and the outcomes from this; as well as two short papers that helped to focus our thinking. The first of these (Abran & Sellami) addressing issues of measurement and metrology, is concerned with the underpinning framework needed for any empirical studies; while the second paper (Suryn et al.) illustrates the practical issues involved in applying an empirical approach.

We enjoyed running this workshop and would like to thank all those who contributed to it in any way. We hope that it may be the precursor of further workshops as a means of contributing to the codification of empirical techniques within our discipline.