Two or Three Things I Have Learnt about Repositories

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Since the appearance of the term "repository" in the software development community in the late seventies, it has been used in a variety of contexts, and especially in relation with software tools and software engineering environments. This term has become so overloaded so as to mean different things to different people. As a consequence, professionals have become embattled in quasi-religious feuds on whether such or such tool should be "repository-based", losing track of the very purpose of the tools. We will review some of the connotations that are often associated with the notion of repository, and we will describe some of the desirable features and functionalities that should be provided in order to see repositories used as unifying frameworks in software development.