How Tagging Supports Informal Processes in Software Development

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Motivation

- Technical aspects
- Social aspects
- Formal processes
- Informal processes
- Tool support
- Communication mechanisms

Jazz work items

Adoption of tagging

Distinct taggers per day

- 30 day average

- June 2006 - May 2008

Reasons for tag use

- Categorization
  - "Tags are useful for identifying cross-cutting concerns."

- Organization
  - "I use tags because I feel like work items should be organized."

- Finding
  - "I use tags so I can have queries and find things."

Most frequently used tags

- beta2candidate
- editor
- errorhandling
- m6candidate
- performance
- polish
- svt
- testing
- usability
- UX

Development-specific tags

- Lifecycle related tags
  - beta2candidate
  - rc2candidate
  - related to a milestone
  - transient

- Component-specific tags
  - editor
  - api
  - refine existing categories
  - ad-hoc categorization

- Cross-cutting tags
  - polish
  - consumability
  - orthogonal to categories
  - describe non-functional requirements

- Idiosyncratic tags
  - buildstatus
  - adoption
  - support individual processes
  - used only by very few developers

Categorization

- Tags are useful for identifying cross-cutting concerns.

Organization

- "I use tags because I feel like work items should be organized."

Finding

- "I use tags so I can have queries and find things."

- "I would expect other people in the team to assign tags like workspaceeditor or aspects if they find issues in that area."

- "You just sort of see it happening in the work item’s feeds."

- "If I’ve never seen a tag before, I won’t even bother to go look it up."

Potential tool enhancements

- Allow tagging of other software artifacts
- Display tag authors along with tags
- Allow optional description of keywords
- Add lifecycle management for tags
- Add reporting mechanism for tags
- Suggest tags for incoming work items

Contact information

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