Industrial survey papers

Six reasons to reject them

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Our experience

* Six distinct surveys in last 10 years

* Most finalized in quality venues

* Dismayed at some reviews
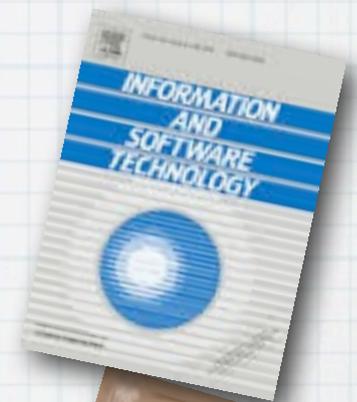
Goals

* Identify typical unwarranted criticism

* Provide typical rebuttal strategies

* Devise guidelines for avoiding them

Our surveys

Topic	Scope	Year
Development with Off-The-Shelf components		2004
Software projects success factors		2007
Software migration (Web, SOA, smartphones)		2007
Perception of software projects success factors		2008
SOA knowledge, adoption and trend		2008,11
Model-driven engineering		2011

Top six

1. No practical usefulness

2. Sampling bias

3. Obvious conclusions

4. Just people's perceptions

5. No analysis of non-respondents

6. Limited geographical scope

1. No practical usefulness

* *"it is not clear how other researchers or practitioners can benefit from the outcomes of this study"*

* Surveys take a snapshot that defines the framework map for setting up any grounded research plan
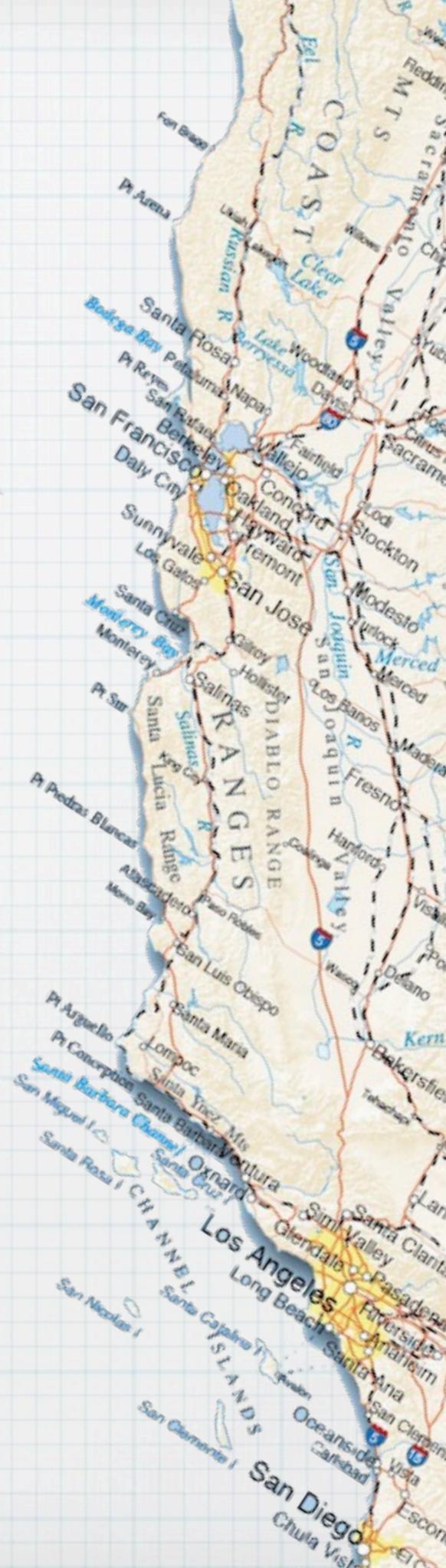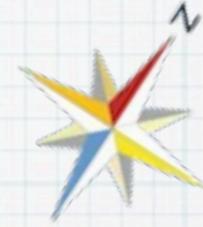
2. Sampling bias

* Representativeness

  * **What does a representative sample of software development projects looks like?**

* Sampling frame

* Self-selection bias

3. Obvious conclusions

* "The results are hardly surprising or controversial"

* Surveys take a faithful picture of the industrial reality,

  * without any "photoshopping"

4. Just perceptions

* *"it seems to provide only a 'the general perception is' argument."*

* It is the price to pay to get a large scale snapshot of an otherwise unobservable phenomenon

* Software engineering activities heavily depend on humans and so their perceptions do matter

5. Non Respondents

* "Did you perform a non-respondent analysis?"

* Response rate is available only if you have your sample listed

  * not for mailing lists or web advertisement

* Further analysis (exclusion motivation) are nearly impossible to conduct

NATIONAL
DO NOT CALL
REGISTRY

6. Limited geo scope

* "I would suggest as future work to extend the survey to other continents"

* Generalizability is of course limited

* Have you ever conducted a multi-national (continental) survey?

What's next...

* We aim at thoroughly analyzing reviewers' comments

We want YOU

to share your surveys' reviews