A Process Decision Table for Integrated Systems and Software Engineering

Barry Boehm and Jo Ann Lane, USC-CSSE

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Incremental Commitment Model (ICM): Nature and Origins

- Integrates hardware, software, and human factors elements of systems engineering
  - Concurrent exploration of needs and opportunities
  - Concurrent engineering of hardware, software, human aspects
  - Concurrency stabilized via anchor point milestones
- Developed in response to DoD-related issues
  - Clarify "spiral development" usage in DoD Instruction 5000.2
    - Initial phased version (2005)
  - Explain Future Combat System of systems spiral usage to GAO
    - Underlying process principles (2006)
  - Provide framework for human-systems integration
    - National Research Council report (2007)
- Integrates strengths of current process models
  - But not their weaknesses

ICM integrates strengths of current process models
But not their weaknesses

- V-Model: Emphasis on early verification and validation
  - But not ease of sequential, single-increment interpretation
- Spiral Model: Risk-driven activity prioritization
  - But not lack of well-defined in-process milestones
- RUP and MBASE: Concurrent engineering stabilized by anchor point milestones
  - But not software orientation
- Lean Development: Emphasis on value-adding activities
  - But not repeatable manufacturing orientation
- Agile Methods: Adaptability to unexpected change
  - But not software orientation, lack of scalability

Process Model Principles

Principles trump diagrams

1. Commitment and accountability
2. Success-critical stakeholder satisficing
3. Incremental growth of system definition and stakeholder commitment
4, 5. Concurrent, iterative system definition and development cycles
    - Cycles can be viewed as sequential concurrently-performed phases or spiral growth of system definition
6. Risk-based activity levels and anchor point commitment milestones

Used by 60-80% of CrossTalk Top-5 projects, 2002-2005

Common Risk-Driven Special Cases of the ICM

Special Case	Example	Size, Complexity	Change Rate % /Month	Criticality	NDI Support	Org, Personnel Capability	Key Stage I Activities : Incremental Definition	Key Stage II Activities: Incremental Development, Operations	Time per Build; per Increment
1. Use NDI	**Small Accounting**				**Complete**		**Acquire NDI**	**Use NDI**	
2. Agile	**E-services**	**Low**	**1 – 30**	**Low-Med**	**Good; in place**	**Agile-ready Med-high**	**Skip Valuation , Architecting phases**	**Scrum plus agile methods of choice**	**<= 1 day; 2-6 weeks**
3. Architected Agile	**Business data processing**	**Med**	**1 – 10**	**Med-High**	**Good; most in place**	**Agile-ready Med-high**	**Combine Valuation, Architecting phases. Complete NDI preparation**	**Architecture-based Scrum of Scrums**	**2-4 weeks; 2-6 months**
4. Formal Methods	**Security kernel; Safety-critical LSI chip**	**Low**	**0.3**	**Extra High**	**None**	**Strong formal methods experience**	**Precise formal specification**	**Formally-based programming language; formal verification**	**1-5 days; 1-4 weeks**
5. HW component with embedded SW	**Multi-sensor control device**	**Low**	**0.3 – 1**	**Med-Very High**	**Good; In place**	**Experienced; med-high**	**Concurrent HW/SW engineering. CDR-level ICM DCR**	**IOC Development, LRIP, FRP. Concurrent Version N+1 engineering**	**SW: 1-5 days; Market-driven**
6. Indivisible IOC	**Complete vehicle platform**	**Med – High**	**0.3 – 1**	**High-Very High**	**Some in place**	**Experienced; med-high**	**Determine minimum-IOC likely, conservative cost. Add deferrable SW features as risk reserve**	**Drop deferrable features to meet conservative cost. Strong award fee for features not dropped**	**SW: 2-6 weeks; Platform: 6-18 months**
7. NDI- Intensive	**Supply Chain Management**	**Med – High**	**0.3 – 3**	**Med- Very High**	**NDI-driven architecture**	**NDI-experienced; Med-high**	**Thorough NDI-suite life cycle cost-benefit analysis, selection, concurrent requirements/ architecture definition**	**Pro-active NDI evolution influencing, NDI upgrade synchronization**	**SW: 1-4 weeks; System: 6-18 months**
9. Hybrid agile / plan-driven system	**C4ISR**	**Med – Very High**	**Mixed parts: 1 – 10**	**Mixed parts; Med-Very High**	**Mixed parts**	**Mixed parts**	**Full ICM; encapsulated agile in high change, low-medium criticality parts (Often HMI, external interfaces)**	**Full ICM ,three-team incremental development, concurrent V&V, next-increment rebaselining**	**1-2 months; 9-18 months**
9. Multi-owner system of systems	**Net-centric military operations**	**Very High**	**Mixed parts: 1 – 10**	**Very High**	**Many NDIs; some in place**	**Related experience, med-high**	**Full ICM; extensive multi-owner team building, negotiation**	**Full ICM; large ongoing system/software engineering effort**	**2-4 months; 18-24 months**
10. Family of systems	**Medical Device Product Line**	**Med – Very High**	**1 – 3**	**Med – Very High**	**Some in place**	**Related experience, med – high**	**Full ICM; Full stakeholder participation in product line scoping. Strong business case**	**Full ICM. Extra resources for first system, version control, multi-stakeholder support**	**1-2 months; 9-18 months**

C4ISR: Command, Control, Computing, Communications, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance. **CDR:** Critical Design Review.
DCR: Development Commitment Review. **FRP:** Full-Rate Production. **HMI:** Human-Machine Interface. **HW:** Hard ware.
IOC: Initial Operational Capability. **LRIP:** Low-Rate Initial Production. **NDI:** Non-Development Item. **SW:** Software

Case 1: Use NDI

- Exploration phase identifies NDI opportunities
- NDI risk/opportunity analysis indicates risks acceptable
  - Product growth envelope fits within NDI capability
  - Compatible NDI and product evolution paths
  - Acceptable NDI volatility, some open-source components highly volatile
  - Acceptable usability, dependability, interoperability
  - NDI available or affordable
- Example: Small accounting system
- Size/complexity: Low
- Anticipated change rate (% per month): Low
- Criticality: Low
- NDI support: Complete
- Organization and personnel capability: NDI-experienced
- Key Stage I activities: Acquire NDI
- Key State II activities: Use NDI
- Time/build: Driven by time to initialize/tailor NDI
- Time/increment: Driven by NDI upgrades

Case 2: Pure Agile Methods

- Exploration phase determines
  - Low product and project size and complexity
  - Fixing increment defects in next increment acceptable
  - Existing hardware and NDI support of growth envelope
  - Sufficient agile-capable personnel
  - Need to accommodate rapid change, emergent requirements, early user capability
- Example: E-services
- Size/complexity: Low
- Anticipated change rate (% per month): 1-30%
- Criticality: Low to medium
- NDI support: Good; in place
- Organization and personnel capability: Agile-ready, medium to high capability
- Key Stage I activities: Skip Valuation and Architecting phases
- Key State II activities: Scrum plus agile methods of choice
- Time/build: Daily
- Time/increment: 2-6 weeks

Case 3: Architected Agile

- Exploration phase determines
  - Need to accommodate fairly rapid change, emergent requirements, early user capability
  - Low risk of scalability up to 100 people
  - NDI support of growth envelope
  - Nucleus of highly agile-capable personnel
  - Moderate to high loss due to increment defects
- Example: Business data processing
- Size/complexity: Medium
- Anticipated change rate (% per month): 1-10%
- Criticality: Medium to high
- NDI support: Good, most in place
- Organization and personnel capability: Agile-ready, med-high capability
- Key Stage I activities: Combined Valuation and Architecting phase, complete NDI preparation
- Key State II activities: Architecture-based scrum of scrums
- Time/build: 2-4 weeks Time/increment: 2-6 months

Case 4: Formal Methods

- Biggest risks: Software/hardware does not accurately implement required algorithm precision, security, safety mechanisms, or critical timing
- Example: Security kernel or safety-critical LSI chip
- Size/complexity: Low
- Anticipated change rate (% per month): 0.3%
- Criticality: Extra high
- NDI support: None
- Organization and personnel capability: Strong formal methods experience
- Key Stage I activities: Precise formal specification
- Key State II activities: Formally-based programming language; formal verification
- Time/build: 1-5 days
- Time/increment: 1-4 weeks

Case 5: Hardware Component with Embedded Software

- Biggest risks: Device recall, lawsuits, production line rework, hardware-software integration
  - DCR carried to Critical Design Review level
  - Concurrent hardware-software design
    - Criticality makes Agile too risky
  - Continuous hardware-software integration
    - Initially with simulated hardware
- Low risk of overrun
  - Low complexity, stable requirements and NDI
  - Little need for risk reserve
  - Likely single-supplier software

Case 5: Hardware Component with Embedded Software *(continued)*

- **Example: Multi-sensor control device**
- **Size/complexity: Low**
- **Anticipated change rate (% per month): 0.3-1%**
- **Criticality: Medium to very high**
- **NDI support: Good, in place**
- **Organization and personnel capability: Experienced; medium to high capability**
- **Key Stage I activities: Concurrent hardware and software engineering; CDR-level ICM DCR**
- **Key State II activities: IOC Development, LRIP,FRP, concurrent version N+1 engineering**
- **Time/build: 1-5 days (software)**
- **Time/increment: Market-driven**

Case 6: Indivisible IOC

- **Biggest risk: Complexity, NDI uncertainties cause cost-schedule overrun**
  - **Similar strategies to case 4 for criticality (CDR, concurrent HW-SW design, continuous integration)**
  - **Add deferrable software features as risk reserve**
    - **Adopt conservative (90% sure) cost and schedule**
    - **Drop software features to meet cost and schedule**
    - **Strong award fee for features not dropped**
  - **Likely multiple-supplier software makes longer (multi-weekly) builds more necessary**

Case 6: Indivisible IOC *(continued)*

- Example: Complete vehicle platform
- Size/complexity: Medium to high
- Anticipated change rate (% per month): 0.3-1%
- Criticality: High to very high
- NDI support: Some in place
- Organization and personnel capability: Experienced, medium to high capability
- Key Stage I activities: Determine minimum-IOC likely, conservative cost; Add deferrable software features as risk reserve
- Key State II activities: Drop deferrable features to meet conservative cost; Strong award fee for features not dropped
- Time/build: 2-6 weeks (software)
- Time/increment: 6-18 months (platform)

Case 7: NDI-Intensive

- Biggest risks: incompatible NDI; rapid change, business/mission criticality; low NDI assessment and integration experience; supply chain stakeholder incompatibilities
- Example: Supply chain management
- Size/complexity: Medium to high
- Anticipated change rate (% per month): 0.3-3%
- Criticality: Medium to very high
- NDI support: NDI-driven architecture
- Organization and personnel capability: NDI-experienced; medium to high capability
- Key Stage I activities: Thorough NDI-suite life cycle cost-benefit analysis, selection, concurrent requirements and architecture definition
- Key State II activities: Pro-active NDI evolution influencing, NDI upgrade synchronization
- Time/build: 1-4 weeks (software)
- Time/increment: 6-18 months (systems)

Case 8: Hybrid Agile/Plan-Driven System

- Biggest risks: large scale, high complexity, rapid change, mixed high/low criticality, partial NDI support, mixed personnel capability
- Example: C4ISR system
- Size/complexity: Medium to very high
- Anticipated change rate (% per month): Mixed parts; 1-10%
- Criticality: Mixed parts; medium to very high
- NDI support: Mixed parts
- Organization and personnel capability: Mixed parts
- Key Stage I activities: Full ICM; encapsulated agile in high changed; low-medium criticality parts (often HMI, external interfaces)
- Key State II activities: Full ICM, three-team incremental development, concurrent V&V, next-increment rebaselining
- Time/build: 1-2 months
- Time/increment: 9-18 months

Case 9: Multi-Owner System of Systems

- Biggest risks: all those of Case 8 plus
  - Need to synchronize, integrate separately-managed, independently-evolving systems
  - Extremely large-scale; deep supplier hierarchies
  - Rapid adaptation to change extremely difficult
- Example: Net-centric military operations
- Size/complexity: Very high
- Anticipated change rate (% per month): Mixed parts; 1-10%
- Criticality: Very high
- NDI support: Many NDIs; some in place
- Organization and personnel capability: Related experience, medium to high
- Key Stage I activities: Full ICM; extensive multi-owner teambuilding, negotiation
- Key State II activities: Full ICM; large ongoing system/software engineering effort
- Time/build: 2-4 months Time/increment:18-24 months

Case 10: Family of Systems

- Biggest risks: all those of Case 8 plus
  - Need to synchronize, integrate separately-managed, independently-evolving systems
  - Extremely large-scale; deep supplier hierarchies
  - Rapid adaptation to change extremely difficult
- Example: Medical device product line
- Size/complexity: Medium to very high
- Anticipated change rate (% per month): 1-3%
- Criticality: Medium to very high
- NDI support: Some in place
- Organization and personnel capability: Related experience, medium to high capability
- Key Stage I activities: Full ICM; full stakeholder participation in product line scoping; strong business case
- Key State II activities: Full ICM; extra resources for first system, version control, multi-stakeholder support
- Time/build: 1-2 months Time/increment: 9-18 months

Frequently Asked Question

Q: Having all that ICM generality and then using the decision table to come back to a simple model seems like an overkill.

- **If my risk patterns are stable, can't I just use the special case indicated by the decision table?**

A: Yes, you can and should – as long as your risk patterns stay stable. But as you encounter change, the ICM helps you adapt to it.

- **And it helps you collaborate with other organizations that may use different special cases.**