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Pernille Bjørn

The Dark side of Global Agile



Seminar Info

Agile software development is typically presented as empowering the IT-developers in decision-making by structuring work within self-managing collocated teams. But what happens when agile methods are introduced in global outsourcing set-ups? We followed three large IT projects between December 2011 and February 2014 and studied them from the Indian IT vendor's perspective. In this period, the vendor introduced agile development, thus IT developers located in India collaborated with client team members located in either the US, Singapore, or Europe applying agile methodology. We wanted to explore how the introduction of agile processes in global outsourcing setups impacts work conditions of the IT developers working out of Bangalore. Listening to their experiences, we were surprised to find that working in global agile outsourcing, even after three years of implementation, was perceived as more stressful, creating work environments with less flexibility and agency, and thus negatively impacting the work conditions as well as the personal lives of the IT developers and testers. Basically, all the negative aspects of human work situations, which agile methodologies were developed to reduce, were very much evident when agile went global.

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10:00 a.m.

Gates Hillman Center 8102

Speaker Bio

Pernille Bjørn is Professor at University of Copenhagen in the Human Centred Computing section at the Computer Science Department (DIKU). She specializes in Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), and focus on understanding the complexities of collaborative work with the aim of designing collaborative technologies. She has conducted studies in different domains such as healthcare technologies, global engineering, and global software development and published her contributions at different venues such as Journal of Computer Supported Work (JCSCW), Transaction of Computer Human Interaction (ToCHI), and International Journal of Medical Informatics. In current work, she is particular interested in understanding the role of politics within cooperative work - an interest which particular arise from her ethnographic work in the NexGSD research project (nexusd.org) concerning the work conditions software developers working in global outsourcing which shape software development in particular ways. Further, in her work on the ConflictIT research project, where focus is on the special work conditions for Palestinian tech-start-up companies working out of Ramallah, in the West Bank. Finally, she currently drives the FemTech initiative at DIKU, which goal is to challenge the dominating narratives of computer science in the society, through new inclusive activities. For more info: <http://pernillebjorn.dk>