

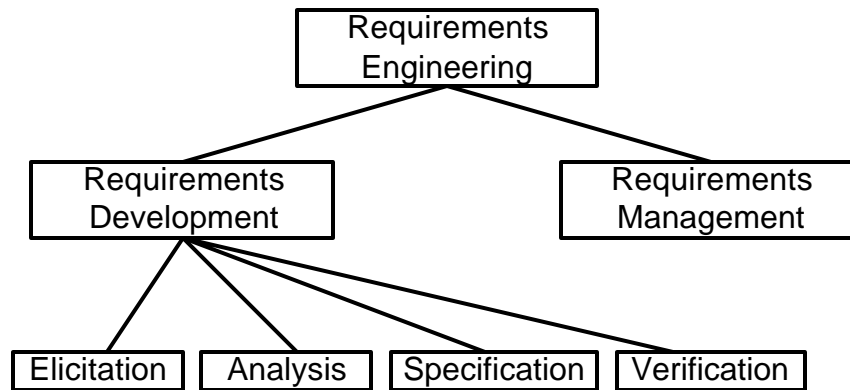
Software Requirements Elicitation Checklist



Introduction

Elicitation is part of the Requirements Engineering process.

The following checklist addresses only the elicitation part of requirements development. Once elicited requirements are analyzed, a specification document is created and reviewed. To complete the requirements engineering process, the requirements are managed using a defined change control process that ensures that all work products and plans based on the requirements, remain consistent.



Requirements Elicitation

1. Setting the Stage

	Were the requirements elicitation activities undertaken by an analyst who has experience or training in best practices?
	Was a shared vision, reflecting the organization's senior stakeholders perspective of the purpose and scope of the product/application/system, developed and documented?
	Were the principal groups of users (called "Actors" in UML) of the product/application/system identified and their characteristics documented?
	Were representatives of these user groups identified and made available for the analyst to consult with?
	Were the representatives empowered to make binding decisions on behalf of the users they represented?

	Was appropriate project time, resources, and money (approximately 25-35%) allocated to gathering and documenting the requirements (requirements development)?
	Were the lessons learned from previous project post-mortems/retrospectives taken into consideration when planning requirements gathering activities?
	Does the organization have, and did the analyst follow, an approved documented and understood process for gathering requirements, and, in particular, does it address the activities for requirements elicitation?
	Were the potential risks attributable to poor requirements elicitation exposed, and have approaches been adopted to mitigate these risks?
	Was the analyst trained on how to categorize the "voice of the customer" when gathering requirements, particularly with respect to the different categories of information the user provides e.g. constraints, functional requirements, solution suggestions, business rules etc?

2. Getting Results With Users and Customers

	Are the techniques used to elicit the requirements appropriate for the users? (For example use case workshops, JAD sessions or task analysis)?
	Have the reasons that users need a function been clarified by asking 'why', to drill down from the initial request?
	Have solution descriptions presented by users been exposed, and the underlying specific need uncovered?
	Was there an opportunity to go back to users and request additional information as necessary?
	Were the elicited requirements then analyzed to ensure an understanding of the real tasks being performed by users?
	Are the needs of the users clearly understood as being separate from the implementation approach (e.g. presentation style)?
	Have users been asked to express the characteristics about how well the system will perform its functions under different operating conditions (the quality attributes)?
	Were all the exception conditions or failure modes to be handled by the system identified, or do the elicited requirements cover only 'normal' operation conditions?
	Have missing requirements been uncovered by exploring the preconditions (including input data) necessary to perform a task, and the state in which the system will be left once the task is complete?
	Have any pertinent business rules been uncovered (policies for how business is to be conducted)?
	Are the requirements revisited and reviewed frequently, formally and informally throughout the elicitation process?
	Do users understand the written representation of the requirements?
	Is the user who originated the requirement recorded?
	Are industry- or business-specific terms defined in a glossary and used consistently?
	Are users and user tasks the focus of the requirements being elicited rather than the behavior of the system being built?

3. Other Sources of Requirements

	Were the following documents considered as potential sources of requirements? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards• Regulations (from the business domain)• Legislation• User Interface Style Guides
	Were competitive products evaluated as a source of potential requirements?
	If features or significant portions of the system are being reworked, have the existing manuals been examined for both functional requirements and quality attributes?
	For non-human interfaces (e.g. interfaces to other existing systems), were specifications for the external systems analyzed?
	Were all help desk (or trouble) reports outstanding against the system reviewed?
	Did the engineering team provide any requirements necessary to ensure the future sustainability of the code base?

In Summary

We hope this checklist builds your understanding of the elicitation stage of requirements gathering.

Feel free to contact us at Software Productivity Center, if we can help your team or organization by:

- Building awareness of any of the activities in requirements development or management
- Helping to diagnose the areas of requirements gathering that are causing difficulty
- Providing customized, specific solutions to your challenges in requirements gathering

Check out our Software Requirements services and training at:

http://www.spc.ca/services/requirements_solutions.htm

Contact Us

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