



## Software Product Lines: Ready for Prime Time

### Greetings from BigLever:

One of the most important objectives - and responsibilities - of the software product line (SPL) community is to bring the emerging SPL practice into widespread use in the mainstream development community. Over the past few months, I've had the opportunity to gauge our progress and to gain deeper insights into this topic through observations and experiences at the International Software Product Line Conference (SPLC 2006) and the SD Best Practices 2006 Conference.

SPLC continued its steady transition from a specialty conference for SPL research into a hybrid conference that is also attractive to mainstream practitioners. Evidence for this was clear in the workshops, tutorials and paper sessions that had a healthy emphasis on the intersection of SPL practice and modern mainstream software practices such as agile, aspect-oriented, model-driven and development lifecycle management. There was also a noticeably larger number mainstream practitioners at the conference, ready to "do business" in the hallways and thirsty for practical experiences to take back home to their organizations.

The SD Best Practices Conference, on the other hand, is a mainstream software development conference where I was the "outlier" in the group, presenting an introduction to the modern methods in SPL practice and how this related to the more well known practices such as agile, model-driven, aspect-oriented and lifecycle management. The three most relevant observations I made there were:

(1) The room for my session was full and the interest level throughout the session was high.

(2) An informal show of hands indicated that only 10% of attendees already knew about SPL practice.

(3) An informal show of hands also revealed that all attendees' organizations - except for one - created a product line portfolio and faced all of the associated problems (the one exception reported that his company plans to start building multiple products next quarter).

The message from this audience was that software product line development practice is clearly ready for prime time.

### Bring the Mountain to SPLs or Bring SPLs to the Mountain?

As SPL development tools and methods continue their

### Software Product Lines and BigLever in the News

*More evidence of growing mainstream interest in SPL can be seen in the industry trade press. The following eWeek article is one of several recent news stories regarding SPL technologies.*

#### Software Product Lines Automate Development

By Darryl K. Taft

*Eweek: Enterprise News & Reviews*

With reuse of software assets as its foundation, the software product line theory will help foster mass production and customization of software to power the next generation of systems. At the Software Product Line Conference (SPLC 2006), vendors, researchers and practitioners shed light on the status of software product lines, how they are putting them to use, and what tools and techniques help to implement SPLs.

>> [See full article.](#)

#### Software Product Line Hall of Fame - 2005/2006 Inductee

LSI Logic was inducted into the Software Product Line Hall of Fame at SPLC 2006. Using BigLever's Gears solution, the Engenio Storage Group division of LSI Logic has established one of the industry's most notable software product line successes, which was acknowledged at the conference as an example of

As SPL development tools and methods continue their progression into the prime time of mainstream practice, the impetus appears to be that SPL approaches are becoming more compatible with current development practices rather than a shift in the mindset of mainstream development organizations towards traditional SPL practice theory.

For example, as SPL methods become more incremental, agile and non-disruptive, mainstream development organizations that have adopted agile methods are able to extend - rather than replace - their current approaches. By removing the upfront barriers to SPL adoption, these new approaches allow organizations to broaden their current development practice to accommodate the unique requirements of developing a product line portfolio.

*Thus, a broader range of companies now have greater, more immediate access to the order-of-magnitude productivity gains and top-line benefits delivered by SPL technologies.*

Over the next few months, we will continue this thread of discussion with a series of informational emails on how SPL methods relate to other software development technologies and approaches - and how development organizations can take advantage of the complementary capabilities that SPL technologies and tools provide.

Thank you for your continued interest in the latest developments in the software product line community. I look forward to this new dialogue and hearing your thoughts regarding the progression of SPLs into mainstream practice.

Best Regards,

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### About BigLever

BigLever Software, Inc. (TM) is a leading provider of software product line development tools and services. BigLever's patent-pending solution, Gears (TM), dramatically simplifies the creation, evolution and maintenance of embedded or standalone software for a product line.

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