

Foreword

Software product lines aim at providing the means for achieving large-scale software variability in an effective manner. However, systematic methods and tools are still needed for describing and managing variability in the large scale and effectively deriving product instances.

This workshop was organized based on the encouraging experience from earlier workshops (at SPLC2 02, Groningen 03, ICSE03) on variability management. The workshops have provided an initial understanding of the area and formed a basis for managing the variability of software product lines. Furthermore, relevant results and lessons can be learned from traditional products (mechanical and electronic) in the field of product configuration, which is an area utilizing techniques of artificial intelligence. The field has also recently shown interest in configuring software products that exhibit very large variability. With this background, we set out a call-for-papers, which yielded a good selection of papers covering the intended topic areas.

The workshop has a session addressing the modeling issues and theoretical underpinnings of variability, including ones stemming from feature modeling and domain engineering as well as those relying on formal methods. In addition, we have papers reporting experience of the use of product configurators and techniques of traditional products for resolving variability in software product lines. Furthermore, there is a nice set of demonstrations working towards tool support in the product derivation of software product lines.

Together all these contributions form a basis for fruitful discussions on the emerging body of knowledge in modeling, management and product derivation of software product lines in a manner allowing construction of tools that could be taken widely in use in industry. We expect that the workshop makes a relevant contribution in this respect by bringing together researchers with different backgrounds and linking the research efforts with industrial experiences and needs from different domains.

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