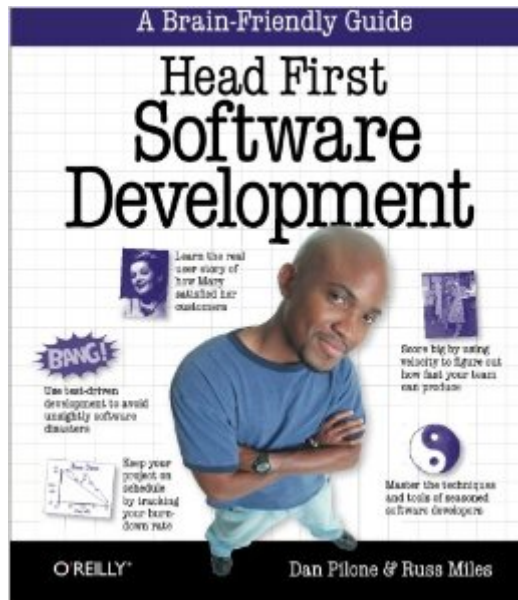


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# Head First Software Development



## Synopsis

Even the best developers have seen well-intentioned software projects fail -- often because the customer kept changing requirements, and end users didn't know how to use the software you developed. Instead of surrendering to these common problems, let *Head First Software Development* guide you through the best practices of software development. Before you know it, those failed projects will be a thing of the past. With its unique visually rich format, this book pulls together the hard lessons learned by expert software developers over the years. You'll gain essential information about each step of the software development lifecycle -- requirements, design, coding, testing, implementing, and maintenance -- and understand why and how different development processes work. This book is for you if you are:

- Tired of your customers assuming you're psychic. You'll learn not only how to get good requirements, but how to make sure you're always building the software that customers want (even when they're not sure themselves)
- Wondering when the other 15 programmers you need to get your project done on time are going to show up. You'll learn how some very simple scheduling and prioritizing will revolutionize your success rate in developing software.
- Confused about being rational, agile, or a tester. You'll learn not only about the various development methodologies out there, but how to choose a solution that's right for your project.
- Confused because the way you ran your last project worked so well, but failed miserably this time around. You'll learn how to tackle each project individually, combine lessons you've learned on previous projects with cutting-edge development techniques, and end up with great software on every project.

*Head First Software Development* is here to help you learn in a way that your brain likes... and you'll have a blast along the way. Why pick up hundreds of boring books on the philosophy of this approach or the formal techniques required for that one? Stick with *Head First Software Development*, and your projects will succeed like never before. Go on, get started... you'll learn and have fun. We promise.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've read and reviewed several of the "Head First" series of books on programming languages and software design, so I thought I would give this one a try too. Unlike so many books on software development, this one doesn't start with a terse and rather useless overview chapter. Instead it clearly tells you who this book is for: Those who have a background in programming, specifically Java, who want to learn techniques for building and delivering software. First the book explains the Head First concept in learning - using puzzles, cartoons, graphics, and anything else that should stick in your head to explain the usually dry topic of software engineering. The first three chapters - "Great Software Development", "Gathering Requirements", and "Project Planning" - talk about how software development usually goes wrong and talks about some of the methods for organizing your efforts. Chapter 4 puts some of these ideas in motion when the book analyzes the development of a mythical application, iSwoon. The book has the application get into serious trouble and then shows you the way out of the abyss using good software design methodology. Next, the book has you adding features to "BeatBox Pro", which is an application from the "Head First Java" book. This is where your ability to understand Java code comes into play. The book also discusses the use and usefulness of the Ant build tool for Java projects. However, this is a book on how to approach the design of the software, not how to perform the detailed coding, so having somewhat rusty Java skills should be acceptable. Throughout the book are puzzles, Q&A sessions, and "There are no dumb question" sessions that really drive home the points being made. The following is the table of contents for the book:

When I first looked at Head First Software Development by Dan Pilon and Russ Miles, I was thinking that it would be best targeted at people who had never formally written software before. It definitely fits that bill. But I can see a use for experienced developers who have never been exposed to agile development techniques. Either way, it's a very good book.

Contents:

- Intro
- Great Software Development: Pleasing Your Customer
- Gathering Requirements: Knowing What The

Customer Wants  
Project Planning: Planning For Success  
User Stories and Tasks: Getting To The Real Work  
Good-Enough Design: Getting It Done With Great Design  
Version Control: Defensive Development  
Building Your Code: Insert Tab A Into Slot B...  
Testing and Continuous Integration: Things Fall Apart  
Test-Driven Development: Holding Your Code Accountable  
Ending An Iteration: It's All Coming Together...  
The Next Iteration: If It Ain't Broke... You Still Better Fix It  
Bugs: Squashing Bugs Like A Pro  
The Real World: Having A Process In Life  
Appendix 1 - Leftovers: The Top 5 Things (We Didn't Cover)  
Appendix 2 - Techniques and Principles: Tools For The Experienced Software Developer

The authors do a great job of covering the entire software development process, from getting requirements to debugging code. But instead of going back to the older and more traditional waterfall method of software development, they chose to expose the reader to the agile methodology. Personally, I think that's a great decision, as it gets across important techniques such as story cards, iterations, and test-driven development. Learning those skills as the primary way to build software goes a long way towards prepping the new developer for the marketplace.

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