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# Introduction to Retrospectives

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# Our wild idea!

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- Our plan:
  - Guide on how to run a Retrospective [now]
  - Building the Timeline [during the day]
  - Hold a Retrospective [close]
- Learn:
  - How to run a Retrospective
  - What to improve about XPDay Benelux



# What is a Retrospective?

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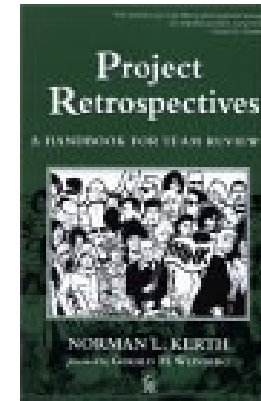
A meeting where a team looks back on a past period of work so that they can learn from their experience and apply this learning to future projects



# Background

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- Pioneered by Norman Kerth, author of “Project Retrospectives” 2000
- Adapted to support XP iterations by agile development teams
  - Eg RoleModel Soft, Connextra



# What a Retrospective is not ...

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- A Retrospective is not a Post-Mortem:  
Aim to use Retrospectives regularly during the life of the project rather than after catastrophic failure



- A Retrospective is not a Witch-Hunt:  
Retrospectives are not about apportioning blame



# Kerth's Prime Directive

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*"Regardless of what we discover, we must understand and truly believe that everyone did the best job he or she could, given what was known at the time, his or her skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand."*

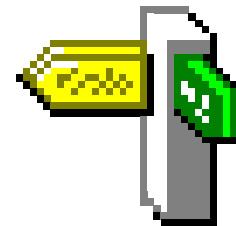
*Norman Kerth, 2000*



# Why hold a Retrospective?

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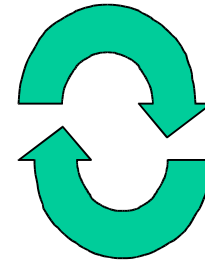
- To reflect and learn from the past
- To decide how the team will work in the future
- To improve communication within the team
- To allow a team to own and drive their development process



# Regular maintenance

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- After work period, hold a retrospective
  - Reflect on what did and didn't work over the past work period
  - Make adjustments
- Repeat “heartbeat” cycle to boost ..
  - Communication
  - Ownership (+intrinsic motivation)
  - Effectiveness



# Who should attend?

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- Try to represent many viewpoints:
  - Development
  - Marketing
  - Customer Support
  - QA
  - Managers
- May split into specialist groups
  - eg Dev only for specialist discussions



# Choosing a Location

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- On-site
  - Convenient
  - Cheaper but may imply unimportant
  - Risk of interruptions
- Off-site
  - Possibly not practical for regular retrospective
- Room requirements
  - Moveable tables/chairs
  - Flipcharts



# Choosing a Facilitator

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Use a Facilitator to manage the Retrospective:

- Neutral outsider
- Background in software development
- Experienced in mediation and conflict resolution



# Getting the XPDay Story Out

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How you can help :

- Gather Artifacts
  - anything to jog memories of significant events
- Building a Timeline
  - introducing our timeline monitors



# Mine the XPDay timeline for Gold

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How you can help:

- Retrospective at the close of the day
- Judging the Artefacts Contest



# Any Questions?

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# Reading List

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- "Project Retrospectives: A Handbook for Team Reviews" by Norman Kerth
- "Agile Software Development" by Alistair Cockburn
- "Adaptation: XP Style" XP2001 conference paper by Chris Collins & Roy Miller, RoleModel Software



# Useful Links

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- Norm Kerth's site
  - <http://www.retrospectives.com>
- Ward Cunningham's wiki
  - <http://www.c2.com/cgi/wiki?ExtremeProgrammingRoadmap>
- Extreme Tuesday Club, XTC
  - <http://www.xpdeveloper.com>
- Agile Alliance
  - <http://www.agilealliance.com>

