TELMACO

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Telmaco announces MeterIT-Converter

A number of organisations are beginning to benefit from the COSMIC method of functional measurement. These organisations are either new entrants to software sizing with COSMIC or are moving to COSMIC from one of the first generation sizing methods: IFPUG, NESMA, or Mk II FPA. The latter do not want to lose their measurement assets and benchmarking results: they want metrics continuity. **MeterIT-Converter** supports these organisations by converting their measurements to COSMIC. Why not give it a try . . .

Also, new licensing options are now available for **MeterIT-Cosmic,** ensuring closer adjustment to specific project needs. License it only when needed.

Dear All,

A significant number of organisations have started to systematically measure their software production. In a similar fashion, this accounts for internally-produced software and for outsourced software. Software measurement (or software sizing) requires that it be carried out based on a standard of measurement. The most usual standards have obtained ISO recognition and are traditionally well-positioned in the category of First Generation (1G) sizing standards: there we find the standards IFPUG, NESMA, and Mark II.
Being much-used and practised over the past 20 years, largely due to the advantage of their being available, their insufficiencies have also progressively become evident. These mostly follow from a combination of being the first to have been created (hence having some natural 'teething problems') coupled with a progressive change in the requirements of the software industry, the latter becoming more productivity-conscious and relying more and more on outsourcing. Hence a new standard has become necessary, which is COSMIC.

The Progress of COSMIC

Thus the advent of the COSMIC standard, five years ago, corresponds to a need of the emerging software industry, hence positioning itself due to its performance to the level of a Second Generation standard. So, no wonder if new entrants to software sizing easily adopt COSMIC and deploy it with enthusiasm within their organisation and with good results. Considering that not all recorded software developments are recorded in the International Software Benchmarking Standards Group (ISBSG) at **http://www.isbsg.org** but accepting that the ISBSG recorded measurement constitutes a realistic sample for the sake of our argument here, we can observe that the evolution of COSMIC is quite encouraging. (It is noteworthy that the ISBSG report version 09 was published about one year before the version 10). The table below show the number of recorded measurements in the main standards for the successive versions.

Sizing Method	V. 09	V. 10	Change %
IFPUG	2,718	3,281	21
COSMIC	73	117	60
NESMA	144	152	6
Mark II	35	35	0
Total	2,970	3,585	21

Whilst the progress of IFPUG is at an average of 21% for this group of standards, COSMIC has surged to a remarkable 60%. We may assume that the COSMIC records were issued by a non-published number of new COSMIC entrants as well as from ex-IFPUG organisations. The problem lies now with those organisations which have been early adopters of software sizing and have constituted large knowledge bases of 1G software measurement. The dilemma is to choose between either continuing with the 1G standard they know well despite its imperfections or moving anyway to the 2G standard for its advantages, meanwhile running the risk of losing the continuity with their previous measurement base.

The Conversion Option

Naturally the option of re-measuring their previous portfolio of thousands measurements is to be avoided as not economical. However, converting the 1G sizes into 2G sizes is a very productive option. The proposed way is to use MeterIT-Converter, a size conversion tool from Telmaco.
This new tool can be downloaded from **http://www.telmaco.co.uk** and installed in any computer running Microsoft Window XP or later. A trial period of 30 days is available, beyond which an end user-licence will need to be obtained from Telmaco Ltd.

MeterIT-Converter - A New Telmaco Product

MeterIT-Converter offers three main capabilities: (i) - conversion from 1G to COSMIC, (ii) - retro-version from COSMIC to each of the three main 1G standards, and (iii) - the facility to produce and maintain your own Conversion Algorithm (CA).
(i) - In conversion from 1G to COSMIC, this tool accepts sizes from the three major 1G standards and produces the conversion to COSMIC size. The entered size can be measured or estimated. When it is estimated, the tool accepts the amount of uncertainty by which the estimate was arrived at. For each 1G standard a number of Conversion Algorithms are programmed in the tool. These CAs are selected as having been thoroughly researched and tested, and refereed by the COSMIC Group.
(ii) - The retro-version to 1G, enables this tool to take a COSMIC size (measured or estimated) and retro-vert it to the three main 1G standards. This facility makes use of the Retro-CA programmed in the tool. As for the conversion facility, for each standard, the CA to be used may be selected by the user.
(iii) - Develop and maintain your own Conversion Algorithm: It may happen that the COSMIC authenticated Conversion Algorithms do not satisfy local particularities of the organisation using this tool. It sometimes happens in an outsourcing contract that one of the suppliers is still sizing with a 1G standard whilst the outsourcer and other suppliers have already passed to COSMIC. For that purpose, a facility has been embedded supporting the user in creating his/her own Local Conversion Algorithms (LCA). With this facility the user can create and test LCAs and activate it for normal use once validated.

Other capabilities:

Additionally to these three main facilities, MeterIT-Converter offers the access to the now well-known Rules Relative Size Scale (R2S2) facility. Knowing the size of an application this facility pre-positions the size of the project necessary for processing the software application converted. The choice is offered between three project types: New Development, Enhancement/Maintenance, and Re-development. This could be an efficient way of obtaining an idea or a 'wild estimate' of the budget necessary for the project being considered.

MeterIT-Converter is delivered with a very complete User Guide (including a tutorial) accessible by Help and by F1. A conversion report can be issued when the user needs it. It is a new product, and even though some teething problems have been solved, the best 'bugs' are always hiding very deep. If you were to experience problems with it, an Anomaly Report (Black-Box) would automatically be issued. You would just need to email it to Telmaco Ltd for a resolution as soon as possible.

The future of MeterIT-Converter:
This product will evolve not only by being augmented by all the new CAs refereed and published as they come in but also by the comments you send to Telmaco with a view to making it more effective and productive.

New Licensing Options for MeterIT-Cosmic

Further to the perpetual licence, two new types of licence have been launched in 2008 (See **http://www.telmaco.co.uk**): the licence for the duration of the project and the licence allowance for the newly trained COSMIC.

(i) - MeterIT-Cosmic for the duration of the project

The advanced sizing usually made during the Feasibility Study is often accommodated during the free month of MeterIT-Cosmic evaluation; it is also at the end of this period that the overall project duration is known. At this time we calculate the number of months necessary for bringing the software application from its early design to its delivery status. You can acquire from Telmaco a Licence covering only this number of calendar months with a minimum of three months. Naturally it could happen that the project requires an extension. The flexibility of this option is in making a licence extension possible once you have reported your additional number of months to Telmaco.

(ii) - One free yearly Licence for COSMIC trained by SMS

The next public COSMIC training course has been announced by SMS Ltd. The course recommended by Telmaco is "Practical Use of COSMIC"; it will take place on the **4th/5th November, 2008** at Edenbridge, UK. For more details please log on
http://www.smsknowledge/practicalcosmic.
Once you have obtained your certificate of SMS COSMIC-trained you can acquire your one-year free licence for MeterIT-Cosmic. Please refer to your training certificate at ordering time.

Finally, I'd like to continue inviting your comments, suggestions and general responses. They are very welcome, and indeed, are fundamental to shaping the driving strategy for MeterIT-Cosmic's future.

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Telmaco is the creator of the MeterIT tool suite for software metrics.
MeterIT-Cosmic measures software size in compliance with the standard COSMIC (ISO/IEC 19761, 2003), **MeterIT-Project** benchmarks software projects and calibrates Telmaco's software project estimation tool, **PredictIT**.

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