Throwaway Prototyping

Throwaway prototyping is a technical mechanism to reduce project risk by exploring factors critical to the projects success.

Main Benefits	Throwaway prototyping can significantly reduce risk.
Keys to Success	Choose the prototyping language that enables quick prototyping and commit to throwing the prototype away.
When to Use	It can be used at any time on a project by any of the project's personnel. Individual project participants can realize some benefit by prototyping risky areas within their individual areas of responsibility.
Main Risks	The main risks of throwaway prototyping are not throwing it away and inefficient use of prototyping time.

Overview

With throwaway prototyping, code is developed to explore factors critical to the system's success, and then that code is thrown away. The prototyping implementation uses programming languages or development practices or both that are much faster than the target language and practices. The user interface is prototyped far more commonly than any other part of the system, but other parts of some systems can also benefit from being prototyped. When used as a requirements-specification aid, throwaway prototypes can accelerate projects based on traditional lifecycle models, such as DoD projects. It can be initiated at either a management or technical level.

CxOne Support

CxOne provides support for prototyping with design checklists. Additionally support for exploring critical success factors such as the user interface, can be found in the Requirements CKA.

Interactions with other Best Practices

Prototyping in one form or another can be used on most kinds of projects regardless of what other practices are used. Even in projects in which you can't use full-scale evolutionary prototyping, you can still often use throwaway prototyping to explore key risk areas.

Further Reading

McConnell, Steve. *Rapid Development*. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Press. 1996.

CxBest_EvolutionaryPrototyping