What Remains to Be Done?

Dr. Maurice Schlumberger taught me one of the key principles for measuring progress on a software development project. He first reminded me that work to be done on a project grows over time as the development team finds things they need to do that they had not thought of earlier. Therefore, one must always ask, "What remains to be done?" *rather than (or in addition to),* "What have you completed?" *Plot on a chart both the amount of work completed and the new estimate of total work to be done.*

After charting several of these points, it is possible to estimate a slope of the completion rate (called "velocity" *in the agile world) and another slope of the growth of total work to be done. If you are lucky, the two lines intersect (that is, the completion rate is greater than the growth of newly-discovered work). The point at which they intersect predicts the date of completion for the original project scope.*

If your chart does not converge, be alarmed! Your project will never finish.

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Get Out of the Way!
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