

IBM Rational Method Composer: Part 2: Authoring method content and processes

Level: Introductory

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from The Rational Edge: Part Two of this introduction to the new IBM Rational Method Composer (RMC) details the concepts that define method content and processes in RMC, and explains cataloging method content and defining processes, with examples.

Last month, I published Part One of this two-part introduction to the newly released IBM Rational Method Composer (RMC) with a discussion of key concepts and typical usage scenarios for RMC. This month, in Part Two, I will provide more details about the concepts that define method content and processes in RMC. I will start by reviewing the three main elements for building method content -- namely, roles, tasks, and work products -- and their relationships. I will then discuss guidance and the different kinds of guidance supported by RMC. I will show you how to organize catalogs of your method content using standard and custom categories. I will then move on to defining processes in RMC, providing you with a rationale for RMC's process representation and walking you through a set of examples for the different kind of processes you can use and create in RMC.



[Editor's note: The number of figures in this article (beginning with Figure 10) and footnotes (beginning with footnote number 17) is an intentional continuation from last month's Part One installment.]

Managing intellectual capital and assets as method content and guidance

Let's consider the three main elements for building method content -- roles, tasks, and work products -- and their relationships.

Roles, tasks, work products

One of the most commonly quoted phrases in software engineering literature is "software development is a team sport,"¹⁷ indicating that software is (still) created by human developers who perform development tasks in which they heavily collaborate and exchange the products of their work with each other. In that sense, RMC applies the very common and even standardized approach¹⁸ to define development methods, as depicted in Figure 10, by identifying development roles that represent a set of related skills, competencies, and responsibilities of a development team. These roles are responsible for specific types of work products: for example, developers are responsible for source code, or system analysts are responsible for use case specifications. For creating and modifying work products, roles are assigned to perform tasks that have specific types of work products as input and output.

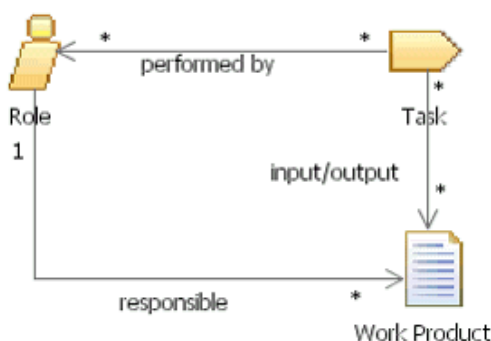


Figure 10: Simplified conceptual model of the core method content concepts of role, task, and work product.

The experienced Rational Unified Process ®, or RUP®, user will realize that we used the term "activity" in previous versions of RUP instead of "task." We changed the terminology as part of the Unified Method Architecture (UMA) and SPEM 2.0 work described in [Part One](#), under "Method Content," to better reflect industry usage of these terms and to provide a tighter link to process enactment and project management approaches.

A new capability in RMC, in contrast to previous versions of RUP, is your ability to assign a task more than one role. This emphasizes the collaborative nature of software engineering, because many tasks require that people with different skills, backgrounds, and stakes work together. For example, a task called "prioritize requirements" needs to combine skills and expertise from different roles. You need the system analyst's skills to represent the end user's needs and priorities. You need the architect's skills to assess feasibility and costs of features for the project manager to be able to define the cost/benefit ratio. You also need the project manager's skills to assess how many development resources and skills are available to be able to allocate and prioritize requirements realizations to different iterations. Therefore, prioritizing requirements requires the collaboration of individuals playing roles with all these different skills. In modeling methods with past versions of RUP, you were forced to assign such a task to only one of these three roles or to create a new role that combines these skills, leading to large numbers of very specialized roles. In RMC, you assign all the roles you need to tasks to clearly define what skills are required to do the work. When actually performing this work in a project, a project manager can still decide whether to assign one person per role or to have that person perform several roles at the same time.

Another change RUP users will notice is the use of the concept *work product* instead of *artifact*, as noted in Figure 10. RUP still defines artifacts, but the work product concept has been introduced in RMC as a generalization to include and support two more work product types: deliverables and outcomes. Deliverables are used for packaging other work products for delivery to an internal or external party. They define typical or recommended content in the form of work product selections and deliverable-specific documentation that would be packaged for delivery. Outcomes are intangible work products that are a result or state, such as an installed server or optimized network. A key difference between outcomes and artifacts is that outcomes are not candidates for harvesting as reusable assets.

Mapping method description into method content

In [Part One](#) of this article, I explained method content as a way to represent fundamental development methods and techniques harvested from software engineering literature and represented in RMC with the concepts of role, task, and work product. The Rational Unified Process, for example, contains a full range of development methods for most key development disciplines. Some examples are:

Use-case analysis. A number of books¹⁹ on this subject describe how a designer systematically creates object-oriented analysis models from use-case specifications.

Developing and scoping a vision. Other authors²⁰ have defined a method for mapping and communicating stakeholder problems to business needs to system features (requirements) used for project scoping.

Testing. Cem Caner et al. have defined and published various methods²¹ for systematically planning for tests, identifying and designing test ideas, and doing systematic regression testing.

Methods like these have been mapped by the RUP Content Team from their sources into one or more tasks. As shown in Figure 11, every task is organized into a series of steps associated with performing roles and input/output work products and with guidance providing additional background information and detail.

Task: Use-Case Analysis

This task describes how to develop an Analysis-level Use-Case Realization from a Use-Case.
Discipline: Analysis & Design

Expand All Sections Collapse All Sections

Purpose

- To identify the classes which perform a use case's flow of events
- To distribute the use case behavior to those classes, using analysis use-case realizations
- To identify the responsibilities, attributes and associations of the classes
- To note the usage of architectural mechanisms

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Relationships

Roles	Primary Performer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designer 	Additional Performers:
Inputs	Mandatory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Case 	Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use-Case Realization Analysis Class Analysis Model Design Model Use-Case Model Supplementary Specifications Software Architecture Document Glossary Project-Specific Guidelines
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use-Case Realization Analysis Class Analysis Model 	

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Steps

Expand All Steps Collapse All Steps

- Create Analysis Use-Case Realization
- Supplement the Use-Case Description
- Find Analysis Classes from Use-Case Behavior
- Distribute Behavior to Analysis Classes
- Describe Responsibilities
- Describe Attributes and Associations
- Reconcile the Analysis Use-Case Realizations
- Qualify Analysis Mechanisms
- Establish Traceability
- Review the Results

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More Information

Checklists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use-Case Realization
Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use-Case-Analysis Workshop Use-Case Realization Sequence Diagram Communication Diagram Analysis Class
Tool Mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capturing the Results of Use-Case Analysis Using Rational Rose Creating Use-Case Realizations Using Rational Rose Performing Use-Case Analysis Using Rational XDE Developer Managing Collaboration Diagrams Using Rational Rose Managing Sequence Diagrams Using Rational Rose Managing the Design Model Using Rational Rose Performing Use-Case Analysis Using Rational Software Architect

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Figure 11: The method of performing use-case analysis represented as a task in RMC. The example shows how a task is rendered into HTML and presented to an RMC user. Detailed step descriptions are provided in collapsible sections. All blue text in this figure represents hyperlinks to pages of the related method content elements.

[Click to enlarge.](#)

For example, Figure 11 depicts how the use-case analysis method is represented in RUP as a task performed by the role designer. The task has the work-product use case as a mandatory input. It has several other work products as optional inputs, such as use-case realization, analysis class, glossary, and so on. As output work products, the task defines a use-case realization as well as the analysis model comprising analysis classes. The task is linked to various guidance elements such as a checklist; guidelines for specific techniques such as performing a use-case analysis workshop; guidelines discussing the details of work products such as use-case realizations, analysis classes, and so on. Finally, there are tool mentors that describe how to perform use-case analysis using tools such as IBM Rational Rose, XDE, or Software Architect.

The task itself is structured into steps, although these steps do not have to be performed in a strict sequence. In fact several of these steps might be performed in only particular situations and not for each and every use case. For

example, the step "Reconcile the Analysis Use-Case Realizations" requires that you have already performed this task more than once so that you have several use-case realizations to reconcile. Hence, steps describe units of work within the task that the task performer can choose from when doing the work. As you will see in the "Managing Process with RMC" section, it is the process that actually defines which steps shall be performed at what point in time. The task with its steps defines the method of use-case analysis with all of its variants of performing it, describing all the work that gets done throughout a development lifecycle that contributes to the achievement of the task's purposes. It is the application of the method element in a process that provides it with context that allows you to decide on what parts of the method you are actually performing at what point in the lifecycle.

Defining and using tasks in RMC intentionally has a lot of commonality with how use cases are defined and used in software engineering. As a use case, a task shall provide a clear purpose in which the performing roles achieve a well-defined goal that provides value to a stakeholder. An individual step of a task, such as "Create Analysis Use-Case Realization" in our example above, does not provide a value on its own. The use-case realization concept by itself only represents the container for the analysis elements identified in the analysis. It is therefore a means to the end of achieving the purposes of the analysis task as listed at the top of Figure 11.

Defining tasks with a clear purpose or goals provides similar advantages for identifying and managing tasks as it does for use cases. Stakeholders such as process implementers or developers can more easily relate to their tasks because they see the larger context of their purpose: why they are doing this work. Defining and assigning too many low-level units of work to people is hard to manage and hard to communicate. Also communication and education of tasks becomes much easier if they fulfill a level of granularity that relates to clear development goals. As a result, time required for performing a task can range from a few hours to many days. Hence, process estimation cannot be performed by counting tasks; it needs to be performed by considering estimates for every task individually. (However, it is recommended that you define estimates for occurrences of tasks in processes, which already provide more specific context as described above.)

Another rule for a task's granularity is that it usually affects one or only a small number of work products. In other words, a task shall not have too many different output work product types. In such a case, it might be that you defined too finely grained work products that should be combined to address a particular purpose. It could also be that your tasks perform work of several development methods that should be refactored into separate ones to increase reusability of the task and focus on specific goals.

As with use cases, the aim is to provide complete definitions of doing all the work that needs to be done to achieve the task's goal. This includes alternative as well as optional steps. In this sense, the task's steps map to use-case flows that can be placed in many different combinations in a process to derive different "scenarios," in this case, development scenarios. Assigning input and output work product relationships to a task is illustrated in Figure 12. To complete the use-case analogy, please note that the performing roles of a task do not map to use-case actors because actors are external users. Roles represent the developers performing the actual work. Therefore, roles are similar to control objects in analysis use-case realizations or business workers in business use-case realizations.

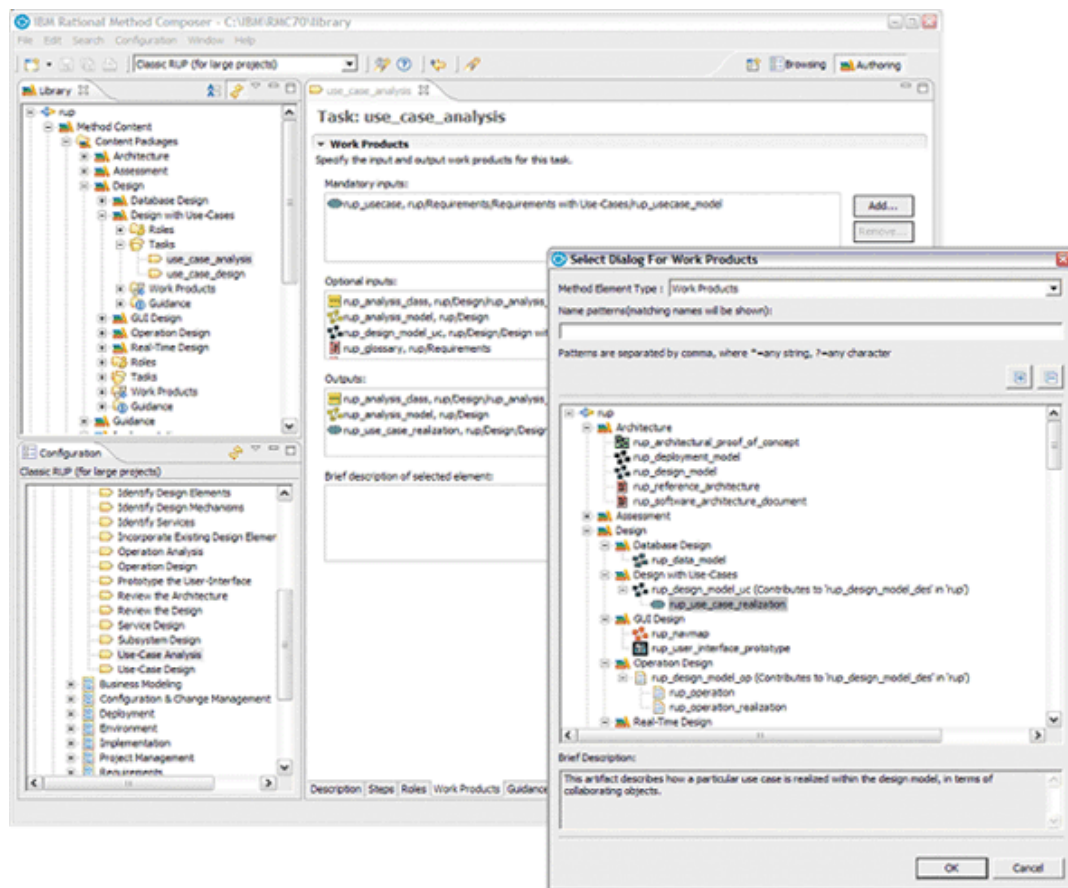


Figure 12: Assigning input and output work product relationships to a task in an RMC task editor using simple add and remove buttons and dialogs.

[Click to enlarge.](#)

Guidance and categories

Guidance elements let you add any additional information that makes your method content more complete and allows you to factor details into separate descriptions, as shown in Figure 13. The concrete guidance kinds supported in RMC cover the addition of whitepapers, checklists, templates, or term definitions. See Table 1 below for a complete list of supported guidance kinds.

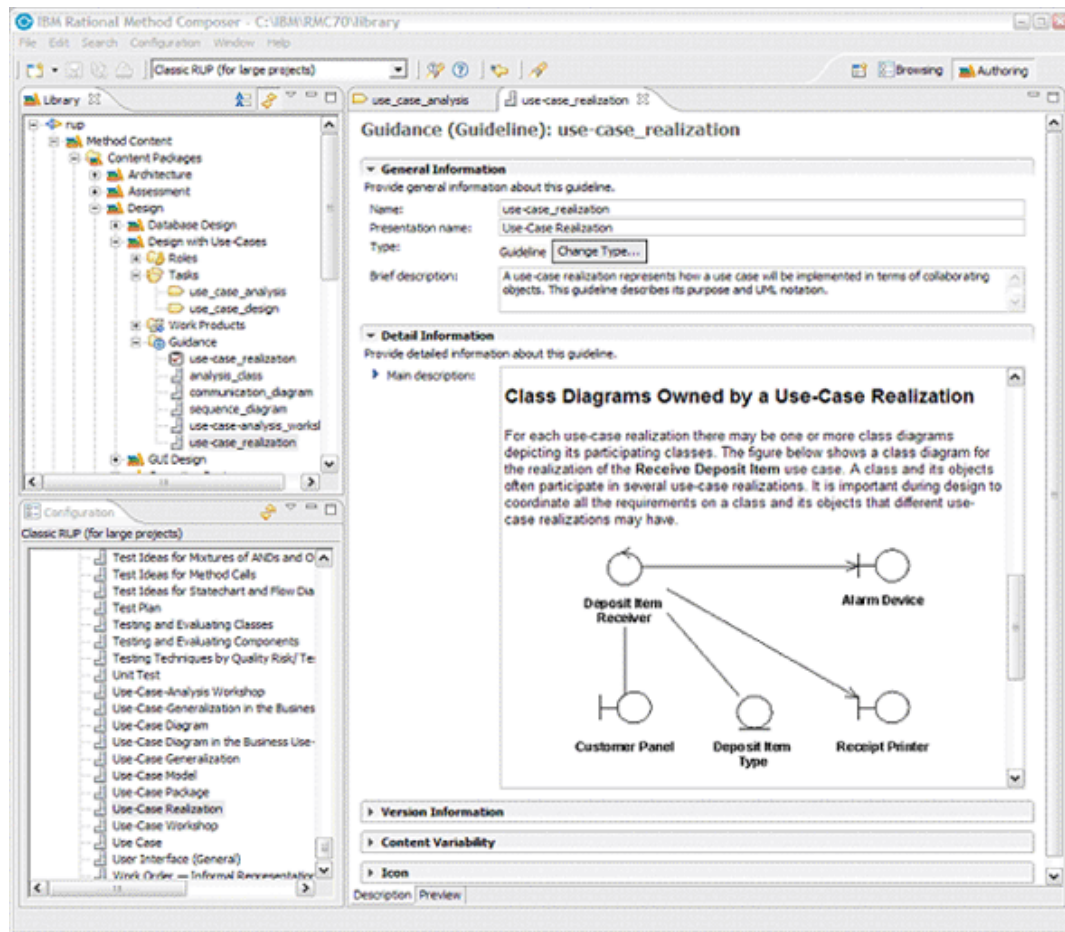


Figure 13: Guidance is authored in RMC with specific form-based editors. This figure shows the editor for the Guideline kind. It basically consists of a free-form text field that allows editing whitepaper-like documentation. Other guidance kinds provide more specific editors; for example, the Checklist kind is edited with a check item editor.

[Click to enlarge.](#)

RMC supports you in authoring such guidance elements using form-based editors as depicted in Figure 13. You can then relate your guidance to your roles, tasks, or work products using simple dialogs for either creating links inline to your documentation (for example, inside a step description, a work product definition or the text of another guidance element) or in the separate reference sections such as the "More Information" section that you saw in the example of Figure 11.

Table 1: A list of the different guidance kinds supported by RMC. Different guidance kinds can be related to different elements. For example a template is typically associated only with work products and not tasks or roles. The Rational Unified Process offers a detailed overview of the relationships allowed.

Checklist	Identifies a series of items that need to be completed or verified. Checklists are often used in reviews such as walkthroughs or inspections.
Concept	Outlines key ideas associated with basic principles underlying the referenced item. Concepts normally address more general topics than guidelines and span several work products and/or tasks or activities.
Example	Provides an example of a completed work product or performed tasks and activities.
Guideline	Provides additional detail on how to perform a particular task or grouping of tasks or provides additional details, rules, and recommendations on work products and their properties.
Practice	Represents a proven way or strategy of doing work to achieve a goal that has a positive impact on work product or process quality. Practices are defined orthogonal to methods and processes. They could summarize aspects that impact many different parts of a method or specific process.
Report	A template for an automatically generated description with extracted content from one or several work products.
Reusable Asset	Links a prepackaged solution to a problem for a given context. Examples of assets are design patterns or mechanisms, solution frameworks, etc. Asset packaging and consumption is directly supported by IBM Rational's design and construction tools.
Roadmap	A linear walkthrough of a complex process or activity. (This is process-specific guidance.)
Supporting Material	A catch-all for other types of guidance not specifically defined elsewhere. It can be related to all kinds of content elements.
Template	For a work product, provides a predefined table of contents, sections, packages, and/or headings, a standardized format, as well as descriptions on how the sections and packages are supposed to be used and completed.
Term Definition	Defines terminology and is used to build up the glossary.
Tool Mentor	Shows how to use a specific tool to accomplish some piece of work, either in the context of, or independent from, a task or activity.
Whitepaper	Similar to concept, but has been externally reviewed or published and can be read and understood in isolation of other content elements and guidance.

In addition to providing supplementary informal content with guidance, you can use categories to organize and index your content presentation, as shown in Figure 14. RMC provides a set of predefined standard categories for its method content elements such as disciplines categorizing tasks, domains categorizing work products, role sets grouping related roles, and so on. RMC also allows you to define your own custom categories that you can use to define your own logical organization and presentation structures for roles, tasks, and work products, as well as guidance. All the tree browser views you see in the published RMC content are generated based on these categories. Categories themselves are considered content elements (yes, you can also categorize categories themselves), because they can also contain detailed rich text descriptions defining and summarizing the category. Moreover, you can also use custom categories to create your own indexes and catalogs on your content. For example, you can define categories for CMMI²² levels or practices and categorize content such as your tasks based on these levels.

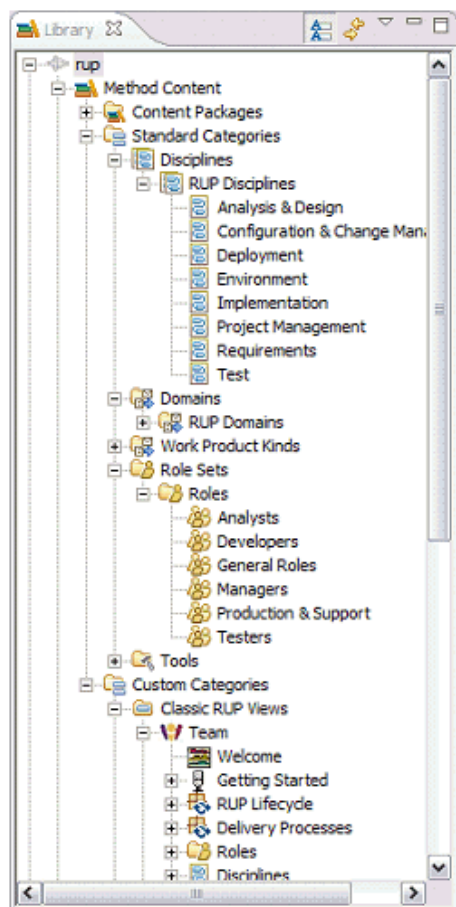


Figure 14: Examples for standard and custom categories defined for the IBM Rational Unified Process. Disciplines and Role Sets are examples for standard categories. Custom Categories can be used for classifying your content as well as defining navigation structures for the published Website.

Managing processes with Rational Method Composer

In [Part One](#) of this article, I provided you with a general overview of processes in RMC. In this section, we will look at the details of creating processes. I will discuss how RMC facilitates your process-tailoring work with reusable building blocks expressed as capability patterns and method content. I will show you how to create agile processes with implicit method content, as well as enriched processes that refer to concrete method content. In particular, we will look at how relationships defined for method content can guide you to systematically completing your processes.

A rationale for RMC's process representation and presentations

Development processes define how development projects shall be executed. One of the most common characteristics found within the many different definitions of process in literature is sequencing of phases and milestones expressing a lifecycle of the product under development. Processes also define how to get from one milestone to the next by defining sequences of work, operations, or events that usually take up time, expertise, or other resources, and which produce some outcome.

Reference frameworks for development processes such as CMMI define different levels of maturity for processes. Each level entails different characteristics for the process definition as well as enactment in an organization or project for each level. For example, CMMI defines a "managed process" as performed activities that can be recognized as implementations of development practices. Such a process has certain characteristics: it is planned and executed in accordance with policy; it employs skilled people, having adequate resources to produce controlled outputs; it involves relevant stakeholders; it is monitored, controlled, and reviewed; and it is evaluated for adherence to its process description. By contrast, a "defined process" is a managed process that is tailored from the organization's set of standard processes according to the organization's tailoring guidelines. A defined process has a maintained process description and contributes work products, measures, and other process-improvement information to the organizational process assets. As you will see throughout this section, RMC processes support many of these characteristics.

As we saw in the previous section, method content is defined as isolated content. It treats tasks as a kind of use case for achieving specific development goals. For creating a process, you now need to define how such methods are applied and sequenced in a development lifecycle. Figure 15 depicts conceptually how method content -- defined by its three main elements (or dimensions): tasks, roles, and work products -- is applied in a process along the timeline (the fourth dimension).

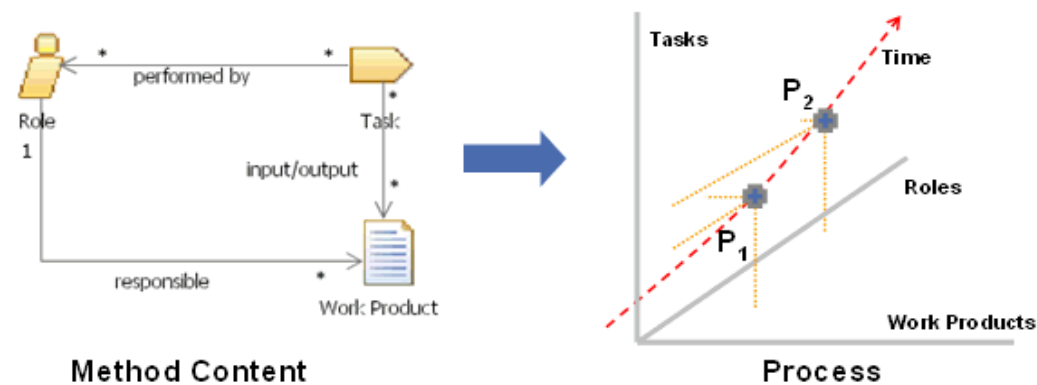


Figure 15: Applying method content in a process. The figure shows how method content defined with tasks, roles, and work products is sequenced in processes.

Whereas traditional waterfall-based developed processes would be able to define more or less straight lines for the tasks to be performed, modern iterative development processes, such as RUP, Scrum, and XP, require more complex structures to represent increments of development. In these structures, work is packaged into repeatable chunks in which tasks are performed concurrently and repeatedly.

These varieties of development approaches also require different degrees of formality and levels of detail for their process descriptions. Traditional development processes define phases based on predefined deliverable types, providing exact descriptions of the sequences of work that produce these deliverables. Agile development processes only ask for informal work descriptions because they assume self-organizing teams will be able to perform the work without guidance and without control once the development goals have been defined. They also focus on scoping of iterations of work with less deliverable-oriented, but more capability-oriented (results-based) milestones. Finally, modern scalable iterative processes provide explicit descriptions of the work to be performed with a variable and tailorable amount of detail depending on the type of project and maturity of the organization. RMC aims to support all three of these approaches.

To support complex process structures as well as various degrees of formality, traditional iterative development processes are modeled using nested workflow representations. This allows you to define complex process structures as a hierarchy of nested diagrams in which each diagram node could be refined or detailed with a whole new diagram. For example, the RUP always defined its processes with UML-like activity diagrams. Activity diagrams can express parallelism of work using fork, merge, and join nodes. They can also express sequencing using control flows.

A second popular representation for traditional waterfall as well as iterative development processes is work breakdown structures. Breakdown structures are similar to nested activity graphs because they also allow the refinement of work definitions via nesting. They provide an easy way to sequence work by using what is called *predecessor dependencies*, which have some similarity to control flows. All elements that are not related via these predecessors are free to be performed in parallel. Another advantage of the breakdown structure representations is that they are very popular in project enactment and management applications such as IBM Rational Portfolio Manager or Microsoft Project. Using breakdown structures in RMC supports bridging the gap between process definition and process enactment in projects. RMC integrates these two popular process representations of activity diagrams and breakdown structures into one format that it maintains internally to represent processes. Based on this format, RMC supports both presentations interchangeably, as shown in Figure 16.

Presentation Name	Index	Prefix	Model Info	Type	Predecessors	Repeat...	Ongoing	Event...
Inception Phase Iteration	0			Capability Pa...		true	false	false
Manage Iteration	1		extends 'manage_ite...	Activity		false	true	false
Initiate Project	4		extends 'initiate_proj...	Activity		false	false	false
Define Vision	5			Task Descriptor		false	false	false
Plan the Project	6			Task Descriptor		false	false	false
Manage Requirements	7		extends 'manage_re...	Activity	4	false	false	false
Find and Outline Requirer	8			Task Descriptor		false	false	false
Detail Requirements	9			Task Descriptor		false	false	false
Determine Architectural Feasi	10		extends 'determine_...	Activity	4	false	false	false
Analyze the Architecture	11			Task Descriptor		false	false	false
Create Architectural Proc	12			Task Descriptor		false	false	false
Assess and Plan Next Iteratic	13		extends 'assess_and...	Activity	1,7,10	false	false	false

Figure 16: Two presentations for the same process structure. The process Inception phase iteration is consistently maintained in a breakdown structure as well as in an activity diagram view. Changes in one view are translated to the other view if possible. Presentation-specific elements, such as the synchronization bars in the activity diagram, are not presented in the breakdown structure, but appropriate predecessor dependency information is still derived from the diagram following simple mapping rules.

[Click to enlarge.](#)

The example presented here depicts a process in both presentations for Inception phase iterations from the Eclipse Process Framework's Basic Unified Process.²³ An RMC process author can work on either of these two process presentations, and changes are automatically reflected by RMC in the other view because both views are rendered from one underlying data structure. Of course, both presentations are not completely equivalent and contain information the other presentation does not contain, such as the synchronization bars in the diagram of Figure 16 as well as decision points not available in breakdown structures. In this case, the other presentation view omits this information but provides a consistent mapping on it, as we see with the predecessor dependencies shown in Figure 16. For example, drawing a control-flow link from one activity to another directly or via a synchronization bar creates a finish-to-start predecessor dependency between activities in the breakdown structure presentation. As you can see in the top of Figure 16, predecessors are listed according to the control flows in the diagram. For example, "Manage Requirements" and "Determine Architectural Feasibility" refer to element four as its predecessor, which is the activity "Initiate Project."

Creating a process with breakdown structures

Processes such as delivery processes or capability patterns (described in Part One of this article) are created in RMC's process editor as a breakdown of nested activities. Every activity in this breakdown can present its subactivities with an activity diagram, as we have seen in the last section.

Hence, "activity" is the main concept for defining processes. Many elements you see inside the process editor derive from the activity concept; in other words, they are specializations of activity. Processes themselves, such as capability patterns, are actually nothing else but special activities that allow processes to be nested inside activities. This provides a realization of the process pattern mechanisms we defined with capability patterns. Phases and iterations are also created as activities in RMC's process editor. The only concepts you find in RMC's processes that are not activities are descriptors (explained farther below) and milestones. Creating a process with a lifecycle model in RMC is very similar to creating a plan in a planning tool. Figure 17 depicts an example of how you begin developing a RUP or BUP-like process by defining phases, iterations, and milestones.

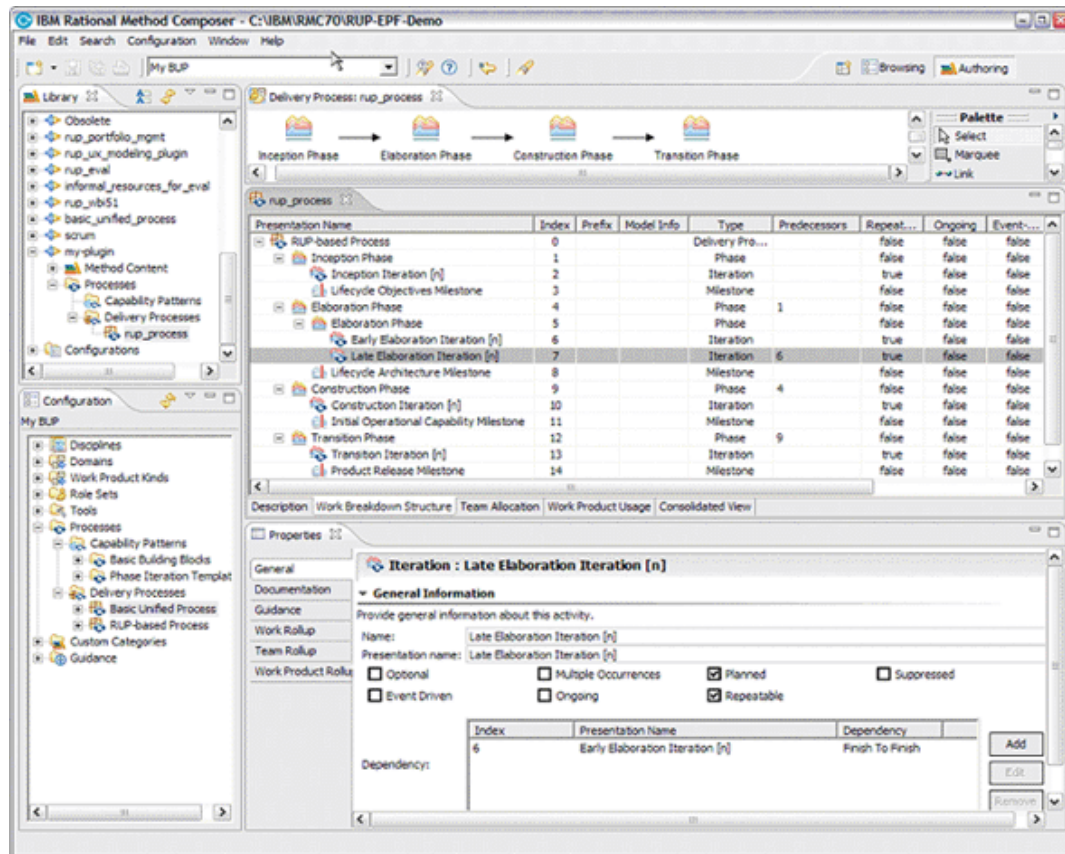


Figure 17: Creating a lifecycle model for a RUP-like process using the breakdown structure editor in RMC. The screen capture also shows the activity diagram for the top-level activity named "RUP-Based Process" as well as the properties window that allows you to document the activity currently selected in the breakdown editor. [Click to enlarge.](#)

As you have already seen in Figure 8 ([Part One](#) of this article), which showed a Scrum-like process lifecycle, you are not limited in RMC to using the RUP-like lifecycle model because RMC supports you in the creation of almost any kind of lifecycle model.

The example process in Figure 17 defines four phases because it follows the RUP lifecycle model. Its four phases have to be performed in sequence, which is expressed via the predecessor dependencies defined in the example. Within each phase of the delivery process, you can have subactivities (or subprocesses) for iterations. Within the four phases, you could now, for example, model the process for an early versus a late elaboration iteration if the phases are different from each other in the way work is performed or work products are being evolved. For instance in RUP, early elaboration work requires more overhead in establishing the work environment and the initial executable architecture than late elaboration work.

As mentioned above, except for the descriptors and milestones, all elements listed in this breakdown are activities, can

have their own activity diagrams, and can therefore be refined by more activities, as depicted in Figure 18. Figure 18 shows how the Inception Iteration has been refined with four activities that define the high-level work that has to be performed in these types of iterations.

Presentation Name	Index	Type	Pred...	Repeat...	Ongoing	Event...	Optional	Planned	Multiple...
RUP-based Process	0	Delivery Pro...		false	false	false	false	true	false
Inception Phase	1	Phase		false	false	false	false	true	false
Inception Iteration [n]	2	Iteration		true	false	false	false	true	false
Manage the Iteration	3	Activity		false	true	false	false	true	false
Initiate Project	4	Activity		false	false	false	false	true	false
Define the System	5	Activity	4	true	false	false	false	true	true
Determine Architectural Feasibility	6	Activity	4	true	false	false	true	true	false
Lifecycle Objectives Milestone	7	Milestone		false	false	false	false	true	false
Elaboration Phase	8	Phase	1	false	false	false	false	true	false
Construction Phase	13	Phase	8	false	false	false	false	true	false
Transition Phase	16	Phase	13	false	false	false	false	true	false

Figure 18: Detailed process showing how the Inception Iteration activity has been refined with activities that define the high-level work for this type of iteration.

Also note the information provided in the columns on the right. In addition to predecessor information, the process author who created these activities also specified that certain activities are to be considered as ongoing (in a plan derived from this process, these activities dynamically have the same duration as the parent activity), repeatable (they can be performed several times in sequence), or with multiple occurrences (they can be performed several times in parallel by different teams).

A process author working with agile self-organizing teams could now stop and consider this process of Figure 18 to be finished. It provides a complete development process by defining phases, different iteration kinds, milestones, and the high-level activities to be performed. It might provide just the amount of detail and formality required for an agile project. However, in the following section, we show you how you apply method content to your process. Such method content could define which work products shall be produced or define when the tasks should be performed as part of these activities. Such method references provide another level of detail in the breakdown that can be used for planning and executing the process. They could also serve as guidance for the development team that does not want to map this level of detail to planned and tracked work in a project plan.

Refining processes with method content descriptors

An activity in RMC can be refined with other nested activities, with references to method content called descriptors, or a combination of both. A descriptor is basically a reference object inside a process that, on one hand, represents the occurrence of a method content element such as a task or work product inside an activity, but on the other hand, also has its own relationships and documentation attributes that define how this particular occurrence of the method content element might be different from its default definition.

For example, as we saw in Figure 5 (Part One), a task can be applied to a process in RMC by simply dragging it on top of an activity. However, instead of creating a copy of the task, it creates a task descriptor. This descriptor inherits properties and relationships from the task that can now be extended and overwritten. As a result, every activity defines its own local sets of descriptors. Every descriptor within such an activity contains only the relationships and information specific to the particular situation or context of the process in which it is applied. For example, the role "Project Manager" normally is responsible for a long list of different work products such as project plans, iterations plans, risk lists, work item lists, and so on. The method content element Project Manager role lists all of these relationships, providing the complete list of the work products a Project Manager would ever be responsible for. However, in the context of a specific activity, a role descriptor for a Project Manager would only list the work products the manager is responsible for in the context of this one activity at this point in the process. Refer to the upper process view of Figure 20 for an example. You see there that the Project Manager role is represented by a descriptor in the activity Manage the Project as well as in the activity Initiate the Project. In the context of the first activity, only the Project Manager's responsibility to the "Iteration Plan" and "Work Items" list is relevant. The second activity does not deal with these artifacts at all and therefore only the responsibility to the "Project Plan" is represented for this role descriptor.

When adding descriptors to a process, you can start in any of the three dimensions depicted in the conceptual overview of Figure 15. RMC provides you with three process views that allow you to work in a work-breakdown-centric,

work-product-centric, or role-centric fashion. Regardless of where you prefer to start, RMC can support you in completing the information in the other two dimensions. RMC uses interactive wizards that dynamically retrieve information from the method content based on the relationships illustrated on the left of Figure 15, and propose candidates for creating additional descriptors.

For example, Figure 19 shows a scenario in which the process author drags the "Project Manager" role into the activity "Manage the Iteration," thus expressing that this role is performing work in this activity.

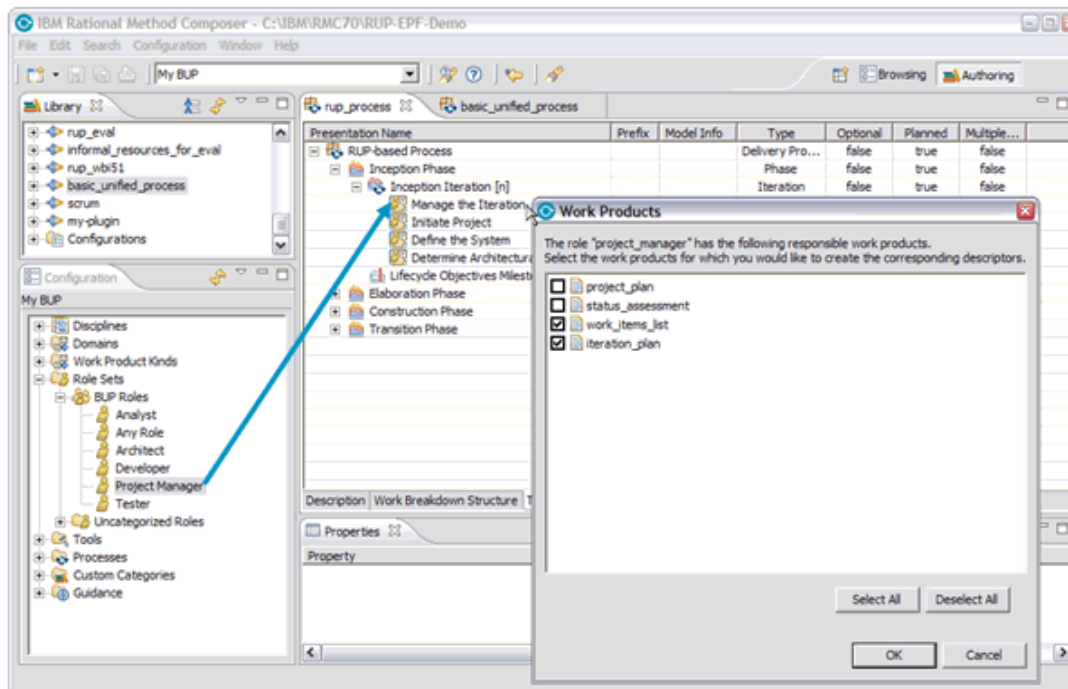


Figure 19: After applying the project manager role to an activity, RMC asks the user if he wants to add to the process any of the work products this role is typically responsible for. It retrieves this information by checking relationships defined in the method content. After the user selects work products, RMC adds them to the process as work product descriptors and establishes the responsibility relationships among them.

To guide the user in completing the activity based on the knowledge structures RMC has available in its method content, RMC now proposes that the process author could further add any of the work products to the activity that the Project Manager is typically responsible for. In the case of Figure 19, the process author selected the two artifacts "Work Items List" and "Iteration Plan." RMC adds descriptors for these two work products to the same activity "Manage the Iteration" and makes the Project Manager descriptor the responsible role for these work products descriptors. After adding these new work product descriptors to the process, RMC continues making suggestions (not visible in Figure 19). This time, it prompts all the tasks that list the selected work products as outputs because these tasks would be good candidates to add to the process as well.

Making these choices of adding descriptors in RMC does not force you, however, to always create complete processes that contain task, work product, and role descriptors. You could also create more agile, lightweight processes that, for example, only contain the work products to be worked on in activities and optionally the roles responsible for these work products as depicted in the examples of Figure 20. This example shows in the lower view what we call entry and exit states for each work product descriptor within each activity.

The figure displays two views of a process definition in IBM Rational Method Composer. The top view, 'Consolidated View', shows a hierarchical tree of process elements. The bottom view, 'Work Product Usage', shows the same process elements with columns for Presentation Name, Type, Entry State, Exit State, and Optional.

Presentation Name	Index	Model Info	Type	P...	Repeat...	Ongoing
RUP-based Process	0		Delivery Pro...		false	false
Inception Phase	1		Phase		false	false
Inception Iteration [n]	2		Iteration		true	false
Manage the Iteration	3		Activity		false	true
Project Manager		Role Descriptor				
Project Plan		Responsible For	Artifact			
Work Items List		Responsible For	Artifact			
Initiate Project	4		Activity		false	false
Project Manager		Role Descriptor				
Project Plan		Responsible For	Artifact			
Analyst		Role Descriptor				
Vision		Responsible For	Artifact			
Define the System	5		Activity	4	true	false
Analyst		Role Descriptor				
Vision		Responsible For	Artifact			
Use-Case Model			Artifact			
Determine Architectural Feasibility	6		Activity	4	true	false
Architect		Role Descriptor				
Architecture		Responsible For	Artifact			
Lifecycle Objectives Milestone	7		Milestone		false	false
Elaboration Phase	8		Phase	1	false	false
Construction Phase	13		Phase	8	false	false
Transition Phase	16		Phase	13	false	false

Presentation Name	Type	Entry State	Exit State	Optional
RUP-based Process	Delivery Pro...			false
Inception Phase	Phase			false
Inception Iteration [n]	Iteration			false
Manage the Iteration	Activity			false
Iteration Plan	Artifact	defined	refined	true
Work Items List	Artifact	defined	refined	false
Initiate Project	Activity			false
Project Plan	Artifact	undefined	goals, milestones defined	false
Vision	Artifact	undefined	problem, needs defined	false
Define the System	Activity			false
Vision	Artifact	problem, needs defined	initial scope defined	false
Use-Case Model	Artifact	undefined	briefly described	true
Determine Architectural Feasibility	Activity			true
Architecture	Artifact	undefined	candidates id'ed	true
Lifecycle Objectives Milestone	Milestone			false
Elaboration Phase	Phase			false
Construction Phase	Phase			false
Transition Phase	Phase			false

Figure 20: A lightweight process without any task descriptors. The figure shows two views on the same process. The upper Consolidated View shows the breakdown defined for this process. Every activity defines performing roles as well as work products the roles are responsible for. The lower Work Product Usage view shows the process's work products, defining for every work product descriptor the state at the beginning (entry) and end (exit) of every activity. In this process, the associated role is responsible for transforming its work products from the entry to the exit states.

Entry states express the state work products should be in before work on the activity can begin, and exit states define the state the work product should be in before the activity can be assumed to be completed. In processes like these, roles can choose their own methods for achieving the requested work product state, without the need to follow formal and prescriptive task descriptions. However, processes like these still contain enough formality to define which roles are in charge of which work products and what are the expected results.

Outlook

In this two-part article I provided you with an overview of IBM Rational Method Composer as well as the proposed Eclipse Process Framework (EPF) tool. I presented a high-level summary of its key concepts and capabilities, and we iteratively refined these concepts with detailed conceptual and tool-specific descriptions.

To get started with the RMC and the EPF tool itself, we recommend that you explore the tool's online help, which

contains several interactive tutorials that provide you with step-by-step instruction on how to perform the scenarios discussed in this paper.

Additional applications and capabilities of RMC that were outside the scope of this initial article will be provided in future articles in *The Rational Edge* or elsewhere within IBM developerWorks/Rational. Other topics will include how to import and author rich text documentation, how to migrate content from different sources (especially RMC's predecessor, IBM Rational Process Workbench), how to create categorization and navigation structures for published configurations, how to use the dynamic pattern-binding capabilities to rapidly assemble and tailor processes, how to use variability and plug-in mechanisms to extend third-party content and processes, how to import processes from RMC as planning templates into IBM Rational Portfolio Manager, and how to use RMC with version control system such as IBM Rational ClearCase or CVS.

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Notes

¹⁷ See, for example, Walker Royce, *Software Project Management: A Unified Framework*. Addison-Wesley Professional, 1998

¹⁸ OMG, "Software Process Engineering Metamodel," version 1.1, formal/2005-01-06, 2005
<http://www.omg.org/technology/documents/formal/spem.htm>

¹⁹ See I. Jacobson et al., *Object-Oriented Software Engineering: A Use Case Driven Approach*. Addison-Wesley, 1992; Peter Eeles, Kelli Houston, and Wojtek Kozaczynski, *Building J2EE Applications with the Rational Unified Process*. Addison-Wesley, 2002; and my own chapter titled "Use Case-Based Software Development," in *Scenarios, Stories, Use Case*, edited by Ian Alexander and Neil Maiden Wiley 2004.

²⁰ Dean Leffingwell and Don Widrig, *Managing Software Requirements: A Use Case Approach*, Second Edition. Addison-Wesley 2003; also Kurt Bittner and Ian Spence, *Use Case Modeling*, Addison-Wesley 2003.

²¹ Cem Kaner, Jack Falk, and Hung Quoc Nguyen, *Testing Computer Software*, Second Edition. Wiley 1999.


²² Capability Maturity Model Integration. See the Software Engineering Institute Website for more information at <http://www.sei.cmu.edu/>

²³ See Ricardo Balduino, "Basic Unified Process: A Process for Small and Agile Projects," <http://www.eclipse.org/proposals/beacon/Basic%20Unified%20Process.pdf> Eclipse.org 2005.

About the author



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