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On the Use of i* for Driving COTS Component Selection

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Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) component selection is an activity that plays an increasingly crucial role in the deployment of software systems. We are using i*, especially Strategic Dependency models, for driving this activity. Software domains are modelled as actors; the relationships among them and with external actors, other software systems, organizations, etc. are represented using the concept of dependency. While providing some satisfactory findings, our proposal has also given light to some interesting questions that we have tackled or are still dealing with, remarkably: Which are the foundations of COTS components selection? Which are the properties of interest when selecting COTS components and how do we formalize them? How do we build i* models in a consistent way? What is the precise meaning of the i* constructs that we use in our models? How do we organize the knowledge about the marketplace and how do we use this knowledge during selection? What type of tool support is appropriate? In this talk, we present our current state of research in the COTS components selection area and provide partial answers to the questions above.

Xavier Franch is Associate Professor at the Universidad Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC). He received his Ph.D. in Informatics from the UPC in 1996. He has been a principal and co-investigator of several funded research projects. He is currently the leading investigator of the GESSI group at the UPC, compound of more than 10 full-time researchers. His lines of research include requirements engineering, COTS selection, and quality model construction. He is co-organizer of several workshop series, and has published more than 60 refereed contributions. He has participated in several industrial collaborations of COTS selection in the fields of ERP systems, document management tools, health-care solutions, and others. He has been nominated with the Best-Paper Award in ICCBSS’03, ICCBSS’04, and ICCBSS’07.