Developer experience and the SPACE framework, practically

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Developer experience (DevEx) is how it feels to do development work in your organisation: how quickly feedback arrives, how clear the work is and how much gets in the way. The SPACE framework offers a way to measure productivity without reducing it to one number.

TL;DR The short version

- Developer experience is how it feels to do development work: how fast feedback arrives and how much gets in the way.
- The SPACE framework measures productivity across five dimensions because no single number captures it.
- Ask developers what slows them down and measure waiting; never judge individuals by lines of code or commit counts.

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The five dimensions of SPACE

- **Satisfaction and well-being.**
- **Performance:** outcomes of the work.
- **Activity:** counts of actions, such as commits or reviews.
- **Communication and collaboration.**
- **Efficiency and flow:** time without interruption or waiting.

The key idea

No single measure captures productivity. Use several across more than one dimension, and include what people say as well as what systems record.

Practical steps

1. Ask developers what slows them down most.
2. Measure waiting: builds, reviews, environment provisioning.
3. Fix the biggest friction first.
4. Re-measure and share the result.

What to avoid

Using activity counts, such as lines of code or commits, to judge individuals. They are easy to count and misleading to read.

Related credential: Agile Delivery Practitioner. Explore the exam facts and syllabus.

Sources and further reading

1. Forsgren et al. “The SPACE of Developer Productivity.” ACM Queue, 2021.

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