
Google's Automated Coding Machine: It Slices, It Dices, and More

In an effort to organize my storage room, I pushed boxes around and spent time flipping through cartons I had ignored for years. One of the notebooks had a quote I attributed to Bill Gates, president of Microsoft. Here's what I jotted down:

The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency.

I have no idea where I obtained the quote, but it triggered my thinking about one of the similarities between Google and Microsoft. The differences are well-known. Google generates 99 percent of its \$25 or \$30 billion in revenue from online advertising. Microsoft's cash river comes from license fees for desktop applications and enterprise software. Both companies perceive themselves as equally capable in the other's markets, but that type of hubris is part of the high-technology ethos.

The similarity is the push for programming tools that automate certain tasks. Microsoft's VisualStudio 2010 is positioned as "a powerful integrated development environment that ensures quality code." Programmers burdened with repetitive tasks can get distracted from a more significant task. The result can be buggy code or security vulnerability

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