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SMART principle

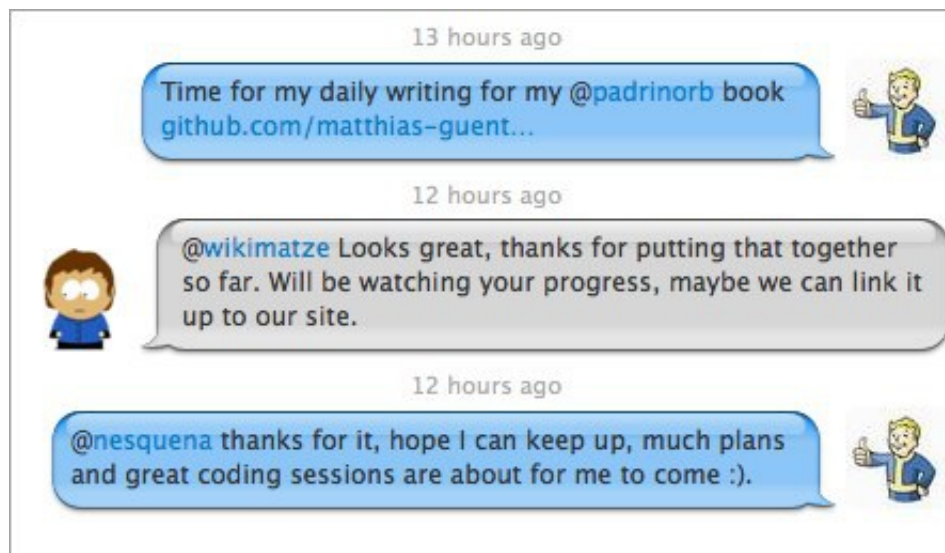
This post is about the SMART principle that helps you to start and keep rolling projects. I outlined how I use SMART for my eBook project.

I recently read the book Pragmatic Programmer, in which Dave Thomas explained the SMART principle. SMART is an acronym and each character of the principle has the following meaning:

- **S** (*specific goal*) - what is the goal of the new project you want to start
- **M** (*measurable*) - list all the features you need to accomplish to start the project
- **A** (*action*) - when will you start
- **R** (*realistic*) - is the project small enough to finish it in the specified time frame demanded time frame
- **T** (*time*) - in the beginning of July 2012 everything should be fine

Putting theory into practice

Late in 2011, I started a new and personally ambitious project: Writing an eBook about the great web framework [Padrino \(http://www.padrinorb.com/\)](http://www.padrinorb.com/). In a first step, I created a rough road map, about what I wanted to write and which topics should be covered. After writing the intro section and pushing the resources to [github \(https://github.com/matthias-guenther/padrino-book\)](https://github.com/matthias-guenther/padrino-book) I did something very crazy and mentioned **@padrinorb** in one of my tweets and this was it – the authors of the framework motivated me with with writing the book. They retweeted every small progress I made with the project and through that I got further pull requests and even a bunch of interested followers who are watching the project.



Let's see how I can formulate the Book project with SMART:

- **S** (*specific goal*) - I want to learn how to write a eBook easily about Padrino web framework
- **M** (*measurable*)
 - create roadmap about the topics of the book
 - find a method to write book in one format and export the as pdf, epub, mobi, and HTML format
 - get really involved in Open source community and communicate with them
 - find an audience and get help from other people
- **A** (*action*)
 - start as soon as possible
 - try to write everyday one chapter of the book
 - tweet about the progress I made everyday
- **R** (*realistic*)
 - it is a big project (never have written a book before) but continuously delivery will motivate me during this long period
- **T** (*time*)
 - till February 2012 everything should be finished

I set up the frame of SMART goals and developed a rough plan - that's all you need to let come your dreams true.

Cost for SMART

To be honest, writing of my Padrino eBook project consumes a lot of my free time so I in the near future I will publish only a few new entries on this blog. I have many ideas and topics I want to cover, but first I will finish this book to deepen my writing experience. I'm glad to hear your opinion (or contribution) to the [book](https://github.com/matthias-guenther/padrino-book) (<https://github.com/matthias-guenther/padrino-book>) - I will put every contributor on the [special thanks list](https://github.com/matthias-guenther/padrino-book/blob/master/README.md) (<https://github.com/matthias-guenther/padrino-book/blob/master/README.md>) of the book.

Conclusion

SMART is great if you want to start in small steps to begin with something completely new, learn much about it, and report (for example, I'm using the twitter hashtag **#dailywriting**) about the progress you made.

Thanks to [Sebastian Guenther](http://sebastianguenther.org/) (<http://sebastianguenther.org/>) for reading an earlier draft of this post.