

The View From Outside

Stories from an Outsourcing Lab

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This is not a sales pitch

This talk is about the workings of an outsource lab.

It's about the questions to ask and the questions you may be asked when something needs testing.

It's about the many clients who call us, the discussions we have, and the training we undergo in waiting for that hotline to ring so that when we show up at your door, we are armed with the tools to help your project succeed.

I am a...

- Senior test manager
 - Managing test lead
 - Tester
 - Test Strategist
-
- Firefighter
 - Detective
 - Copyeditor
 - Secret service agent
 - Professional scapegoat



...who works for a...

- Testing Company
- Outsource Agency
- Vendor
- Service Provider



-
- Crime lab
 - Garage
 - Private Detective Agency
 - Firehouse
 - Day care

... in ...



... specifically ... here



and up here...



Project Process

Time

Budget

What are we testing?

Approach / Strategy

Proposal / Contract

Staffing

Execution

Status

Summary

Invoice

Stories about time

“We need an hour of testing...”

“The project lasts 6 months...”

“This is a 6-weekend run...”

“You have 3 days...”

“How much time will it take?”

“We’ve got time...”

Stories about budget

“Not over \$10,000.”

“How much will it cost for a dedicated team?”

“Half-days for right now.”

“This is a pilot project. Lowest bidder wins.”

“As cheap as India as we can get.”

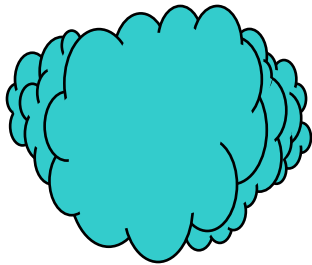
“The same as last time -- \$2,500.”

What are we testing?

- E-commerce web site
- Submissions for photo contest via web
- Early Warning System
- Cell phone registration system
- WAP gateway (8 mobile devices)
- “Search” toolbar for web browser
- Internet Security (firewall, parental control, etc.)
- Educational software
- Microsoft Courseware
- Vessel Container Management software

Approach / Strategy

Exploratory or Scripted or both?



Compatibility

Regression

Function

Stress / Load / Performance

Acceptance

Competitive



Proposal / Contract

- Statement of work
- Scope
- Spec / RFI Info
- Strategy
- Dates
- Staffing
- Price
- Terms and Conditions



Staffing attributes

- 1) Technical skill
- 2) Testing skill
- 3) Project experience
- 4) Availability



Execution

- Sessions
- Test cases
- Notes
- Bugs
- Issues
- Changes
- Delays
- Substitutions

```
CHARTER
-----
Analyze MapMaker's View menu functionality and
report on areas of potential risk.

#AREAS
OS | Windows 2000
Menu | View
Strategy | Function Testing
Strategy | Functional Analysis

START
-----
5/30/00 03:20 pm

TESTER
-----
Jonathan Bach

TASK BREAKDOWN
-----

#DURATION
short

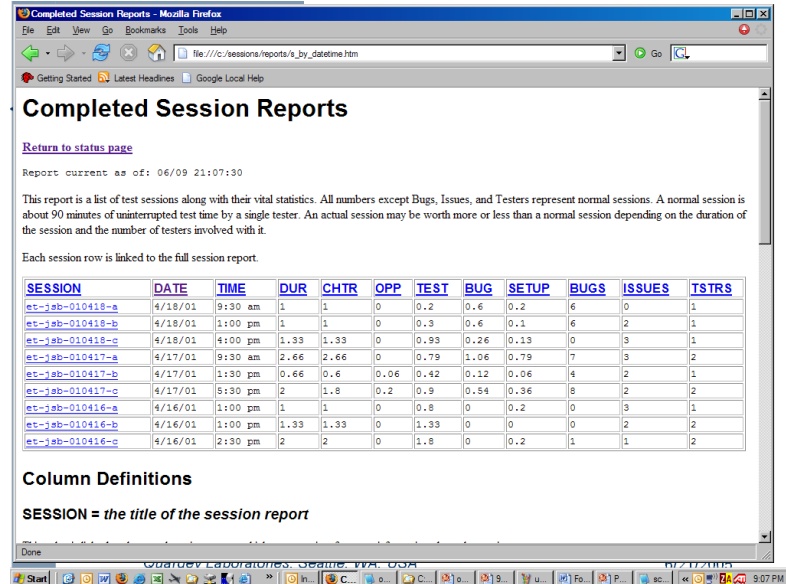
#TEST DESIGN AND EXECUTION
65

#BUG INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING
25

#SESSION SETUP
20
```

Status

- Daily
- Weekly
- Highlights
- Bugs
- Issues
- Budget Remaining
- Next Steps



Completed Session Reports

[Return to status page](#)

Report current as of: 06/09 21:07:30

This report is a list of test sessions along with their vital statistics. All numbers except Bugs, Issues, and Testers represent normal sessions. A normal session is about 90 minutes of uninterrupted test time by a single tester. An actual session may be worth more or less than a normal session depending on the duration of the session and the number of testers involved with it.

Each session row is linked to the full session report.

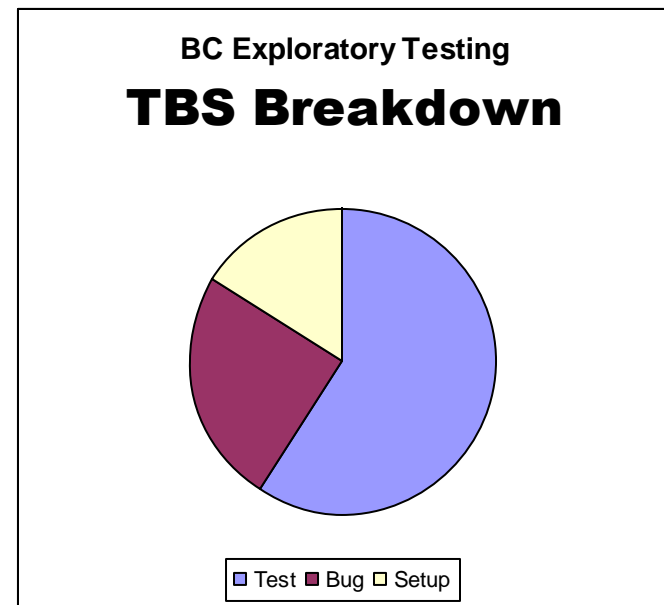
SESSION	DATE	TIME	DUR	CHTR	OPP	TEST	BUG	SETUP	BUGS	ISSUES	TSTRS
et--sb-010418-a	4/18/01	9:30 am	1	1	0	0.2	0.6	0.2	6	0	1
et--sb-010418-b	4/18/01	1:00 pm	1	1	0	0.3	0.6	0.1	6	2	1
et--sb-010418-c	4/18/01	4:00 pm	1.33	1.33	0	0.93	0.26	0.13	0	3	1
et--sb-010417-a	4/17/01	9:30 am	2.66	2.66	0	0.79	1.06	0.79	7	3	2
et--sb-010417-b	4/17/01	1:30 pm	0.66	0.6	0.06	0.42	0.12	0.06	4	2	1
et--sb-010417-c	4/17/01	8:30 pm	2	1.8	0.2	0.9	0.54	0.36	8	2	2
et--sb-010416-a	4/16/01	1:00 pm	1	1	0	0.8	0	0.2	0	3	1
et--sb-010416-b	4/16/01	1:00 pm	1.33	1.33	0	1.33	0	0	0	2	2
et--sb-010416-c	4/16/01	2:30 pm	2	2	0	1.8	0	0.2	1	1	2

Column Definitions

SESSION = the title of the session report

Summary Report

- Proposal
- Conclusions
- Bugs
- Sessions
- Emails
- Dailies
- Cases
- Graphs



Training

Games / Puzzles
Note-Taking
Rapid Test Planning
Open-Book Testing
Session-Based Testing
C# programming
Bug Hunting
Iron Tester
Repro

Rapid Testing
Issues Lists
Daily Status
Session Reports
Delays, emergent events
(emergencies)

Can you start tomorrow?

What clients have asked

Your bug database or mine?

Can I get the same tester as before?

How do you train?

Can I get resumes from your staff?

To what associations do you belong?

Can I see the templates you'll use?

Can I customize the status reports you give?

If I need to postpone or cancel, what's the penalty?

Can I talk to a tester in the lab?

What are your working hours?

Will you work overtime or weekends?

What's your hiring process?

Will we be billed for the hours we don't use?

How do you measure test coverage?

Why didn't you catch that bug?

What we have asked

Your bug database or mine?

Can I talk directly to a developer?

What are your working hours?

Do you work overtime or weekends?

What's your triage process?

When do you plan to ship?

Will we work onsite or here in our lab?

Do you use any existing tools that would be of help?

Can we see your existing bug database?

Did you want to devote time to regressions?

How often will you be giving us builds?

What are the minimum hardware requirements?

What kinds of users is this targeted for?

Has this been tested before?

Would you be a reference?

We are all “outsourcers”

The Expert Game Equation

If...

- you are able to get important things done
- you are seen learning things on your own
- you are seen trying to do things even if you aren't sure how
- you share freely the things that you know
- you don't hide your ignorance, but also don't rest on it
- you honor what other people know
- you know more often than not how to find out what you don't know
- you know how to ask for help
- you offer to help people on their own terms

Then...

- no one will care whether you succeed by learning or succeed by already knowing
- no one will care if you mess up occasionally because they assume you learn from it
- no one will mind if you forget (or don't know) any given fact or method at any given time
- you will be treated as if you're smart and useful, even though everyone knows you have a lot to learn

Takeaways

You have clients, too.

We are all outsourcers – we provide service.

You can do meaningful work when there is little time.

You can do meaningful work when there is little budget.

Questioning (like testing) takes skill and practice.

You can respond to emergencies with speed, agility, and grace.

You can ask questions you know the answers to be clear on your mission.

There is no shame in advertising your limitations.

Thank you!

“Playing the Expert Game” © 1999 IEEE Computer Society

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Whitepapers: www.quardev.com

Rapid Exploratory Testing: www.satisfice.com

Session-Based Test Management: www.quardev.com/whitepapers