

Software Quality



March 2010

Software Testing A South African Dilemma

Dilemma

[Definition] – A situation offering a choice between two equally undesirable alternatives.

So then if it's only one bad alternative, is that a Malemma?



Some experts say there is too much focus on testing and less **focus on quality** in SA.

Software quality starts with good processes and requirements. Conversely these two things lead to testable requirements.

Testing then reports the quality levels present in the products and systems.

The Facts & Myths

Fact # 1: Many Testing Providers with Fewer Solutions

There are several testing companies in South Africa. Their core focus is on software testing services. There is currently no **corporate governance** or industry “watchdogs” for the software testing industry in SA.

Several quality claims and promises are made. So what should one consider when measuring these testing companies’ claims?

- What are their quality assurance methodologies?
- How mature is their test processes?
- Are the testing skills measurable?
- What are the testing companies’ artefacts i.e. the quality of testing delivery?
- How independent is their testing?

Business Testing vs. Software Testing

Business analysts & users typically test system functionality.
Software testers typically test for critical defects & business risks.

Fact # 2: Over-Reliance on Testing Tools

In many instances the testing tools’ process becomes the organisation’s testing methodology (for test planning, requirements and defects capturing). An organisation should first define their QA & testing processes. This will then help in identifying the tools required and the distinct features needed.

Myth # 1: Business Analysts & Developers Make Good Testers

Well the old adage is that anyone can test. Yeah right! This is a common way of trying to obtain maximum value from development resources. But can they test beyond system features?

Software testers typically test beyond boundaries and system features. Their goal with testing is to find hidden and critical defects.

Myth # 2: Testing Injects Quality into Systems

Quality starts with good processes and well defined requirements.
Software testing then measures product and system quality.

Quality Assurance (QA) vs. Testing

QA measures software processes.
Software testing measures software systems.

The Testing Dilemma

What you need to know?

Dilemma # 1: Immature SA Testing Companies

There are more than 20 testing companies making grand claims of being testing leaders or specialists. What is rather strange is that few of these companies are offering anything fundamentally different.

Of the 20 SA testing companies more than 90% of them offer ISEB certifications & related products as testing solutions. However testing skills and maturities still remain very low in SA.

Developing skills for the testing role is driven by a **rigorous testing process and QA framework**.

Testing companies must be subject to the same quality principles that they pronounce i.e. if they promote quality it must then be evident in their artefacts e.g. their resources, documentation, business tools & other tangible sources.

How ironic would it be if these quality agents then had errors in their artefacts?

Dilemma # 2: Dangers of Outsourcing Testing Offshore

- Offshore outsourcing costs SA intellectual capital.
- It also costs SA jobs in testing.
- There is a disconnection from the local business climate.
- Insensitivity to the local environmental developments may exist.
- Language barriers arise.
- Barriers in technical writing occur.
- Offshore testing companies & resources are typically paid in dollars.

Testing Maturity

There are approx. 20 SA testing companies. More than 90% of them offer ISEB certifications & related products as testing solutions. However testing skills & maturities still remain very low.

Today in History - March, 1993

Quality Events That Changed the World

The New York Times reports that the Japanese National Institute for Fusion Science had challenged the USA by announcing that a Japanese supercomputer designed by NEC Corporation could perform all the tasks the Institute required. Cray Research Inc., USA, who stood to sell the institute one of its own supercomputers, insisted on **testing** the machine itself before agreeing to the claim.

Insist on in-house testing before agreeing to a producer's claim.

Events Calendar: March 2010

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
New Batch of Test Designers Available				
22	23	24	25	26
Test Management Course				
29	30	31		

Success Story

Absa to Implement QA & Testing Process

A division of Absa has outsourced their quality and testing processes to QA.



QA will be responsible for the software quality strategy, test planning, test designing & managing the test execution for their specific programme.

We would like to thank Absa management for their vision toward implementing software quality processes.

Did you know?

All organisations pay for the cost of quality in the following ways:

Prevention Costs

Refers to preventing defects & failures.



Detection Costs

Refers to finding and fixing defects.



Failure Costs

Refers to dealing with failures.



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