

PROFESSIONAL TESTER

Essential for software testers

Contributing guidelines

[THANK YOU](#) for considering contributing to Professional Tester – the most effective way to reach software testers everywhere! This document explains how we work, offers guidance to help you, and sets out your and our responsibilities.

Professional Tester is the ideal forum for sharing information and opinions with people worldwide working in software quality and related disciplines. So if you have something to contribute or say, please submit it. Please send us a photograph of yourself too, in the highest resolution you can. We will respond to all contributions and try to offer helpful advice even if we do not wish to publish. If you have an idea but not yet much material, it's a good idea to let us know what you have in mind before doing too much work. The format is flexible: we'll consider material of any type, in any form and of any length. We'll judge it only on whether we believe it likely to be of interest to a sufficient proportion of our readers. Published articles often, but not always, consist of:

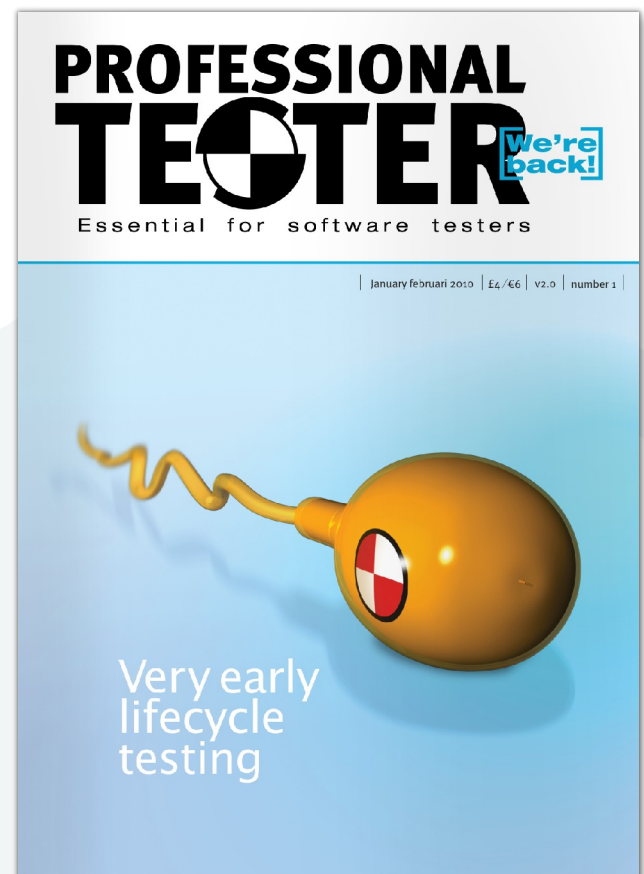
- Sharing of experience and insight
- Explanation and/or discussion of methods and techniques
- Reporting of industry developments
- Comment or opinion – serious or lighthearted
- Reviews of products and resources such as software, books, conferences and websites.

Your submission should be original and must credit and reference any work by others on which it draws. We do consider work that has been published before or submitted to other publications, but please tell us about this. If you are employed by or working on behalf of an organization that provides products or services related to software development and testing, we may ask that some advertising is purchased to offset the costs of publishing your submission. However other than your submission nothing will be published on your or the organization's behalf without prior arrangement.

Most importantly, the intention of your submission should be to share knowledge or information with others, not to sell or promote anything proprietary. Material that in the editor's opinion is commercial in this sense will be treated as advertising and, if we wish to publish it, we will contact you to discuss the options.

We reserve the right to edit your submission for style and length. We promise to do our best, but cannot guarantee, not to change the sense or meaning. Where we think it desirable or necessary we will try to work with you and seek your approval of changes, but do not promise to do so. When you submit anything to Professional Tester, you promise that:

- it is original and does not infringe any copyright you offer it for possible publication in good faith to the best of your knowledge it is legal in all countries, honest and truthful.



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For more help please email the editor:

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Editorial calendar and themes

In 2011 Professional Tester will continue its mission to provide practical help and inspiration to software testers everywhere. That requires coverage of complex and challenging testing themes. In order to achieve that more effectively, we have decided to issue this uniquely flexible editorial calendar. The themes of forthcoming issues are detailed below, but are not in order of publication.

This means that:

- each theme can be covered more effectively, because contributors can be given more time if needed
- issue sponsors and advertisers will have more opportunity to appear in an issue especially relevant to them at the most appropriate time

Publication calendar 2011

PT issue	Copy date	Publication date
7	15 December 2010	31 January 2011
8	15 February 2011	31 March 2011
9	15 April 2011	31 May 2011
10	15 June 2011	29 July 2011
11	15 August 2011	30 September 2011
12	15 October 2011	30 November 2011

Themes explained

*not in order of publication

• Theme: **Managing manual testing**

As automated test execution continues to provide its advantages increase but there are some defects it cannot detect. Manual test design and execution remains important because it offers many more possibilities in approach, process, method and technique. As test management tools become more tightly coupled with test execution tools, there is danger of the manual work becoming a side activity rather than a central, high-contributing part of the overall effort. Professional Tester's contributors will discuss integrating manual testing with application lifecycle management.

• Theme: **Showing testing is good**

Perhaps unfairly, onus has always been on software testers to demonstrate the value of their work. This is hard because defects are not predictable. Whether testing actually prevents loss depends partly on luck. To show testing is good we need to eliminate that and measure its potential to prevent failure, independently from the actual quality of the software under test. This has been done by academics using theoretical models. Can

we now apply that work to testing real systems? Or find other pragmatic but objective ways to compare test activities with one another, and with inaction? If so, we'll be able to prove what we have always believed, that formal testing is by far the most effective way to improve service to all IT users. In one of the 2011 issues of Professional Tester, we'll try.

• Theme: **Open testing**

A test case has value only if it assures a requirement, whether or not that requirement is documented. However many requirements are common to very many systems. Requirements are usually proprietary, but do tests need to be? What if we shared our documented test cases freely, for other testers to adapt and use? Professional Tester believes this idea – first conceived, as far as we know, by our reader Kobi Halperin and put into practice at his forum thread <http://xqual.freeforums.org/community-test-suites-sharing-f8.html> – has massive potential. We hope to contribute to developing it throughout 2011.

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Themes explained

*continued

Theme: Test tools as a service

Testing hosted applications can pose special challenges that will affect some testers, but nearly all testers may soon be using hosted applications to test systems of all kinds. The exciting possibilities are hardly limited by technology, but are and may be for some time more significantly by commercial considerations including vendors' strategies and product, process and governance constraints. We will seek to discover the best of the cloud for testers, now and in the near future, in test environments, design, management and more.

Theme: Test data creation and management

Availability of realistic and workable data is on the critical path of a testing project, is often a weak point in test effectiveness and repeatability, and is often so hard to achieve and maintain that testers must rely on (and wait for) the typically opaque co-operation of developers and DBAs, undermining their independence. Today's open standard data structures can help to change that. This issue of Professional Tester will aim to provide readers with understanding and ideas to take control of test data as an integral part of test design, and seek innovative test-oriented solutions to obstacles such as data protection compliance.

Theme: Agility without fragility

Many believe that good testing should influence development in ways other than detecting or not detecting defects. Some of testing's pioneers went further and suggested that testing, as the primary quality assurance activity, should select and control development processes. This argument may already be lost: telling developers how to work is not an option for most testers and the use of non-sequential development continues to grow. Testing must adapt continually to development, so should testing become more agile, whatever that means? Or is "agile testing" a contradiction in terms, like "creative accounting" or "being economical with the truth"? Professional Tester will propose that if development becomes more agile testing must become more rigid in order to protect software buyers and users adequately, and discuss how to achieve that.

Theme: New functional testing techniques

Professional Tester has argued before that the commonly-used functional test design techniques are insufficiently defined and leave too much to interpretation and arbitrary choice. The quest for better instructions raises another question: are these really the only techniques conceivable, or indeed needed? Why do no new usable techniques seem to have emerged in the last two decades – a period during which system development methods have improved beyond recognition? This issue will challenge its contributors either to find a new way to detect defects, or explain why there just isn't one.

Theme: Webtesting 1.0

The best pure web applications continue to improve fast. Superb developers own and direct them. They perceive testers wrongly: as a type of developer. Meanwhile real-world applications operated by other business types have stalled. Many banking, financial services, retail and e-government sites leave a great deal to be desired in multiple areas including most notably usability, compatibility, reliability and performance. It really should be possible to do better and testing, in its real role acting to protect business and users, should be contributing more. Professional Tester will propose, technically and realistically, how. Web accessibility has moved slowly too: the long-wanted standards have not materialized and the advice released by nontechnical organizations such as government and campaigning bodies is unusable. So should we use WAI? Is it relevant, effective and applicable? Professional Tester will test it.

Theme: Review techniques

The review is the best of all testing techniques. It has detected countless defects that would otherwise have led to unbearable cost. Unfortunately it has also missed some it should have detected and which have then done exactly that. Too many people still think their review role consists of reading a document and noting the issues that happen to occur to them. That misconception wastes the only opportunity to detect some defects including the worst. Reviews need not only to be done, but to be done well, with systematic defect detection techniques applied rigorously both by individuals and groups. This has been a neglected area for too many years. Professional Tester will aim to help move it on fast.

Theme: How testers communicate and how they should

One of the most important functions of a tester is to describe: we must explain products, criteria, tests and defects in a way that everyone who needs to, including business, developers and users, can understand. Whatever developers might say, the worst way to do that is verbally. Natural language documentation, however well written and reviewed, is incompatible with working productively with colleagues in global locations and with different abilities and viewpoints. Formal languages are too complex, modelling systems insufficiently accessible and database-driven collaboration tools too assumptive to work for all of these groups. This is a tough problem. Professional Tester will look "outside the box" for solutions.

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