



Nature or nurture?

We all know it takes an unusual personality to be a good tester. But do you ever ask yourself 'how did I get here'? Vizuri's lifestyle quiz will reveal all

Thoroughness, diligence, caution and pragmatism are all core qualities which we must possess to succeed in a profession which can be highly complicated and pressurised and which can appear dull to outsiders/those who don't 'get it' (ie normal people). After all it's rare for any child, when asked in junior school, to profess a burning ambition to be a software tester.

So what made us take this route, rather than becoming the traditional choices of the young, aspirant pre-teens: lawyer, sportsperson or fighter pilot? [What kind of pre-teen wants to be a lawyer? Ally McBeal's dancing baby? -Ed] Or even developers, engineers or IT managers? Were we born to it, or is it something we've drifted into?

It's the classic psychological 'nature or nurture' question. So that's why, in line with our intelligent approach to testing, Vizuri has persuaded the editor to turn a page of *Professional Tester* into *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Not something that happens every day, so make the most of it.

In order to see on which side of the divide you fall, answer the following set of questions, match your score to the appropriate analysis, and see whether you're a natural born tester, or just ended up there somehow.

Q1: What's your ideal way to relax?

- a) A couple of pints in the local
- b) On your PlayStation trying to figure out how to beat the system on *Grand Theft Auto*
- c) At your machine finding flaws in the latest edition of Windows

Q2: You're off to the races. How do you decide which horses to back?

- a) Gut feel, or choose a name you like
- b) Study the recent form in the programme then make an educated guess
- c) Spend the previous evening poring over your files of stats and clippings and arrive with your decisions already fixed

Q3: Derren Brown or David Blaine?

- a) Blaine – he's more of a showman
- b) Brown – he takes a more scientific approach to magic
- c) Neither – I can see straight through their little act

Q4: What does your CD collection look like?

- a) A mix of everything – dance, pop, rock, rap
- b) Retro and rocky, with the tee shirts to match
- c) Dangerously close to heavy metal and arranged in strict alphabetical order

Q5: What is testing for you?

- a) A job, a means to an end which supports my lifestyle
- b) A career, and it's good to have one that's enjoyable and challenging
- c) A real specialism which should be held in the same esteem as professional vocations like accountancy

Q6: How do you approach testing challenges?

- a) Do what I can and get support from specialists when I need it
- b) Follow defined processes and methodologies to reach the desired result
- c) I don't need to think and plan too much – it all just comes together

Q7: A light bulb needs changing. You say:

- a) That's trivial - I'll do it. Then we can get on with things
- b) It's not a showstopper. Let's do what we can without it

- c) That's not my job - I only turn the switch on and off. Also, I now need extra budget for regression testing to check that the change of light bulb won't affect other systems in the building, the street and the rest of the world adversely. And anyway, if I'd been involved earlier, a better light bulb that wouldn't have blown would already have been designed so we wouldn't have this problem...

Q8: You arrive on a blind date. What do you do?

- a) Turn up without preconceptions and try not to get nervous
- b) Give her ten minutes and then decide whether to get out fast
- c) Blind date? I'd never meet somebody without vetting them first

Q9: For women: My ideal man is...

- a) George Clooney – cool, confident and with eyes to die for
- b) Michael Moore – smart, cuddly and opinionated
- c) Anyone with code in their soul and a goatee on their chin

Q10: For men: My ideal woman is...

- a) Cameron Diaz – tall, blonde, beautiful
- b) Carol Vorderman – smart and sassy
- c) Anyone with code in their soul and a goatee on their chin

Q11: Which film personality do you identify with?

- a) John McClane in the *Die Hard* series
- b) Winston Wolf from *Pulp Fiction*
- c) Tom Ripley in *The Talented Mr Ripley*

So, are you a tester by nature?

If you answered mostly A: Are you really involved in software testing? Or did you think *Professional Tester* was some kind of consumer advice mag? Testing is not so much your pre-ordained destiny as a destination you've ended up in by mistake – and you can't even remember the route you took. Stop browsing this magazine now and pick up a copy of *FHM/Glamour* instead.

Mostly B: A bit of both. You have many of the inherent attributes of a natural tester, but you still have to work hard to grasp many parts of the job. Maybe it wasn't always your intention to be where you are today, but now you're there you've embraced it and see it as a logical vocation. Nevertheless, you have found a good, healthy balance - you still don't let it invade your personal life too much and are willing to take the odd risk.

Mostly C: Obsessively, compulsively, living, sleeping and working the job. You're a born tester, with the typical dogged, meticulous nature which pervades all areas of your life. If you see a risk, you deal with it or you leave well alone, and you analyse everything to the point of mania. Unfortunately, those around you don't always share the same outlook. Well done, you've found your natural role in life – which is lucky for the rest of us too because it keeps you off the streets.

Every member of Vizuri's staff, not just testers, has scored at least 90% Cs on this test. They are also all qualified to at least ISEB Foundation Certificate level, and have an enormous wealth of experience in finding and implementing appropriate, pragmatic and highly effective solutions to testing challenges faced by major organisations. If you fit the profile – or if you don't, and you want someone who does to do the worrying for you – contact Paul Dixon (10 Cs), Matt Arpino (9) or Gary Kingsmill (9) on +44 020 7297 2030 or visit www.vizuri.ws