



Don't reinvent the wheel

Chris Ambler, Head of Test Architecture and Strategies at Newell & Budge, introduces Test Hybridisation[®]

Businesses often struggle to maximise their investment in IT because of inability to align industry testing standards and preferred testing processes to existing business objectives. In these situations, the industry standard(s) will effectively hold a business back rather than to helping it deliver on its promise. Testing must continually add value in any organisation if it is to become more strategically involved in the business.

There are many very powerful testing processes and methodologies that can be used today to thoroughly test applications and supporting systems. All sorts of different approaches have been used, some good and some not so good. It is the not so good ones that we know fail to protect the business.

Testing is a multifaceted topic and covers many different areas of the business lifecycle. Over the years, as development techniques and technology have become more complex, testing has become more intrinsic to the overall project lifecycle, making it difficult to complete necessary testing whilst simultaneously balancing the needs of the business. On occasion, testing standards are not adhered to or are simply over-looked because they do not fit the business need. By failing to apply preferred testing practices, the risk of failure for the business increases, almost always contributing to a reduction in the overall quality of product or service.

In order to improve testing's fit for business, we must extend the capability for businesses to locate and adapt core testing components, that make up industry standards and best practices, in a bid to more effectively produce results when testing standards do not fit. For example, a fast car does not use any mass-produced or traditional parts. It uses

custom built, precisely engineered parts to ensure that the car performs to its maximum; however, it's still a car.

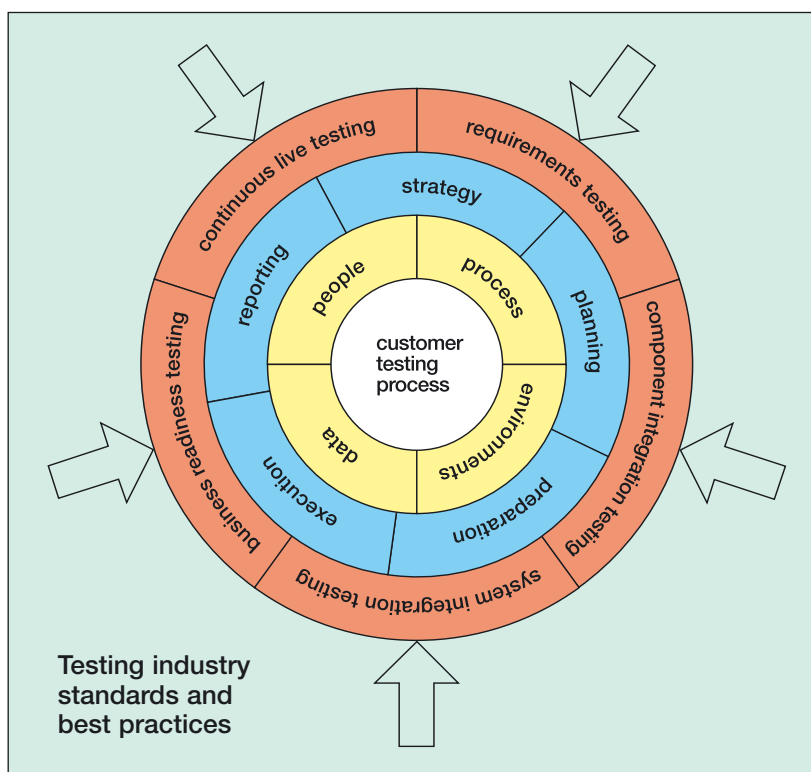
the concept of co-construction, with test processes being broken down and re-constructed again, targeting new business critical issues and/or objectives. At Newell & Budge, we refer to these as hybrid test processes and through our test hybridisation process, businesses can set boundaries for industry standards in the same way that it is now common practice to set boundaries for business functions and individual roles. As business needs change, test boundaries can expand and contract to fit the need.

Co-construction involves working directly with the business and IT stakeholders to determine the best fit of the individual test modules and requires, for example, one-on-one meetings and workshops to evolve the best test solution in each case. The key for these test solutions is the buy-in of all

stakeholders to ensure that the new hybrid test process is followed by everyone. Through co-construction and test hybridisation, testing becomes more dynamic and can effectively plug the gap in a tester's toolkit.

Testing strategies must evolve to enable businesses of all shapes and sizes to create bespoke test processes that can immediately and more effectively target key business critical issues, whilst always maintaining the principles of preferred industry standards and testing processes.

The bespoke application of recognised industry test standards and best practices, providing a quality test strategy that maps directly to key business drivers, is fundamental to the evolution of our testing wheel – let's reshape it, not re-invent it!



Testers must continually remind themselves that an industry standard is not there to stipulate or impose a process but, more importantly, to be the foundation on which improved, more bespoke testing processes can be built.

Traditionally, testing is broken down into five phases: *requirements testing*, *component integration testing*, *system integration testing*, *business readiness testing* and *continuous live testing*. Each of these traditional phases can be further broken down into five stages: *strategy*, *planning*, *preparation*, *execution* and *reporting*. Each stage is then covered by four distinct areas: *people*, *process*, *environment* and *data*.

This effectively creates 100 different components or 'building blocks' that can, in essence, be re-adapted to fit a particular business objective. As business needs change, the test hybridisation process can begin, utilising