

Bug Reporting Guideline



Ashis Raj

The Fact

Anybody who has written a bug report will probably have written at least one bad bug report.

1. Reports that say nothing ("It doesn't work!")
2. Reports that make no sense
3. Reports that don't give enough information
4. Reports that give wrong information.
5. Reports of problems that turn out to be user error
6. Reports of problems that turn out to be the fault of somebody else's program
7. Reports of problems that turn out to be network failures.

General Guidelines

1. Structure of Bug Report

Ensure the Bug Report adheres to the specific Report Structure. e.g.

1. Title/Summary
2. Description
3. Environment - e.g OS, Build Number, Browser name and version, Tool name and version
4. Setup/Prerequisite - e.g User name/email ID, User Role and Permission, Integration scenarios, User Logged in/out

5. Steps - must be in bulleted list (numbers only, so to be identifiable)
6. Expected Result - must be in bulleted list (numbers only, so to be identifiable)
7. Actual Result - must be in bulleted list (numbers only, so to be identifiable)
8. Error/Exception Log/Details

2. Bug Title/Summary

This is the most important attribute of a Bug.

This is where one struggles to make out from the title/summary itself if written badly.

It should be short yet detailed enough to give a fair idea about the whole issue to Dev/anyone, who is reading out.

It is a skill one needs to enhance by learning, practicing and making it an Art.

Example:

A bug with title *XXXX: Print Labels: Printing of label is not working when quantity changes and click on reprint label after making checkbox checked on facility in setting section for reprint print label quantity change Pick/Restock*

can be re-written like **Label does not print when <support/admin> user changes quantity and then clicks on Reprint Label <Link or Button>**

Rest everything can go into the Steps section.

Before the suggested rewrite above, one may get an impression that the Label Print does not work only due to the changes made on the Checkbox in the Facility's settings section. This may be true or may not be. As QA, one always needs to describe the symptoms and not pass the verdict.

Writing something like **the Item Management page doesn't work** doesn't help someone who is reading it. Specify expected behavior instead of passing the verdict, e.g. describe,

1. the page itself is not opening or crashes,
2. or the page opens but user is not able to see something that is expected on the page,
3. or the user sees the other additional things that is not expected on the page,
4. or the user is not able to perform some action on the page (clicking on the button/links/page controls, switching the tabs).

3. Amend your habit (*select the right template*)

I will be realistic and honest here while suggesting this. If you have a habit and/or inclined to clone/copy the past Bug Report, then you MUST select the right Bug Report as a template for you. Then do the certain changes as per the Bug you are reporting. This way, you make sure you do not repeat the Bad Bug report nth number of times. You must perform the cleanup to minimize the chance that you are not cloning/copying the Dev/PO/Arch/PM/Other Stakeholders comments/notes/attachments from the past Bug Report.

4. Read the bug report

Before submitting the bug report, read it at least once and pretend that you are a Dev/PO/Arch/PM/Other Stakeholder and then see if you are able to understand it as a different user/role.

5. Reproduce / Simplify / Generalize

Do it.

6. Clear, concise, and descriptive (Step-by-step description)

Be it.

7. Be specific

If you can do the same thing two different ways, state which one you used. "I selected Load" might mean "I clicked on Load" or "I pressed Alt-L". Say which you did. Sometimes it matters.

8. Describe the symptoms

Describe the symptoms and let the programmer do the diagnosis of what the problem is and what to do about it.

9. Avoid Duplication and Repetition

A Bug Report with title,

XXXX: Transaction Queue : User is able to complete an item scan even if no verify quantity is entered and scans the item on the Add Pick screen.

can be rewritten as,

XXXX: Transaction Queue : Add Pick: User is able to complete item scan even if verify quantity is not entered

10. A user is just an Actor

A user is just an Actor, hence do describe his/her actions.

11. Be ready

Be ready to provide extra information if the programmer needs it. But also set a goal for yourself that your Bug Report is accepted by the Developer in one go. If not, then take a note and see what else you could have done better. Programmers also have different levels of understanding, knowledge and experience, so keep that very point in mind.

12. The Bug Report in a span of 3 to 6 months or a year's time

Write a Bug Report in such a way that you yourself have to read this out later in a span of 3 to 6 months or a year's time and still you are able to make out from the bug you wrote in the past. The same should make sense to others too.

13. Grammar (Tenses)

This is the least taken care of and mostly taken as license not to follow the correct Grammar being a and non-native English speaker. A little care over here itself makes a Bug Report look good.

One should always speak and write the bug in Present Tense only.

e.g. User opens, enters, clicks, checks/un-checks, toggles, submits, sees, observes, goes to, follows, watches, this and that.

Even writing a bug in Present Continuous Tense is NOT a good practice.

So, all such writing like <user> is
using/finding/working/clicking/selecting/adding/deleting/checking/submitting

must be written in Present Tense like <user>
uses/finds/works/clicks/selects/adds/deletes/checks/submits

Do not ever mix the Tenses or play badly with the Grammar, e.g.

- User was clicks on this and that,
- User has been completed this and that.

Finally, the bug reports with apologies for their poor English/Grammar can actually turn out to be very clear and useful if the above guidelines are followed.