ETA Week 1 - 3/04/2017

The Session in Review

Being our first week together as a group we spent some time learning a few things about each other

We spoke about the definition of testing that Lee and Paul prefer

"Testing is the process of evaluating a product by learning about it through exploration and experimentation, which includes to some degree: questioning, study, modeling, observation, inference, etc."

We discussed the definition as a group. We also learnt that this is one definition of testing, there are others. Read widely to understand different ideas about testing and find the definition you are comfortable to base your work on.

We discussed why QA (Quality Assurance) and testing are not really the same thing. We considered that some people might choose to disagree with this or believe they are the same.

We had a really good discussion about why testing might be important. Some of the ideas we discussed were:

Testing adds value to the project by:

- **Providing stakeholders with useful information**
- **Assessing risks**
- **Finding out what the software actually does (and doesn't) do**
- **Oh, yes, and to find bugs**

We discussed the idea of providing confidence (and why testers don't do this) and why testers don't make release decisions or prove that a product "works". We also spoke about why testers do not own quality.

We spoke about software failures that had made the news. We discussed why software failure can range from insignificant to resulting in death.

We discovered that while there are people called "Testers" who test other people also test.

We spoke about understanding the context of a project and why context is important to the decisions we make about testing. How we gather information, the planning we do to inform our testing.

We spoke about Context Driven Testing (CDT). Lee and Paul follow the CDT testing principles. We also discussed that while this is Paul and Lees preferred approach, it is not the only approach.

The 7 principles of CDT

1. **The value of any practice depends on its context.**
2. **There are good practices in context, but there are no best practices.**
3. **People, working together, are the most important part of any project's context.**
4. **Projects unfold over time in ways that are often not predictable.**
5. **The product is a solution. If the problem isn't solved, the product doesn't work.**
6. **Good software testing is a challenging intellectual process.**
7. **Only through judgment and skill, exercised cooperatively throughout the entire project, are we able to do the right things at the right times to effectively test our products.**

We finished the session by playing with tennis balls (although we had not specifically identified them as tennis balls), testing them. We gathered a list of “ball” attributes and ways in which we could test a “ball”. We then compared that list to see if they could be applied to:

- a table tennis ball
- a squash ball (2 types)
- a golf ball

While we found that some tests and attributes had some general suitability, without knowing the reason we were testing (the testing mission) or the context in which the ball would be used, we could not be specific about how we could test a ball really well.

An interesting observation from this exercise was how the attributes we gathered around what a ball is could be used as targets for testing.

This was a great session. Lee and Paul were surprised by the quality of the discussion and some very insightful observations and questions.