

The Session in Review

We began this session by asking for any questions that might have arisen when thinking about week 1 topics or while completing the assigned homework task. The assigned homework being to test a palindrome checker at the following site:

<http://xndev.com/palindrome/>

Without the use of a specification, but by asking questions, making and testing hypotheses and using resources such as a dictionary (to establish what a palindrome is, its characteristics) and palindrome websites (for data of various complexity), you found ways in which the checker might not be good enough. What we didn't expose you to is some of the detail that comes with the checker. You can find that at the link below (have a read and think about how it might help you execute further testing)

<https://www.stickyminds.com/article/next-generation-exercises-software-testers?page=0%2C0>

We then spent some time on critical thinking. Thinking about things with the intent of not being fooled. Lee ran the Wason test. An exercise that fools many people. This session showed that we have some very good thinkers. There were initial reactions to which cards should be turned over, then analysis as you thought more about it, asked questions. Some of you got it right but the questions you asked and the thinking that you displayed was more important than the final answer.

- From Wason we went to Daniel Kahneman. From his book Thinking Fast and Slow we discussed WYSIATI (What You See Is All There Is). We discussed System 1 and System 2 and how this might impact us as testers. We also spent a little bit of time on cognitive biases. We focused mainly on confirmation bias (seeking information that supports your claims and rejecting that which doesn't) but will discuss others through the course. You will also learn about some things you can do to help mitigate the impact of cognitive bias.

Critical thinking is not something you can just learn and do. You learn to do it by doing it. You learn to get progressively better by studying others work and ideas, checking how you respond and getting feedback from others. Lee and Paul have introduced you to the field of critical thinking but you need to work on the skills if you want to continue the journey.

In the second half of our session we looked at some testing techniques:

- ❖ Boundary Value Analysis
- ❖ Equivalence Partitioning

We discussed what these techniques are and why we might use them. We also spoke about how some BVA and EP tests can be combined to reduce the number of tests we need to execute BUT without increasing risk. We applied the ideas by applying our understanding to a screen specification. You came up with some great questions and observations. Lee and I were delighted that you highlighted some language inconsistencies ("what does that word or term really mean?"). You also spotted inconsistencies with boundary descriptions. You were engaged in static testing without even knowing it (we'll cover this in week 4). Keep thinking like this, keep asking the questions. They are very important test skills.

Lee and Paul had planned to also go through Decision tables and Pairwise testing. With time running short we thought it better to hold these to week 3 so we didn't rush.

Another excellent session of thoughtful questions and analysis. Well done. Keep developing your skill set.