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CS250-T5475

05/28/2023

Assignment 4-3 - Journal: Tester

Testing is a crucial part of any project’s development. It’s the only way to know if the product actually does the thing you intended it to, once everything is said and done. It is necessary for any project to undergo extensive testing before release to ensure it is of the highest quality.

In Agile, testing is even more important! The development team, as part of its iterative development process will test the code almost constantly, so that every change can be monitored for errors or side-effects. In many cases, much of this testing will be automated. The use of automation in the testing process insures that there is consistency in how the tests are performed, decreasing the chance that errors will slip through unnoticed.

There is, however, always a place for humans in the testing process! After all, most—if not all—products currently produced are intended to be used by a human, whether directly or indirectly, so it’s important to consider things from a human perspective. That’s where the development team’s testers come in.

As a member of the development team’s testing group, I am responsible for putting each iteration of the software through it’s paces. I try to put myself in the user’s shoes and make sure the the software does what the user will expect it to do. To do this, I need to carefully consider the user stories the team has put together.

The best user stories, from a testing perspective, are the ones that explain how the user eventually wishes to use the finished product. The more specific they can be about what features they want to see, how they expect those features to work, and what their specific end goals for using the software are, the easier it is to put myself into their mindset and test the software. A broad range of perspectives is useful too. No two SNHU Travel customers are totally alike, so it’s important to be able to consider the needs of many different types of customer. It was very helpful that the client sent over a mock-up of the product, as well, as this gave us a better idea of what they envision.

Something that could have maybe helped in the user stories, that wasn’t present, is information about the sorts of things users would *not* like to see in the website; things that make the experience less enjoyable. For instance, if a user had purchased a travel package through an SNHU Travel competitor and found the experience frustrating or lacking, knowing the details of just what put them off about the experience would help the testing and design teams to prevent those sort of user experiences.

To get this sort of information, we might ask someone who has used a competing website to describe their experience, with a special emphasis on what they liked, disliked, or found lacking about the transaction. If we know what they would have liked to have seen, or what went wrong with their other experiences, we might be able to adjust our testing practices a bit to make sure that those sorts of hiccups don’t happen with out finished product.

Example E-mail

TO: Christy <christy@snhutravel.net>

FROM: Trent <trent@software.biz>

SUBJECT: User Story Clarifications

Dear Christy,

I have been looking over the user stories you provided us, so I can understand how to best create test cases for the different features of the program. While I feel that I have a firm understanding of how the underlying system will work, I feel that I could use a bit of clarification on which design for the user frontend would best suit your needs. Can I get your input on the following questions?

* How should the results be displayed to the user? Should they be organized in a numbered list or maybe a series of pages the user can flip through?
* What sort of information is most important to show the user in the initial search results? Are there specific columns you’d like to see listed?
* For the price range filter, what kind of increments would make the most sense for your clientbase/travel packages?

At this early stage in development, we are most focused on the core functionality of the website. However, knowing how this backbone will tie into the eventual user interface will allow us to make more informed decisions moving forward.

Thanks and look forward to hearing from you,

Trent

TO: Trent <[t](mailto:trent@snhutravel.net)rent@software.biz>

FROM: Christy <christy@snhutravel.net>

SUBJECT: User Story Clarifications

Dear Trent,

Thanks very much for the update on your progress and your proactive approach to developing our website! I can’t wait to see what your team comes up with!

To best appeal to our client’s tastes, we’d like to see a slideshow-style user interface, with each destination on its own dedicated page. Each destination result should include a picture, the name of the destination, and a brief description of the travel package. Clicking on the destination should take the user to a page that will offer them more in-depth information about the travel package and allow them to book it, if they choose.

As far as pricing denominations, our travel packages tend to range from $300 to $1500, and generally fall into tiers of $100 or so. An increment of that $100 when filtering prices would make the most sense for our users.

Thanks again!

Christy