



# A Day in the Life of a Test Architect

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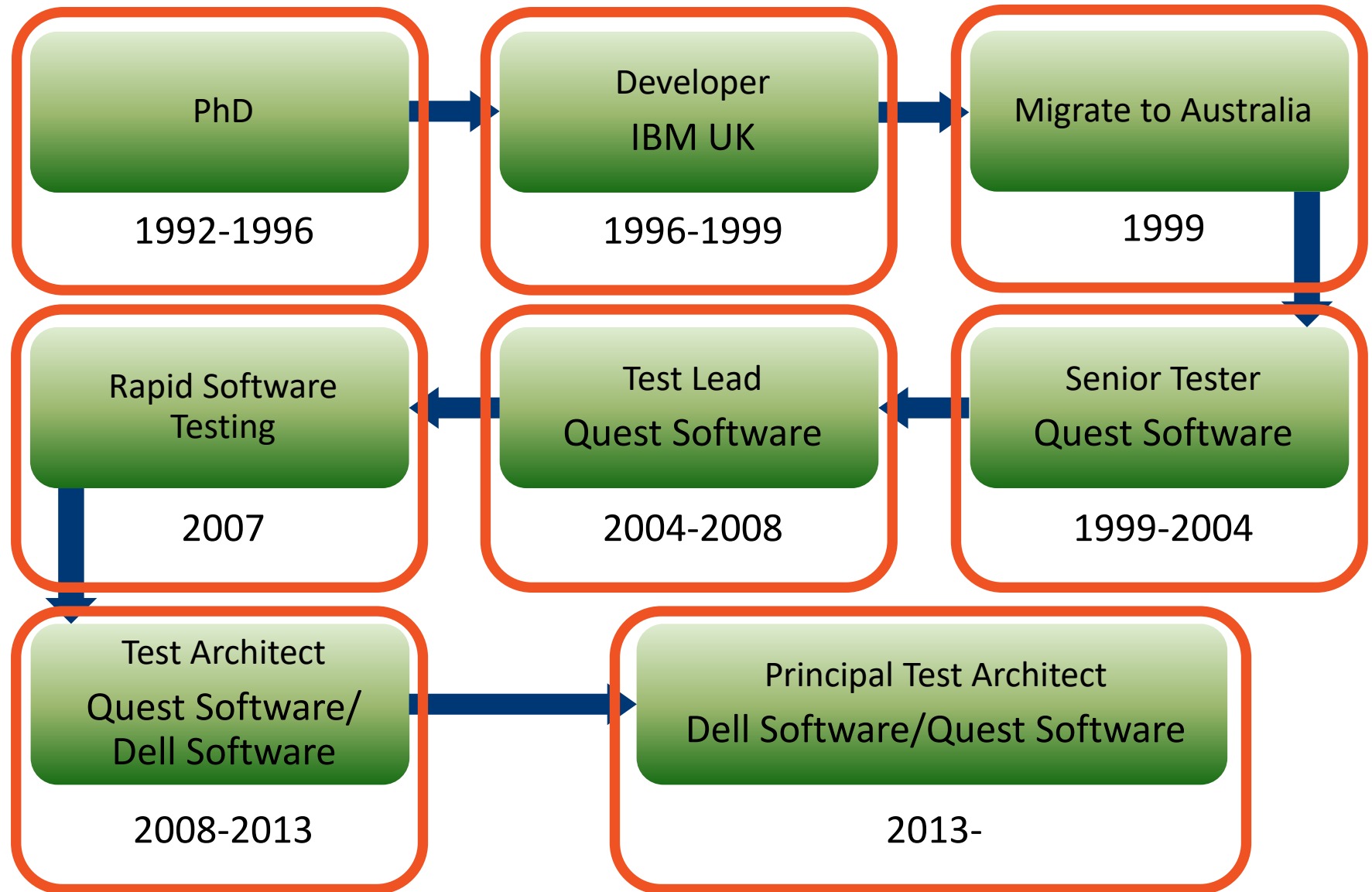
Quest™

# My journey

“It is the story that matters,  
not just the ending.”  
(Paul Lockhart)

Paul Lockhart “A Mathematician's Lament: How School Cheats Us Out of Our Most Fascinating and Imaginative Art Form”

# My career



# How I became a test architect – so what?

- You often don't end up where you think you will. (And that is probably a good thing.)
- There are always opportunities - look for them, make them happen.
- Look out for pivotal moments – attending “Rapid Software Testing” was mine.
- Becoming a professional in software testing involves continuous learning. Don't make the mistake of believing you're an “expert”.
- Do your current job really well and demonstrate you can do more - this is how “Test Architect” became a thing at Quest.



A day in the life





## 8am-9am: preparing my day

- I have a fairly long commute - one hour by train or 90mins on a fast ferry.
- This time helps to prepare my day.
- Catch up on overnight Twitter action.
- Gives me ideas for blog posts.
- Note CFPs for any interesting conferences.
- I was reluctant to engage on social media, but was persuaded to join Twitter during a peer conference, now my main source of news about software testing.



Image: Marcus Wong <http://railgallery.wongm.com/>



Image: Port Phillip Ferries <http://www.portphillipferries.com.au>

# 9am-10am: talking testing

- In senior level management meetings, I am there to represent testing:
  - Technical leadership
  - Strategic direction
  - Advocating for changes in approach
  - Staffing
  - Process improvement



Image: <http://www.fınca-spanien.net/virtualoffice.htm>

# 10am-12pm: evangelizing

- Big part of my job as Test Architect
- Creating reference materials
- Writing wiki articles
- Writing up case studies
- Internal testing promotion:
  - Explaining the need for testers (yes, even in agile teams)
  - Describing what good testing looks like (to me)
  - Blogging internally to give testers within the organization a “go to” place for information about current testing trends, who they should be following, etc.



Image: <http://www.wheelofwellbeing.org/activities/well-being-spread-word>



# 12pm-1pm: engaging with community

- Connect with other testers
- Present at another company
- Chat with a new speaker
- Software testing training for young adults on the autism spectrum with Paul Seaman, through not-for-profit EPIC Assist organization



Image: <http://www.cremamagazine.com.au/st-ali-melbourne>



# 1pm-3pm: mentoring and presenting to offshore team

- Melbourne is expensive - all testers in my group are in lower cost locations (viz. China & Czech Republic).
- Most are quite junior and require a lot of mentoring and training – especially in China.
- Visit these sites frequently.
- Both broad and deep sessions, as required:
  - Three pillars: (exploratory) testing for new features, risk-based regression testing, and automation (in CI/CD)
  - Session-based exploratory testing & using oracles and heuristics
  - Using mind maps for test planning and reporting



Image: <http://bcs-computing.com/bcs-cloud-solutions/>

## 3pm-4pm: conference proposals and preparation

- The good news: more & more testing conferences across the globe.  
The bad news: you can't go to them all!
- Twitter as my main source of “calls for proposals/papers” (CFPs).
- Typically respond to 4-6 per year.
- Keep a backlog of ideas from:
  - Interactions with other testers,
  - What I see on social media, and
  - Reading blogs, articles, etc.
- Keep “current” presentations down to one or two during the year.

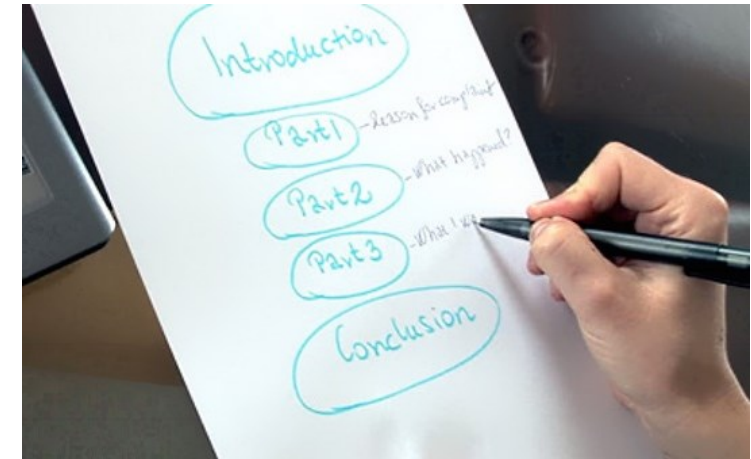


Image: <http://pptmag.com/blog/presentation-skills-preparing-and-organizing-the-content/>

# 4pm-5pm: personal branding

- Take advantage of social networks but don't be ruled by them. Be consistent across platforms.
- I only engage on Twitter & LinkedIn.
- Personal (Wordpress) blog:
  - Cadence: one or two posts per month
  - Report on testing events
  - Posts motivated by current trends and inspiration from tweets & other blogs I follow.
- Become known for your unique values and passions.
- Act in alignment with your personal brand to build credibility.



Image: <http://smurfitschoolblog.com/tag/personal-branding/>

## 5pm-8pm: time to give back

- Software testing training for young adults on the autism spectrum
- Co-presented with Paul Seaman
- Through not-for-profit EPIC Assist organization
- Developed a 12-week programme
- First run just finished - 6 students, 5 completed the course
- Learned a lot and very rewarding
- Entry-level testing jobs for some?



## 5pm-8pm: time to give back

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# Summary

# Takeaways

- It's possible to have a long & rewarding career in software testing (even if you don't start out with this intention).
- There are many ways to engage with the testing community and you will be welcomed for your active participation.
- There are many different schools of thought around what makes good testing, so find the ones that make sense to you and then learn all you can to become an excellent tester.
- Don't be afraid – to ask for help, to step out of your comfort zone, to make your opinions public.

***Testing is not a dead end career!***



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Fancy a trip to Melbourne?!

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28 February  
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