Creating Yourself as a Tester

Make Your Own Testing Path

Nordic Testing Days 2017

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How good would you be if you spent all your time practicing, thinking and reading about Software Testing?

"Why is the sky blue Daddy?"

We are not born testers

The Wonderful World of Testing

(*'Alice' images from Mad Magazine #18, December 1954*)

IT MAY BE QUAINT BY YOU!... IT MAY BE DELIGHTFUL BY YOU!... IT MAY BE WONDERLAND BY YOU!
BY ME IT'S ONLY ONE THING!
SCARY!
LEMME OUTTA THIS FURSHLUG-GINER PLACE!

Q: What made you become a tester?

A: I just fell into it

Burning with curiosity, she ran across the field just in time to see it pop down a rabbit-hole. Alice went after it...

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel and then dipped suddenly down and Alice found herself falling...

...down what seemed to be a very deep well. First she tried to look down but it was too dark to see!

APE

We make choices to determine if, and when, we improve as testers.

First Steps - Read Everything

Suddenly, Alice came upon a table of solid glass with a tiny golden key on it and beside the key, a tiny bottle inscribed with the words "DRINK ME."

Since it would do her no good to open the tiny door, she turned to the bottle and finished it off. "How curious! I must be shutting up like a telescope!" said Alice.

First Steps - Fit in to your place of work

And now her size was OK... the door was OK... She went to get the key... but **Alice** was too small!
So she grew big again from a cake that said "EAT ME"... got key OK... went to door... but **Alice** was too big!
HOOP
...Drank more "DRINK ME" bottle... size OK... door OK... went to get key... but **Alice** was too small!
HOOP

Start to spot things that are 'wrong'

...ate cake... key OK... table OK... size OK... but the door was too big!
YOOP
...more bottle... key OK... size OK... door OK... but the **room** was too small!
YOOP
...more cake... door OK... size OK... table OK... but the **key** was too big.
YOOP
...bottle... key OK... door OK ... size OK... table OK... but the **picture** was too small!

There may come a point where you decide you've had enough

...and there was the Rabbit hurrying along. Alice fancied she heard him say something like "Updok!"

At the end of the hall appeared a doorway through which the Rabbit flew with Alice right after.

However, the door being fifteen inches high, and the wall being harder than her head, Alice was unable to follow!

Start Experimenting

...Well... that's the way it goes!...And so, on to our next adventure..."Through the Looking Glass"! Alice had been sitting curled up in a corner of the great armchair...

"How nice it would be to get through into Looking Glass House," said Alice..."I'll pretend the glass has got all soft like gauze." She was up on the chimney-piece while she said this...

...Though she hardly knew how she had got there, the glass **was** beginning to melt away like a bright silvery mist! In another moment Alice was through the glass...

By George! That "pretending" business sure can get a body into trouble!... The whole gol-durned mirror... smashed to smithereens! Alice began looking about...

Everything we do in the name of 'testing' shapes us as a tester. By our every day actions we create ourselves as testers.

We have to take responsibility for our own test approaches and for making ourselves better testers.

Dark Days

Wake up and Take Control

"Wake up, Alice dear!" said her sister. "You've been dreaming!" "What?" said Alice, "The old 'dream' plot?"

"Whew! That old routine where an adventure turns out to be a dream, is the corniest plot in history!"

And so she told her sister of her curious dream as well as she could remember...

...And when she had finished, her sister said, "It certainly was a curious dream" and so took Alice off to see a psycho-analyst.

"...and so took Alice off to see a psycho-analyst."

- I study Psychotherapy as a hobby
- Because I am interested in 'beliefs', how they are formed and changed
- I did not do it to improve my testing
- But it did improve my testing

There are many paths

I'm not a:

— puzzle / riddle / card game person

I'm a software person and an action gamer.

That works better for me.

So I 'hack' JavaScript games for fun.

Harness and follow what works for you.

Testing is a normal world activity

- TOTE
- George Miller

Assimilate all your normal world activity and interests as 'testing'

Not as metaphor, or simile, but as actual Testing Strategies and Processes

Applied Psychotherapy

- Not a Metaphor
- Not a Simile
- I assimilated techniques and concepts into my Testing as Testing Techniques and concepts

Here are some things I learned from Studying Psychotherapies that I apply directly to testing

Work with the patient you have. Not the patient you want

- Every System is unique
- Avoid assumptions about how it works
- Observe below the covers to find out 'how' it actually works

Therapist builds a Model the Patient's communication then asks questions to check their model, challenge patient's model and effect change

- Interactions with the system are questions
- Need to know what purpose my questioning serves
- Can be accidental change when I ask a question - am I observing deep enough?

Patient tells you where the problem is if you observe and listen effectively, they also offer the solution

- Observing 'all' the details in 'all' the places is hard, need tool support
- Need to replay back 'records' of testing to spot things I missed and identify new models and questions

We communicate in abstractions - generalisations, deletions, equivalence

- Apply to 'story'/'requirements'/'examples' analysis
- Specific questions: How do you know? According to whom? Specifically? Could that also mean...?

Multiple Models, which can contradict, held simultaneously

- Model system from multiple angles
- Do physical models contradict logical models?
- Are models enforced at all system layers?
- Are models consistently enforced at all system layers?

... and the list goes on

- Effect of environment on behaviour and communication
- Presupposition in statements
- Intervention, Change and Manipulation

I generalised my model to:

Model

Observe

Reflect

Interrogate

Therapies for Software Testing

— Hypnosis - Milton Erickson, NLP
— Provocative Therapy - Frank Farrelly
— Family Therapy - Virginia Satir
— Gestalt Therapy - Fritz Perls
— Brief Therapy - Steve de Shazer
— Choice Therapy - William Glasser
— Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy - Albert Ellis

There are many paths

"Don't try to imitate my voice, or my cadence. Just discover your own. Develop your own techniques. Be your own natural self. I tried to do it the way somebody else did and it was a MESS."

Milton H. Erickson, M.D. quoted in "Taproots", 1987, O'Hanlon

Roots and Overlaps

- Family Therapy used concepts from Systems Theory
- Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy built on General Semantics and Cybernetics
- Brief Therapies built on Mathematics - Set Theory, Discrete Mathematics (preconditions, postconditions, transformations), Theorem Proving

Study what these very study studied

Everything is As Related as *You* Make It

(or "Lessons Learned from studying Conspiracy Theories")

related reading http://www.paranoiamagazine.com/

Evil Testing
Systems Thinking
Management
Cybernetics
Stafford Beer
W. Ross Ashby
Norbert Wiener
General Semantics
Linguistics
Strategy Philosophy
Taoism
Art of War
Book of Five Rings
Bruce Lee
Machiavelli
Manufacturing
Deming
Juran
Buckminster Fuller
John Seddon
Lean
Ishikawa
Shingo
Computer Science
Programming
Compilers & Interpreters
aho, ullman
Modelling
Herbert Simon
Michael Jackson
Dijkstra, de marco, myers
Software Testing
Hypnosis
NLP
Influence
Gustave Le Bon
Milton Erickson
Stage Hypnosis
Ormond McGill
Psychotherapy
Family Therapy
Virginia Satir
Provocative Therapy
Frank Farrelly
Choice Therapy
William Glasser
Brief Therapy
Steve de Shazer
REBT
Albert Ellis
Gestalt Therapy
Fritz Perls
Feldenkrais
F. Matthias Alexander
Other
Magic
Mentalism
Misdirection
Observation and Technique
Comics
Gaming
RPG, LARP
Shooters
DOOM
Robotron
Adventure Games
Music
Guitar
Fencing
Martial Arts
Madness
Cults
Brainwashing
Occult
Crowley
Magick
Colin Wilson
Unexplained Phenomenon
Charles Fort

Evil Testing
Systems Thinking
Management
Cybernetics
General Semantics
Strategy Philosophy
Manufacturing
Computer Science
Programming
Compilers & Interpreters
Modelling
Software Testing
Hypnosis
NLP
Influence
Milton Erickson
Stage Hypnosis
Psychotherapy
Other
Magic
Comics
Gaming
Music
Fencing
Madness

Annotated Evil Testing
Systems Thinking
Management
Cybernetics
General Semantics
Linguistics
Strategy Philosophy
Taoism
Art of War
Book of Five Rings
Bruce Lee
Machiavelli
Manufacturing
Computer Science
Programming
Compilers & Interpreters
aho, ullman
Modelling
Methodology
Software Testing
Mathematics
Hypnosis
Psychotherapy
Other
Magic
Comics
Gaming
RPG, LARP
Shooters
DOOM
Robotron
Adventure Games
Music
Guitar
Fencing
Martial Arts
Madness
Cults
Occult
Unexplained Phenomenon

Evil Testing
Computer Science
University
Programming
Gaming
via linguistics
writing parsers
playing
Writing Games
coding
Other
Adventure Games
Shooters
Modeling
tool creation
strategic automating
create bots to play games
bots for stress testing
Compilers and Interpreters
model system
mapping experimenting modelling exploratory testing
finding secrets
cheating, exploiting bugs
automation abstractions
Software Testing

Everything is As Related as *You* Make It

Practical Steps to Create Yourself As a Tester

— What do you do?
— Who does it better?
— What do you think?
— Practice

What do you do?

- Make notes
- Reflect
  - Do you do it well?
  - What do you need to improve?
  - What will you do to improve?
- Act
  - Dedicate time to improving

What did I do?

— daily logs
— detailed logs when testing
— create a list of technologies I did not understand
— work through the list
— find tools to support

Who does it better?

— Pick people to model.
— Observe what they do,
— Build your own model of what they do,
— try it out.

If you get the chance, interrogate them about their model to learn how to model them better

What did I do?

Model:

— read blogs, articles, watch talks
— make my own unified notes
— apply to my situation

Ask:

— How did they get there?
— What did they read / do?

What do YOU think?

- Describe your models of testing, using your words
  - What IS Testing?
  - Why did you test that?
  - Why did you test that that way?
- Describe other people's models of testing, using your words
  - What is Agile Testing? Exploratory Testing? Automation?

What did I do?

— blog
— describe rather than define
— avoid using certain words
— share - grow up in public

New:

— instagram - daily summary of concepts and thoughts

My current testing path

- EVERYTHING is Testing
- Concentrate on applied practicalities
- Create own models and descriptions
- Practice

Make your own testing path

- Keep up to date with 'testing'
  - Build your own views
- Build your own model(s) of testing, refine it over time
- Choose the language you use to describe testing
- Practice applied and practical skills

You are your responsibility

Create Yourself as a Tester

Make Your Own Testing Path

We never finish

Learn to "Be Evil"

- www.eviltester.com
- @eviltester
- www.youtube.com/user/EviltesterVideos

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- www.compendiumdev.co.uk
- uk.linkedin.com/in/eviltester

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BIO

Alan is a test consultant who enjoys testing at a technical level using techniques from psychotherapy and computer science. In his spare time Alan is currently programming a multi-user text adventure game and some buggy JavaScript games in the style of the Cascade Cassette 50. Alan is the author of the books "Dear Evil Tester", "Java For Testers" and "Automating and Testing a REST API". Alan's main website is compendiumdev.co.uk and he blogs at