

# A New Taxonomy of Software Testing Approaches

Seeking More Standardized Standards

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### Goal

Taxonomy of software testing approaches

- Should be systematic, rigorous, and "complete"
- Application: **automatically generating test cases** in Drasil [1]
- The underlying domain should drive the scope and prerequisites for generated test cases

### Problem

Existing software testing taxonomies are inadequate

- Tebes et al. (2020): focuses on parts of the testing process (e.g., test goal, testable entity)
- Souza et al. (2017): prioritizes organizing testing approaches over defining them
- Unterkalmsteiner et al. (2014): provides a foundation for classification but not its results

## Methodology

Since a taxonomy doesn't already exist, we should create one!

- Started from **established standards and resources** (e.g., IEEE [2], [3], [4]; SWEBOK [5])
- Relevant information (currently 190 testing approaches, 85 software qualities, and their definitions) is then **collected and organized** into spreadsheets
- Note: static testing approaches are included, since they are sometimes included in "software testing" [2, p. 17], [3, p. 440], [5, p. 5-2]
- We will iterate this process until we encounter diminishing returns, implying that something approaching a complete taxonomy has emerged!
- Since there are many standardized documents about software testing (or software in general), this should be trivial, no?

# In Our Experience...

### Levels of testing

Unit testing Integration testing System testing System integration testing Acceptance testing

 Operational acceptance Factory acceptance testing

User acceptance testing

- Alpha testing Beta testing
- Production verification testing

### Test practices

Model-based testing Scripted testing Exploratory testing Experience-based testing Manual testing A/B testing Back-to-back testing Mathematical-based testing Fuzz testing Keyword-driven testing Automated testing — Capture-replay driven Data-driven

# **Types of testing**

Accessibility testing Compatibility testing Conversion testing Disaster/recovery testing Installability testing Interoperability testing Localization testing Maintainability testing Performance-related testing

- Performance — Load
- Stress
- Capacity Recovery
- Portability testing Procedure testing Reliability testing Security testing Usability testing

Static testing

Reviews (ISO/IEC 20246) Static analysis Model verification

### Test design techniques / measures

Equivalence partitioning

- Classification tree method
- Boundary value analysis Syntax testing
- Combinatorial testing All combinations
- Pairwise Each choice Base choice
- Decision table testing Cause-effect graphing
- State transition testing Scenario testing
- Use case testing Random testing Metamorphic testing Requirements-based
- Structure-based:
- Statement testing Branch testing Decision testing Branch condition testing
- Branch condition combination testing MC/DC testing Data flow testing
- All-definitions testing All-C-uses testing All-P-uses testing

All-DU-paths testing

All-uses testing

Experience-based: - Error guessing

# Operational acceptance testing and operational

The classification of

testing approaches in

following ambiguities:

Experience-based

design technique

■ Pairs of terms are

not distinguished:

testing and

testing and

combination

testing

Disaster/recovery

recovery testing

Branch condition

branch condition

testing [3, p. 303]

and a test practice

testing is both a test

but contains the

Figure 1 appears logical

More Examples

[2] is a software testing standard that leaves much unstandardized (see Figure 2)

- Most (55 out of 99) testing approaches from [2] do not have a definition!
- Eight of these were (at the very least) described in the previous version of this standard [4]
- Nine were present in the same way in another IEEE standard [3] before this one was published

Having definitions does not mean they are useful; see Figure 3 for some good (bad?) examples

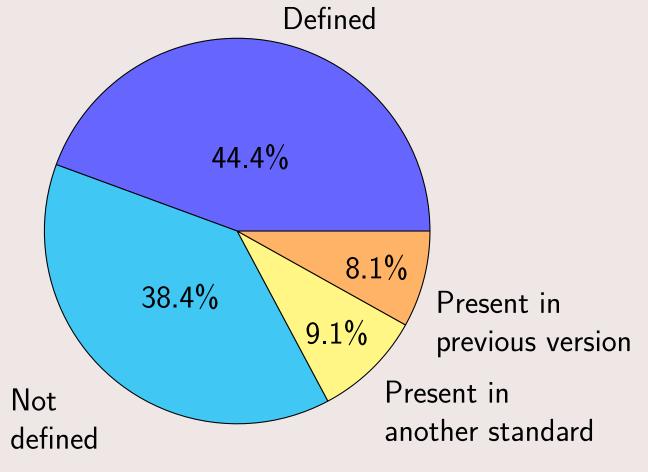


Figure 2: Breakdown of testing approach definitions in [2].

### software element

1. system element that is software cf. system element, software/system element

### event sequence analysis **1.** per

operable 1. state of

# 1. mechanism or piece of equipment designed to serve a purpose or perform a function

Figure 3: Less-than-helpful definitions [3, pp. 421, 170, 136, 301 (counterclockwise from top)]. Note: "equipment" is not defined, and "mechanism" is only defined as how "a function ...transform[s] input into output" [p. 270].

### SWEBOK's Definition of "Scalability Testing"

"Scalability testing evaluates the capability to use and learn the system and the user documentation. It also focuses on the system's effectiveness in supporting user tasks and the ability to recover from user errors" [5, p. 5-9]

- The above definition is an amalgamation of usability, recovery, and functional testing
- SWEBOK's definition of elasticity testing cites a single source [5, p. 5-9] that doesn't contain the words "elasticity" or "elastic"!

Alpha testing is quite common, but there is disagreement on who performs it:

- "users within the organization developing the software" [3, p. 17],
- "a small, selected group of potential users" [5, p. 5-8], or
- "roles outside the development organization" [6]

# Conclusions & Future Work

- Current software testing taxonomies are incomplete, inconsistent, and/or incorrect
- Ideally, one will be built systematically from a large body of established sources
- We will continue investigating, analyzing, and structuring how the literature defines and categorizes software testing approaches
- This **broad and consistent taxonomy** will hopefully grow as the field of testing advances

### References

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- [2] ISO/IEC and IEEE, "ISO/IEC/IEEE International Standard Systems and software engineering -Software testing -Part 1: General concepts," ISO/IEC/IEEE 29119-1:2022(E), Jan. 2022.
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Figure 1: Classification of some "test approach choices" [2, p. 22].