

# Putting Software Testing Terminology to the Test

## M.A.Sc. Seminar

Samuel Crawford, B.Eng.

McMaster University  
Department of Computing and Software

Fall 2024

# Table of Contents

## 1 Introduction

- The Need for Standardized Terminology
- The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## 2 Project

- Research Questions
- Methodology

## 3 Discrepancies

# Table of Contents

## 1 Introduction

- The Need for Standardized Terminology
- The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## 2 Project

- Research Questions
- Methodology

## 3 Discrepancies

# The Need for Standardized Terminology

- Engineering is applied science
- Scientific fields use precise terminology
- Therefore, the same should be true of software engineering!

# The Need for Standardized Terminology

- Engineering is applied science
- Scientific fields use precise terminology
- Therefore, the same should be true of software engineering!
- Imagine if other fields used unclear, inconsistent, and incorrect terminology:
  - Force
  - Isotope
  - Phalange

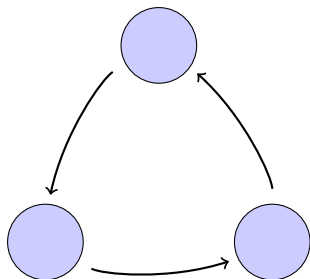
# The Need for Standardized Terminology

- Engineering is applied science
- Scientific fields use precise terminology
- Therefore, the same should be true of software engineering!
- Imagine if other fields used unclear, inconsistent, and incorrect terminology:
  - Force
  - Isotope
  - Phalange

If software engineering holds code to high standards of clarity, consistency, and robustness, the same should apply to its supporting literature!

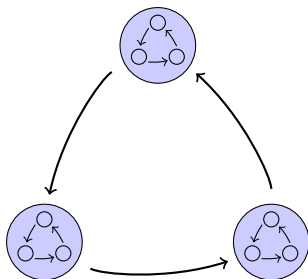
## Interorganizational

Schools, companies, etc.



## Interorganizational

Schools, companies, etc.



## Intraorganizational

Kaner et al. (2011, p. 7) say  
“complete testing” could require the  
tester to:

- discover “every bug”,
- exhaust the time allocated,
- implement every planned test,
- ...



# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## “The Problem”

- Unfortunately, a search for a systematic, rigorous, and complete taxonomy for software testing revealed that the existing ones are inadequate and mostly focus on the high-level testing process rather than the testing approaches themselves:
  - Tebes et al. (2020) focus on *parts* of the testing process (e.g., test goal, test plan, testing role, testable entity) and how they relate to one another,
  - Souza et al. (2017) prioritize organizing testing approaches over defining them, and
  - Unterkalmsteiner et al. (2014) focus on the “information linkage or transfer” (p. A:6) between requirements engineering and software testing and “do[] not aim at providing a systematic and exhaustive state-of-the-art survey of [either domain]” (p. A:2).

# Unstandardized Standards

## “The Problem” (cont.)

- Tours “guide[] testers through the paths of an application” by following a structure that is:
  - quite general (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 34)

# Unstandardized Standards

## “The Problem” (cont.)

- Tours “guide[] testers through the paths of an application” by following a structure that is:
  - quite general (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 34)
  - “organized around a special focus” (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024)

# Unstandardized Standards

## “The Problem” (cont.)

- Tours “guide[] testers through the paths of an application” by following a structure that is:
  - quite general (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 34)
  - “organized around a special focus” (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024)
- Load testing is “conducted to evaluate the behaviour of a test item under anticipated conditions of varying load” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 5; 2017, p. 253), such as:
  - loads “between anticipated conditions of low, typical, and peak usage” (2022, p. 5)

# Unstandardized Standards

## “The Problem” (cont.)

- Tours “guide[] testers through the paths of an application” by following a structure that is:
  - quite general (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 34)
  - “organized around a special focus” (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024)
- Load testing is “conducted to evaluate the behaviour of a test item under anticipated conditions of varying load” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 5; 2017, p. 253), such as:
  - loads “between anticipated conditions of low, typical, and peak usage” (2022, p. 5)
  - loads that are as large as possible (Patton, 2006, p. 86)

# Unstandardized Standards

## “The Problem” (cont.)

- Alpha testing is the “first stage of testing before a product is considered ready for commercial or operational use” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2017, p. 17) performed by:
  - “users within the organization developing the software” (p. 17)

# Unstandardized Standards

## “The Problem” (cont.)

- Alpha testing is the “first stage of testing before a product is considered ready for commercial or operational use” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2017, p. 17) performed by:
  - “users within the organization developing the software” (p. 17)
  - “a small, selected group of potential users” (Washizaki, 2024, p. 5-8)

# Unstandardized Standards

## “The Problem” (cont.)

- Alpha testing is the “first stage of testing before a product is considered ready for commercial or operational use” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2017, p. 17) performed by:
  - “users within the organization developing the software” (p. 17)
  - “a small, selected group of potential users” (Washizaki, 2024, p. 5-8)
  - “roles outside the development organization” conducted “in the developer’s test environment” (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024)



# Unstandardized Standards

## “The Problem” (cont.)

- Alpha testing is the “first stage of testing before a product is considered ready for commercial or operational use” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2017, p. 17) performed by:
  - “users within the organization developing the software” (p. 17)
  - “a small, selected group of potential users” (Washizaki, 2024, p. 5-8)
  - “roles outside the development organization” conducted “in the developer’s test environment” (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024)

“Okay testing team, we want to conduct alpha testing on our product. What’s our timeline? Budget? Sample size?”

# Table of Contents

## 1 Introduction

- The Need for Standardized Terminology
- The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## 2 Project

- Research Questions
- Methodology

## 3 Discrepancies

# Research Questions

## Research Question 1

What testing approaches does the literature describe?

# Research Questions

## Research Question 1

What testing approaches does the literature describe?

## Research Question 2

What discrepancies exist between descriptions of these testing approaches?

# Research Questions

## Research Question 1

What testing approaches does the literature describe?

## Research Question 2

What discrepancies exist between descriptions of these testing approaches?

## Research Question 3

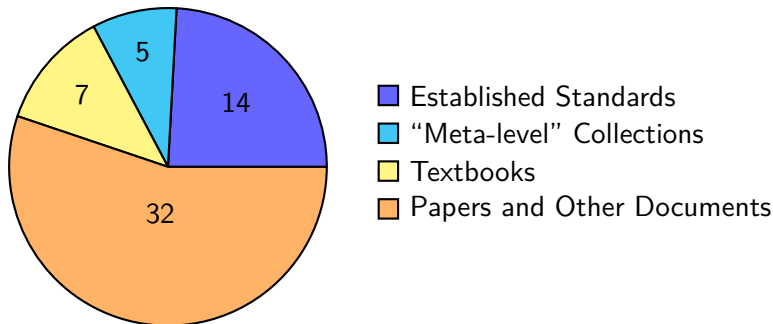
Is it possible to resolve/reduce any of these discrepancies systematically?

## Research Question 1

What testing approaches does the literature describe?

Literature Review Time!

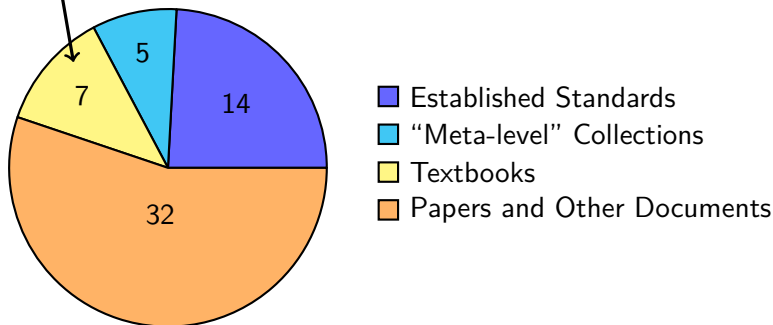
# Methodology: Sources



Summary of how many sources comprise each source category.

# Methodology: Sources

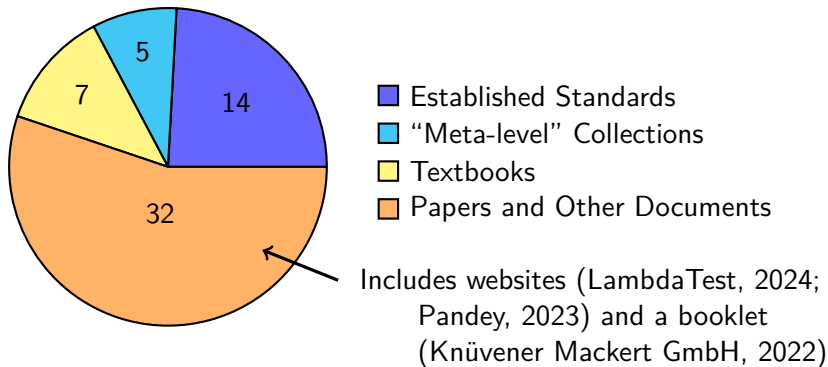
Textbooks trusted at McMaster were our ad hoc starting points  
(Patton, 2006; Peters and Pedrycz, 2000; van Vliet, 2000)



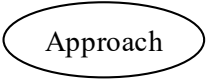
Summary of how many sources comprise each source category.



# Methodology: Sources



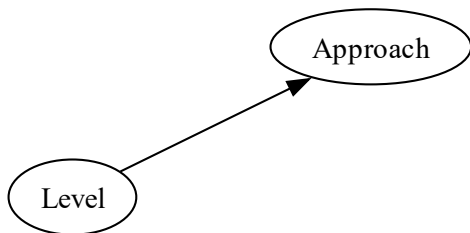
Summary of how many sources comprise each source category.



Approach

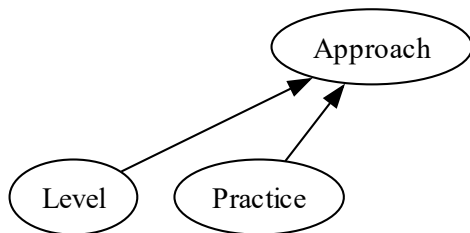
**Approach:** a “high-level test implementation choice” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 10) used to “pick the particular test case values” (2017, p. 465)

# Methodology: Categories

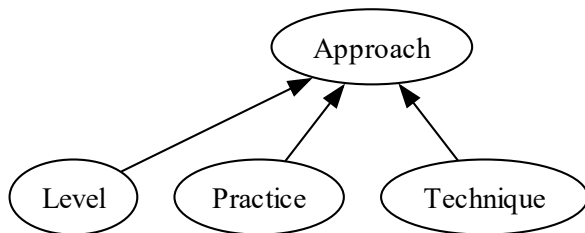


**Level:** a stage of testing with “particular objectives and ... risks”, each performed in sequence (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 12; 2021, p. 6)

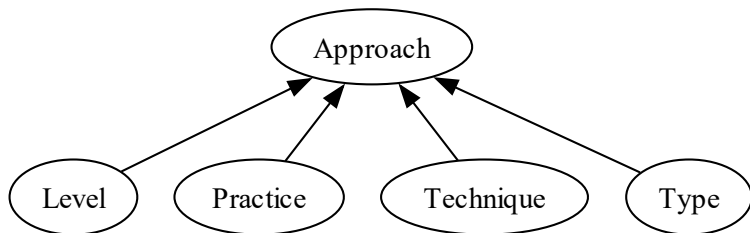
# Methodology: Categories



**Practice:** a “conceptual framework that can be applied to . . . [a] test process to facilitate testing” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 14; 2017, p. 471)



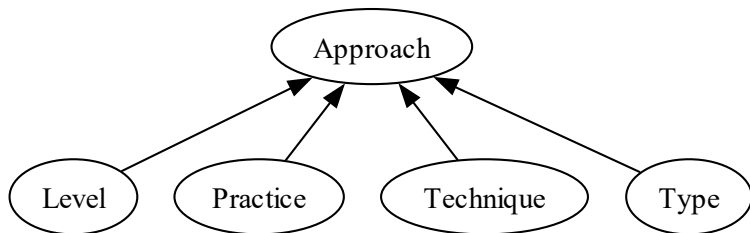
**Technique:** a “defined” and “systematic” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2017, p. 464) “procedure used to create or select a test model, identify test coverage items, and derive corresponding test cases” (2022, p. 11)



**Type:** “Testing that is focused on specific quality characteristics”  
(ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 15; 2021, p. 7; 2017, p. 473)

# Methodology: Graph Notation

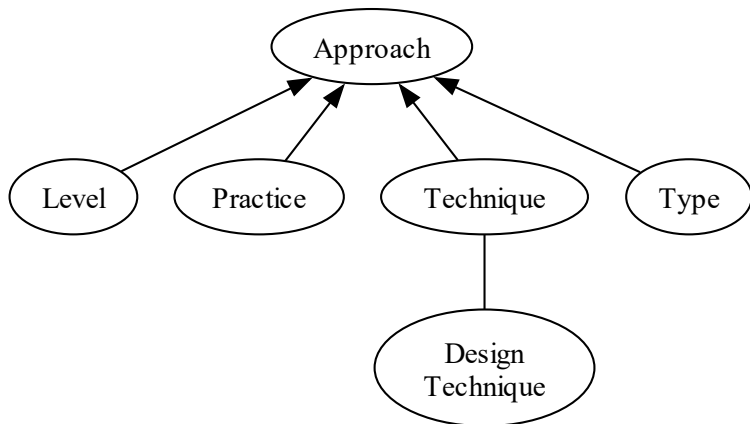
## Relations



Arrows point from a *child* node to a *parent* node.

# Methodology: Graph Notation

## Relations

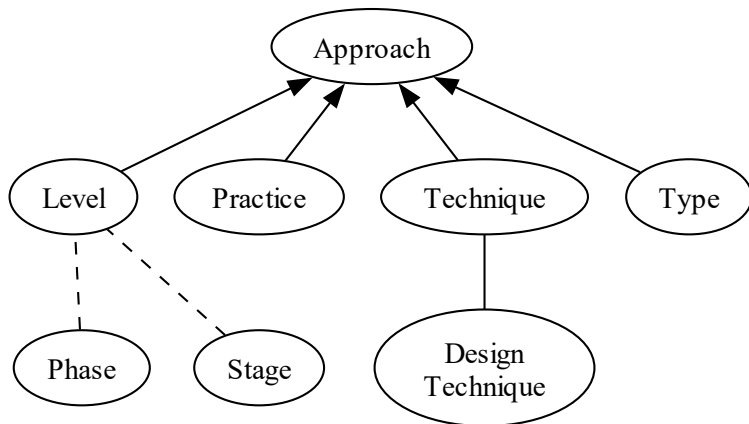


Lines without arrowheads connect *synonyms*.



# Methodology: Graph Notation

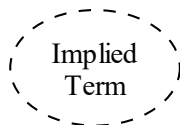
## Relations



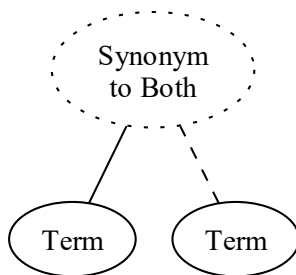
Dashed lines indicate a relationship is *implied*.

# Methodology: Graph Notation

## Terms

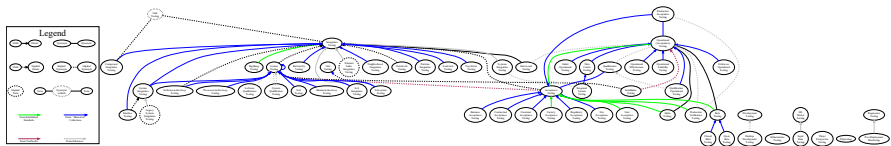


Dashed outlines indicate a term is *implied*.

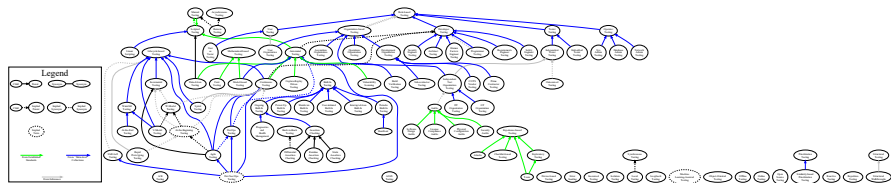


Dotted outlines indicate a term is a *synonym* to more than one term.

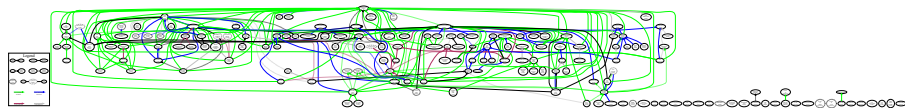
## Graph of Test Levels



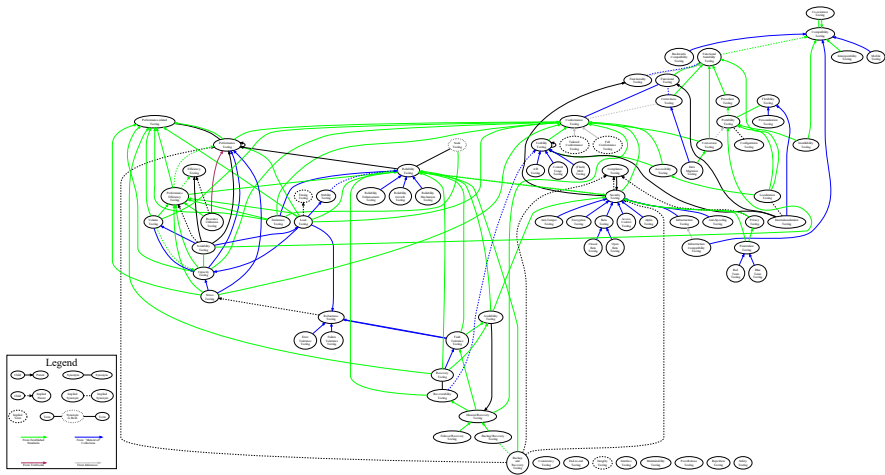
# Graph of Test Practices



# Graph of Test Techniques

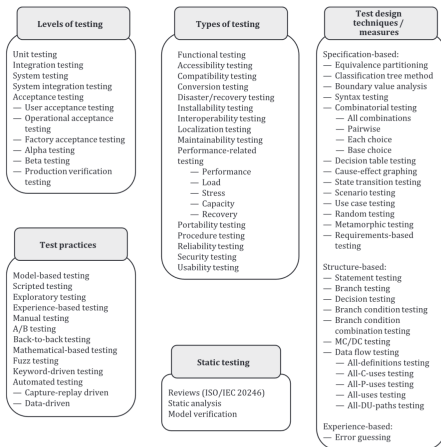


## Graph of Test Types



# Methodology: Graph Notation

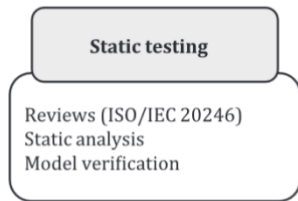
## Static Testing



Example test approach choices (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, Fig. 2).

# Methodology: Graph Notation

## Static Testing



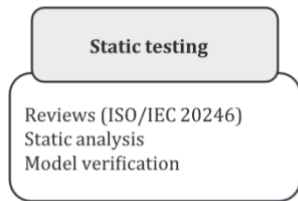
Example test approach choices.

Adapted from (ISO/IEC and  
IEEE, 2022, Fig. 2)



# Methodology: Graph Notation

## Static Testing

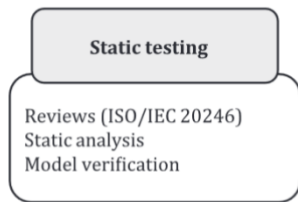


- While our focus is on dynamic testing, we include static testing in our research for completeness

Example test approach choices.  
Adapted from (ISO/IEC and  
IEEE, 2022, Fig. 2)

# Methodology: Graph Notation

## Static Testing



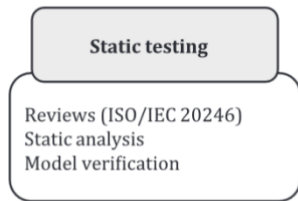
- While our focus is on dynamic testing, we include static testing in our research for completeness
- Static testing *is* quite distinct from dynamic testing, but this does not necessarily make it an orthogonal category

Example test approach choices.

Adapted from (ISO/IEC and  
IEEE, 2022, Fig. 2)

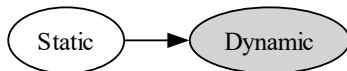
# Methodology: Graph Notation

## Static Testing

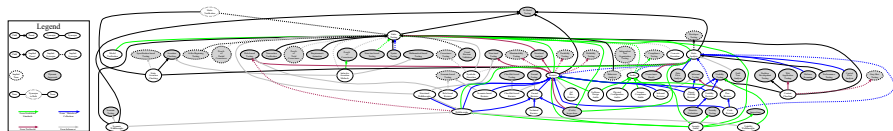


Example test approach choices.  
Adapted from (ISO/IEC and  
IEEE, 2022, Fig. 2)

- While our focus is on dynamic testing, we include static testing in our research for completeness
- Static testing *is* quite distinct from dynamic testing, but this does not necessarily make it an orthogonal category
- When considering static testing in isolation, terms with gray backgrounds are related *dynamic approaches*



# Graph of *Static* Test Approaches



# Methodology: Procedure

## Approaches

- A row is created for each test approach, such as the following which is based on (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022)

Name	Category	Definition	Parent(s)	Synonym(s)
A/B Testing	Practice (p. 22)	Testing “that allows testers to determine which of two systems or components performs better” (p. 1)	Statistical Testing (pp. 1, 35), ...	Split-Run Testing (pp. 1, 35)

# Methodology: Procedure

## Approaches

- A row is created for each test approach, such as the following which is based on (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022)

Name	Category	Definition	Parent(s)	Synonym(s)
A/B Testing	Practice (p. 22)	Testing “that allows testers to determine which of two systems or components performs better” (p. 1)	Statistical Testing (pp. 1, 35), ...	Split-Run Testing (pp. 1, 35)

- This information is gathered from sources by looking for
  - Glossaries
  - Testing-related terms
  - Terms described *by* other approaches
  - Terms that *imply* other approaches

- It seems that the existence of a software quality implies the existence of a test type associated with it

# Methodology: Procedure

## Other Information

- It seems that the existence of a software quality implies the existence of a test type associated with it
- Some test approaches use shared or complicated terminology



# Methodology: Procedure

## Other Information

- It seems that the existence of a software quality implies the existence of a test type associated with it
- Some test approaches use shared or complicated terminology
- For each of these, we record its
  - Name
  - Definition
  - Precedence for a related test type (only for qualities)
  - Synonym(s)

# Methodology: Procedure

- Recording these data in a consistent format allows for graphs to be generated according to a certain logic

# Methodology: Procedure

- Recording these data in a consistent format allows for graphs to be generated according to a certain logic
- It also allows for subsets of discrepancies to be identified

# Methodology: Procedure

- Recording these data in a consistent format allows for graphs to be generated according to a certain logic
- It also allows for subsets of discrepancies to be identified

## Research Question 2

What discrepancies exist between descriptions of these testing approaches?

# Table of Contents

## 1 Introduction

- The Need for Standardized Terminology
- The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## 2 Project

- Research Questions
- Methodology

## 3 Discrepancies

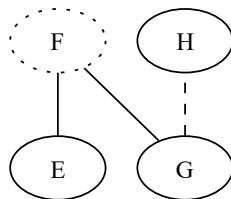
# Automated Discrepancies

- Some terms are given as a synonym to two (or more) disjoint, unrelated terms, making the relation between the given synonyms ambiguous

# Automated Discrepancies

- Some terms are given as a synonym to two (or more) disjoint, unrelated terms, making the relation between the given synonyms ambiguous
- These are included in generated graphs automatically

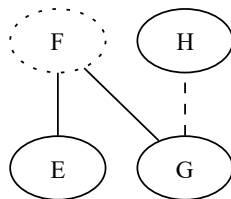
Name	Synonym(s)
E	F (Author, 0000; implied by 0001)
G	F (Author, 0002), H (implied by 0000)
H	X



# Automated Discrepancies

- Some terms are given as a synonym to two (or more) disjoint, unrelated terms, making the relation between the given synonyms ambiguous
- These are included in generated graphs automatically

Name	Synonym(s)
E	F (Author, 0000; implied by 0001)
G	F (Author, 0002), H (implied by 0000)
H	X



- The following four are the most prominent examples of the ten identified automatically:



## ❶ Invalid Testing:

- Error Tolerance Testing (Kam, 2008, p. 45)
- Negative Testing (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024; implied by ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2021, p. 10)

## ❷ Soak Testing:

- Endurance Testing (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2021, p. 39)
- Reliability Testing (Gerrard, 2000a, Tab. 2; 2000b, Tab. 1, p. 26)

## ❸ User Scenario Testing:

- Scenario Testing (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024)
- Use Case Testing (Kam, 2008, p. 48) (although “an actor can be a user or another system” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2021, p. 20))

## ❹ Link Testing:

- Branch Testing (implied by ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2021, p. 24)
- Component Integration Testing (Kam, 2008, p. 45)
- Integration Testing (implied by Gerrard, 2000a, p. 13)

# Acknowledgment

- Dr. Smith and Dr. Carette have been great supervisors in the past and have, both then and now, provided me with valuable guidance and feedback
  - They have helped me refine the scope of this project
  - Dr. Smith first suggested generating test cases back in 2020!

# Acknowledgment

- Dr. Smith and Dr. Carette have been great supervisors in the past and have, both then and now, provided me with valuable guidance and feedback
  - They have helped me refine the scope of this project
  - Dr. Smith first suggested generating test cases back in 2020!
- The format of this presentation was *heavily* based on a previous presentation by Jason Balaci, who also provided a great thesis template

# Acknowledgment

- Dr. Smith and Dr. Carette have been great supervisors in the past and have, both then and now, provided me with valuable guidance and feedback
  - They have helped me refine the scope of this project
  - Dr. Smith first suggested generating test cases back in 2020!
- The format of this presentation was *heavily* based on a previous presentation by Jason Balaci, who also provided a great thesis template
- The past and current Drasil team have created a truly amazing framework!

Thank you!  
Questions?

# References I

- Paul Gerrard. Risk-based E-business Testing - Part 1: Risks and Test Strategy. Technical report, Systeme Evolutif, London, UK, 2000a. URL [https://www.agileconnection.com/sites/default/files/article/file/2013/XUS129342file1\\_0.pdf](https://www.agileconnection.com/sites/default/files/article/file/2013/XUS129342file1_0.pdf).
- Paul Gerrard. Risk-based E-business Testing - Part 2: Test Techniques and Tools. Technical report, Systeme Evolutif, London, UK, 2000b. URL [wenku.uml.com.cn/document/test/EBTestingPart2.pdf](http://wenku.uml.com.cn/document/test/EBTestingPart2.pdf).
- Matthias Hamburg and Gary Mogyorodi, editors. ISTQB Glossary, v4.3, 2024. URL [https://glossary.istqb.org/en\\_US/search](https://glossary.istqb.org/en_US/search).
- ISO/IEC and IEEE. ISO/IEC/IEEE International Standard - Systems and software engineering—Vocabulary. *ISO/IEC/IEEE 24765:2017(E)*, September 2017. doi: 10.1109/IEEESTD.2017.8016712.

ISO/IEC and IEEE. ISO/IEC/IEEE International Standard - Software and systems engineering –Software testing –Part 4: Test techniques.

*ISO/IEC/IEEE 29119-4:2021(E)*, October 2021. doi:  
10.1109/IEEESTD.2021.9591574.

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)*, January 2022. doi:  
10.1109/IEEESTD.2022.9698145.

Ben Kam. Web Applications Testing. Technical Report 2008-550, Queen's University, Kingston, ON, Canada, October 2008. URL <https://research.cs.queensu.ca/TechReports/Reports/2008-550.pdf>.

# References III

- Cem Kaner, James Bach, and Bret Pettichord. *Lessons Learned in Software Testing: A Context-Driven Approach*. John Wiley & Sons, December 2011. ISBN 978-0-471-08112-8. URL <https://www.wiley.com/en-ca/Lessons+Learned+in+Software+Testing%3A+A+Context-Driven+Approach-p-9780471081128>.
- Knüvener Mackert GmbH. *Knüvener Mackert SPICE Guide*. Knüvener Mackert GmbH, Reutlingen, Germany, 7th edition, 2022. ISBN 978-3-00-061926-7. URL <https://knuevenermackert.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SPICE-BOOKLET-2022-05.pdf>.
- LambdaTest. What is Operational Testing: Quick Guide With Examples, 2024. URL <https://www.lambdatest.com/learning-hub/operational-testing>.
- Pranav Pandey. Scalability vs Elasticity, February 2023. URL <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/scalability-vs-elasticity-pranav-pandey/>.



# References IV

- Ron Patton. *Software Testing*. Sams Publishing, Indianapolis, IN, USA, 2nd edition, 2006. ISBN 0-672-32798-8.
- J.F. Peters and W. Pedrycz. *Software Engineering: An Engineering Approach*. Worldwide series in computer science. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2000. ISBN 978-0-471-18964-0.
- Erica Souza, Ricardo Falbo, and Nandamudi Vijaykumar. ROoST: Reference Ontology on Software Testing. *Applied Ontology*, 12:1–32, March 2017. doi: 10.3233/AO-170177.
- Guido Tebes, Luis Olsina, Denis Peppino, and Pablo Becker. TestTDO: A Top-Domain Software Testing Ontology. pages 364–377, Curitiba, Brazil, May 2020. ISBN 978-1-71381-853-3.

- Michael Unterkalmsteiner, Robert Feldt, and Tony Gorschek. A Taxonomy for Requirements Engineering and Software Test Alignment. *ACM Transactions on Software Engineering and Methodology*, 23(2):1–38, March 2014. ISSN 1049-331X, 1557-7392. doi: 10.1145/2523088. URL <http://arxiv.org/abs/2307.12477>. arXiv:2307.12477 [cs].
- Hans van Vliet. *Software Engineering: Principles and Practice*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Chichester, England, 2nd edition, 2000. ISBN 0-471-97508-7.
- Hironori Washizaki, editor. *Guide to the Software Engineering Body of Knowledge, Version 4.0*. January 2024. URL <https://waseda.app.box.com/v/SWEBOK4-book>.