

# Putting Software Testing Terminology to the Test

## M.A.Sc. Seminar

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Fall 2024

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## 1 Introduction

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

## 2 Project

- Research Questions
- Methodology

## 3 Discrepancies

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## 3 Discrepancies

# The Need for Standardized Terminology

- Engineering is applied science
- Scientific fields use precise terminology



SOFTWARE  
ENGINEERING

# The Need for Standardized Terminology

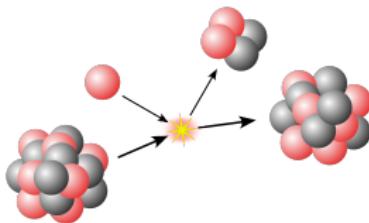
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- Scientific fields use precise terminology



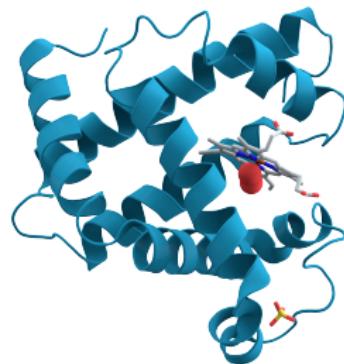
SOFTWARE  
ENGINEERING



Penubag and Ramey (2010)



Kjerish (2016)



AzaToth (2008)

# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## "The Problem"



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

# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## "The Problem"



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

# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## “The Problem”

ISO/IEC/IEEE 29119-4 describes the **experience-based test design technique** of error guessing. Other **experience-based test practices** include (but are not limited to) exploratory testing (see [4.4.3.3](#)), tours, attacks, and checklist-based testing.

Adapted from (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 34)

# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

“The Problem” (cont.)

## What: by Object Under Test (OUT) – System Testing



(Firesmith, 2015, p. 23)

# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

“The Problem” (cont.)

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# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

“The Problem” (cont.)



Adapted from (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024)

Adapted from (Firesmith, 2015, p. 23)

# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

“The Problem” (cont.)



# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## "The Problem" (cont.)

"Alpha testing is done by 'users within the organization developing the software'."

(ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2017, p. 17)



# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## "The Problem" (cont.)



# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## "The Problem" (cont.)



# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

“The Problem” (cont.)

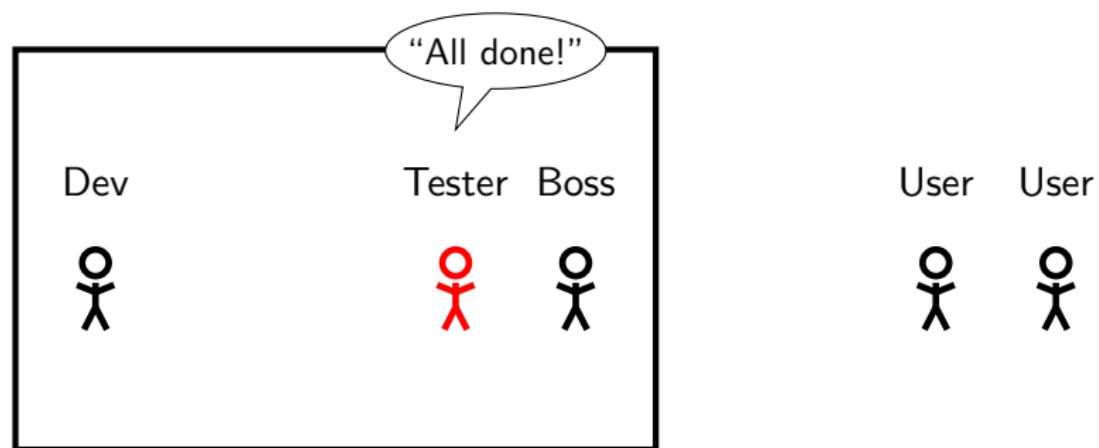


Tester User User



# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

“The Problem” (cont.)



# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

“The Problem” (cont.)

“How? Alpha testing is performed  
‘in the developer’s test environment’,  
but you didn’t bring anyone in.”

(Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024)



# Barriers to Effective Communication

“The Problem” (cont.)

## Interorganizational

Schools, companies, etc.



# Barriers to Effective Communication

“The Problem” (cont.)

## Interorganizational

Schools, companies, etc.



## Intraorganizational

“Complete testing” could require the tester to:

- discover every bug,
- exhaust the time allocated,
- implement every planned test,
- . . . (Kaner et al., 2011, p. 7)

# Taxonomies to the Rescue?

## “The Problem” (cont.)

- Existing software testing taxonomies:
  - Tebes et al. (2020)
  - Souza et al. (2017)
  - Unterkalmsteiner et al. (2014)

# Taxonomies to the Rescue?

## "The Problem" (cont.)

- Existing software testing taxonomies:

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- Souza et al. (2017)
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Focus on:

The Testing Process  
Organizing Terminology  
Traceability between Stages

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# Research Questions

## Research Question 1

What testing approaches do the literature describe?

## Research Question 2

Are these descriptions consistent?

## Research Question 3

Can we systematically resolve any of these inconsistencies?

# Research Questions

## Research Question 1

What testing approaches do the literature describe?

- 533 test approaches →
- 76 software qualities  
(may imply test approaches)



# Methodology

## Procedure

- A row is created for each test approach

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

Information from (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022)

# Methodology

## Procedure

- A row is created for each test approach

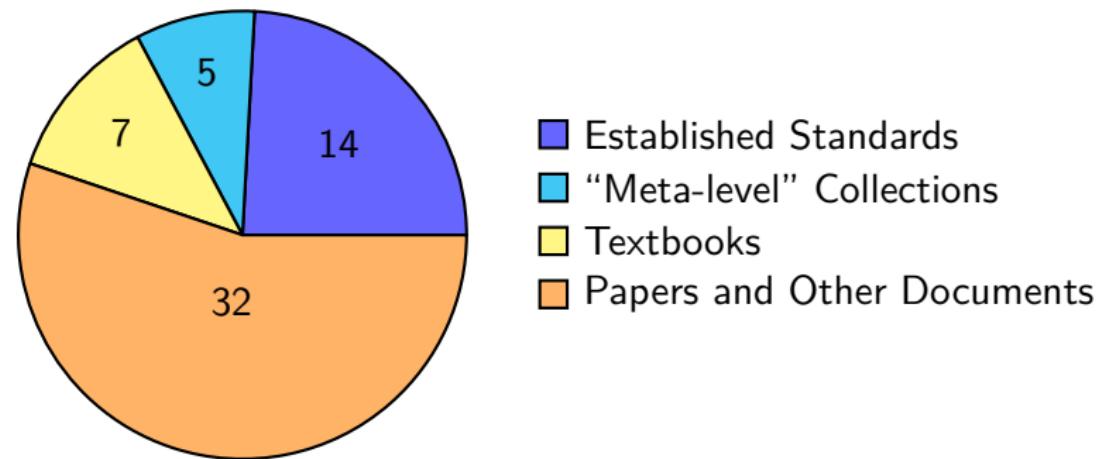
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| A/B Testing | Practice<br>(p. 22) | Testing “that allows testers to determine which of two systems or components performs better” (p. 1) | Statistical Testing<br>(pp. 1, 35),<br>... | Split-Run Testing<br>(pp. 1, 35) |

Information from (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022)

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

# Methodology

## Sources



# Methodology

## Sources

Textbooks trusted at McMaster were our ad hoc starting points

(Patton, 2006; Peters and Pedrycz, 2000; van Vliet, 2000)



# Methodology

## Categories

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)

# Methodology

## Categories



**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)

# Methodology

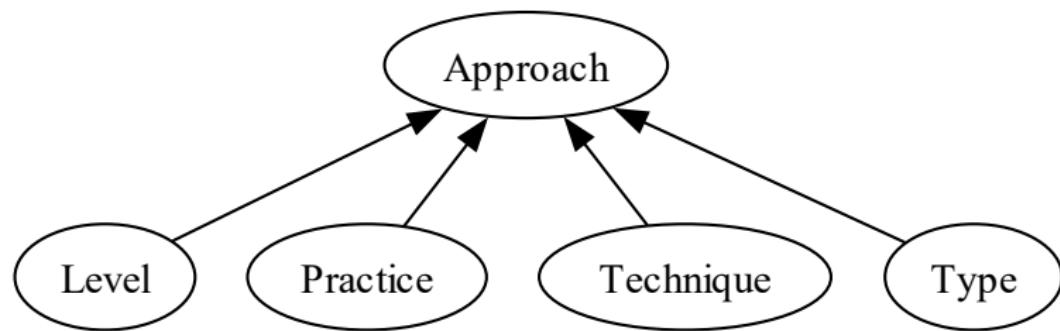
## Categories



**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



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

# Methodology

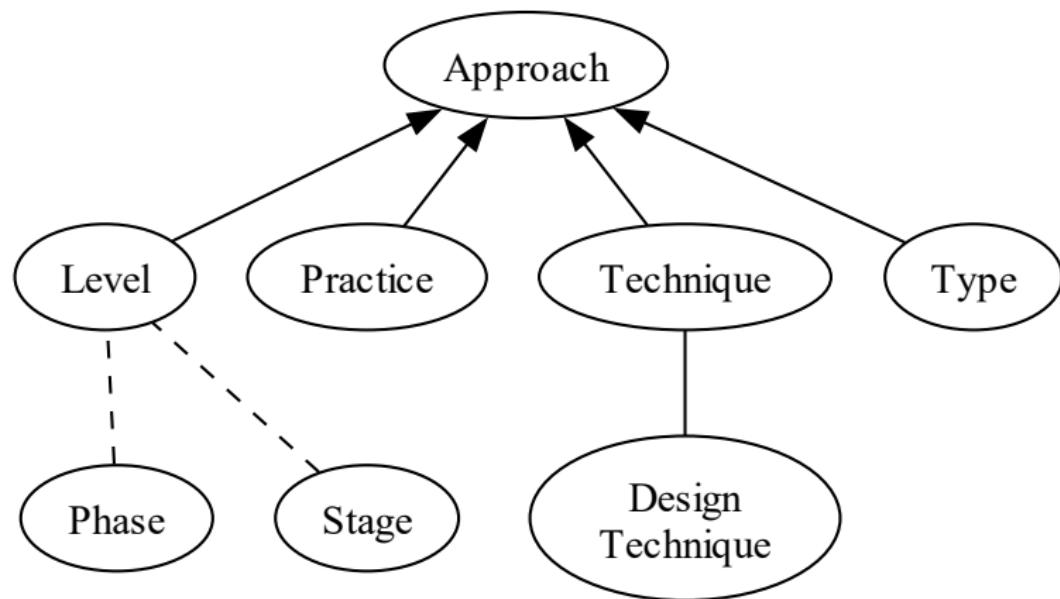
## Graph Notation



Lines without arrowheads connect *synonyms*.

# Methodology

## Graph Notation



Dashed lines indicate a relationship is *implicit*.

# Methodology

## Graph Notation



Dashed outlines indicate a term is *implied*.

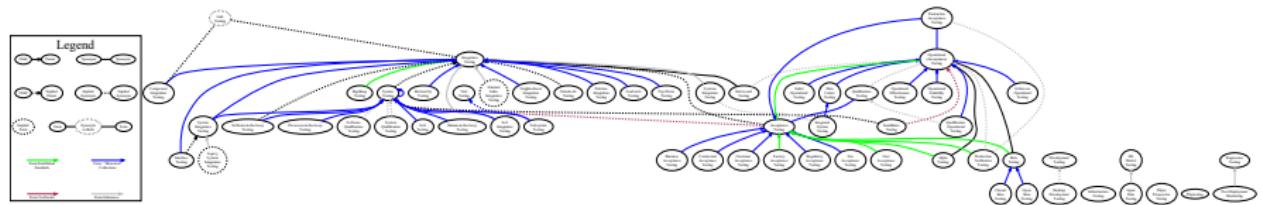
Dotted outlines indicate a term is a *synonym* to more than one term.

# Graph of Test Approaches

# Graph of Test Approaches

! Dimension too large.

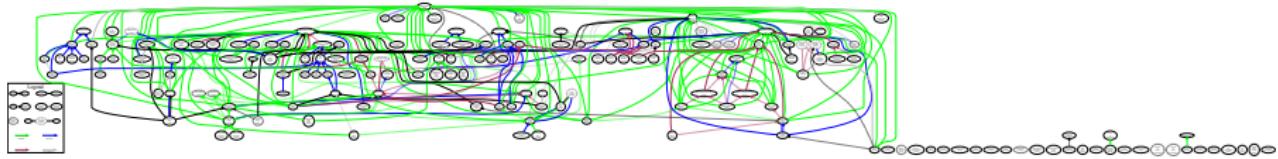
# Graph of Test Levels



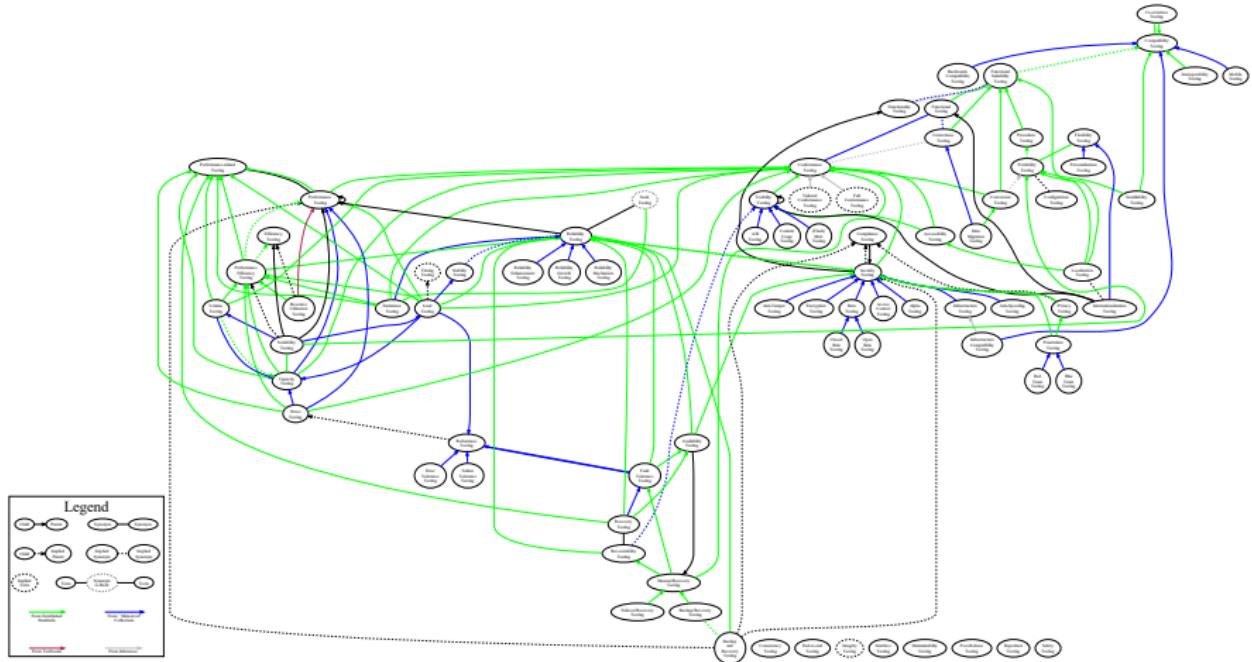
# Graph of Test Practices



# Graph of Test Techniques



# Graph of Test Types



# Methodology

## Graph Notation



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

# Methodology

## Graph Notation



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

# Methodology

## Graph Notation



- Quite distinct but not necessarily orthogonal

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

# Methodology

## Graph Notation



- Quite distinct but not necessarily orthogonal
- When considering static testing in isolation, related *dynamic approaches* have gray backgrounds



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

# Graph of *Static* Test Approaches



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# Automated Discrepancies

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

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- 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                                     |



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# Automated Discrepancies

Prominent examples of these “multi-synonyms”:

| ① Invalid Testing:        | Source(s)                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Error Tolerance Testing | (Kam, 2008, p. 45)            |
| • Negative Testing        | (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024) |

# Automated Discrepancies

Prominent examples of these “multi-synonyms”:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>① Invalid Testing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Error Tolerance Testing</li><li>● Negative Testing</li></ul> <p><b>② Soak Testing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Endurance Testing</li><li>● Reliability Testing</li></ul> | <p><b>Source(s)</b></p> <p>(Kam, 2008, p. 45)<br/>(Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024)</p> <p>(ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2021, p. 39)<br/>(Gerrard, 2000a, Tab. 2; 2000b, Tab. 1, p. 26)</p> |
|---|---|

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# 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
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- The past and current Drasil team have created a truly amazing framework!

Thank you!  
Questions?

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