Message from the President

Executive Summary

Survey Questions and Analysis

- Backgrounds of Respondents
- Organizational Aspects of Testing
- Economic Aspects of Testing
- Testing in the SDLC
- Skills and Career Paths
- Tools and Automation
- Test Processes and Techniques
- Improvement Opportunities in the Testing Activities

Credits
“The survey covers several topics, ranging from organizational and budgetary aspects, to techniques, processes, tools, through skills and competencies; we think it provides useful information for all the professionals involved in the testing market, as well as direction for the further evolution of the ISTQB® scheme.”

Gualtiero Bazzana, ISTQB® President

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As a nonprofit organization with its mission of advancing the software testing profession, ISTQB® regularly conducts international online surveys to assess the trends in testing industry.

After the “2013 ISTQB® Effectiveness Survey”, in which we collected market feedback on the impacts of ISTQB® certifications, in 2015 we conducted a survey looking at the “Worldwide Software Testing Practices”, the results of which are published in this report.

ISTQB® (International Software Testing Qualifications Board - www.istqb.org) has created the world’s most successful scheme for certifying software testers. As of June 2015, ISTQB® has administered well over 560,000 exams and issued more than 400,000 certifications in over 110 countries world-wide, with a growth rate of about 50,000 certifications per year.

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I would like to thank all of you who responded to the survey; your valuable feedback will contribute significantly to the future of the ISTQB® scheme.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main highlights from the report are:

**Budgets assigned to testing are large and keep on growing**

The typical IT/R&D project budget allocated to software testing ranges between 11% and 40%. This is in line with the World Quality Report 2015-16 that indicates an average expenditure of 26% for 2014 and 35% for 2015. Also in line with the World Quality Report is the fact that budgets are expected to grow in the near future, with about 60% of the respondents expecting an increase of the budgets assigned to testing, with an average expected growth rate for next year to be about 14%.

**Agile based SDLCs are being adopted ahead of traditional ones (Waterfall or V-Model)**

Agile methodologies are significantly increasing in popularity; this emphasizes the need to have appropriate testing processes and techniques for Agile, as well as certification of testing competences.

**Segregation of duties has become a standard practice from an organizational point of view**

In close to 80% of the cases, the responsibility for software testing is assigned to in-house test teams. Adoption of "segregation of duties" is further confirmed by the fact that in most cases (84%) the test team does not report to Development.

**Training and certification of competences are key factors in improving test skills**

In addition to training on the job (72%), organizations are improving the competency level of their test teams mostly by encouraging their employees to undertake relevant certifications (51%) and formal training (46%). This means that learning of the theory and the practicing of hands-on activities are both seen as important, and should be used in combination.

**Test tools are widely adopted**

Adoption of testing tools is becoming commonplace, especially for defect tracking, test execution, test automation, test management, performance testing and test design.

**Test automation is a hot topic**

Test automation has become very widespread in the market, with 72% adoption. 40% of the respondents suggested that the percentage of automated test cases in use is well beyond 20%. Test tool/automation consulting is also the most sought service from external providers, with test automation being the area with highest improvement potential.

**Testing requires a wide range of skills and competencies**

A good tester should be able to combine Technical Skills [especially on test design and test execution tools] together with Soft Skills and Domain Knowledge.

**Important career paths are available for testers and test managers**

Testers typically evolve into technical analysts and test managers who can progress to become Test Department Managers or Project Managers.

**The decision of “When to stop testing” is mainly based on requirements coverage**

Requirements coverage is by far the most adopted criterion to decide when to stop testing. It is a bit worrisome to see that constraints imposed by scheduling is the second criterion, knowing that this is a dangerous practice.

**Use cases and exploratory testing are the most adopted test techniques in the business practices**

Use cases and exploratory testing are more extensively applied than traditional black-box techniques (like BVA or equivalence classes). Coverage-based white box techniques are used by no more than 20% of the sample.

**Performance, usability and security tests are gaining traction**

The top three non-functional testing activities that test teams normally perform are performance (63%), usability (56%) and security testing (39%).

**Several improvement opportunities are recognized**

The survey indicates that there are still significant improvement opportunities in test automation, test process, communication and test techniques that have been cornerstones of the ISTQB® syllabi since the certification scheme began.

“With its reach to more than 89 countries and about 3,200 respondents, ISTQB® Worldwide Software Testing Practices Report lays the foundations for an open discussion about the most important topics in the software testing community.”


ISTQB Marketing Working Group
Background of Respondents

In which region do you currently work?

- Asia: 31%
- Europe: 36%
- North America: 22%
- South America: 9%
- Africa: 1%
- Oceania: 1%

To which industry does your organization belong?

- Information Technologies: 1580
- Healthcare and Medical: 124
- Business Unit Manager: 33
- Financial Services: 492
- Consumer Products, Retail and Distribution: 104
- Business Analyst: 123
- Public Sector: 93
- Developer: 80
- Automotive: 84
- Test Leader: 582
- Education: 61
- Business Analyst: 582
- Transportation: 53
- Test Manager: 459
- Manufacturing: 50
- System Analyst: 296
- Other: 344
- Telecom, Media and Entertainment: 26
- CIO / IT Manager: 26
- Project Manager: 106
- Other: 80
- CEO / General Manager: 61
- Operations Manager: 3
- Academic / Professor: 18
- R&D Manager: 5
- Development Manager: 24
- Enterprise Architect: 8
- Database Admin: 5
- "Respondents distribution according to functions"
Who is responsible for software testing in your company? (Multiple answers were allowed.)

- In-house test team: 76.7%
- Developers: 38.1%
- End Users: 27.1%
- In-sourced test team: 23.5%
- Distributed test team: 19.5%
- Off-shore test team: 17.3%
- Near-shore test team: 8.3%

In close to 80% of the cases, the responsibility of SW testing is assigned to an in-house test team; this confirms the increasing adoption of “segregation of duties”, that is one of the key factors for the effectiveness of testing activities.

Segmentation by Industry

- Information Technologies
- Financial Services
- Telecom, Media and Entertainment

In close to 80% of the cases, the responsibility of SW testing is assigned to an in-house test team; this confirms the increasing adoption of “segregation of duties”, that is one of the key factors for the effectiveness of testing activities.
To whom does the test team report?

Test teams are in most cases under the supervision of project managers (46%). 11% of them are reporting to development manager and CIO/IT manager. Only 3% are reporting to the CEO/General Manager.

Wide adoption of “segregation of duties” is confirmed by the fact that in most cases (84%) the test team does not report to Development.

Segmentation by Industry

The testing function in Financial Services reports to the CIO/IT manager in more than 20% responses, and only in 6% for Telecom, Media.

Segmentation by Function

Wide adoption of “segregation of duties” is confirmed by the fact that in most cases (84%) the test team does not report to Development.
What percent of a typical IT/ R&D project budget is allocated to software testing?

The large majority of respondents indicate budgets between 11% and 40%.
This is in line with World Quality Report 2015-16 that indicates an average expenditure of 26% for 2014 and 35% for 2015.

Segmentation by Industry

Telco/ Media companies devote more of their budget to testing activities than do IT or Financial Services companies.
About 60% of the respondents expect an increase of the budgets allocated to testing; this confirms the growing trend exhibited in the World Quality Report 2015-16, which forecasts that by 2018 the IT budget allocated to QA & testing will rise to 40%.

Average expected growth is 14% which is in line with the forecasted CAGR of the Global Testing Market in 2015-2019 in the Technavio Report (www.technavio.com).

System testing is by far the activity absorbing most of the testing budget. This is in line with the EuroStar 2014 Survey. (http://testhuddle.com/practices-attitudes-in-software-testing-study)

To which test level [s] is most of your budget allocated? [Multiple answers were allowed.]

System 71.3%
Integration 48.7%
User Acceptance 44%
Unit / Component 24.1%

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Which of the below services is your organization going to obtain from external providers in the next 12 months? [Multiple answers were allowed.]

Test tool/automation consulting (47.6%) is the most sought service from external providers. Certification of testing competencies (33.4%) and test training (32.2%) deserve a strong interest.

Only 21.4% of the respondents do not plan to benefit from external services in the next 12 months.

Segmentation by Industry

- Telecom, Media and Entertainment 60%
- Financial Services 50%
- Information Technologies 40%
- Other 20%
- Certification of Testing Competencies 10%
- Test Training 10%
- Will not Obtain any Services 10%
- Test Process Consulting 10%
- Test Design 10%
- Testing Service Charged by Time 10%
- Full Outsourcing of Testing Service 10%
- Other 10%
Which Software Development Lifecycle (SDLC) model are you using? (Multiple answers were allowed.)

- Agile (Scrum, Extreme Programming, Kanban): 69.6%
- Sequential (Waterfall, V-model): 53.5%
- Iterative (RUP, Spiral): 18.8%
- Other: 3.2%

Agile based SDLCs are being adopted significantly more often than traditional ones.[Waterfall or V-Model]

Agile methodologies are significantly increasing in popularity; this underlines the need to have appropriate testing processes and techniques also for Agile, combined with certification of testing competences. ISTQB® has recently launched a specific certification module for “Agile Tester” with a strongly positive reply by the market, and in the near future will further extend the certifications on Agile testing at an Advanced level.

Which activities do you use to find defects before test execution? (Multiple answers were allowed.)

- Formal Review of The Analysis Documents: 84.3%
- Formal Review of The Design Documents: 60.7%
- Source Code Inspection: 33.7%
- Static Analysis Tools: 30.7%
- None: 16.1%
- Other: 5.3%

Review of the analysis documents/requirements remains the most widespread activity for early detection of defects.
Which skills do you expect from testers?
(Multiple answers were allowed.)

A good tester should be able to combine Technical Skills (especially on test design and test execution tools) together with Soft Skills and Domain Knowledge.

Segmentation by Roles

The evaluation of the most important test skills does not vary, depending on the role of the testers.
How does your organization improve the competency level of your testers?  [Multiple answers were allowed.]

Besides training on the job (72%), organizations are improving the competency level of their test teams by encouraging their employees to undertake relevant certifications (51%) and formal training (46%). This means that learning theory and practicing hands-on activities are both seen as important and should be used in combination.

Formal Training and Certification are used in combination by 31% of respondents. This is well in line with the 2013 ISTQB® Effectiveness Survey in which Test Engineers and Test Managers alike declared to be highly satisfied with the ISTQB® CTFL certification and happy to recommend these to their colleagues (91% - Test Engineers, 94% - Test Managers).

In a typical tester’s career path the next step is either becoming a test analyst (31.6%) or a test manager (27.6%).

This is also confirmed by the EuroStar 2014 survey in which 74% of the respondents declared that certifications are valuable to them.

What could be the next level in the career path for a Test Manager?

The most common next step in the career path for a test manager is becoming test department director (44%) or project manager (37%).

Which Career Path is more Common for a Tester in Your Organization?

In a typical tester’s career path the next step is either becoming a test analyst (31.6%) or a test manager (27.6%).

This is also confirmed by the EuroStar 2014 survey in which 74% of the respondents declared that certifications are valuable to them.
Which tools do you use in your organization?
(Multiple answers were allowed.)

Tools and Automation

Defect Tracking (81.2%), Test Execution (70%), Test Automation (67.3%), Test Management (65.4%), Performance Testing (55.2%), Test Design (49.7%), Requirements Traceability (47.4%), Unit Testing (42.8%), Static Analysis (26.4%), Dynamic Analysis (16%), Other (1.6%)

Adoption of testing tools is becoming commonplace. Defect tracking (81.2%), test execution (70%), test automation (67.3%) and test management (65.4%) tools are the most commonly used among test teams. Also, Performance testing and Test Design tools are used by about half of the respondents.

What is the percentage of automated test cases you use with respect to your overall test cases?

Test automation has become very widespread in the market, with 72% adoption; in 40% of the cases the percentage of automated test cases is well beyond 20%.

Segmentation by Industry

Information Technologies

Financial Services

Telecom, Media and Entertainment

The use of test automation in the Telecom & Media industries is more prevalent than in IT and Financial Services.
What are the main objectives of your testing activities?  

(Multiple answers were allowed.)

- To Detect Bugs: 87.3%
- To Show the System is Working Properly: 67.4%
- To Gain Confidence: 52%
- To Evaluate the User Experience: 38.4%
- To Comply with Regulations: 35.3%
- To Be a Customer Advocate: 25.4%
- To Have Zero Defects: 13.6%
- Other: 2.2%

Top three testing objectives are detecting bugs (87.3%), showing the system is working properly (67.4%) and gaining confidence (52.0%). Evaluating user experience (38.4%), complying with regulations (35.3%), being a customer advocate (25.4%) and having zero defects (13.6%) are the following objectives.

What are your test exit criteria?  
(Multiple answers were allowed.)

- Requirements Coverage: 73.4%
- Scheduled Deadline: 46.5%
- Risk Coverage: 43.3%
- User Story Coverage: 34.6%
- Percentage of Defects Closed: 28%
- Budget: 19.5%
- Total Number of Defects Found: 18.8%
- Decision Coverage: 13.3%
- Statement Coverage: 11%
- Path Coverage: 10.6%
- Other: 3.8%
- None: 2%

Requirements coverage is by far the most adopted criterion to decide when to stop testing. It is a bit worrisome to see that constraints imposed by scheduling is the second criterion, knowing by the quantitative analysis of Capers Jones (http://namcookanalytics.com/about/) that this one of the most dangerous practices in terms of quality and costs throughout the whole life cycle [including maintenance].

Which are the most adopted test techniques?  
(Multiple answers were allowed.)

- Use Case Testing: 70.8%
- Exploratory Testing: 66.3%
- Checklist Based: 54.1%
- Boundary Value Analysis: 48.2%
- Error Guessing: 37%
- Equivalence Partition: 34%
- Decision Tables: 27.7%
- Decision Coverage: 21.5%
- State Transition: 21.4%
- Statement Coverage: 18.2%
- Pair-Wise Testing: 13.2%
- Attacks: 10.4%
- Classification Tree: 7.1%
- Other: 2.2%

Use cases and exploratory testing are more extensively applied than traditional black-box techniques [like BVA or equivalence classes]; coverage-based white box techniques are used by no more than 20% of the sample.
Which of the non-functional testing activities does your test team normally perform? [Multiple answers were allowed.]

Performance (63%), Usability (56.1%), Security (38.5%), Reliability (30.7%), Accessibility (29.1%)

Test automation confirms to be a very hot topic, because it is at the same time one of the most adopted practices, an activity for which external support is sought and the area with highest improvement potential. In this respect, ISTQB® is completing additional certification modules dedicated to test automation for both the traditional SDLC and for the Agile context.

The survey indicates that there are still significant improvement opportunities in test process, communication and test techniques, that have been cornerstones of ISTQB® syllabi since the certification scheme began.

What are the main improvement areas in your testing activities? [Multiple answers were allowed.]

Test Automation (58.5%), Knowledge about Test Processes (46.6%), Communication Between Development and Testing (46.4%), Knowledge about Test Design (40.7%), Maintaining Test Cases (38.7%), Test Data Preparation (32.6%), Communication Between Project Management and Testing (31.1%), Prioritization (29.8%), Maintaining Test Scripts (28.8%), Time (28.5%), Having Well Trained Personnel (27.8%), Unrealistic Expectations of Other Stakeholders from Test Team (19.5%), Budget (16.2%), Other (1.8%)
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