

What is the SIGiST?

THE SIGiST is the Specialist Interest Group in Software Testing. We are the largest of the specialist interest groups in the British Computer Society.

The mission of the Group is:

'To be the leading forum for promoting excellence in systems and software testing.'

The objectives of the Group are:

- To promote the importance of software testing.
- To develop awareness of industry's best practices in software testing.
- To represent the interests of the Group's members with other bodies.

- To encourage research into software testing.
- To promote and develop high standards and professionalism in software testing.

With over 2000 members we are effectively the largest independent team of testers in the UK! We run one day conferences 5 times a year at the prestigious London Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London. Some of the conferences are themed days and others cover a diverse range of testing topics. Listen to key note speakers from around the world and share experiences and problems with fellow professionals, whatever your background. We also run exhibitions of test tool and service suppliers at our conferences.

Our sub-group has produced a standard on software component testing, copyright of which has now been assigned to the BSI (British Standards Institute) for acceptance as a British Standard. The group is now working on standards for non-functional testing.

Membership of the SIGiST is free and as well as conference discounts it entitles you to access our full library of testing-related material at www.sigist.org.uk/library.shtm. Books, papers and videos are available for browsing or loan, free of charge to members. See www.sigist.org.uk to join – regardless, we hope to see you at our next conference!

SIGiST Meeting September 2002

THE September SIGiST Conference featured well-known testing author and speaker Jens Pas from Belgium. Jens presented a talk on Emotional Intelligence as the Key to Software Quality. Jens offered a fascinating, alternative view on why systems fail to meet requirements and how we might optimise our approach to pinning down the real needs of our users.

In his talk, Steve Allott set out the factors that determine the cost of down time of your online systems. As testers, we often need to re-justify our activities by comparing the cost of testing with the potential cost of failure. Steve outlined the potential cost of loss of productivity, damaged reputation, loss of revenue, financial performance and costs to meet existing business commitments and application repair. He also introduced the notion of stress testing as a way of addressing the risk of failure.

Marquis Harding from the USA presented a methodology for quantifying the complexity of a system. The aim is to be able to use this complexity metric to compare a new project with previous projects of known complexity and use the comparative complexity scores to predict the test effort (among other things). The factors that affect a system's testability are system interfaces, the technical environment, foundation applications, business processes, third party applications and data flows. Marquis used an example spreadsheet model to illustrate the calculations of complexity and make some interesting conclusions.

The Birds of a Feather sessions provoked lively and valuable discussions after lunch. Jen's Any Questions session, which ran in parallel, allowed a packed room to benefit from further discussion of his "emotional intelligence" ideas.

In the book review slot, Peter Morgan gave a summary of Paul Gerrard and Neil Thompson's book, "Risk-Based E-Business Testing". Peter set out the structure of the book, the pros and cons, and judged that the book was well worth buying.

Jens Pas closed the day with a second talk entitled, "From Test Dummy to Trusted Advisor". This entertaining presentation set out the importance of trust in the relationship between testers and developers (among others). Jens proposed that testers are, ultimately, advisors to the rest of their projects. Earning trust requires that advisors demonstrate integrity relating to the issues and empathy with those they advise. All in all, it was a thoughtful and thought-provoking talk.

Thanks to Jens and the other speakers for their contribution to another good SIGiST conference.

Paul Gerrard
Programme Secretary

BCS SIGiST - Monday 9 December 2002

London Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London W1

We Wish You a Merry Test Pass

AGENDA

08.30 Coffee & Registration, Exhibition opens

09.25 Introduction and Welcome
Barbara Eastman, Chair

09:30 Andy Redwood
Cresta Testing
What's Wrong with the Testing Methodology?

10:30 Coffee & opportunity to visit the exhibition

11:00 Fran O'Hara
Insight Consulting, Ireland
A Practical Method to Rapidly Improve the Performance of Testing

12:00 Lloyd Roden, Mark Fewster, Clive Bates
Grove Consultants
Developers are from Neptune, Testers are from Pluto

12:45 Networking session and commercial break

13:00 Lunch & opportunity to visit the exhibition

14:00 Birds of a Feather Session

15:00 Book Review

15:15 Tea & opportunity to visit the exhibition

15:45 Tips for Testing

16:00 Paul Gerrard
Technical Director, Systeme Evolutif Limited
What is the Value of Testing and How Can we Increase it?

17:00 Close

Paul Gerrard, Systeme Evolutif

The value of testing is a difficult thing for a tester to define – as a supplier we are not independent! It might help if we think like marketers for a moment and view testing as a service (or is it a product?) provided by a supplier to its customers.

Who are the customers that benefit from our testing efforts? The sponsors of a development project, the business users, project management, development staff and others are all our customers in (sometimes) different ways. What do they VALUE in testing?

Our product (or is it a service?) comes in different flavours: static and dynamic, functional and non-functional, planned and exploratory, manual and automated testing are sometimes alternatives, sometimes complementary. Are we confusing our customers by offering such diversity in the market?

This talk looks at the value of testing through the eyes of a marketer and offers some insights to how we might better brand, market and deliver testing to our customers.

Andy Redwood, Cresta Testing

We all endeavour to work within a framework for testing, but some are better than others. Maybe it's just easier to write a methodology in testing by only considering the testing, but unfortunately the real world doesn't function like this. As a result, the testing methodologies that I have used don't necessarily implement best testing practice. Moreover, they lack content and structure relating to those areas that testing interfaces to – such as Project Management, Design, Development and Configuration Management etc. This presentation explores What's Wrong with the Testing Methodology.

Fran O'Hara, Insight Consulting

The experience of the last decade has shown that there are many barriers to successful process improvement. This presentation describes a rapid and iterative method that implements effective testing practices in software organisations, while directly addressing these (and other) barriers. The method does this by getting managers and staff to focus their improvement actions on their specific goals and immediate project problems. It is highly flexible and provides measurable performance results quickly, thus creating buy-in from staff and management and ensuring continued improvement and success.

Mark Fewster, Lloyd Roden and Clive Bates, Grove Consultants

This is a special fun session with a serious point. Based on a number of parallels between these planets, it looks at the relationship between testers and developers, which can vary from wonderful to rather strained! This lively presentation will focus on how the tester communicates with the developer, with examples of both how not to do it and better ways to do it. A few examples are given from the recently discovered phrase book translating between Neptunian and Plutonian. Audience participation will help to discover characteristics of good and bad criticism styles.

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December 2002

THE TESTER

- **Developers are from Neptune, Testers are from Pluto**
- **What is the Value of Testing and How Can we Increase it?**
- **A Practical Method to Rapidly Improve the Performance of Testing**
- **What's Wrong with the Testing Methodology?**



FUTURE SIGiST CONFERENCES

Monday 9 December 2002

Tuesday 11 February 2003

Thursday 15 May 2003

Thursday 10 July 2003

Thursday 18 September 2003

Tuesday 9 December 2003



FROM THE EDITOR

WELCOME to the new look Tester! The newsletter is now somewhat reduced in size, but we hope you like the overall format of the mailing. Grateful thanks to our Marketing Secretary, Tony Wells (Mission Testing) for this re-design. As always I welcome contributions.

The Keynote Speakers have been such a success, both in the content of their papers and their entertainment value. We always analyse the feedback we get from attendees and Jens Pas from the September meeting and James Bach from July both proved to be a great hit, and were sometimes controversial, which is always welcome!

Paul Gerrard is actively encouraging members to make use of the forum on the SIGiST web-site, so I hope that you will have a look at this and maybe you will be able to provide useful advice to others? Failing that, you may have a testing problem to air.

The SIGiST is the place to network!

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BCS SIGiST web-site:
www.sigist.org.uk

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Conference delegates are able to discuss their hot topic around a table with like-minded people and more than a few 'experts'. Choose from the topics listed below (*please indicate your first and second choices of these ever-changing topics on your 9 December registration form*).

1. **Automation** – is it worth the effort?
2. **IEEE 829 Standard for Test Documentation** – what can it do for me?
3. **Web sites** – have we 'cracked it' or do we still have to test everything we did in 1999?
4. **Usability Testing** – does informal usability testing have value?
5. **Managing Testing** – from good to great – what worked for you?
6. **Testing profile** – how to make management sit up and listen.
7. **Exploratory testing** – does it deserve to be called 'a technique'?
8. **Getting budget for testing** – does blood have to be spilt first?
9. **Negotiating with tool vendors** – is getting the best deal the same as getting the best price?
10. **Test process improvement** – meet Fran O'Hara and hear more about his method.

Please feel free to submit other 'specific questions' (*not just general areas*) you would like to have discussed in addition to your first and second choices of the above list.

TO REGISTER ON THE SIGiST DATABASE

If you wish to receive information about future SIGiST meetings please contact:

Claire Mason at SIGiST Registrations and Admin

Tel: 01422 836 431 Fax: 01422 839 472

Email: SIGiSTregs@aol.com

Please note that any views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the BCS.

SPECIALIST INTEREST GROUP IN SOFTWARE TESTING

NEXT CONFERENCE:

We Wish You a Merry Test Pass

Monday 9 December 2002

London Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London W1

see overleaf for Conference Agenda

REGISTRATION FORM

You may register by

Fax 01422 836 096 or 01422 839 472

Post SIGiST Conference Registration,
Marshwood Events Management,
P O Box 445, Triangle, HX6 3YF.

Tel 01422 836 431

Email SIGiSTregs@aol.com (giving all details required below)

Title _____

First Name _____

Family Name _____

Invoice and Joining Instructions to be sent to
(please include company name)

Company _____

Address _____

If you haven't heard from us by 29 November,
please contact us on 01422 836 431

Tel _____

Fax _____

Email _____

If you are a SIGiST member, BCS corporate, individual or
affiliated member please state which and quote your
membership number.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER SESSION

1st choice _____

2nd choice _____

NOT-FOR-PROFIT FEES include morning coffee, afternoon
refreshments, 3 course luncheon, full set of presentation
materials and entry into the tools and services exhibition.

| | Ex Vat | Inc VAT |
|---|---------|---------|
| Members | £120.00 | £141.00 |
| Non-Members | £150.00 | £176.25 |
| Full Time Students * | £35.00 | £41.13 |
| Academics & those returning to work ** | £70.00 | £82.25 |

* please include copy of student ID

** available once in any 12 month period (VAT @ 17.5%)

PAYMENT

By cheque made payable to '**BCS SPECIALIST INTEREST
GROUP IN SOFTWARE TESTING**', by bank transfer
(await details on invoice) or by credit card

VISA Mastercard Access Switch

Name on card _____

Expiry date _____

Issue number (Switch only) _____

Card Number _____

Amount _____

Billing address if different from first column:

Signature _____

Date _____

PURCHASE ORDERS

Does your company use Purchase Orders? Yes No

If so, please put the Purchase Order number here so that
we can process your registration more quickly. If you tick
the box above but do not know the Purchase Order Number
we shall wait until we have one before processing.

Purchase Order No: _____

CANCELLATIONS

Cancellations must be received in writing prior to
29 November to qualify for refund of fees (less £10.00
administration charge). No-shows are liable for the
full cost of fees. Substitutions may be accepted at
anytime. Please note that no provisional registrations
can be accepted.

VEGETARIAN MEALS / SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

I am a vegetarian Allergies _____

Please tick this box if you DO wish to give permission
for your name and address to be passed to a third party
for mailings on related matters.

In the unlikely event of conference cancellation, our liability
will be limited to the refund of fees.

CPD The meeting is worth 5 hours CPD
(Continuous Professional Development)

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