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
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

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.

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.
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?
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!

FROM THE EDITOR

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.
A LITTLE over 11 years ago the BCS SIGiST set up a Standards Working Party. This group was responsible for the production of two British Standards for Software Testing that many of you have come to know through studying for, taking and passing the ISEB Testing Foundation Certificate. These standards are BS 7925-1, a glossary of terms, and BS 7925-2 techniques for component testing.

This was the first set of testing standards that the working party worked on, and it took 8 years from the first meeting to a final published document.

After completion of BS 7925-1/-2 the working party decided to target techniques for non-functional testing — an area of testing that many of us find ourselves working in, without real direction or formal specification.

The working party has made significant progress over the last three years with the identification of 15 formal techniques:

- Memory Management
- Reliability
- Usability
- Maintainability
- Configuration
- Portability
- Recovery
- Disaster Recovery
- Performance / Stress
- Security
- Procedure
- Interoperability
- Compatibility
- Installability
- Conversion

The work has taken a step forward this year in two main areas; on accessibility and direction. First, the decision to make the draft techniques available to all via the working party’s website on www.testingstandards.co.uk. This has given the working party and anyone else who visits the website access to the final draft versions of BS 7925-1 and BS 7925-2, the draft definitions of techniques on non-functional testing, work in progress and minutes of the working party meetings.

The second area has been the adoption of a domain-based approach. This recognises that people who will use these standards come at them from a domain-based point of view and wish to see examples appropriate for their domain. So, it was decided to provide examples of applying each of the above techniques in a number of domains.

The domains currently adopted are:

- Database
- Real-time
- Embedded Systems
- Management Information Systems
- e-business
- Desktop
- Safety Critical
- Process Control
- Scientific
- Graphics
- Knowledge Based Systems

This last summer, the working party has been through an extensive planning exercise, looking at how best to produce individual domain/technique examples for presentation on the website.

Analysis of this work to be done has shown that there are a number of areas that the experience base of the working party members does not currently cover. That is why we are making this call for additional volunteers to join the BCS SIGiST Standards Working Party and become involved in producing software testing standards for non-functional techniques. The working party is an open group that anyone can join and contribute to.

We are particularly looking for volunteers in the areas highlighted in the table below, and especially in the following domains: Safety Critical, Scientific, Graphics and Knowledge Based Systems. We also welcome volunteers whose experience covers other areas, because there are a large number of roles to fill, including; reviewer, author, team leader, planning and organisational roles.

If you would like to volunteer, then please visit the website www.testingstandards.co.uk or email me, Graham Thomas, direct at graham@badgerscroft.com.

I look forward to working with you.

Graham Thomas
Secretary
BCS SIGiST Standards Working Party
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.

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* please include copy of student ID
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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

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

VAT Reg No GB 618 1687 24

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