April 2021

bcs
The Chartered Institute for IT

Specialist Group in Software Testing

THE TESTER

Limitless opportunities for 2021 and beyond!

68

IN THIS ISSUE

From the Editor

Welcome to *The Tester,* the official magazine of *SIGiST*. SIGiST is continuing to grow from strength to strength, delivering more successful webinars, in 2021 and beyond! This issue mentions the successful events SIGiST have hosted so far.

In *The Tester* review the abstracts for our events in April, and also read the results of the survey SIGiST conducted in March this year, with some interesting findings. There are 2 inspiring mentoring and development stories by Sam White and Ady Stokes on pages 31 and 33, and details about the Testing Stories ebook on page 35 which the proceeds go to the mental health charity Open Sourcing Mental Ilness.

There is also a list of future non-SIGiST events which SIGiST Committee members will be speaking at on page 18, as well as a call for an Early Careers Advocate to join the SIGiST committee on page 39

Andy Shaw
The Tester Editor
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Join us on social media:

Join our Linked-In Group:

LinkedIn/BCS SIGiST

Follow us @SIGiST

Facebook: BCS SIGiST

Book online for our April 22nd 2021 event:

https://www.bcs.org/events/2021/april/webinar-bug-bash/

Book online for our April 23rd 2021 event:
https://www.bcs.org/events/2021/april/webinar-women-in-qa-celebrating-international-girl-s-in-ict-day/

SIGiST, another year of success in store!

Since the newly formed SIGiST committee were formed last year at the SIGiST AGM in February 2020, they have organised some really successful events throughout 2020, for the SIGiST community online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and have already delivered some outstanding events in 2021, with plans for some more amazing events throughout 2021 and beyond. While this has been an uncertain and unusual time, the SIGiST committee identified the opportunity to deliver our events via webinars to reach out to both the SIGiST and the software testing communities, some of which may not have been able to attend event in person otherwise.

The first event ran on the 31st of March, where 3 fantastic speakers delivered their talks. The video of the event can be viewed on YouTube, on the BCS Member Channel, at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gghac3lUW1w&feature=youtu.be

Different subsequent events took place afterwards, including the following webinars where the following videos can be viewed:

Webinar	Date	YouTube link
Testing Contact Tracing	29th May 2020	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-u1mualoVoQ
QA Teams during and Post Covid	17th September 2020	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lV7Ilnm4SYk
What Testing Means Today	20th October 2020	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qoWQ1C1ry5s
SIGiST Apprenticeship event	3rd November 2020	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RH2MX4Z9bw
ISTQB and cracking software testing interviews	5th November 2020	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gQ1nCq7jlA

SIGiST also organised Lean Coffee breakfast events, starting with our first event run by Gita Malinskova (the Programme Chair) on the 20th of May, where attendees could network and discuss questions raised by the SIGiST community. SIGiST are planning on running some more Lean Coffee breakfast events in due course.

SIGiST have also been running events alongside different BCS branches, as well as BCS Specialist Groups like BCS Women, and other testing organisations like AST (Association of Software Testing), where a workshop was run between SIGiST and AST about why the public should care about software testing. The report from this event can be found in Issue 67 (the previous issue) of the Tester.

SIGiST ran a successful event about modern apprenticeships to raise awareness about apprentices in testing, as well as highlighting the benefits an apprentice can bring to an organisation. There are future events planned, concerning career development as a Tester,

including an event about mentoring which the details of which will be confirmed in due course, so watch this space! There is a fantastic interview with Ileana Herrera, from Salta, Argentina, who is a founder of the Ministry of Testing meetups in Argentina, and who has previously spoken at one of our events 'What Testing Means Today' back in October 2020 and who has also helped contribute to the Tester magazine.

SIGiST was a professional sponsor for a four-day event, run by UNICOM, which started on the 1st of December and ended on the 4th of December, with a great line up of speakers. SIGiST is also supporting another UNICOM event, taking place on the 28th to the 29th of April, which more details can be found on pages 15 to 16.

There are some fantastic events lined up for April:

- A 'Bug Bash' testathon, like a hackathon, webinar taking place on the 22nd of April, more details about the event can be found on page 7, with the presentation abstracts and speaker biographies on pages 8 to 9.
- A 'Women in QA: Celebrating International Girl's in ICT Day' Testathon, like a hackathon, webinar taking place on the 22nd of April, more details about the event can be found on page 10, with the presentation abstracts and speaker biographies on pages 12 to 14.

SIGiST continues to put additional focus on inclusion, encouraging people from all backgrounds to consider software testing as a possible career path, and running amazing events so BCS members, the SIGiST and software testing communities, and the public can learn about the latest developments in testing.

SIGiST welcomes any ideas for events, workshops and articles relating to software testing and interesting contributions that anyone may have.

Welcome notes from Issue 68!

Greetings everyone, and welcome to Issue 68 of the Tester, now Spring is here and the days are getting longer, and lockdown looks to be gradually winding down, although I am making the best of things whilst being in lockdown. 2020 was an interesting year, however I am now focusing on 2021, looking forward to meeting some amazing people I have been speaking to online (and hopefully face to face, once lockdown is over) and learning much from the online webinars I have been attending, as well as delivering some talks about mental health, testing, mentoring, plus more.

Since the last issue, which was released in December 2020, I have been doing some User Experience Testing (UX Testing) for new developments of the BCS Mentoring Tool which will be deployed by the BCS soon. I have written an article about the BCS Mentoring Tool which can be found at on pages 28 to 29. I have also been developing myself as a tester, including learning a cool programming language called Python and developing my coding skills. Learning more about Python is a goal I have set myself to achieve this year, and I will keep you updated on my progress.

I've also had a short break from public speaking, due to a number of commitments, however I am planning on speaking at some future events and looking to organise more events, both at SIGiST and beyond.

As well as being involved with SIGiST, I have also been attending different networking events around software testing, as well as attending BCS events and conferences. I am continuing to attend conferences around the Early Careers Initiative group, a new BCS group which includes modern apprentices, university graduates within their first few years after finishing university and professionals changing careers at some point in their lives. I look forward to helping to include these professionals within the SIGiST community, and see how they can help bridge the different specialist groups like SIGiST with the BCS Student Chapters as an example.

Enjoy this edition of the Tester magazine and if you have any ideas for article suggestions or submissions, event ideas, software testing questions you would like answering, books you have written and like to be reviewed, please contact one of the SIGiST committee members or myself.

Enjoy Issue 68, and if there is anything you would like to see in a future issue of the Tester, please shout!

"Using Artificial Intelligence" webinar – Testimonial

SIGiST hosted their webinar "Using Artificial Intelligence" on the 12th of January, which included talks by Adam Leon Smith and Dr Larissa Suzuki, and have received a fantastic testimonial written by James Thomas. James has also included a wonderful diagram, included in the tribute, which summarised the event:
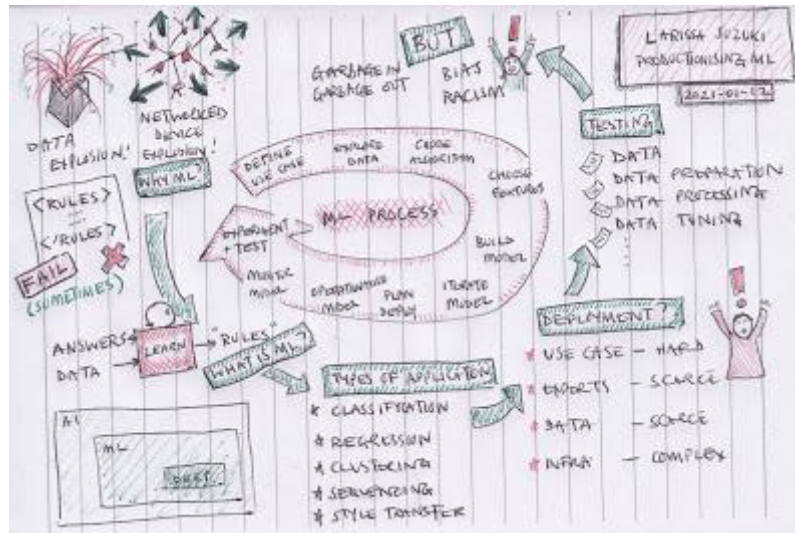
"Last night I attended Using Artificial Intelligence, a webinar hosted by BCS SIGIST, the Special Interest Group in Software Testing of The Chartered Institute for IT. In different ways, the two presentations were both concerned with practical applications of AI technology.

The first speaker, Larissa Suzuki, gave a broad but shallow overview of machine learning systems in production. She started by making the case for ML, notably pointing out that it's not suited for all types of application, before running through barriers to deployment of hardened real-world systems.

Testing was covered a little, with emphasis on testing the incoming data at ingestion, and again after each stage of processing, and then again in the context of the models that are built, and then again when the system is live.

To finish, Larissa described an emerging common pipeline for getting from idea to usable system which highlighted how much pure software engineering there needs to be around the box of AI tricks.

In the second half, Adam Leon Smith walked us through three demonstrations of artificial intelligence tooling with potential application for testing.

He showed us Evosuite (video, code), a library that, unsupervised, creates unit tests that cover a codebase. There's no guarantee that these are tests that a human would have made, and Adam noted a bias towards negative cases, but in some sense this tool captures a behavioural snapshot of the code which could be used to identify later changes.

In the next demo (video, code) Adam trained a model on images of magnifying glasses and used it to identify the search icon at Amazon's home page, an approach that might be used to check for the presence of expected icon types without requiring a fixed gold standard. Finally, he showed how synthetic test data could be generated by AI systems, using thispersondoesnotexist.com which creates photorealistic images of non-existent people as an example."

The initial testimonial, written by James Thomas can be found at the following link: https://qahiccupps.blogspot.com/2021/01/practical-ai.html

Conference Agenda

Bug Bash

Are you just starting in testing or planning to try it out? Join us for a Bug Bash on 22nd of April for a 2 hour testing session and see if you can win a prize.

A Bug Bash is like a hackathon, but for testers. No prior experience is required, and no tools need to be installed beforehand.

Time	Session
17:00	Start
17:00	*Welcome – Adam Leon Smith, Chair, SIGiST*
17:00	*Introductions*
17:15	Ronald Cummings-John from Global App Testing introducing Bug Bash
17:30	Bug Bash starts
18:30	Paul Michael Grossman from Tester.io talking about testing strategies
18:45	Bug Bash Continues
17:50	Bug Bash stops + Awards
20:00	*End*

The SIGiST committee reserve the right to amend the programme if circumstances deem it necessary.

COVID-19
Due to the current COVID-19 situation we are responding by looking to make our events online for the foreseeable future, the benefits include: a wider range of speakers, the events being non-London centric, more accessible and will increase inclusion in the testing community.

Presentation Abstracts and Speaker Biographies

Keynote One

Ronald Cummings-John

Ronald Cummings-John has spent years building companies and writing software. After selling his first startup, he's now scaling up Global App Testing - a VC backed, crowdsourced testing platform with over 50,000 professional testers globally, selected as one of the fastest-growing tech companies in the UK.

Ronald is the author of the definitive, best-selling book on testing, Leading Quality: How Great Leaders Deliver High-Quality Software and Accelerate Growth.
His passion for quality assurance has taken him around the world, working with the top QA and product teams from companies such as Etsy, Microsoft, King, Spotify, eBay and more.

Ronald's past speaking experiences include the National Software Testing Conference, a huge event for the testing and QA community as well as Online Testconf, where he shared how the most successful tech companies deliver high-quality software and accelerate growth.

Keynote Two

Paul Grossman

Paul Grossman has been a Software Developer Engineer in Test Architect for 20 years. His test automation tool experience spans Selenium, testRigor, MicroFocus UFT, Cypress and TestProject.io. He designs frameworks for ease of use, accuracy, scalability, and low maintenance in multiple languages.

He developed the Magic Object Model for dynamic element locators to significantly reduce maintenance in the Page Object Model and Object Repository. Paul has spoken at various podcasts and conferences including Vivit Worldwide in December 2019 , the 2020 Vivit Virtual Community Days Conference and Joe Colantonio's TestGuild.

You can see his tips and tricks in test automation at YouTube.com/PaulGrossmanTheDarkArtsWizard and he can also be found on Twitter as the @DarkArtsWizard.

Conference Agenda

Women in QA: Celebrating International Girl's in ICT Day

Joint event between BCS SIGiST & BCS Women

Are you considering a move into QA but don't know where to begin?
Have you decided you want to move into testing from another industry?

In celebration of International Girl's in ICT Day, join BCS SIGiST on Friday 23rd April at 5 PM as we hear from tech professionals sharing their own career stories and giving advice on how you can successfully navigate your own journey.

Time	Session
17:00	Start
17:00	***Introductions***
17:05	***Career Journeys***
17:05	Marie Drake, Quality Engineering Manager, Zoopla
17:20	Tania Mahmood, Graduate Engineer, Aveva
17:35	***Career Advice***
17:35	Nicola Martin, Head of Quality, Adarga
17:50	Questions and Answers
18:00	***End***

The SIGiST committee reserve the right to amend the programme if circumstances deem it necessary.
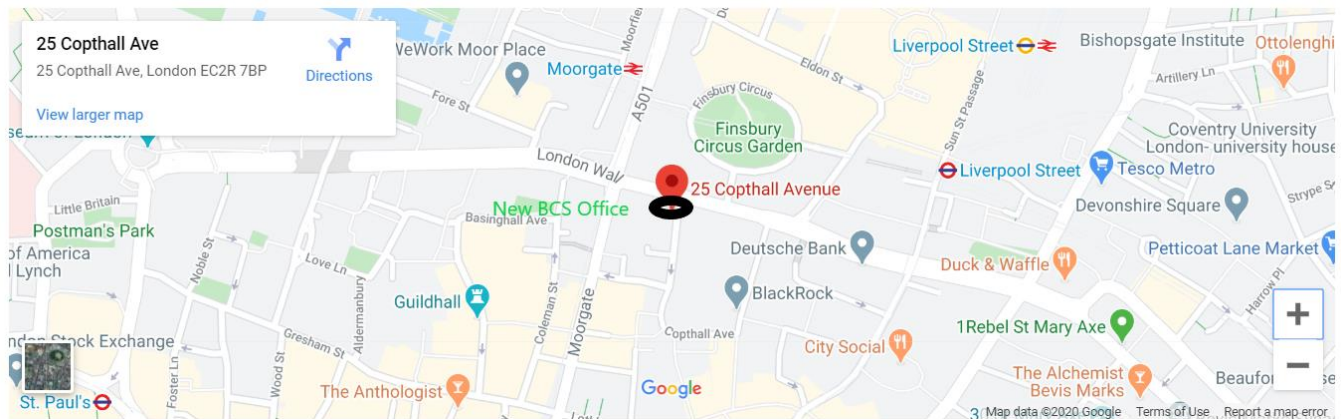
COVID-19
Due to the current COVID-19 situation we are responding by looking to make our events online for the foreseeable future, the benefits include: a wider range of speakers, the events being non-London centric, more accessible and will increase inclusion in the testing community.

BCS London Venue

When the pandemic is controlled/over, some events will be held at the new BCS London office.
The location is below.

London Office Guide

Address

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT
Ground Floor
25 Copthall Avenue
London
EC2R 7BP

Online events

We are responding by looking to make our events online for the foreseeable future, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The benefits of which include: a wider range of speakers, the events being non-London centric, more accessible and will increase inclusion in the testing community. It will also provide new and upcoming speakers with the opportunity to deliver a talk, some of which may not have the opportunity to do so. If you are interested in delivering a talk/ workshop/ etc online, simply contact one of the committee members or email the Editor at andrew.shaw@bcs.org

Presentation Abstracts and Speaker Biographies

Keynote One

Marie Drake, Quality Engineering Manager, Zoopla

Currently a Quality Engineering Manager at Zoopla, Marie is a software tester with 7+ years of experience focusing on test automation, leadership and mentoring team members with the goal that quality is everyone's responsibility. She is also a tech blogger at mariedrake.com, an accessibility advocate, a Cypress Ambassador and co-organiser of the Cypress UK Community meetup group and an online instructor at Ministry of Testing and Test Automation University.

Keynote Two

Tania Mahmood, Graduate Engineer, Aveva

Tania is a Graduate Engineer at Aveva.

After earning a BEng (Hons) Mechanical Engineering degree, she undertook a two-year technical graduate scheme at AVEVA. Since completing the graduate scheme (January 2021), she has accepted a full-time role as a Junior Cloud DevOps Engineer at AVEVA.

Her proudest achievement to date is achieving an EngTech accreditation from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, and winning a gold medal for a science project in the energy category by defeating participants from 69 countries.

Tania is very passionate about STEM and loves supporting the next generation wherever she can, to enthuse them towards a STEM career.

Keynote Three

Nicola Martin MBCS, Head of Quality, Adarga
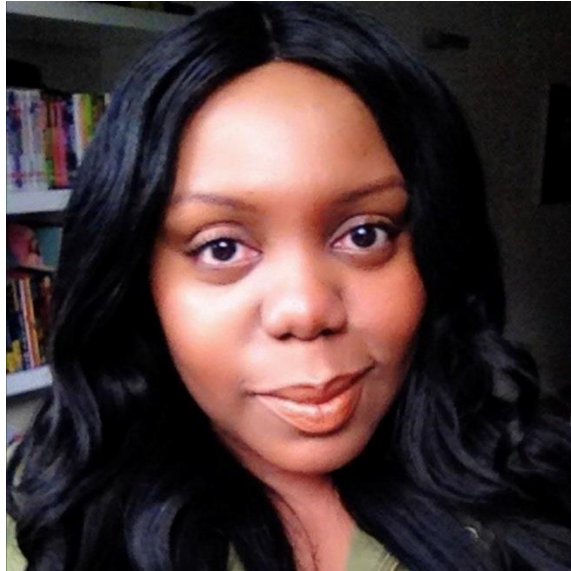
Nicola is currently working in the AI and Data Science field as Head of Quality at Adarga. Nicola has many years of experience focusing on quality for high profile tech projects. She specialises in working with companies to build high-performance teams, create strategies, improve processes, and create high-quality deliverables for customers.

Nicola is passionate about increasing diversity and inclusion in software engineering. She mentors and coaches professionals wanting to change careers and others wishing to develop their career.

She is a committee team member for BCSWomen and the Special Interest Group in Software Testing (SIGiST) and mentors for the BCS and The Association For Black & Minority Ethnic Engineers (AFBE-UK).

UNICOM SEMINAR: AGILE, DEVOPS & TESTING: THE BUSINESS CASE

UNICOM is organising **Agile, DevOps & Testing: The Business Case** on **28-29 April 2021**, Online.

Conference focus:

Since the Agile Manifesto in 2001, almost every business sector has been "doing Agile" in some form or another. But now, with the uncertainty in the current work world, organisations have changed and investigated how to adopt and use new agile practices and have also examined the practices of others and seen the values that could be adapted to suit the business aspect.

In the last decade, DevOps practitioners, too have changed their focus from development and built their operational capabilities and become customer facing with emphasis on actual business value and revenue.

Testers have always been at the coal face of ensuring that "stuff works as it should". Is there anything different in the actual testing of new digital products, new interfaces with clients which must always provide the optimum user experience?

Agile, DevOps and Testing have shared environments that facilitate working together. Spurred by greater demand for excellence, these methods are more than simply adopting new tools and processes. They are working together to build transparent processes with an aim to meet the customers' expectations and generate revenue.

Event website: https://conference.unicom.co.uk/adt2021/april1/

The discount code to avail 15% discount on the tickets is: **BCS15**

There are 10 free complementary passes for the event, which can be accessed at the following link: https://conference.unicom.co.uk/adt2021/april1/complimentary-ticket-guest-pass-bcs/

For more information, please contact info@unicom.co.uk

TESTING EVENT: TESTING FESTIVAL 2021
12th to 14th May 2021

Join Testing Festival 2021 for three days, from the 12th to the 14th of May 2021, of inspirational thought-leadership, knowledge downloads, and connecting with other testers and QA practitioners.

Bringing thought-leaders and testing leaders together, Testing Festival is a networking and knowledge sharing event to serve the needs of testers and QA practitioners. It facilitates technical discussions, personal development talks and workshops to help individuals and teams become the high performers they aspire to be.

The successful delivery of great software is dependent upon collaboration across many disciplines. With this in mind, Testing Festival sets itself apart from other technology conferences by steering away from one specific technical discipline and instead focusing on collaboration between IT disciplines.

Headline Speakers:
- Paul Gerrard,
- Fiona Charles
- Dorothy Graham
- Wilson Mar
- Mike Jarred
- Eran Kinsbruner
- Michael Anderson.

More details about the Testing Festival 2021 can be found at the following links:

- LinkedIn - http://bit.ly/TestingFestival
- Website - https://www.TestingFestival.com/

Non SIGiST Testing Events:

A list of events which SIGiST committee members are speaking at in future events

Many of the SISiST Committee members also speak at other Testing and networking events outside of SIGiST, so here is a list of the events some of the different committee members will be delivering talks, webinars or online workshops at in the near future:

Nicola Martin – Inclusion Officer:

Event Date	Event	Event Link
28th to 29th April 2021	**Agile, DevOps and Testing: The Business Case**	https://conference.unicom.co.uk/adt2021/april1/
Talk: How to navigate a career in QA		
4th June 2021	**QA Talks – UK and Europe Edition**	https://www.tech-talks.info/global-summit
Talk: How to navigate a career in QA		

Mike Harris – Co-Programme Chair:

Event Date	Event	Event Link
4th June 2021	**QA Talks – UK and Europe Edition**	https://www.tech-talks.info/global-summit
Talk: Two Quality Frameworks from Deming That Help Testers		

Andy Shaw – Editor of the Tester:

Event Date	Event	Event Link
June/July 2021 – To Be Confirmed	**QA Beginners Club**	https://www.meetup.com/QA-Beginners-Club/
Talk: How I developed my career as a tester		

Andy Shaw is also planning to deliver some future talks and organise some events (once lockdown is over) about mental health, both within the BCS and other organisations. He is also planning to deliver talks to different universities about testing.

BCS SIGiST Test Survey 2021

Welcome to the BCS SIGiST Test Survey 2021.

The last year has seen incredible changes in the way that we work and in our industry. Remote working has had a huge impact on all of us and ensuring the quality of systems has never been more important. Teams are adapting, with even more focus on keeping up to date with changing technologies and tools and in how test teams deliver projects.

To that end, SIGiST wanted to conduct a survey to understand the current situation with our members in terms of roles and testing within their organisations.

We will do more of these in future, expanding questions as we try to understand more about our members, our industry trends and how we can better serve you and our community. A huge thank you to those of you who took part!

**First, which bracket would you say you fall under? What is your role?**
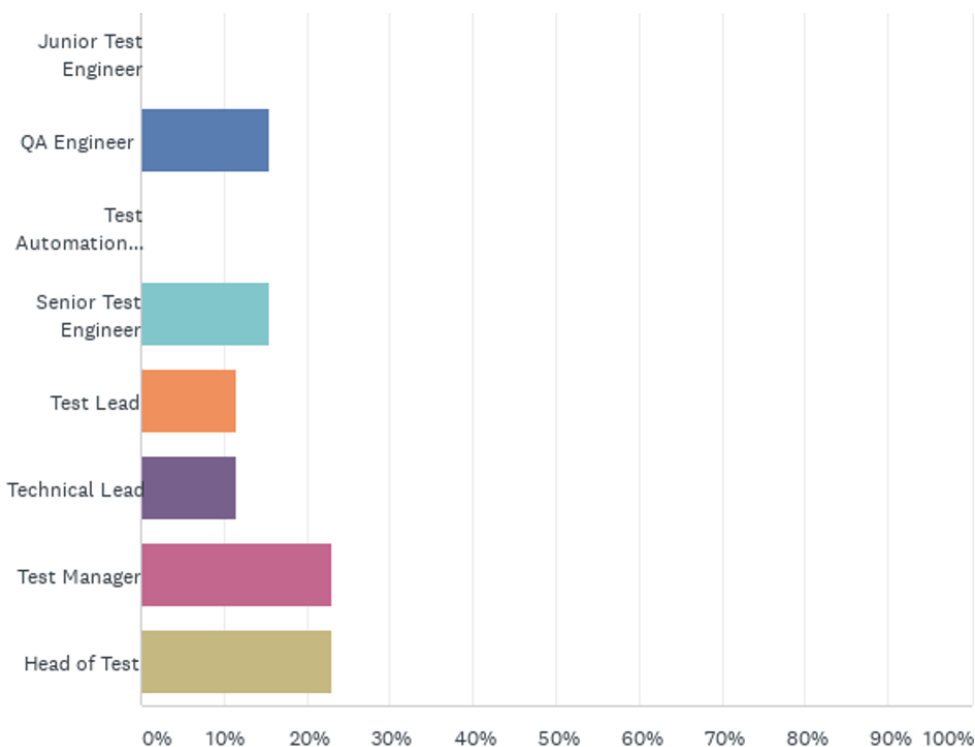
- A large number of respondents have identified as being in senior test roles.
- We had just over 10% of members identifying as Test or Technical Leads.
- None identified in more junior roles.

**How long have you been in your current role?**
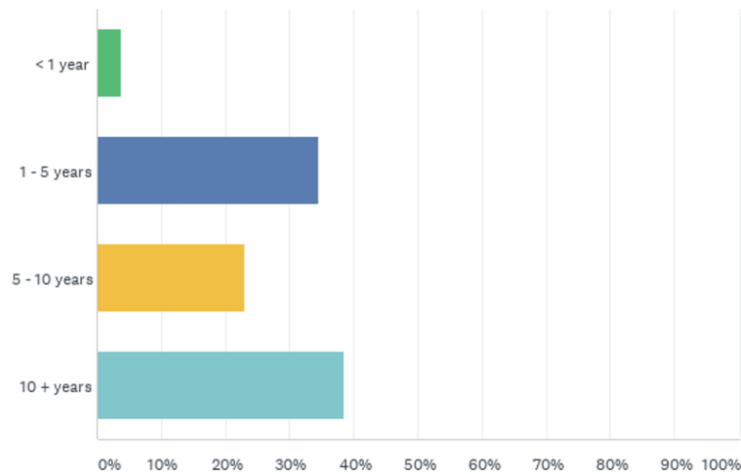
- Nearly 40% of respondents to Q2 have been in their current roles for over 10 years.
- This was followed closely by 35% in the 1–5-year range and just over 20% in the 5–10-year range.
- Under 5% had been in their current role for < 1 year.

How long have you been in testing?
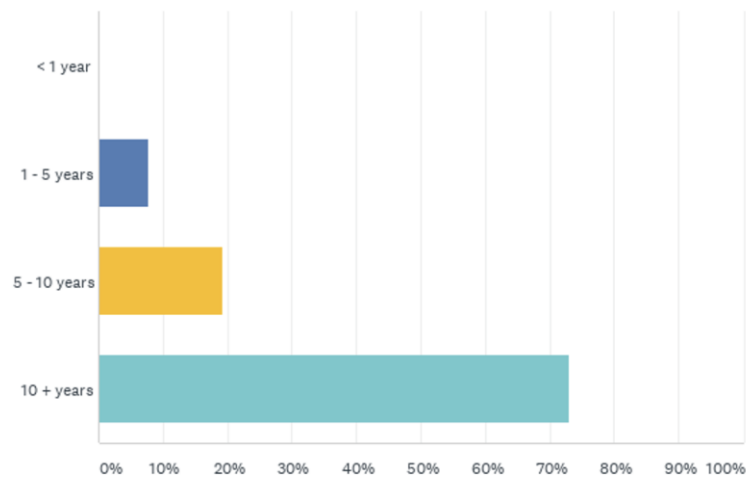
- 73% of respondents have 10 + years of experience in testing. This correlates with earlier responses about respondents being in senior test roles and shows that people are staying in the industry long term.

Do you have any formal test qualifications?
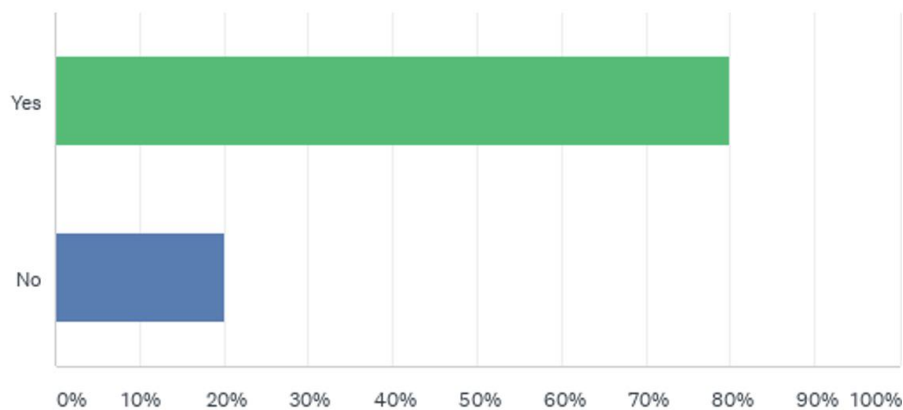
- It is not surprising to see that 80% of respondents have formal test qualifications. This is seen as a standard to gaining entry to working in QA roles and to continuing careers. As the market becomes more competitive, this is likely to put more emphasis on gaining certification.
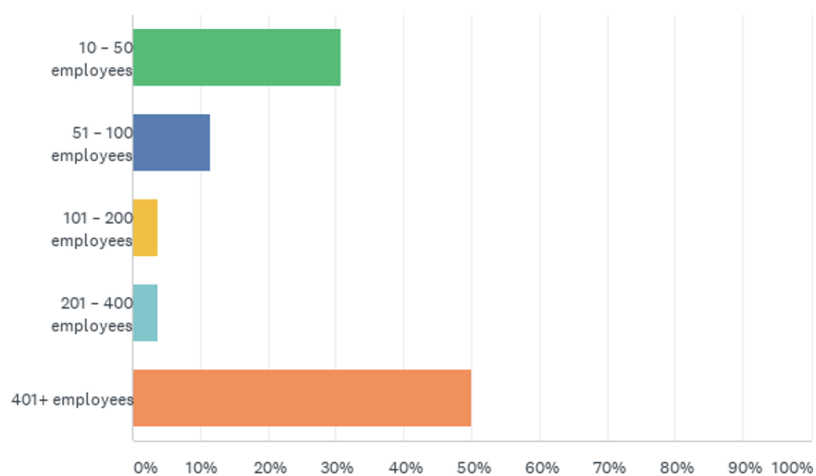
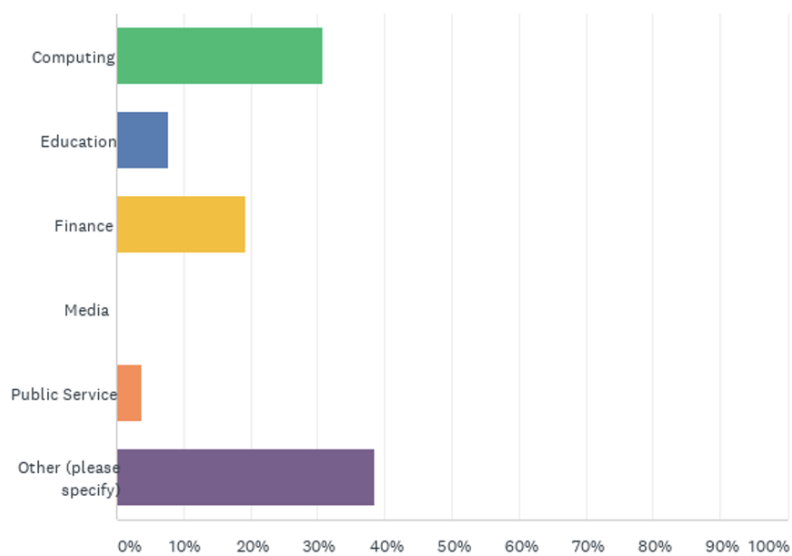**Do you consider yourself a technical tester?**
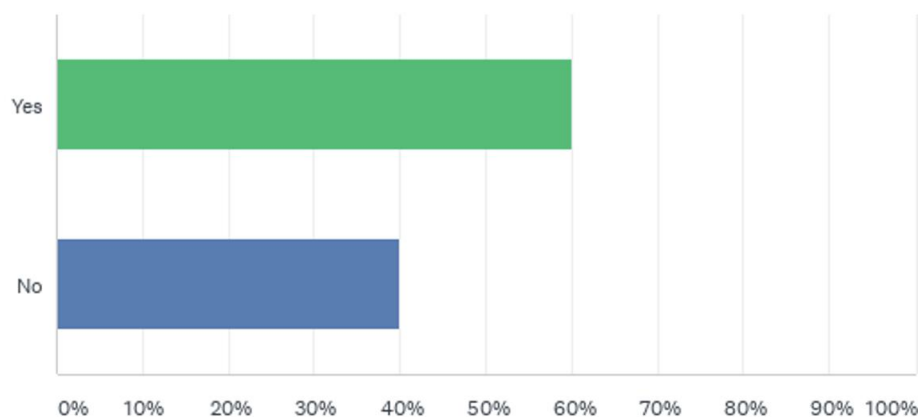
- We had 60% of respondents state that they consider themselves technical testers.
- 40% did not consider themselves as technical testers.

As companies move rapidly towards cross-functional teams and adopt agile, the emphasis is on automation to support these changes and get product to production faster. It will become even more important for testers to gain some level of technical skills to ensure they continue to be marketable.
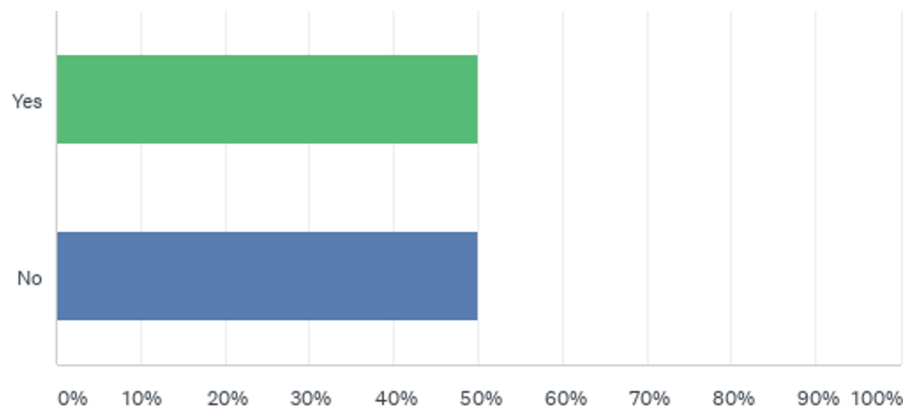
How many employees are there in your organisation?

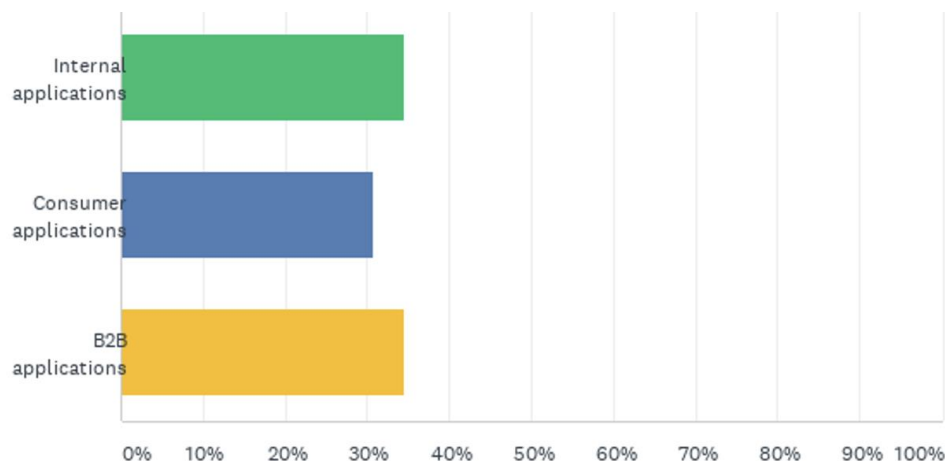**What Industry is your organisation in?**

Are there any apprentices or university graduates within your testing team(s)?

Companies are still including graduates within test teams as they continue to show their value. Half of respondents also said that apprentices are also used in their teams.

**What applications are you testing?**

- We had 60% of respondents state that they consider themselves technical testers.
- 40% did not consider themselves as technical testers.

As companies move rapidly towards cross-functional teams and more adopt agile, the emphasis is on automation to support these changes and get product to production faster. It will become even more important for testers to gain some level of technical skills to ensure they continue to be marketable.

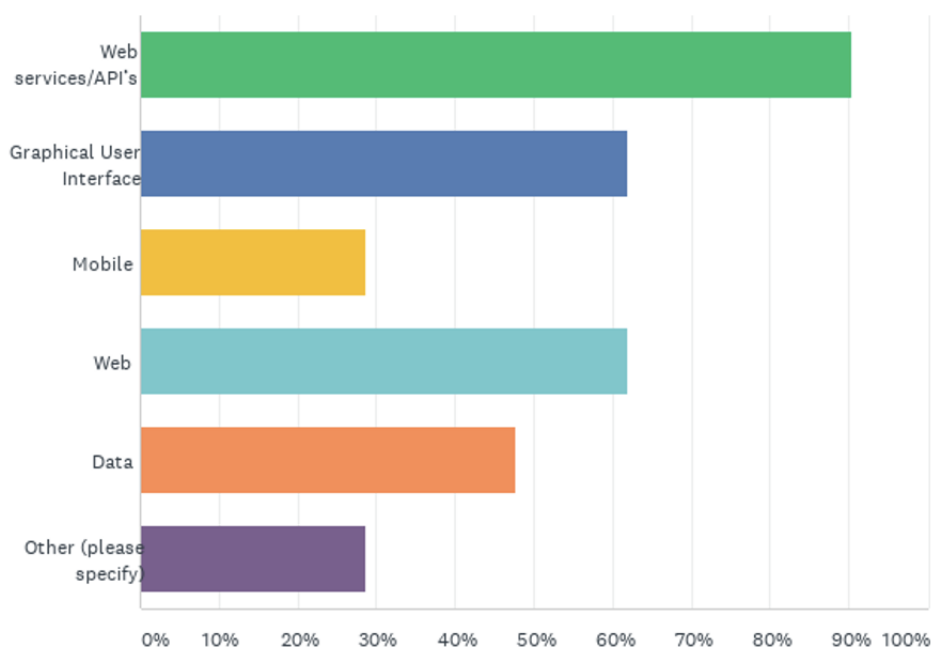**Where are your colleagues?**
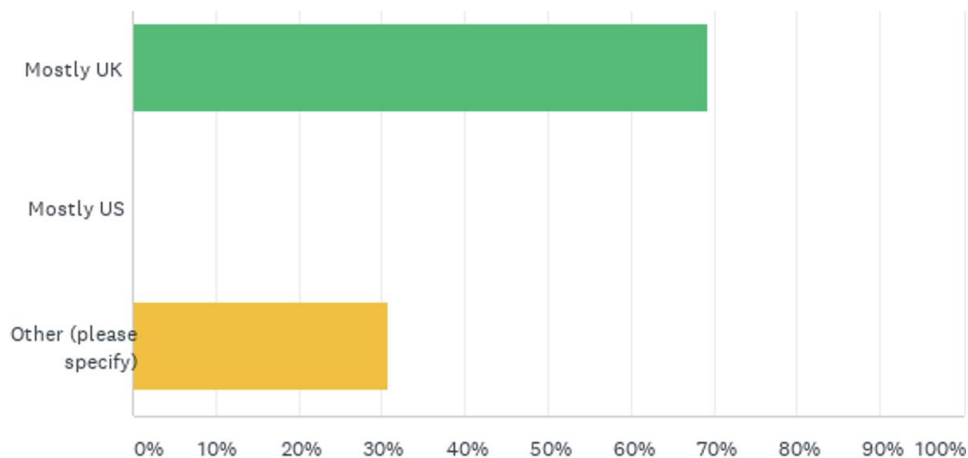
Does your QA function follow a manual or automated test strategy?
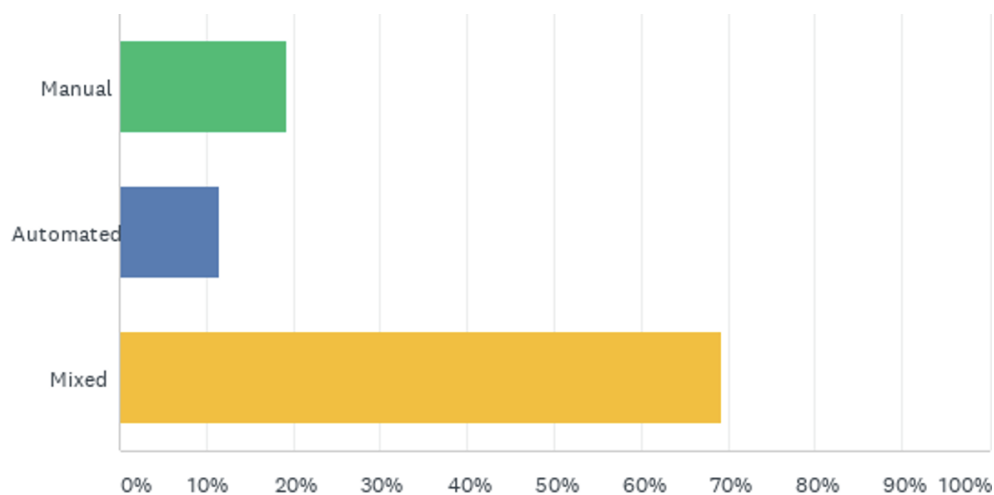
Interestingly, with automation growing in most organisations, the results tell us that many member teams are currently opting for a mix of both automated and manual testing to support their test strategy.

What types of automation do you or your team conduct?

How does your automation run?
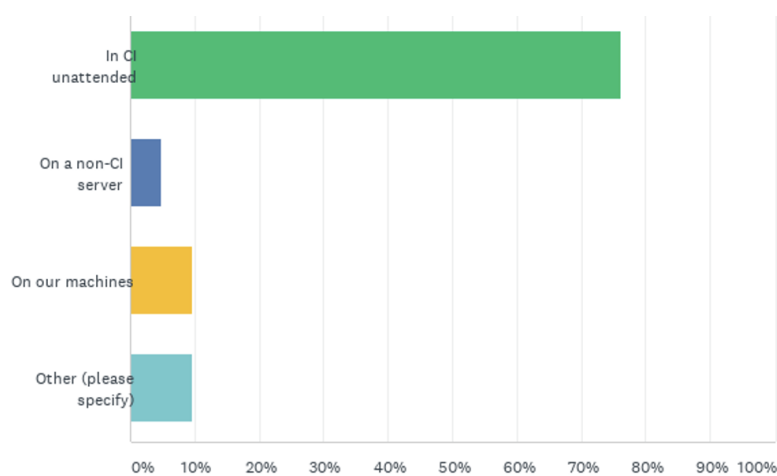
Do you use virtualisation technologies (e.g., Docker) to improve your testing processes?

Does your organisation do non-functional testing? Pick from the following which apply.

Does your organisation test AI software OR use AI software testing tools?

We asked this question due to the rise in teams testing and using AI software to test platforms. We have seen high attenda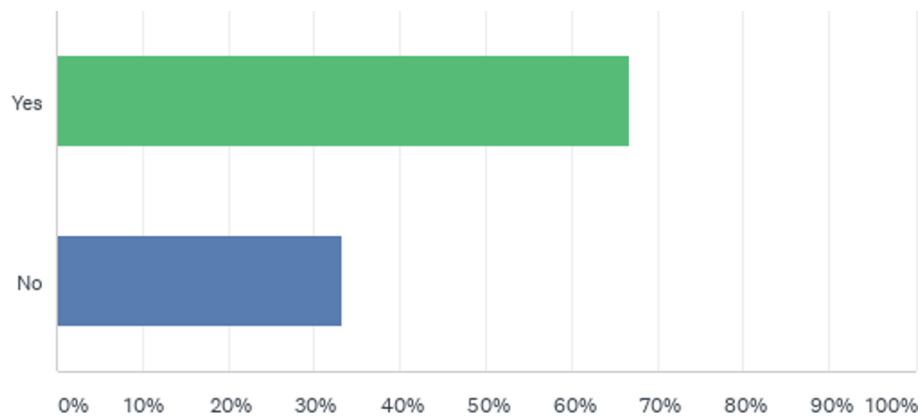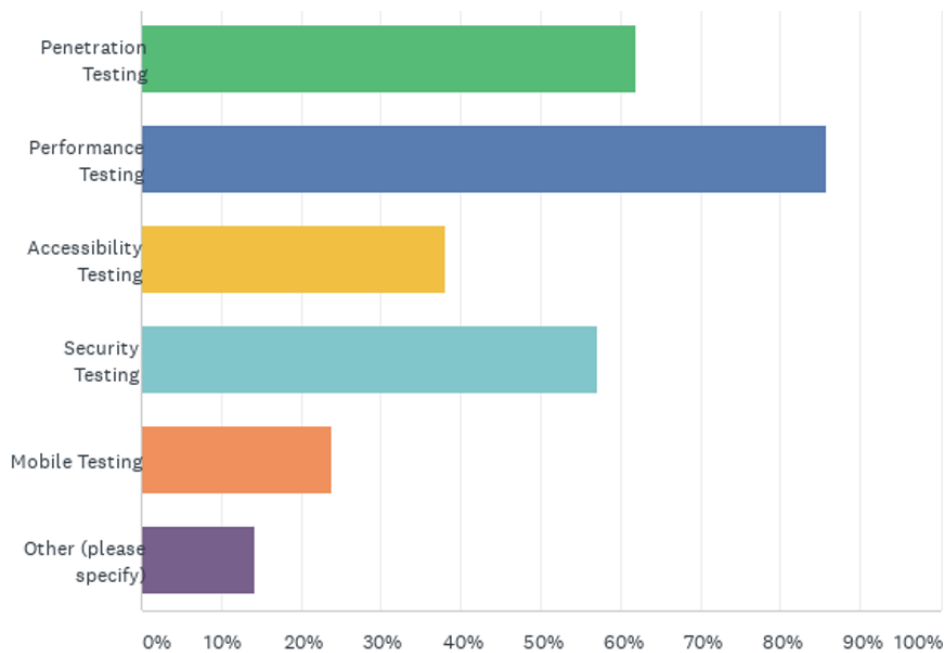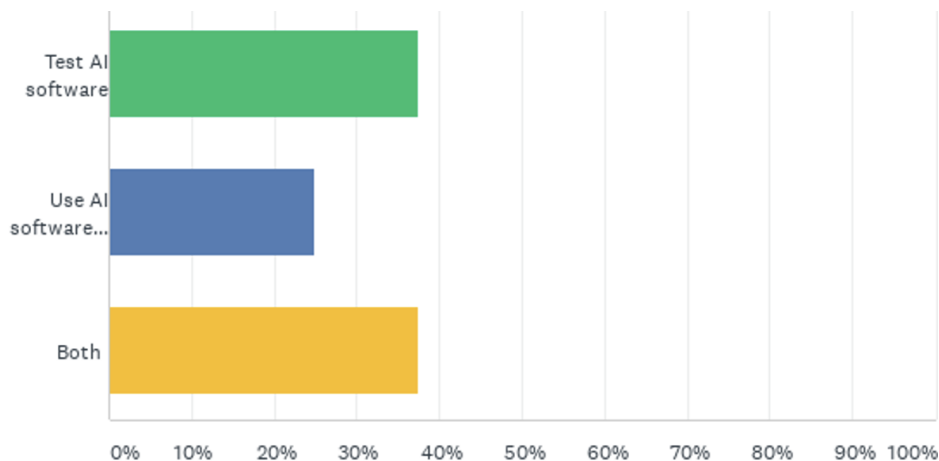nce at events we have run in the past year related to AI and testing and will be including more questions in future surveys as this area grows.

Summary

As mentioned in the opening, organizations and ways of testing are changing rapidly.
Partly in response to the pandemic but also because of changes to strategies, approaches and processes around testing and teams.

So as we move forward, there will be a bigger emphasis on whole team's testing as opposed to just individual QA teams. Quality is the responsibility of everyone.

So in order to embrace those who are also becoming part of our test teams or taking up testing tasks, we need to make sure that our approaches are inclusive and also still aligned with achieving quality. As mentioned, there will also be focus on automation and technical skills.

There will also be more attention on AI testing. This will include standards and process, the types of platforms that we are testing and tools that we choose to do this.

BCS Mentoring Tool – A revamp

The BCS Careers Mentoring Network is another benefit of BCS membership, allowing BCS members from all levels in their careers to mentor, be mentored, or both, allowing them to share their knowledge, as well as learning from others who have developed their careers, helping them to further progress. Another benefit of the BCS Career Mentoring Network is that members can locate potential mentors, as well as mentees, who would be a good match for an individual developing their career.
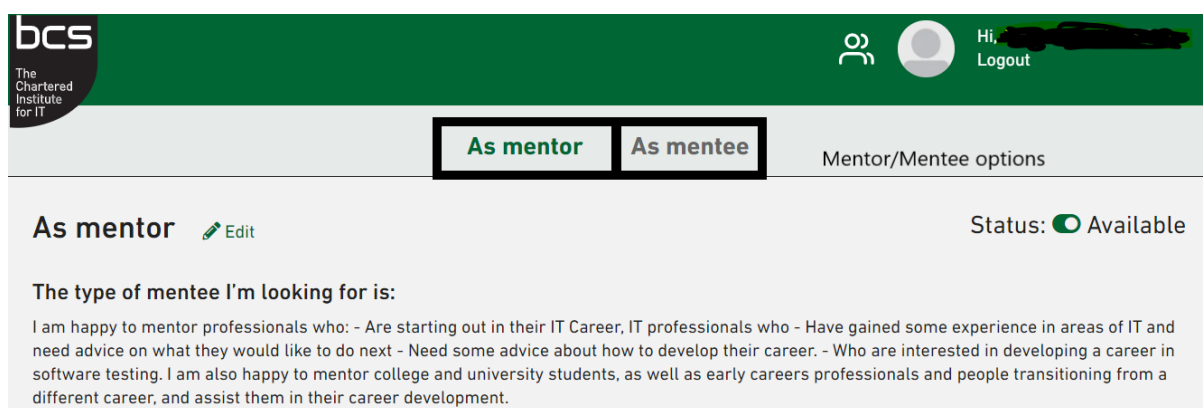
The BCS have been updating the BCS Mentoring Tool, for the BCS Careers Mentoring Network area of the BCS website, and this tool is available for BCS members that they can access once they log onto the BCS website. The BCS Mentoring Tool was updated, with the Phase 1 stage being completed recently, as well as a UX review, to make the tool more user friendly for BCS members looking for a mentor, or a mentee, by finding one based on specific criteria, such as industry/sector, level, and experience.

The BCS Mentoring Tool also links with a BCS member's Personal Development Plan (PDP), by focusing on the mentees goals that are created in the Personal Development Plan, as well as setting new goals (agreed by the mentor and mentee) for the mentee which they can aim for as part of their career development.

Firstly, if a BCS member has accessed the BCS Careers Mentoring Network area, they will be asked to update their profile. The profile has been updated to make it easier for a member to update their details, including their email, biography and note any experience they have to date, which may be interesting for a mentee and indeed a mentor.

Once the BCS member has updated their profile, there are 2 tab options:
- As mentor
- As mentee

Which they can select and enter further information about the type of mentor/ mentee relationship they are interested in. **Please Note** that a BCS member can be both a mentor, as well as a mentee (by setting their profile status to available once they have updated their mentor/ mentee details).

BCS members can update their profile as and when they see fit. Once they are satisfied with the details they have entered for their profile, they can then search for potential mentors or mentees by clicking on the 'Find People' tab. They can search for potential mentors/ mentees based on specific criteria including:

- The sectors where they have industry experience
- Whether they are looking for a mentor/mentee
- Position Type
- Keywords
- Primary Skills
- Engagement (how they would like to communicate with their mentor/ mentee)

After a mentor accepts a mentee, or a mentee accepts a BCS member to be their mentor, both parties will receive an email, informing them the mentoring partnership which was established (where previously both mentor and mentee would have needed to log onto the BCS website to see if their request had been accepted by the other person). The initial message about the mentoring relationship can also be personalised by either the mentor or the mentee.

There is a second phase of development for the BCS Mentoring Tool, which will be revealed soon, which the Editor of the Tester, Andy Shaw, also participated in and provided feedback for the new developments that were taking place for the tool. These developments are helping to make the BCS Mentoring tool more user friendly and simpler to use.

A BCS Mentoring Toolkit, useful for both mentors and mentees, to provide advice about mentoring relationships, can be found at the following link: https://mybcs.bcs.org/media/2008/mentor-toolkit.pdf

A BCS Mentoring Tool Video has been created by the BCS, which gives step by step instructions on setting up a profile and searching for a mentor/ mentee, which can be found at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_6_XiG5sM4

Mentoring and Development Stories: Sources of Inspiration

With the BCS updating the BCS Mentoring Tool, which is included as part of BCS membership, as well as the eagerly awaited next phase development of the BCS Mentoring Tool, SIGiST were interested in hearing stories about different experiences testing professionals experienced concerning mentoring stories, as well as coaching, and how they have benefitted from them, either as a mentor or a mentee.

SIGiST are planning a future webinar about mentoring, where different professionals give their experience on mentoring (whether being mentored, mentoring others, or both). This event will be confirmed in due course.

Other BCS branches, like the South Yorkshire BCS branch, are planning to organise another mentoring event in June 2021. This event will not though be specific to testing, however will including mentoring stories and experience within the Tech Industry.

On the next 4 pages of the tester, here are 2 inspiring stories about mentoring, coaching and personal development which has benefitted both mentors and mentees and show how powerful mentoring can be, and how great role models that others can aspire to be like can have a positive impact on a professional's personal development. They are:

- Mentoring Story – Sam White – Gear4music
- Teaching a Software Testing Bootcamp – Ady Stokes

Mentoring Story – Sam White – Gear4music

My career started in the Travel tech industry as an IT support person in back in 2005 on a measly 13k per year. The opportunity was good, I was exposed to databases, learned SQL, learned general IT troubleshooting skills as well as customer service skills. We had in house developers which wrote bespoke travel agency back office software, as well as other software, and I was involved with the entire life cycle of the back office product.

I didn't realise at the time, but all this was extremely valuable to my learning about software development.

The real joy of IT support is the customers; I met some great customers, and some pretty bad ones too - but this is what gave the role its variation and I really liked my work. From hearing a grateful voice for a simple password reset job, to dealing with very critical financial discrepancy jobs. The legacy back office software was riddled with bugs and in the early days, there was no form of QA whatsoever.

After some years (and some flapping with what I actually wanted to do as a career, at one point learning plastering as a trade for example!) I committed to IT support and after some more years, I was eventually running the support department within the same company, managing, at its peak, about 11 people as well as the back office system QA and deployment.

Fast forward to 2019 and I was ready for change. I had become very comfortable in my role within the business, and looking back now, maybe too comfortable. I knew all the corners of my work, I'd seen all the tickets to see, I'd could even predict which customers were going to raise a support ticket and when at certain times of the month it became that predicable.

One day, I worked through a lunch hour (as I did quite often anyway) but this time, I decided I was going to claim it as overtime. It was a semi-corporate environment where I worked and at times it could be quite toxic. Hideously, my 1 hour overtime request became an issue between myself and my manager. The whole environment had become hostile. I was only reluctantly granted the 1 hour overtime after a meeting with him and HR.

In the end I declined the overtime payment.

I had learned something much more valuable than the £18 or whatever my rate was; That my time was not worth anything to the business, or to my boss, and this is what ultimately gave me the spark to move on.

At the time I was very interested in two aspects of my role - BI development, data visualizing and QA testing, so I took to the job market focusing on these two areas.

In July 2019, after roughly 12 years in IT support, I landed a QA analyst role at Gear4music. It was one of those times where a lot changes came at once. I'd sold my car and decided my commute, come rain or shine, would be cycling in the city center office and I'd committed to learning a totally new role. I remember feeling extremely anxious about it all, but also very excited and ready for a new challenge.

My onboarding at Gear4music was fantastic, and they immediately showed me a few things; how aged my old workplaces tech stack was, how antiquated our communication was, and how on-boarding should be!

Even with my experience, I went from knowing everything about my job to what felt like nothing.

Since I joined, all the team members in Manchester office have given me some form of guidance, but specifically within QA, two key team members James Freas and Paul Farrell have both taught me a great deal, and very different angles of testing and QA. They continue to coach and mentor me to this day.

James Freas has taught me about how to put a QA cap on, what to consider and what not to consider, how to think QA. Usually asking leading questions, or guiding you to the crux of an issue through conversation, James is always on hand to assist or just put down his thoughts on any questions you have about the projects we are working on.

Paul Farrell, who when I joined Gear4music was a key speaker at Postcon, taught me about automation, Javascript, Postman and WebdriverIO - best practices, worst practices and using data to drive test areas. When Paul introduced me to Postman I would write tests, he would review them and feedback what was good and what was bad, how was it maintainable, how would other QA members understand my work.

Paul has upskilled me so much, I now do PR reviews for him before we merge changes into our master test suite.

I couldn't have made it in QA without the help of these two people and I owe them a great deal. I must also mention my other QA colleagues, Aimi and Craig, who have each given me different viewpoints and skills, such as test planning, that I can use to enhance my QA abilities. They're an extremely talented team, that is continuing to grow. We've had x3 new testers added to the team since I joined mid 2019.

Gear4music has given me a great deal, it's given me a lot of time for self improvement and a lot of opportunities within projects to further my own QA skillset. And I've been fortunate enough to give something back with my SQL knowledge, and upskilling the QA department with simple methods of finding or manipulating data.

19 months in to my QA career and things are bittersweet, I'm really enjoying my journey into the QA world, but many of my old colleagues have either been furloughed or laid off due to the pandemic. The travel industry I'm certain will bounce back, but if I'd have not made a career move back in 2019, I'm certain I would have burnt out or lost my job by now.

My key advice to anyone looking to get into QA or the testing world generally, would be to not be afraid of getting a junior position. A junior position means that there are more experienced QA members, looking to take someone in and upskill them and I've been amazed at what my QA colleagues have given to me - so be open to learning and learn from your colleagues, extract everything you can from them and absorb it!

Teaching a Software Testing Bootcamp

Three years ago I first met Crispin Read of The Coders Guild. Two years ago I started drafting the outline for a software testing apprenticeship to be run by the Coders Guild. Then the pandemic made us postpone work until late in 2020, Crispin proposed we use that foundation to create a Software Testing Bootcamp as part of the UK Governments retraining program for those affected by the pandemic and wanting to retrain. The focus was to ensure gender equality and more opportunities to diverse groups. The sessions would be remote and have no cost to those attending.

Taking the outline for the apprenticeship we used that foundation to create a bootcamp with a brilliant team of people, Beth Marshall, Suman Bala, Scott Kenyon and Bruch Hughes. All phenomenal testers in their own right. All people who have made fantastic contributions to the test community. I knew each would bring their own unique experience, style and knowledge to the table and it's been such a rich experience working alongside them all.

It was also important to me that the trainers reflected the diversity of the target audience. This allowed us to not only tell but show that people from a vast variety of backgrounds can have successful careers in tech. This allowed us to build a rapport with the learners early on, whether that was non-male, neurodiverse or from a non-technical or working class background. All the trainers being from West Yorkshire where the students were from also gave us an additional connection.

They each brought their own experiences and expertise to the mix adding value in many different ways. In short order we reviewed the schedule tailoring it to a bootcamp format. Divided the tasks of creating interactive slide decks and worked out a schedule of delivery for the two cohorts. One was based during the day and one in the evening to make them as accessible to people as possible.

All the trainers made themselves available to the students throughout the course, reviewing their course work, answering questions and offering as much help as possible. We had a very wide range of backgrounds on the course from those who had computer science degrees to people with no experience working in technology. This meant we had a very wide range of questions throughout. We also gave the students the opportunity to give us feedback on each session through a Jamboard. Each board asked; Any questions? What did you learn? What did you like? What could have been better? It was a format that allowed the students to be expressive and honest in an anonymous way.

This range of feedback allowed us to adjust as we went along and the main change from the comments was increasing the opportunities for the students to try the concepts we were teaching. Adding more interactive elements helped get quicker feedback and clarify any misunderstandings on the spot. For each session at the beginning we asked if there were any follow up questions from the last session. During the sessions we made it ok for the students to interrupt if they were lost so we could get them back on track straight away. We always checked in at the end of each section. My technique has always been to ask, 'does that make sense?' Each session ended with 'ask me anything' so the students could clarify any parts or coursework questions they had.

Each student had different needs from requiring more direction, extra coaching or pointing to additional resources to help them get more perspectives. It was a really interesting experience and I've learned so much along the way too. I've found that when teaching online I prefer

working with another trainer. Offering multiple perspectives and experiences I feel gives a richer view to the students.

Hearing some of the feedback from the students is just so uplifting and overall it has been a really rewarding experience. To hear people say they have learned so much or have grown in confidence makes me very proud. They are now their own community of support and with the support of the Coders Guild and the trainers the 2021 Graduates will no doubt go on to success.

Thank you to all the trainers, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the Coders Guild and of course the hard working graduates.

Author Bio
Ady Stokes
@A11y_Ady on Twitter. Passionate about accessibility, exploring and testing as part of the creation and development of software. I strongly believe in collaborative methods and using different thought techniques and people perspectives to look at things from many angles. Accessibility is about inclusion, not just disability.

In my career I've been a Director. Test, BI and Logistics Manager. Tester, Test Engineer, QA and Site Lead Tester and any other value adding role required at the time. I have also taught bootcamps and workshops, coached and mentored people throughout my career.

I have my own blog at The Big Test Theory.com sharing my thoughts, occasional poetry and my Periodic Table of Testing, a visual heuristic showing the breadth of the testing universe. I have been published in Testing Experience magazine and The Testing Planet. I have given presentations to Agile and Testing groups at meetups, special interest groups and conferences across the UK and Europe. I am very proud to be a founder member and organiser of the Ministry of Testing Leeds meetup.
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References:
Crispin Read
Bruce Hughes
Suman Bala
Beth Marshall
Scott Kenyon
Coders Guild - Digital Skills Training

Testing Stories

Testing Stories is an ebook of stories written by testers about testing. Thirty testers have come together to write the book, and the process of creating the book was managed by Melissa Fisher. There are stories about many aspects of testing. There is a story by Lisa Crispin, who has spoken at SIGiST events, about the importance of building relationships, a story by Ady Stokes, who has an article in this edition of The Tester, about life as a tester and a story by Mike Harris, who is Co-Programme Chair of SIGiST, about his role as Test Lead in an agile transformation.

All proceeds from the book go to the mental health charity Open Sourcing Mental Illness: https://osmihelp.org/

Please buy a copy of the e-book to read great testing stories and support a great charity: https://leanpub.com/testing_stories

"Testing Times – The Voice of the Tester"

Now the Tester has a monthly email, informing both BCS SIGiST members and about events, calls for participation and submission of articles for future issues of the Tester. This email is an addition to the Tester and serves as a purpose to inform BCS SIGiST members of events which may not have been previously mentioned in the Tester, as well as any relevant and interesting information that may be of interest.

This email is called 'Testing Times – The Voice of the Tester' and is usually sent towards the last week of the calendar month. This is one of the developments implemented by SIGiST to continue communications with the BCS SIGiST members, the Tester readership and the public in addition to the Tester.

Please Note that if you are a BCS SIGiST member, you will automatically receive this email.

If you have any questions, please contact the Editor, Andy Shaw, at: andrew.shaw@bcs.org

Thank You!

Thank you for reading Issue 68 of the Tester so far, and everyone at SIGiST hopes you have really enjoyed this issue. SIGiST would be interested in hearing about what you would like to see in future issues of the Tester, as well as any ideas for webinars, talks, events that you may be interested in.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic being a tricky time for many people, the opportunity for delivering webinars at a national, and sometimes international level, has been an opportunity that has been embraced. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the webinars, talks and workshops delivered by SIGiST, as well as those which SIGiST have collaborated with, have been very successful and SIGiST would like to thank all the speakers, the committee and everyone who has attended these events and supported them in some way. It has made all the difference!

As well as the testathon, events and conferences mentioned in this issue there are more events being planned, the details of which will be available soon so watch this space! If you would also like to speak at a future SIGiST event, please speak to one of the SIGiST committee members or email the Editor on andrew.shaw@bcs.org

Thanks again for your support and enjoy the rest of this issue.

Write an article

We are always on the lookout for new content, so if you have a testing story you would like to share, a book you have written and planning to publish, a test technique you would like to evangelise or testing research you would like to publish, then The Tester is the place to do it. Simply email the Editor on andrew.shaw@bcs.org

Students/ Apprentices

As part of the recently revived SIGiST community, we would be very interested in hearing from university students and apprentices who are interested in software testing, from manual testing, to automation and penetration testing. Do you have an interesting story about how you are developing a career in the Tech Industry and software testing, do you have an article you have written which you would like to see published, do you have a question about software testing which you would like the SIGiST community to answer, then the Tester would be a great place to have this published and get your work recognised.

BCS Student Chapters are also welcome to publicise events that have taken place, or will be taking place in the future. Early Careers professionals, including professionals involved with the Early Careers Initiative run by the BCS, are also encouraged to submit articles, and get involved with the SIGiST community. Maybe you have had a penetration testing workshop, a university hackathon which has taken place, or are planning one.

Publication in a professional magazine like the Tester is great for your LinkedIn profile and adds to your CV and will help you during your career and at university, or on your apprenticeship and beyond.

Please email your articles, questions and ideas to the following email: andrew.shaw@bcs.org

Early Career Advocate – A Golden Opportunity

A new group within the BCS, the Early Careers Professionals group, replacing the now defunct Young Professionals Group has been formed, with the aims to help and support professionals within the early stages, or years, of their career, with relevant events, networking opportunities, mentoring and guidance. An Early Careers professional can be someone who is usually one of the following:

- Is new to the Tech Industry and has started developing a career
- Is graduating from, or has already graduated from a college, or university
- Is undertaking an apprenticeship, or has graduated from an apprenticeship
- Is developing a career in the Tech Industry, from transitioning from a different industry, or a different role within the Tech Industry

A new mandatory role for Specialist Groups and branches within the BCS has been created, which is the Early Careers Advocate role. There have been some workshops and webinars about how the Early Careers Advocates can work with the different BCS branches and Specialist Groups, as well as the different BCS Student Chapters and the other areas of the BCS.

SIGiST is looking for an Early Careers Avocate, who is ideally within the early stages of their career, to help develop SIGiST and ensure those professionals within the early stages of their career have opportunities to develop themselves. SIGiST will also support the Early Careers Advocate in their role, and by working with them to provide opportunities, webinars, workshops and talks to help them and other early careers professionals in their career development.

If you are interested becoming the Early Careers Advocate for SIGiST, please contact the Chair, at the following email: adam@wearedragonfly.com

Start-ups / Entrepreneurs, we want to hear from you!

As part of the recently revived SIGiST community, we would be very interested in hearing from start-up companies and entrepreneurs about anything testing related. If you have an approach you would like to mention, if you would like to speak at a future SIGiST event around the UK (including via a webinar), or publish an article in a future edition of the Tester, then the Tester is the place to publish your article, as well as to mention your talk/ event.

Please contact either one of the committee members on the SIGiST committee, or email andrew.shaw@bcs.org if you are interested in speaking at a future event, or writing an article for the Tester.

Interview with Ileana Herrera

Since the new SIGiST committee were formed back in February 2020, there have been many inspiring testers who have delivered talks at different SIGiST webinars, some being based worldwide. As well as interviewing some amazing different testers, SIGiST are also interested in seeing how different testers around the world have developed their careers, how their stories can inspire others and their views on how the testing community as a whole can develop.

The Editor, Andy Shaw, interviewed Ileana Herrera, a tester from Salta, Argentina, who has developed a career as a tester, after initially developing a career in retail. Since developing her career as a tester, Ileana has attended the TestBash 99 event in the Netherlands in 2019, and using the knowledge she learnt to develop her workplace, as well as the testing community in Argentina. Ileana is the organiser for the Ministry of Testing meetups in Salta, Argentina, which their events can be found at the following link: https://www.meetup.com/Ministry-of-Testing-Salta/ and has also spoken at a previous SIGiST events, "What does testing mean today?" in October 2020.

Thanks to Ileana for a fantastic interview. Enjoy!

What has inspired/ encouraged you to develop a career as a tester?

I wasn't actively looking for a job in IT, let alone testing because I was ignorant of the fact that QA existed. One day, I got offered a position as a manual QA tester by a friend due to my curiosity and level of English which was the main criteria the company used at the moment for that team.

When I had 1.5 years into working on testing, my former boss sent me a link to "The Club" in the Ministry of Testing where I was virtually surrounded by people with whom I shared my fears and doubts about testing techniques. The environment was so inviting and encouraging that I ended up actively participating in the testing community and at the same time seeing results on ideas I applied at work.

How has your career as a tester developed so far?

I've been working in IT for the past 7 years, where I started as a tester without a technical background, but with solid training and continuous learning I succeeded to meet the role's requirement. Afterwards, I was promoted to QA Lead and 2 years ago I was offered the Scrum Master role in parallel.

As a tester, and now a SCRUM Master and QA Lead, what has been the highlight of your career so far?

Definitely maturing the QA team inside of the company. We were able to set up a lot of processes and techniques that improved our performance and expertise. Our hiring process got much better and we were able to establish a training program for new hires that helped them become highly productive and efficient much faster.

Has anyone inspired you so far in your career? And if so who?

Yes, there are many people that inspired me. To name a few; Gitte Klingaard (Agile Coach) talks about working in safe environments, Jenny Bramble (Software Tester) talks about gamification and Michael Ruderman (Collaborative Leadership Teacher) gives classes on Collaborative Leadership, among many others.

What advice would you give someone, who is considering a career as a tester, either from a different career, or a school/college leaver?

Dedicate time to learning about the industry and get involved in a community that speaks to you. Continuous learning is a great habit to have to become a good tester with or without a technical background. This career is very dynamic and inclusive, there will always be a good sport for you to thrive.

How do you see yourself developing yourself even further? And what plans do you have for further developing yourself?

My plan for this year is to develop my public speaking. Therefore I want to share my knowledge in Testing conferences, I'd like to talk about building testing teams with people with no technical background. So, stay tuned.

You have attended international testing conferences, for example the TestBash Netherlands 2019 conference, which conferences have you enjoyed the most, and which have made the biggest impact on your career to date?

I only attended 2 on site conferences, TestBash Netherlands 2019 and Argentesting 2019. TestBash was definitely the one that had the most impact on my career. There I found out how the dynamics of the testing community worked and it encouraged me to keep on learning. Then in 2020 most conferences were available online, such as TestBashes, Agile Testing Days, ITMatters.

You are an organiser for the Salta Ministry of Testing Meetups in Argentina, how big is the testing community in Salta? And do you have plans to further develop the testing community there?

We have a bit over 30 members in the community in Salta. In order to make it grow we'll have some online meetups in June hopefully and also #TestersVirtualCoffe is coming back this year together with the Ministry of Testing Sfax.

What ideas do you feel, the testing community could undertake to develop diversity and inclusion in testing?

From my point of view, the testing community is getting more diverse and inclusive as time passes. Communities are including talks around these 2 subjects mixed with technical talks. So, please keep doing this.

Outside of software testing are there any interests you have? And do you have any goals you are pursuing?

Other than being a QA Lead, I have been working as a Scrum Master, a position I greatly enjoy and plan on exploring further in the future. Outside of work, I have been taking a Collaborative Leadership class which has been incredibly helpful for both my work and personal life, I am preparing that class to teach it myself in English and Spanish.

Ileana Herrera is a QA Team Leader and SCRUM Master at JBKnowledge in Salta, Argentina and is the organiser of the Ministry of Testing meetups in Salta, Argentina. Ileana has developed a training process where she works to develop new testers joining the organisation and is an exemplary tester, using what she has learnt to develop herself and her team, as well as the testing community as well. A proactive self-starter, Ileana is a great role model and her career so far is an inspiration for others.

Did you get your Personal Development Plan email with suggested potential CPD activities?

The BCS Personal Development Plan (PDP) uptake is going well, with thousands of registered users already actively recording their CPD Development Goals, Activities and preferences. It's not just about recording details though, as there is a Resources section that shows live feeds of potential CPD activities, and a tailored email is sent every 2 months with details of the latest videos, articles, blogs, books and research in your specified field of interest. If you haven't registered yet, you can see the content from the latest PDP bulletin for topics relating to solution development and implementation by going to the CPD Portal at: https://pdp.bcs.org/.

The BCS Personal Development Plan is free to use; BCS members can use their Member Secure Area login and password to access it at https://pdp.bcs.org/, and non-members can use most of the facilities (using the same link) and registering to create their own user name and password. You can use it on a PC / laptop or compatible tablet PC or smartphone.