

# An Expert, Tester or both?

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# Look out there's a Kokenut about!

- It's Finnish for Expert 😊



- Individuals
- Centres of excellence
- Consultancies and Contractors
- IT professionals
- Non IT professionals



# What is an expert?

- 'Ex' – is a has been or in maths 'x' is an unknown;
- a 'spurt' is a drip under pressure
- Therefore:



# Expert what?

Person:

- “a person who is very knowledgeable about or skilful in a particular area”

System:

- “a piece of software which uses databases of expert knowledge to offer advice or make decisions in such areas as medical diagnosis”



# So.....

- An expert system can define exactly the decision path followed to reach a decision
- A person can't
- So is the availability of an audit trail of decisions and data proof of expertise?
- Question – does that make a completed test procedure an expert document?



# What is a Tester?

- Test Analyst, Senior TA
- Test Lead
- Test Manager
- Automation/tools
- Security or Performance guru
- Acceptance/Business owner
- Usability
- Classification Trees
- Anybody/Everybody
- Specialist or Generic
- Best Practice – whatever that is
  
- One, some or all of these?



# Expert? In whose opinion? #1

- The wider industry, your customers, your peers
- Some other 'experts'
- Just because you know more than me in one area or field. We are therefore by definition all experts
- Are you an expert just because you have put your opinion in a book or on some social media outlet?
- Is an expert therefore a narcissist? A self publicist convincing others you are an expert
- If nothing is published then we'd never learn anything.



# Expert? In Whose Opinion? #2

- Is it a doctrine or a religion, if you get enough people to believe you then you become the single source of truth and therefore an expert?
- Is expertise a combination of opinions – this is my opinion of an expert others will have theirs, maybe expertise is therefore nothing more than a consensus [which is said to water down opinions] of like minded people?
- Evolving industry – is anyone therefore an expert, e.g. Mobile Apps – it is too new to have a ‘Best Practice’



# Advertise or Die

- If you are unknown in your field can you be an expert? If no one knows you know it you can be an expert but what is the point?
- You have not published anything or spoken anywhere – what is the point of that? Expertise is therefore a sharing exercise
- If you publish [written or spoken] nothing – no one knows you exist
- Does social media have any value, nothing that is said is verified or validated. How dangerous is that?
- If nothing is validated it cannot have credibility – look at sites that have non validated ISTQB exam questions on them - dangerous



# Expert in what?

- Industry wide [i.e. all testing]
- A methodology/process
- An application
- A business sector
- A technique



# The Dangers of expertise

- In an uneducated environment *any* expertise can be confused with the *relevant* expertise
- If you think you are an expert and therefore stop learning you will very quickly become an ex expert
- When you look round the room are you the expert? If so now is the time to



# Reputation

- If you are considered 'the' expert how do you improve – you must be a mentor and thinker and a leader. How then can you be examined when you are the leader in the field – do you need to be?
- Is expert certification just self congratulatory?
- Do you need to be certified if you are considered an expert because of a good reputation?
- Of course you can always have a bad reputation.



# Opinion

- Do you consider yourself an expert?
- Do others consider you an expert?
- Is your expertise limited by others ability to understand or appreciate it?
- Do you value the opinion of an expert? They may be wrong 'this time' or you may not agree but they are still an expert.



# Knowledge and sharing

- You may be good at something but you don't know why – if you can't teach it then is that a problem.
- Is it your job or part of it
- Business knowledge or application knowledge
- Answer a question
- Solve a problem



# Theory vs. Practice

- Can a non practitioner be an expert?
- Are you are a thought leader rather than a practitioner? You need to invent rather than follow?
- I've invented a new term.
- I've replaced 'Good Enough' with.....
- BEWECODOGITHELIOUS known as BEWE Testing
- Is thought and improvement only based on experience – it may be a limiting factor?
- If you are or are not certified does this limit your expertise?



# Application vs. Theory

- Can be taught it but can't apply it.
- If you don't know the game then knowing the rules may not help if you are the referee
- Is repetition a good thing – I guess re-inventing the wheel is not entirely useless if the wheel is better this time around
- Therefore the key is adaptability – we know testing is context driven but are testers capable of that as well?



# Professional

- Some say that testing is a craft. Don't agree
- It is a fledgling profession, as yet we cannot stop people testing if they are no good or break our code of ethics
- Our Baseline is not static
- There is no one single authority
- But that shouldn't stop us trying



# Levels of expertise

- Relevance to the person who is asking or the role you carry out. Foundation is 'expert enough' in some cases.
- Does expertise come with an upper and lower boundary - Is there a scale of expertise?
- Reaching the limit of known knowledge on a subject – even if that is limited
- Can you apply your expertise and are you adaptable and context driven?



# Success or failure

- Do it that way and you are right – if the patient dies not so good. Trial and error?
- Cancer researchers are experts but ultimately they are still failing
- Delivering poor builds for 2 ½ years, that means they are expert at it but it's not a good thing.



# Experience is the key – right?

- 10,000 hours [6 work years] then you are an expert
- I've played golf for that long but I still play off 18
- Even if I did 10,000 hours as a brain surgeon I'd still be useless – I'd be sick or pass out every time
- I've done lots of other things for 10,000 hours and I'm not an expert at those either
- Are you an expert if no one asks your opinion?



# Experience is nothing without...

- An Objective
  - Guidance and mentoring
  - Training
  - Aptitude/talent
  - Physical attributes
  - Sharing
- 
- I can't teach 'tal'
  - I can't teach tenacity, or an eye for detail



# Expertise is therefore nothing without

- Experience
- Peer opinion
- Qualifications
- Communication/Sharing/Mentoring
- Continuous learning
- Reputation
- Scope/Relevance/Contextual
- Proof/Auditability



# A tester is nothing without

- Analysis/Perception
- Estimation/Planning/Time Management
- Communication
- Personality and a conscience
- Tenacity
- Sense of Humour
- The drive and support to do a great job, get better and keep relevant.



Thanks for Listening and time for



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