

Test Cases...is it quantity or quality?

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The Tester's weakest link



John

been with the company for 10 years and a **tester for 5 years**



Carol

been with the company for 1 month and is **new to testing**



Pam

been with the company for 3 years and a **tester for 2 years**



Rick

been with the company as a **senior tester for 25 years**

John



30

\$20000

\$17500

\$10000

\$5000

\$2500

\$1000

\$500

\$0

BANK

your definition of a test case is:
“detailed inputs and outputs with pre and post conditions”

Question:

In the last hour of testing, how many test cases have you run?

Carol

\$20000

\$17500

\$10000

\$5000

\$2500

\$1000

\$500

\$0

BANK

2

your definition of a test case is:

“a set of input values, execution pre-conditions, expected results and execution post-conditions, developed to cover certain test conditions”

Question:

In the last hour of testing, how many test cases have you run?

BANK

Incorrect

Time's Up!

Rick

\$20000

\$17500

\$10000

\$5000

\$2500

\$1000

\$500

\$0

BANK

300

your definition of a test case is: *“one particular instance or variation of a test or test idea”*

Question:

In the last hour of testing, how many test cases have you run?

BANK

Incorrect

Time's Up!

Pam

\$20000

\$17500

\$10000

\$5000



zero



your definition of a test case is: *“a computer executable script with a sequence of discrete steps”*

Question:

In the last hour of testing, how many test cases have you run?

\$2500

\$1000

\$500

\$0

BANK

Game Over

BANK

Incorrect

Time's Up!

GOODBYE!



Counting test cases is meaningless...

...if we don't know the background

Without context

- 30 test cases
- 2 test cases
- 300 test cases
- 0 test cases



zero is the only number with meaning

With context

- 30 test cases = 30 different updates accepted
- 2 test cases = 2 on-line orders processed and dispatched
- 300 test cases = 300 button clicks
- 0 test cases = install had not completed within the hour

The problem with counting test cases...

Public Course Booking Form - Please Complete All Fields
Please read our booking conditions

Public course dates

Course

Date

Contact Information for the person making the booking

Title

First Name

Last Name

Email

Telephone

Invoice Details

Company Name

Company Address

Purchase Order needed for invoice?

Yes No

Attendees

Continue

What is a test case in this example?



The analogy of a “case” is a good one...



We focus too much on quantity!

Managers seem more interested in counting and monitoring the **QUANTITY** of test cases to measure progress (and the larger the number the better!), without understanding the **QUALITY** of the test cases:

- what are they doing?
- do they add value?
- what has been covered?



... so before getting excited about the sheer number of test cases being executed (quantity).....we must look at what the test cases are doing (quality)

So how can we measure the quality of the test cases?

GAINING CONFIDENCE

- in what has been tested
- the depth of testing
- in how much has been tested



FINDING AND REMOVING DEFECTS

- effectively (number and severity)
- efficiently (quickly)
- reducing product risks



providing timely information on the quality of the software – so that management can make informed decisions



RISK

Be careful of the **QUANTITY** of cases...without **QUALITY!**

