

Software quality assurance days

26 International Conference on
Software Quality Assurance
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Recognizing and understanding Human Behaviour helps QA to do a better job

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Human Behaviour

- Systems are conceived, designed, implemented, maintained, used, and tolerated (or not) by people
- People react quite predictably
- However, often differently from what we intuitively think
- Often, we
 - ignore human behaviour,
 - incorrectly assume behaviour,
 - or decide how people should behave (ha ha)
- To be successful, we must study and adapt to real behaviour rather than assumed behaviour
- *Even if we don't agree with that behaviour*

Hey, they shouldn't behave like that ! Well if they do, they do. They're only human.



Movie: Six Days, Seven Nights



Discipline

- Control of wrong inclinations
- Even if we know how it should be done ...
(if nobody is watching ...)
- Discipline is very difficult
- Romans 7:19
 - The good that I want to do, I do not ...



Things we can do:

- Helping each other (watching over the shoulder)
- Rapid success (do it 3 weeks for me...)
- Making mistakes (provides short window of opportunity)

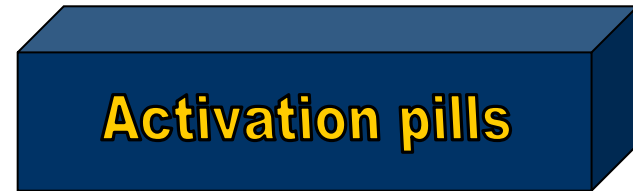


Intuition

- Makes us react on every situation
- Intuition is fed by experience (before birth it's *instinct*)
- It is free, we always carry it with us
- We cannot even turn it off
- Sometimes intuition shows us the wrong direction
- *Sleeping on it* may help us to make better decisions
- Coaching is about redirecting intuition



Is intuition wrong, or is the design wrong ?





Mantra

The user is always right ...
even if he's not



Case at demo: Parking system

- Please fill in your credit card number ...
- 20% of the software is there to make the computer do what it should do
- 80% of the software is there to make the computer not do what it should not do



Communication

- Traffic accident: witnesses tell *their* truth
- Same words, different concepts
- Human brains contain rather fuzzy concepts
- Try to explain to a colleague
- Writing it down is explaining it to paper
- If it's written it can be discussed and changed
- Vocal communication evaporates immediately
- E-mail communication evaporates in a few days



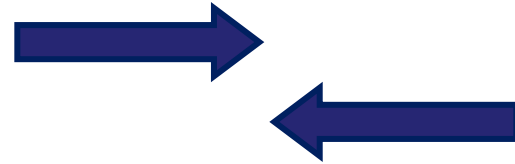


Communication

- Talking as near as possible past each other



To each other



Past each other

- Don't *assume* we understand: *check* !



Case: Agreement ?



- **Mantra: “We’d better assume our assumptions are wrong”**
 - Deliver in two weeks ?
 - Use a date !



Our team (developers, testers, ...)



Perception



- Quick, acute, and intuitive cognition (www.M-W.com)
- Intuitive understanding and insight (www.oxforddictionaries.com)
- What people say and what they do is not always the same
- The head knows, but the heart decides
- Hidden emotions are often the drivers of behaviour
- “Customers who said they wanted lots of different ice cream flavours from which to choose, still tended to buy those that were fundamentally vanilla”
- Trying to find out what the real value to the customer is, can show many paradoxes
- Don’t believe what (you think) they say: check!



It can't be done, *they* won't allow it

- Case: Did you ever observe users of your software ?
- They're in another country
- Yes, did you ever go there ?
- The boss won't allow us to travel that far
- Did you ask ?
- Don't assume ... Check !
- Testers: Did you ever observe users of the software ?
 - Remember: The user is always right, even if he's not !



Excuses, excuses, excuses ...



- We have been thoroughly trained to make excuses
- We always downplay our failures
- It's always 'them' – How about 'us' ?
- At a Fatal Day, any excuse is in vain: *we failed*
- Even if we “really couldn't do anything about it”
- Every day we see a problem earlier, we have a day more to do something about it
- Failure is a very hard word. That's why we are using it !
- No pain, no gain
- We never say: “*You failed*” - Always use: “*We failed*”
 - Because we didn't help the person not to fail



The aim of Testing



- Being done as soon as the development is done
- Well, almost
- Excuses, excuses, excuses
 - The developers are always late
(Developers should live up to their promises)
 - The developers don't take us seriously
(Developers should ask testers for help)
 - The developers don't inject enough defects
(Now testing becomes a real challenge)
 - We are the bearers of bad news
(find out what you're *really* supposed to do)
- Helping development to be successful



Mistakes, unnecessary things

- What was the last time you made a mistake ?
- What was the last time you did something unnecessary ?

- Did you talk with others about it ?
- Did you learn from it ?
- What did you do about it ?

- Case:
 - Learning 10-fold from mistakes



Ignore the first reaction

- If you show something is wrong
- Even if the person agrees, first you'll get:

“Yes, but ... bla bla” or,
“That’s because ... bla bla”

- We have been trained from childhood to make excuses
- Ignore the bla bla
- Let the excuse come out and wait for the next reaction



Any typical behaviour here in Minsk ?



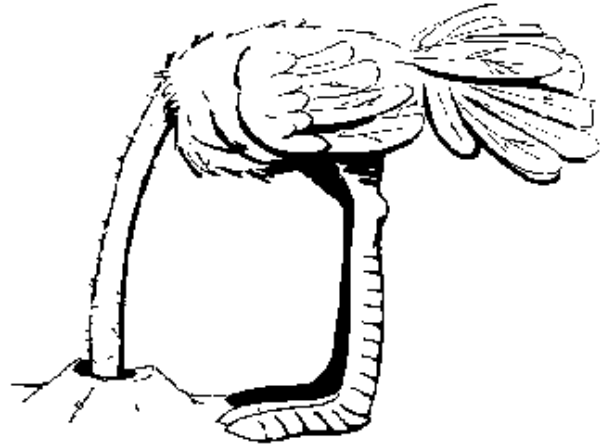
Case: Working with a development team in Minsk

- Behaviour of the project team
- How we expected the project team to behave

Conclusion

- We've seen several elements of human behaviour
- ~~Recognizing and understanding our behaviour is the start of doing something about it~~
- Recognizing and understanding our behaviour is the start of doing something *with* it

- QA to do a better job, helping others to be perfect
- QA is about Prevention !



Our problems are not the real problem,
the real problem is that we don't do something about it

Every day we see a problem earlier,
we have a day more to do something about it

Assumptions, assumptions ...
better assume that some of our assumptions are wrong

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People oppose change !



- Right ?
- People are not against change
- People (sub-consciously) don't like uncertainty
- Any project changes something and thus introduces uncertainty
- People can cope with uncertainty for a short time



We failed because of politics

- **Good politics:**
 - People decide differently based on different beliefs
- **Bad politics: hidden agenda's**
 - Say this, mean that - often even unintentionally
 - Politics thrive by vagueness
 - Facts can make bad politics loose ground
- If we accepted the responsibility, failure because of “politics” is just an excuse
- What did we really do about it ?

