

Testing Matters . . . Ingenuity



■ system testing services

Ingenuity

- Quality and Risk Managed Approach
- Integrity
- Pertinent Solutions
- Automated Solutions
- Independence
- Proven track record

Ingenuity System Testing Services Ltd

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“Fresh” Bananas? ~ A Question of Balance

In the last issue, the subject of testing was placed within its true context of being merely a way in which an appropriate measure could be brought to bear within some greater expectation.

Welcome to my market stall, I have branched out into selling bananas! I have simply tons of them to sell. The nice chappie at the wholesale market sold me a truck-load, all neatly boxed, it says “Best Fresh Bananas” on the box. The unboxed sample looked and tasted fine, the price was so good and he even let me have an old weighing scales with a nice big pounds and ounces dial.

So, Monday morning and seventy boxes of “Fresh Bananas”, sell ten a day, if they are fresh they will last a week, I guess. I am going to make some nice extra cash!

It’s Wednesday morning, the man from Trading Standards says I am

in deep trouble. The bananas I have sold have caused complaints through being sold under ripe and not in kilos.



I have forty boxes left and he insists on checking every single box, with me as a witness. It will take hours and he is already asking why I did not check them and the clearly printed sell-by dates. “Well you don’t look in every box do you?”, I told him.

It is now Wednesday afternoon and I could be selling ripe bananas, as we have located them in the first twenty of the boxes. The remaining twenty are rotten

and, according to the man from Trading Standards, “Constitute a health risk”.

I cannot sell them if I wanted to because I and my Imperial scales have been impounded.

Now, I have to find the money to pay a fine, have lost valuable

“Well you don’t look in every box do you?”

income from my stall and have to pay a specialist to clear up the mess of my rotting bananas.

For all of the time and money I have spent clearing up it would have been so easy to have checked my facts and had the correct weighing scales, learned about sell-by dates and looked in one of each batch of dated boxes. [continued on back page . . .]

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Ingenuity Gains Investor In People Award

When the tester, yours truly, believes that a certain kind of organisation is paramount, to be certain that ambitions and reputation can be sustained, that organisation has to have its foundations checked. Investor in People, as a process, was seen as a way that Ingenuity could be independently reviewed.

Every aspect of the ethos and practice of the Company and its attitude to staff welfare, training,

contracts and appraisals were placed under the magnifying glass. It is an opportunity for the staff to have their say and thereby judge “the management”.

It will not come as any surprise to those who know Ingenuity well, that the assessors found Ingenuity staff to have a wonderfully selfless attitude to supporting one another in the collective goal, to provide the best possible service.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Soon, we will collect our award, which is extremely gratifying for everyone at Ingenuity.

For me? Well, I have a few areas to show sustained improvement but this is small against the pride I have for our testers as professionals, for which I have been given the external “thumbs up”!! Simon.

Testing Matters . . .

Accelerated Pre-Release Testing Scheme

Following our research into the many pre-release testing opportunities which exist, Ingenuity have been able to gain a close understanding of the dynamics preventing Insurers [i.e. non-Ingenuity clients] making the most of these valuable offerings from a number of Software Houses.

By creating a formative testing framework, Ingenuity have created a method which can assist Insurers to execute tests on any or all of :

Misys Sirius
CDL SSP

The framework allows an Insurer to specify their expected outcomes to a set of pre-defined test conditions, which are set out in plain English.

“test conditions, which are set out in plain English.”

Ingenuity will marshal the cases into test files and ensure that they are executed on the chosen systems and reported on in a timely manner.

Technically, the emphasis is on establishing some exercise of actual tests and not assorted quotes, rather than providing a tool.

Many Software Houses already offer testing tools which they make available to Insurers. They have all been proven as being

“Many Software Houses already offer testing tools”

ideal for the job. What they need is the test.



Accelerated Pre-Release Testing Scheme ~ Why Not Join In ?

There are any number of other so called testing tools available but what they lack is the ability to assist in the devising of true “tests”.

Ingenuity are offering the ability to bridge that gap.

How much will it cost? Simple, there is no fee for entry to the scheme, just some time to collect the expected outcomes to a series of pre-defined test conditions.

“there is no fee for entry to the scheme”

The Software Houses all have their own models, regarding the availability of their testing tools and these will have to be honoured.

However, they are as keen as Ingenuity to find ways of making the availability of the tools mirrored by effective use.

To learn more, please contact Simon Mills at Ingenuity, who will be pleased to provide the full details of the scheme.

“just some time to collect the expected outcomes to a series of pre-defined test conditions.”

Software Is Different ~ Food for thought

The issues of software quality are all about complexity and its management. Software is complicated. Software developers don't make it so; the users' legitimate demands and expectations do.

Which is more complex:
A word processor or a supertanker?
A database management system or a 100-floor building?

We can measure the complexity of an engineered product by one

of two reasonable ways: total engineering labour content or total mass of documentation produced.

“Software developers don't make it so; the users' legitimate demands and expectations do.”

The supertanker probably repre-

sents less than 10 work years of labour content. The word processor is about 200 work years. A 100-floor building is about 30 work years. The database package is also about 200 work years. Can we really apply engineering thinking to software development?

Selected excerpt from “Software Is Different”, with special thanks to B². The food for thought excerpts will develop similar themes in future editions . . .

Rational Ingenuity ~ A Great Cocktail

In previous newsletters, the notion of “testing tools” and how, like any tool, they are only as good as the craftsmen who use them has been presented.

Do Ingenuity have favourite test tools? Well, yes, of course we do but we have always remained strenuously independent of being sponsored in any way.

Our choices are always based upon reliability, cost effectiveness and technical support.

We work in a massively difficult field, in terms of seeking “stability”. Some of the processes we test use cocktails of technology which have not been

encountered by the makers of test tools.

A recent testing task of ours, requiring the emulation of 1000 users, had a number of technicians at IBM Rational scratching their heads for a good few days, before we found a way of “talking reliably” with a user interface.

“Mutual support is about as strong as it gets.”

All very convoluted but assisted by our being “partners” with IBM

Rational. Through partnership we have rapid access to both IBM Rational technicians and a whole host of testing specialists such as ourselves.

Hardly a month goes by without partners picking each other’s brains, via introductions brought about by Mr. John Watkins and his people at IBM Rational.

The sceptical would say it is just a sales mechanism. Then again, don’t we prefer to buy tools which have good successful support infrastructures?

Mutual support is about as strong as it gets.



Careful ~ “Head of Books” can prove $1 = 2 \dots$

Ingenuity are always keen to state that they do not employ developers (i.e. programmers), as we are “testers”. This is not strictly true.

“Head of Books”, Ann Mills, a Mathematician and Programmer by training, is a Director and the Company Secretary. She has worked in main-stream corporate IT as well as in the fields of crop protection and

classical artistes’ management.

Ann’s role includes orchestrating the many and ever-changing aspects of Personnel, Payroll, Health and Safety together with all aspects of accounting and management accounts. It is a busy and extremely varied role but genuinely assisted by her in-depth understanding of the work undertaken by the rest of us.

When we are in need of help

with difficult sums, she always assists and it is not unusual to find her hands at the pumps during busy spells.

When she is not clearing up behind her husband and his colleagues, she enjoys simple pleasures of reading, narrow boating, walking the dog and tending to her legendary cottage garden. Oh and, yes . . . she can prove $1 = 2 \dots$

Turned Out Nice Again

For those able to come to the Ingenuity Fun Day, you will already know that the sun shone all day and we stayed dry!

As we had hoped, the fun and the games of the day proved very popular.

The concept of the competitive village fete was a great success and we are all now Olympic standard coconut shy assailants!

There being a scoring element brought out the best of the fun

together with some of the most devious collusion imaginable.

A single family managed “Best Man, Best Woman, Best Boy and Best Girl scores and their associated prizes (didn’t they Andy?).

The duck racing in the mill stream proved scarily exciting.

A crowd of people behaving like they were at Aintree with their month’s wages on the back of a horse but actually coaxing five

plastic ducks in a mill race either gives great cause for concern over the stability of our clients (and staff) or a satisfying sense that we are all still capable of having some good plain simple fun!

Thanks to everyone who made it a great day. Next race sometime 2006 !

www.ingenuitytest.co.uk/funday





Ingenuity System Testing Services Ltd

St Mary's Mill
Chalford
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL6 8NX

Tel: +44 (0) 1453 885545
Fax: +44 (0) 1453 885655
Email: response@ingenuitytest.co.uk
www.ingenuitytest.co.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The Testing Practice . . .

Ingenuity is the working name of a somewhat unique group of people brought together by Simon Mills over a period of some 10 years and based on more than 20 years of gathered experiences in the field of "System Testing".

Our specialism is in bringing a unique blend of Pure System Testing and Quality Management techniques, coupled with an appreciation of the Business Risk Management imperatives to bring pertinent and focused testing and quality management solutions to our clients.

In particular, we have developed the techniques to manage automated testing within exacting and hectic delivery schedules.

We underpin this with a track record of timely delivery, integrity and professionalism, where we have a highly developed ethos of "working as partners" as a way of life and not as a mask to disguise "outsourced".

Within the arena of Electronically Traded Insurance, Ingenuity have won the respect of Developers and Insurance Company Clients and earned the reputation as the place to go for a job well done.

A Question of Balance ?~ and exposure !

[Continued from page 1]
Should I have checked my bananas?

Before we set out to test, though, we have to make certain that the entire excursion is going to be worthwhile. Within Insurance Systems, there are millions of permutations of possible input, to which a variety of rules would expect to be robustly addressed within the software. What happens if the rules fail to be observed? Will someone die? Will someone go to prison? Will there be a hefty sanction of some sort related to non-compliance?

An Insurance Company is likely to have several products for each of several Classes of Business portrayed on a number of systems. These systems are likely to be capable of presenting millions of potential permutations of proposer type and are re-created, often with changes to product rules, with

great frequency.

So, what is the worst thing that can happen? No one will die if the software fails and so it is arguable with good reason that every permutation does not have to be tested. A very different story if the software is controlling the fly by wire activity on the aeroplane jetting you off to the hard earned summer break in Hawaii! Then, if there are 11 million permutations, they WILL all be tested.

Enter Risk Measurement, the starting point. The prudent Business Manager will need to know that the risks associated with conducting business via third party software systems are being mitigated. What does this mean? Simply stated, proposers are declined when they should be and quoted when they should be, for the correct rates and terms and compliant with regulations where called for.

"Exposure" has a part to play as well ~ why test for an infrequent event at the expense of

"effort expended
has to be focused"

an every day issue? With finite resources the effort expended has to be focused from the start.

The method by which the necessary focus is gained has to address "risk". At the time of writing, Ingenuity is preparing to make many tests related to the elevated risk of non-compliance. Why? Because our focus now has to include this very necessary requirement. This teaches us that our method of risk assessment has to take into account "changing times" and requires a cyclical review process. . .



Check Your Exposure !