

# 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

2004 | Q4

## I Asked For Lobster Bisque! ~ I'm sure I did?

What is this? It tastes like a pineapple milkshake and I definitely described my starter as Lobster Bisque.

Okay, I am slightly colour-blind and I did ask for a pinky-yellow pointy thing which you would not wish to meet on a beach, with the rough case missing and the inside "bits" run through a liquidiser, added to milk and whisked up until smooth and creamy, served cold, of course.

How did the chef make such a mistake? How did my simple instructions become so badly mutilated? I knew *exactly* what I wanted and described it to the best of my ability.

Did I ask for Lobster Bisque or a Pineapple Milkshake? Neither! I described in less than clear language what I wanted and was "misinterpreted".

At least a chef, if asked to

produce a given dish, is trained and practised at creating it. The chef will know the rules of cooking, together with the



necessary ingredients of a given dish and be able to produce this. There may be subtle differences between what you expect and what you get, as the chef will add his own artistic flourish.

Now look at the software you want to function as part of your business operation. You know all there is to know about Insurance Underwriting, the products being dealt with, the way your company does business, etc.

The cocktail of questions and

answers, validation decisions and calculations which are so easy to comprehend, in both theory and practice, now have to be turned into an automated process reflecting how you want "your product" to behave when portrayed on a broker facing quotation system or that of a call centre.

*"I knew exactly what I wanted"*

Meet your "chef": he is fully aware of the rules of programming, the capabilities of the platform and language, rather like the chef knowing the basics of food preparation.

This is where they differ. Ask the chef for a Lobster Bisque and that is what you will get. Ask a programmer for a Motor Insurance Product . . .

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## Annual Review 2004

Here we are at the closing stages of 2004 and the 4th Newsletter of the year. A good time to review some of the accomplishments of 2004.

Ingenuity, whilst being organised as a "Testing Practice", as opposed to being a pure "outsourcing company", has had a busy year with its staple diet of Insurance work.

Many see us as "only Insurance",

whereas we have many other facets to our technical capabilities, in all areas of testing.

*"Automation Assisted Testing is a primary objective"*

Automation Assisted Testing is a primary objective, which brings the need for specialist skills, in addition to those of "pure testing".

The need to see the testing process as a contributor to a Risk Managed Quality Management Process is something we never lose sight of.

*"new focus brought about by FSA compliance issues"*

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# Testing Matters . . .

## Accelerated Pre-Release Testing Scheme ~ An Update

The timing of this newsletter and that of the launch of a variety of initiatives does not allow me to "name names".

However, in the early part of 2005 the benefits of testing with purpose and focus will be offered to Insurers, by a Software House and on very reasonable terms.

Ingenuity will provide the facilitated testing for free!

It will, of course be limited to a collection of prescribed test conditions and will demand a degree of continuity of support from the Insurer.

The critical advantage is the nature of the facilitation. The Insurer is only required to provide their information in "their

words", in plain English, and with no need to purchase or learn special software tools. Ingenuity have developed and tested the technical aspects.

Test conditions, in plain English.

We are certain that the process will bring benefits to all of those taking part but we also anticipate that the limitations of the testing will act as a good precursor to the adoption of more testing and the application of quality managed responses.

Initially, the offer will be for Motor and by the second quarter there will be limited opportuni-

ties for Household, with Motor Cycle and Commercial Vehicle to follow during the year.

How do you join up? In the early part of 2005 there will be focused and highly targeted communications, providing information about the scheme and the associated seminars and coaching sessions. All of which will incur no cost to the Insurer.

"How do you join up?"

If you want to be certain about hearing more, write to ~ [simon@ingenuitytest.co.uk](mailto:simon@ingenuitytest.co.uk)

## Annual Review 2004 ~ continued

Much of our work this year has been related to Insurance projects, many of which are ongoing and all of which have had new focus brought about by FSA compliance issues.

Our major responses this year have been to lead the way with revisions to our reporting, risk management and strategic planning of testing within electronically traded insurance.

Whilst we have not devised anything revolutionary (generally a bad response to changing

times), we have drawn on our competence and experience in order to evolve some practices to be even more pertinent to the future challenges for our existing clients.

"we have drawn on our competence and experience in order to evolve"

The gaining of Investors in People, together with the recent "recognition" to be an inaugural member of the "Beacon South West" initiative are testament to our accomplishments, as "people" serving our profession as much as "evolving our skills as technicians".

All in all, a very successful year all round!

## What About 2005?

Hot on the heels of FSA compliance initiatives, we have ambitious plans for "more of the same" for 2005.

Ingenuity have a good number of emerging developments delivering to the need to perform more testing, more often and more quickly. Trying to improve the mitigation of risk, whilst working within ever tightening deadlines is always challenging.

We relish this challenge and responsibility on behalf of our clients and address it by constantly evolving our skills and methods.

2005 will see the rolling out of a number of initiatives which are presently in the closing stages of their proving.

Pre-release testing, with all of its ramifications of urgency and greater need for precision have very much shown their benefits across the board during 2004.

Pre-release testing of electronically traded Insurance Products will "come of age" in 2005 ~ there is no doubt about it.

Being ready for this is something which has been our main priority.

Our clients are ready, are you?

Pre-release testing will "come of age" in 2005 ~ there is no doubt about it.

[Continued]



## Has Anyone Seen Scylla?

Great news!

As this edition of Testing Matters is being put to bed, I am honoured to be able to report that our testing and trials of the new re-born Scylla, together with significant redesigns of a process in which it should be used, are very much nearing completion.

We have been delighted to have been involved in this serious undertaking on the part of CDL and can vouch, as independent testers, that the work has been furious and focused throughout the year.

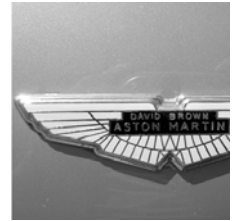
Most importantly, a process of using the Scylla Testing Tool within a Quality Management framework has been both devised and realistically piloted for several months.

“The entire development has progressed very positively”

Ingenuity, by the coincidence of two of the “Pilot Insurers” being Ingenuity clients, have been involved as, “suppliers of risk

management data, through test results,” in the sign off process required of the Pilot Insurers concerned.

The entire development has progressed very positively and we are looking forward to seeing a lot of Scylla soon!



## Matt ~ Not shaken but stirring . . .

Lead Tester, Matt Johnstone, is known by many of our clients and a good number of Software Developers whose works he has tested.

He is also the first name for a number of prospective clients in the Insurance arena, as he often presents “trial work”, to demonstrate our methods.

More than this, he has done much work to prepare our project planning and the mechanisms for coping with the

regular and relentless rate at which we are presented with releases to test.

In common with most other Ingenuity personnel, he has an interest in music, plays the electric bass and is in a band. If this isn't enough, he devotes a huge amount of his spare time to sharing his beliefs with hundreds of people, who may gain more enlightened approaches to their lives as a consequence.

We are all very proud to have

Matt working amongst us and for doing so much to prepare the way for our new project planning system.

In recognition for all of his additional endeavours, he had an extra day's holiday in 2004 charging around a racetrack in classic Aston Martins and Jaguars.

## More 2005

We will be offering more automated testing of Household and Commercial lines, together with facilitated testing of the various Software House Pre-release offerings.

“re-accreditation of ISO9000 by the end of Q2!”

If this is not enough, our own testing horizons will be able to stretch as the planned expansion

of staff and clients is realised. We have the enviable “problem” of a waiting list for both prospective clients and willing staff but growth is not strong if it is not cohesive with needs and abilities.

2004 saw a new Web Site, this Newsletter and Investors in People. So that we do not become complacent, we will be reviewing all of our practices during the first quarter, for re-accreditation of ISO9000 by the end of Q2!

During the first year of the Ingenuity Newsletter, we have

tried to develop the themes which govern our work. On purpose, the method has avoided being too technical or been such as to “give away our crown jewels”.

In 2005, the newsletter will carry some case studies in more depth and extend its scope beyond our Insurance specialism.

Between now and then we all wish you a prosperous 2005





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## 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 Communication? ~ and Ambiguity!

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which follows your own company's philosophy of underwriting and I hope you would be looked at as if you were an alien.

The primary difficulty is one of communication, particularly when "feel" has to be rendered into cold black and white decisions, as is so true of subjects like Insurance.

I would like £5 for every time an Ingenuity tester has asked the question "what do you expect when there has been a drink drive conviction in the last 5 years" and is met with the answer "well it depends"!

The reality is, the question is too limited in its context and the underwriter needs to know more, before being able to gauge a reliable response.

There are a number of fallacies in software development. For

example, that it is "always the developer's fault" and "this is only simple Motor Insurance, what's the problem?"

The sheer number of reasonable permutations and trying to render "feel" into black and white makes Insurance Products extremely difficult to distil into precise language.

The uncomfortable fact is, and it is in common with all types of software development, over 60% of "errors" in a new Insurance Product, a piece of software, have their proximate cause (a nice insurance term) in the ambiguity of the product requirements specification materials. Often we, as testers, are not so much proving that the product is behaving as intended as demonstrating that the specification has led to the "wrong product" being built.

The encouraging feature is that

there is a wealth of good experience to help us to address this risk. A significant, and often overlooked, risk is the "quality" of the specification process as a whole.

### Avoid ambiguity

With 60% of problems starting at the "design stage", it is worthwhile taking a look at some of the constituents of a good specification. Why not have your product specification read by someone not quite so close to the process and see if they can spot any of the following?

- \* Ambiguity of language
- \* Component "Shopping lists"
- \* Contamination through reuse of previous documents
- \* Usage of the word "all"
- \* Any questions which the Product "authority" had not answered.



**Check *all* your ambiguities !**