The 4-hour Tester Experiment

(The Art of Bricolage)

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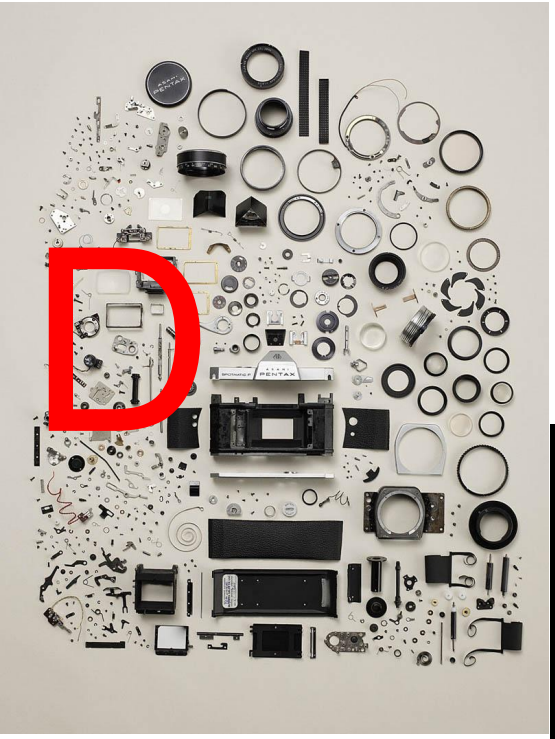
mx mendix
the app platform

DISCLAIMER

NO TESTERS WERE HARMED DURING THIS EXPERIMENT.

Why the 4-hour tester?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Selecting the skills

Criterion

- skill is central to testing

So where does this get us?

artist: s l scott

But how to start?

Shu - follow the rule (obedience)

Ha - break the rule (divergence)

Ri - be the rule (transcendence)

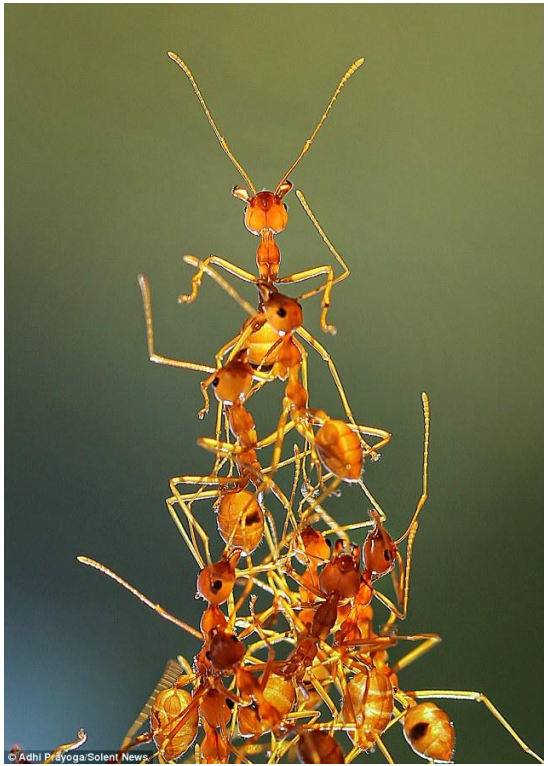
Skills - the survivors

- Interpreting
- Modelling
- Test design
- Note taking
- Bug reporting

Skills - the dropped ones

- Test reporting
- Focus/defocus
- Exploring
- Generating test ideas
- Thinking skills (critical, lateral, systems)
- Visualisation
- Kipling method of asking questions
- Satir interaction model

Why test reporting did not make it



test reporting

requires test framing

requires test mission

Why focus/defocus did not make it

Developing exercises

Considerations...

- What does a useful exercise look like?
- How to help the learner make sense of the experience?
- How to make the exercise fit into 30 minutes?

Structure

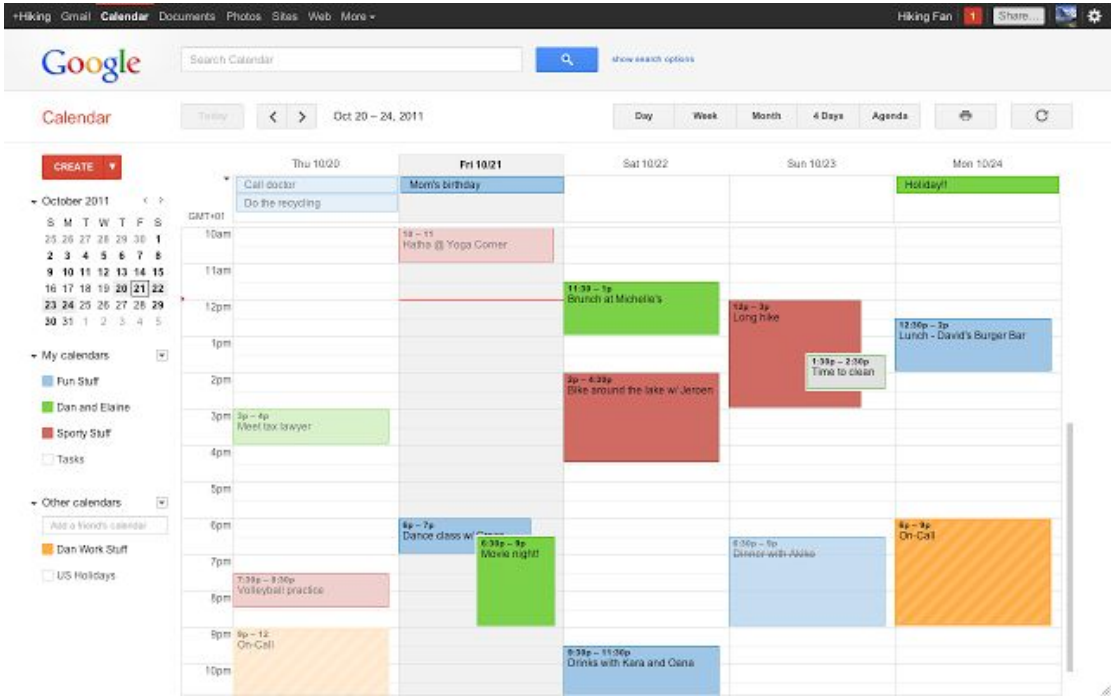
- Brief: what the exercise focuses on

- Instructions: what to do

- **Evaluation: how to reflect on the exercise**

What to use for testing?

- Familiar concept
- Quickly learnable
- Sufficiently complex



Summary of modelling exercise

- **Explanation**: what are touring heuristics; examples

- **Instructions**: do user, data, and configuration tour in Google calendar

- **Evaluation**: think of how the tours help to come up with test ideas

Other people’s thoughts

We asked some people what they would do

Erik Brickarp

Aleksandra Casapu

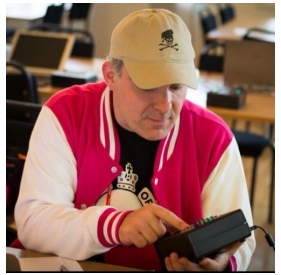
Rikard Edgren

Ben Kelly

Keith Klain

James Lyndsay

Kishen Simbhoedatpanday



Huib Schoots

Thank you all!

We asked some people what they would do

What I'd like to ask of you is this: if you had 4 hours to teach someone testing, what would you teach them in that timeframe?

The outcome would be that this person is then able to to do testing using what was taught by you.

Let’s go meta

[…], the actual combination of skills we practice is not the most relevant. Any testing task should probably do.

the growing discovery of
what is in the system-under-test,
and what is not

help them understand what it is that testers do

I’d want to teach them to think like a tester
(understand what is important, then test it.)

There's homework!

It's important [...] to be open to continuous learning.

a list of blogs, books and open-source projects

give them Perfect Software by Weinberg as homework

to help them understand enough about testing
to be able to further educate themselves

Let’s sit together

Sit together and [...]

I’m also going to frame this as one-to-one coaching.

I would sit next to them coaching them

If I had 4 hours to spend with someone who wanted to learn more about testing, [...]

Euh... but it's a written, long-distance thing

I believe feedback is essential to learning.

If you are aiming at a totally independent 4-hour program,

I think it will be very difficult (it will work only for some.)

Interesting project you are doing, and I look forward to see the results.

Rikard Edgren

Results

Yes, the experiment showed that small exercises could help learn and illuminate testing skills to some degree.

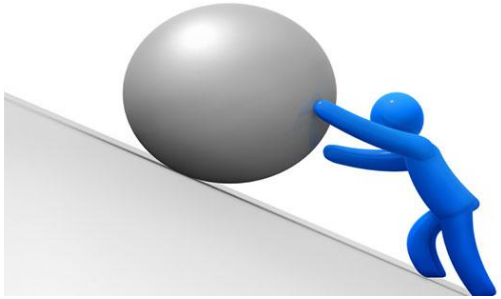
No, you can’t become a tester in 4 hours...

4 beginners

5 exercises

50 minutes

3.2 Exercise was challenging



3.9 Exercise went in depth

4.4 Exercise fits in time limit

3.8 Exercise was easy to evaluate

3.3 Likelihood of repeating

4.4 Skill clearly present in exercise

What did they learn about note taking?

Labeling is something I should think about using in my everyday note taking.

The next time I will write down all steps that were taken and clicks made on something, and if something worked or didn't work. Also I'll add comments about UI or about something else that is worth taking note of.

I learned that taking notes is more important than I thought before, especially to retrace my own steps.

What did they learn about modelling?

From this exercise I learned to look at testing the product in general and see the big picture.

Learned to explore the software from different points of view, to see different elements in software, to structure my test.

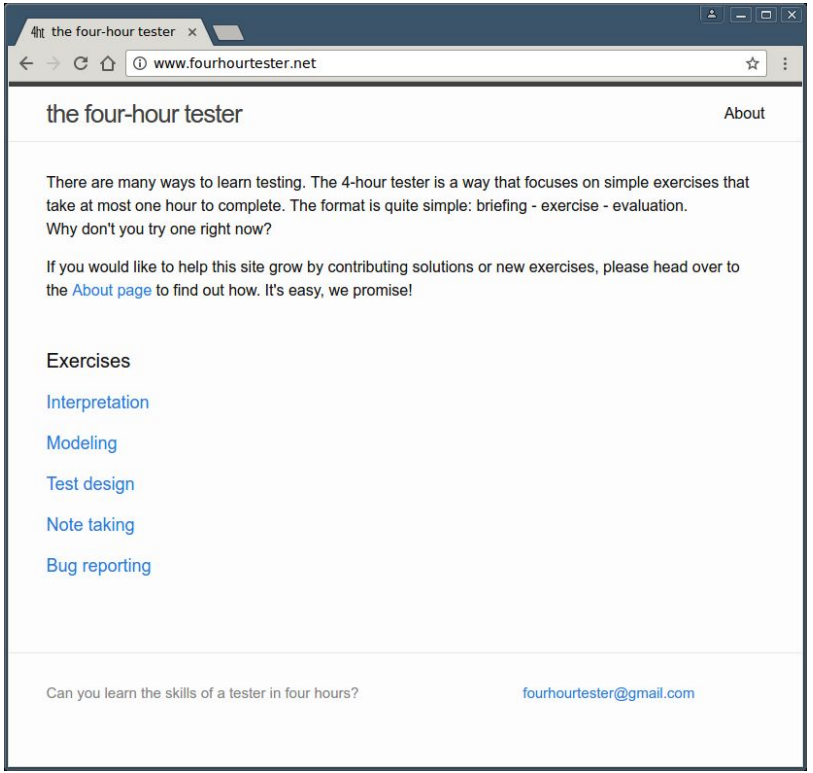
I learned that touring methods are easy to use to focus on different parts of the application.

What we learned

Both more and less is possible

What’s next?

fourhourtester.net



Call to arms

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Thank you!

Joep Schuurkes

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