

## Welcome to the Experimentus July 2009 e-newsletter

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### 1st TMMi Workshop Proves a Hit across All Sectors

The impact of process improvements throughout the Software Development Lifecycle (SDLC) can have a major impact not only on IT's capabilities to deliver, but also the knock on affect to the business.

In a recent survey of CEOs and their strategies to contain costs in the coming year, improving IT processes came top of the list. As such, Experimentus responded with the development of a one day London TMMi workshop. Providing a background and understanding about how to deliver qualitative and quantitative process improvements using the TMMi model, the workshop proved a huge success when it was held on **20<sup>th</sup> May at the Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall.**

*"No matter how much preparation you put in, there's always a degree of trepidation when you host something like this, but the response was excellent" said Geoff Thompson, Director of Experimentus. "Time, especially in today's climate - is a precious commodity, as are available budgets for attending events, so we put a lot of effort into developing a session which would educate attendees of the tangible benefits associated with improving IT Process efficiency, but also provided them with tools and techniques to go away with and implement in-house."*

When asked about the day, **Eleanor Phipps, Leader - Global QA COE, Dun & Bradstreet** added: *"The TMMi workshop was extremely useful as it gave me a clear understanding of how TMMi works and can be used in an organisation to help identify and prioritise improvements in the quality process and has given me plenty of food for thought for the future."*

**Sarah Lightwood, Test Authority - HMRC Aspire** commented: *"We came to the workshop with one view and left with a different view, which has challenged our thoughts and direction we have been taking and provided some excellent ideas for our software quality improvement process."*

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## Ensuring Change Control Procedures Are In Place

**Tim Moore**, Experimentus, Senior Consultant

Change is inevitable and constant. After all, it's what drives us as human beings, evolving and adapting is what we do best as a species. When confronted with change, the human brain can calculate masses of data instantly in order to assess impact, firing new instructions to the parts of our mind and body that need to react or be aware.



It's surprising then, that so many organisations face problems when changes are made to software under development. With so many human brains and all that raw processing power, one would think that change would come easily, except we all know it doesn't. We constantly struggle to control and fight against change, even when deep down we know it's probably for the best. Why?

### Communicate

The problem most organisations face is Communication. Ensuring that everybody involved understands what a change is, what it means to the project and what it's going to cost (not just in monetary terms). Only once you have these three aspects working can you begin to 'control' change. Common occurrences on projects range from Scope changes that fundamentally shift the delivery objectives, to enforced regulatory changes, to minor wording, usability or aesthetic changes. Each change will impact the project, so gathering all the available information on risk and impact, deciding which changes to make and effectively communicating those decisions to the rest of the project team and the stakeholders, is absolutely vital to ensure the best chance of success.

### Use appropriate process

Having a formal change process in place can help prevent scope creep and maintain the quality of the end product, but it's important to ensure your process and procedures fit your needs. Longwinded review and signoff cycles for Change Requests often lead to teams bypassing or misusing the process, but not seriously considering the impact of a change can mean rework has to be done later once the true impact is seen.

### Follow the process

Having a process that fits is only any good if you actually follow it. Baseline your requirements at a relatively early stage (certainly before any high-level designs are issued for signoff) so that you can control and monitor the flow of change through the project, even if at this stage, controlling the changes themselves will be nigh-on impossible. If your organisation is subject to high levels of enforced change (e.g. regulatory) or minor cosmetic adjustments, build in the capability to react with a 'fast-track' element. Be aware though, that everyone needs to be invested in the change philosophy by agreeing to quick turnarounds and you will have to be stern with those that want to place every change through that route. Getting the raiser to document the deadline and the impact of not meeting that deadline is a good way of sorting out the really important ones.

## **Assess the impact of a change**

Get all the information you can in about how the change will affect your project and the system, documenting any risks and issues the change might generate (were it implemented or not). Ensure you seek impact from as many areas as you can – both on the project and externally as changes can be far more wide ranging than a well meaning Business Analyst initially anticipates. It's far easier to discard a "no impact" response than it is to field a "why didn't you tell us about this" one three weeks later! Ensure that for each change you get a Red, Amber, Page 3 of 3 Green (RAG) statement (for delivery, not priority) and an effort estimate from each area impacted as this will feed your overall decision making process.

## **Empower individuals**

Empower individuals to make decisions where the assessed impact of a change is low. The Project (and or Release) Manager should be able to approve small changes without the need to wait for a Change Board meeting which might be a week away. Conversely, large or complex changes must not be the sole responsibility of any individual. The approval of higher risk changes should be decided on a consultative basis with the involvement of as many stakeholders as possible, especially those in your organisation with a strategic or organisation-wide perspective, like Enterprise Architects and Operations.

## **Document and communicate**

Ensure that changes are communicated right across the project. Many artefacts may need to be amended, depending where the change occurs. It is important to ensure that traceability through documentation is maintained so that no conflicts or contradictions occur. Change records should be living documents in themselves and include a list of impacted documents and artefacts. Everything from the Budget, Project Plan, Requirements Specification and Test Approach through Design and Code to Test Cases, Implementation Plans and User Guides might need to be updated as the change ripples through your project and your organisation, and increasing the visibility of those that have changed will benefit the team. Use of collaborative software such as SharePoint, Drupal or Confluence to create a project space can help to engage, involve and inform team members and stakeholders alike.

## **Know when and how to stop**

Late changes are a major pain point on many projects. Some are unavoidable, but many are entirely unnecessary. Setting a 'Change Freeze' is an important first step and only 'Showstoppers' should be allowed to breach that freeze. This shouldn't be confused with a 'Code Freeze' which exists at a lower change level normally the few days before a system is packaged up for migration. Setting a longer period before completion where only urgent changes are considered allows delivery of the stated objectives with retained quality, and will allow team members to effectively concentrate on delivering the final push rather than impacting and re-estimating.

## **Learn to say No**

Saying no to a change can be difficult, especially where the customer might be demanding it. It's all too easy to sacrifice the quality of the product (and the social life and sanity of those working on it) just to placate a stakeholder that may not appreciate all the work that needs to be done to "just display the name" or "make it change colour" and the ripple effect it can have on areas like testing and training. But being strong and pushing back on changes is actually in the best interests of all parties, as it challenges the raiser to really think about the need for change and allows them (provided you've got all the information from your impact assessment) to make an informed decision on whether to affect the Cost, Time or Quality of the deliverable.

Implementing and sticking to a formal change control process is not an easy task, especially where project teams are pressed for time. But convince your team and stakeholders that controlling change will result in a better quality system being released into production; saving time and costs in the long run, and you will quickly start to see a change culture developing in your organisation. Who knows, some may even begin to embrace change (and as long as it's justified and controlled, so can you!)

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## Experimentus Collaborates With World Leading Software Testing Experts in Australia

With the focus heavily on process improvement, keynote speaker and Director of Experimentus, **Geoff Thompson**, gave an uplifting presentation to fellow international software testing experts at the ANZTB software testing forum in Sydney on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

As the regional body representing software testing professionals in Australia and New Zealand, ANZTB offers sought after certification, dependable training accreditation and career-enhancing support for software testing professionals throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Geoff's speech examined the benefits of software test process improvement, citing repeatability, reusability and financial savings as key drivers. He also spoke about software testing career development.

**Martin Adcock**, Managing Director of Experimentus commented: "*We're delighted that Geoff was requested to speak at ANZTB. As a company, Experimentus are continually working to improve the maturity, repeatability and understanding of software testing and quality across the world and this has been another great opportunity to illustrate that we mean what we say.*"

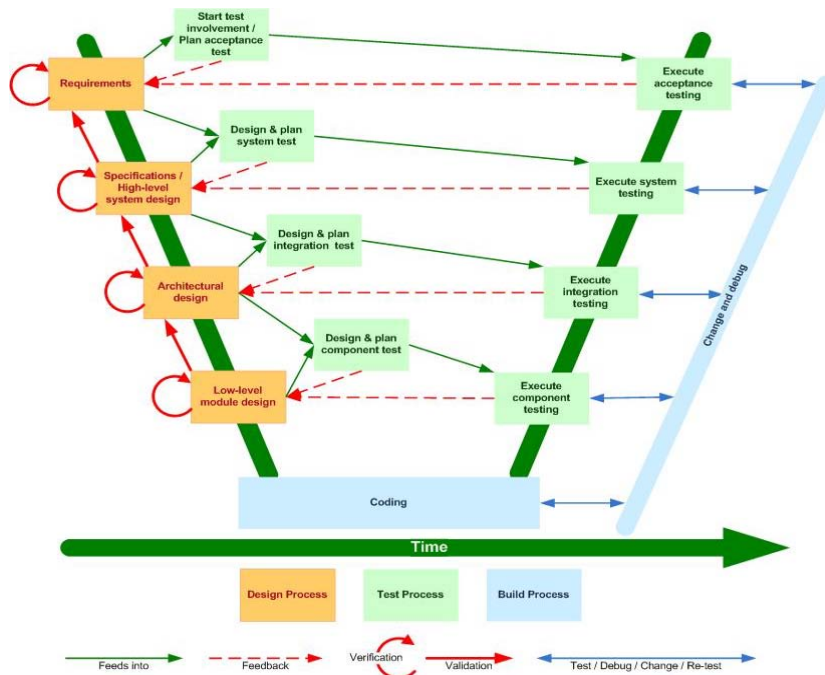
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## Begin System Test Design during the System Design Stage

**Adrian Howes**, Experimentus Senior Consultant explains why planning testing during the design stage is integral to a project's success.

Beginning the testing process early saves money, time and heartbreak over the lifetime of a project, regardless of what stage.

The model below, based on the *V-model* and *W-model*, demonstrates the relationships between system design, test design and test execution. Feedback from test design and planning is immediately available to the system design process which is a sizeable benefit. Feedback positive or negative, it doesn't matter; because it all helps to improve the quality of the product or the process (or both) going forward.



Software testers should conduct early reviews at the requirements stage of development because bringing anomalies to light here are about one hundred times cheaper to correct than the same defects found in production, thus saving you money.

Software testers should not be limited to testing software implementation but should also test software design. This way, you will have scenarios and scripts written before the code is delivered, saving time in test execution.

Use Metrics for tangible proof. When I have analysed projects in the past, has been illuminating, not to say a little shocking, to discover just how many defects were introduced during the system design phase and not picked up until the system test execution phase. Having metrics from a previous project - such as how many defects have been found where in the SDLC, at what point they were introduced and when - available to you at the outset will enable you to make a comparison of the old and new processes and thereby demonstrate how effective the changes have been.

I am also constantly amazed by how many development organisations do not walk through system designs with the test leads and system testers at least once. It is a great way of finding many defects for a small investment of time.

Introduce change gently via a small project to minimise the degree of threat or disruption. The benefits will soon become apparent and the change can be made permanent and more widespread as needed.

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## For your diary

### 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009 - Experimentus and Micro Focus Hold London Testing Seminar

**Geoff Thompson**, Experimentus Director, will be presenting at a half day seminar *Implementing Testing Best Practice*, with Micro Focus.

Experimentus and Micro Focus will show delegates how delivering improvements to your testing processes will bring about significant increases in software quality together with considerable cost savings.

It has been recognised that a major area for improvement within the Software Development Lifecycle (SDLC) is how efficiently processes are managed. However, the challenge is to make efficiency improvements while increasing the quality of the deliverables, and in today's environment demonstrating cost savings and a quick *Return on Investment*.

Delegates will go away with an appreciation of:

- Why well planned and designed testing services are not enough in today's organisations and why enterprise-wide repeatability is critical
- How to produce compliant test data up to 95% of the time without compromising quality and how this can become repeatable across the enterprise to rapidly enhance the production of test data
- How implementing TMMi (Testing Maturity Model Integrated) and other best practices can deliver significant cost savings and improvements to their testing
- An evaluation of different organisations software quality management process revealed by the latest findings and research from Experimentus

[REGISTER NOW](#) to reserve your place. We look forward to seeing you!

### 16-18 September 2009 - Experimentus Test Management Tutorial at Conquest 2009

**Geoff Thompson**, Experimentus Director will present an Essentials of Test Management tutorial at Conquest 2009. The International Conference on Quality Engineering in Software Technology (CONQUEST) will be held in Nuremberg, Germany from 16 -18 September.

CONQUEST is the platform for software professionals bringing together the software engineering community to discuss software quality aspects, to see how quality engineering methods and techniques are used in both industry and science, to see the latest tools, to share experiences on projects and representative case studies and to hear about newest advancements.

Experimentus will join other software testing experts from industry and research from all over the world. Further information about Conquest 2009 [click here](#).

### 15th October 2009 - Experimentus to Present at October 2009 UKSMA Conference

**Brian Wells**, Experimentus Managing Consultant, will present at this year's UKSMA Conference held on 15<sup>th</sup> October in Central London.

[UKSMA](#) is a non-profit organisation that exists only to promote and improve the use of software measurement. The UK Software Metrics Association Conference provides a platform to share experiences, ideas, case studies and strategies for widening the relevance, appeal and benefit of measurement to the management of software development and maintenance.

The theme of this year's conference is *New Directions in Software Measurement*, reflecting the increasingly diverse nature of software measurement and changes in the software development

community.

Brian's presentation will focus on **the benefits of process improvement** and specifically the benefits that can be obtained by reviewing and improving how we test using the TMMi model. He will examine how measurement supports TMMi, how change and potential benefits of change are identified. Brian will use specific case studies to demonstrate how measurement was implemented and the data collateral used to demonstrate realisation of these benefits and how this was very influential in ensuring effective, long term change.

## **30 November 2009 - Experimentus' Agile Testing Presentation at EuroSTAR 2009**

Experimentus Managing Consultant, **Stevan Zivanovic** will present at EuroSTAR on 30 November.

[EuroSTAR](#) is the premier international software testing conference in Europe, attracting delegates and speakers from around the world. Last year in The Hague over 1,000 attendees from 31 countries attended the conference.

Stevan's presentation will focus on **Agile Testing**. Based on Experimentus' experience of delivering successful testing services within Agile projects, this presentation identifies 10 actions that can be easily implemented to improve the quality of the end solution.

This presentation will take the audience on a journey through some of the common problems with quality and testing within Agile projects. Stevan will demonstrate how these problems can be prevented using 10 key practical tips that the participants can take back to the work place and implement.

Topics such as development testing, non-functional testing, environments, virtualisation, metrics and communication will be covered.

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