



BEST PRACTICE Pair Testing Technique

What Is Pair Testing?

Pair Testing is testing of software by two team members sitting behind one machine. One team member is in control of the mouse and keyboard, the other one is making notes, discussing the test scenarios and asking questions.

Pair Testing is not intended to execute formal test cases, Pair Testing uses Exploratory Testing. Exploratory Testing is an informal test technique and requires extensive test experience and/or good knowledge of the software under test.

What Are The Benefits of Pair Testing?

Software Testers gain a more thorough understanding of the application they are testing and learn debugging techniques to find causes of defects.

What Are The Risks And Limitations?

Pair testing is not a cure-all. As with any technique, there are risks involved, and some pair testing efforts fail. Some failures can be traced to a lack of trust between the software testers. "If one or the other goes in with the idea that it is a one-way learning experience, the experience will fail." Pair testing is only effective in an environment of mutual respect and trust.

How Should You Execute Pair Testing?

To use pair testing in your team, start with these steps:

1. **Choose a team member** you trust and who buys into the concept of pair testing.
2. **Pick a suitably-sized project.** Don't try to test the whole application in one session. Pair testing works well when testing new functionality and when both participants have been working on the project since inception.
3. **Plan up front.** Determine a time to test, the length of the session (an hour or so is a good place to start), a break schedule, and a testing focus



- definition. Clarify the goals, and define the outputs of the test sessions. In testing, there can be several outputs: defect reports, test documentation, test cases, etc. You should define the intended outputs of pair testing efforts so that both parties understand what is required.
4. **Use an environment that is suitable for two people to test together at one machine.** Be sure you can work without interruptions and are free to talk to each other.
 5. **Evaluate outcomes.** How successful were the pair testing sessions? What would you do differently next time?

References

Website - <http://softwaredevelopmentisfun.blogspot.com/2008/07/pair-testing.html>

Website - StickyMinds.com -

<http://www.stickyminds.com/sitewide.asp?Function=edetail&ObjectType=ART&ObjectID=7305>