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*Wednesday, Dec 6, 2000*

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# e-Testing the Airline

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*Colin Cherry*



# eurostar2000



## e-TESTING THE AIRLINE A Test Management Perspective





# Personal Background



- Colin Cherry, Senior Consultant Planpower Pty Ltd
- Current Assignment
  - Ansett Australia (since July 1999)
  - Manager, Applications Integration Group
  - Responsible for Testing Services, Applications Test Bench Facility, Release Management, Change Management, Software Tools Management
- Testing involvement since 1988
- Eurostar Country Co-ordinator for last 2 years
- 3rd year @ Eurostar, first as Presenter
- Published in Professional Tester July 2000
- Also run public domain Training Courses





# How it all started



- Early January 2000 advised Ansett WEB site to undergo major upgrade and re-launch by end of February
- Re-launch driven by Customer/Executive feedback regarding slow response times and poor customer satisfaction (via Call Centre)
- Site mainly used to
  - Book a flight
  - Inquire on schedules
  - Advertise Special Offers
  - Inquire on arrival and departure information
  - Provide Frequent Flyer Program Member Services





# Main Issues



- Emotive feedback from Senior Management - suddenly everyone's noticed the WEB Site!!
- However, no previous Ansett IT involvement in WEB site (originally developed by 3rd Party)
- Also, no previous formal internal Testing; therefore, Testing Team has no prior expertise in WEB Testing
- I only knew what I'd read (articles and WEB) and what I'd heard at Eurostar99 (Bob Bartlett)
- How much hype? How much reality?





# Our Response



- Identify and develop a Testing Strategy (to cover User Testing only) - not enough time to focus on more at this stage
  - Utilise input from Eurostar99 (Bob Bartlett)
- Establish a Steering Committee
- Identify the main players -
  - Business Owner and other representatives
  - Three external partners and three internal departments
- Learn as much as possible as quickly as possible
  - SQE and Professional Tester Magazines, various WEB sites (with White Papers)





# Setting up the Team



- Appoint Team Leader
- Hire experienced Contract WEB Testers (if you can find them)
- Hire student/young gun with REAL hands-on WEB experience
- Develop Testing Scope (what can we *reasonably* achieve in the timeframe)
- Develop Plan to support Testing Scope and Strategy
- Develop Testing Schedule
  - Alpha, Beta and UA Tests





# Other Considerations



- Relationships with Designers and Developers
  - Get access to the “look and feel” content prior to build - don’t believe that static content does not carry a risk
  - Get involved in Unit and System Testing
  - Understand the technical infrastructure, including access (security) and operational issues; the Ansett site encompassed much data mining from legacy systems;
  - Interfaces are always a risk
- Issues and Problem Management
- Impact of Scope changes (as always)







# Useability Guidelines



- Simplicity (of concept and use)
- Customer Support (for problems)
- Obviousness (of use)
- Confidence (through Predictability)
- Satisfaction, Achievement, Look and Feel
- Accessibility (through navigation and visibility)
- Flexibility (interactive, readable)
- Consistency
- Adherence to Standards





# Team Initiatives



- Training Program for Testers
  - Introduction to WEB Testing
  - Introduction to Tools and Technical Infrastructure
  - Vendor driven initiatives
  - Hire more (WEB Testing) experienced Testers
- Development of Testing Team Intranet Site
  - Build knowledge of WEB-specific issues
  - Provide understanding of WEB-site development and maintenance
  - Provide environment for future personal development





# What happened to the Re-Launch?



- Slippage in Implementation Schedule
  - Scope changed (due to lack of time)
  - Partners changed (twice) due to lack of clarity of requirements
  - More work undertaken in-house
  - Testing focus changed (due to lack of time)
- Launch took place in April
  - Useability still not fully addressed
  - Performance still not fully addressed
  - Business still didn't understand full implications of WEB-based implementations





# After the Re-Launch



- Replaced Testing Team Leader with more experienced Test Manager
- Undertook Testing PIR of Re-launch
- Expanded WEB Testing Team (from 2 to 6)
- Undertook “Customer Perception” Testing (mainly focussed on Performance and Responsiveness, not functionality)
- Reviewed other Airline Sites (for Useability)
- Reviewed Testing Strategy (to accommodate regular Releases of WEB site)





# Our Risks and Issues



- All our WEB Testers are Contractors....
  - Should we build an in-house capability, continue to use Contractors or find a Testing Services Partner
- How can we best add value?
- What should our future focus be?
- How do we stay current with WEB technology?
- How many other e-Business projects will be initiated over the next few years?
- Should we utilise Testing Tools?

**AND THEN THEY REDUCED OUR  
FUNDING....**





# Permanent vs Contract vs Partners



- Still very few *experienced* WEB Testers
- Training Courses still hit and miss, mainly UK imports
- Funding impacts on recruitment due to merger with Air New Zealand
- Contractors can be (and were) head-hunted
- Finding a “Partner” isn’t easy
- Currently going through process to identify a Partner for Test Automation





# Our Value-Add Proposition



- Understand the Business imperatives (of an airline), focus on Risk and Impact
- Act as a “Testing Centre of Excellence”
- Conduct regular workshops for the rest of IT and the Business
- Stay current with the latest developments in new technologies
- Focus on Requirements Analysis (to get it right the first time)
- Quicker methods for Product to market





# The Best laid Plans...



- Late August
  - Directive from Senior Management to cut size of Testing Team from 32 to 15 within 1 month
- Already lost 3 WEB Testers since January - the Student survived! Now we have to let the Manager go and build a new capability
- Focus on how we can recover
  - Regression Test Suite
  - Release Strategy
  - Slow down in development due to merger
  - e-Commerce related projects continue to flourish (mostly B2B)







# What went well



- Developers originally sceptical of the value we could add, now excellent rapport
- Initially built WEB skills very quickly (good Contract resources)
- Our contribution met all deadlines
- Development program (although just Contractors)
- Customer Perception Testing
- Business now has greater level of confidence in WEB site





# What didn't go so well



- Our influencing skills
  - Re-launched WEB site still had performance issues
  - Requirements analysis not thorough enough, due to time constraints
  - Look and Feel / Useability issues still outstanding
  - Recognition of customer impact by Business Owner(s)
- Retention of skilled Testers
- Program to develop permanent staff
- Acquisition of a Browser-based Problem Management tool (still manual)
- Acquisition of (Regression) Testing Tool





# In Summary



- High Risk, as Technology moving so fast and Business still don't fully comprehend the opportunity
- High Impact, as Customers notice change very quickly and won't come back after a bad experience
- Ansett site still doesn't address the needs of the Customer - Bookings still clumsy, Schedules not easily accessible, low percentage of bookings via the WEB
- Site doesn't reflect the corporate culture....

"Go your own way"





# Contact Details



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**Wednesday 6 December 2000**

**W9**

## **e-Testing the Airline**

**Colin Cherry**

*Colin has worked within the IT industry for over 25 years and possesses an extensive Testing Consultancy and Testing Management background stretching over the last 10 years. He has worked predominantly within the Finance and Travel industry in the UK, USA and Australia. He has also undertaken more traditional IT development roles as Team Leader and line manager. Colin functions equally well in both roles with a personal bias towards Testing Consulting, as he considers his best contribution in the past being successful outcomes in terms of mentoring client staff to create a lasting 'total validation' culture. This ensures a holistic development life cycle (and ongoing systems support) approach towards the quality of deliverables and overall business acceptance.*

*Colin is able to impart his considerable knowledge equally well in one-on-one sessions or with groups. As an extension to Colin's coaching and mentoring roles he presents publicly at an increasing number of testing Seminars around Australia. These presentations are also in demand in Europe and the USA. Colin has also presented testing related subjects at several User Group functions.*

*Colin had an article (on Test Automation) published earlier this year in the new Professional Tester magazine. Colin has been the Australian Country Co-Ordinator for EuroSTAR for the last 2 years and hopes to be involved in a similar venture in Australia within the next few years.*

