



The Big Book of How to Do Perfect Testing

“If you would succeed, know why you do what you do.”

James Bullock © 2004, 2006

1 - Testing is an informational function. You are paying to learn something. Any time your bury or misinterpret information you get from testing you are corrupting what you are paying for.

2 - Testing produces information reliably grounded in the observed behavior of a system. Observation is what separates testing from analysis, induction, deduction and speculation. Any time you argue yourself out of an observation because what you see "just doesn't make sense" or create circumstances that corrupt the observing, you are defeating the purpose of testing.

One of the most powerful observations that can come from testing is noticing what is not being, or cannot be reliably observed. Bury that information at your peril.

3 - Information is valuable if you act on it. Otherwise it is entertainment. So, each bit of information produced by testing needs a customer; a willing, enthusiastic customer eager to use the information they hope to get from testing to do a better job.

If you are a tester without customers, your job description is inoperative. If you are a manager whose testers don't have eager customers, your testing is irrelevant. If you work at creating artifacts, especially software, and your testers aren't your best friends why are you so sure you are right?

4 - The techniques of testing are endless - literally. The correct technique is the one that best gets you the information you need to take a better next step than you would otherwise. If you are stuck on a technique rather than the results, you have descended into ritual. If you or your testers are unwilling to discover, embrace or if need be invent whatever technique it takes to find the information you need, you aren't doing testing, you have descended into administration.

So what do you really want to know about your system, and how do you find that out?

5 - Act always according to these four principles and you will do perfect testing, every time. The rest is details.