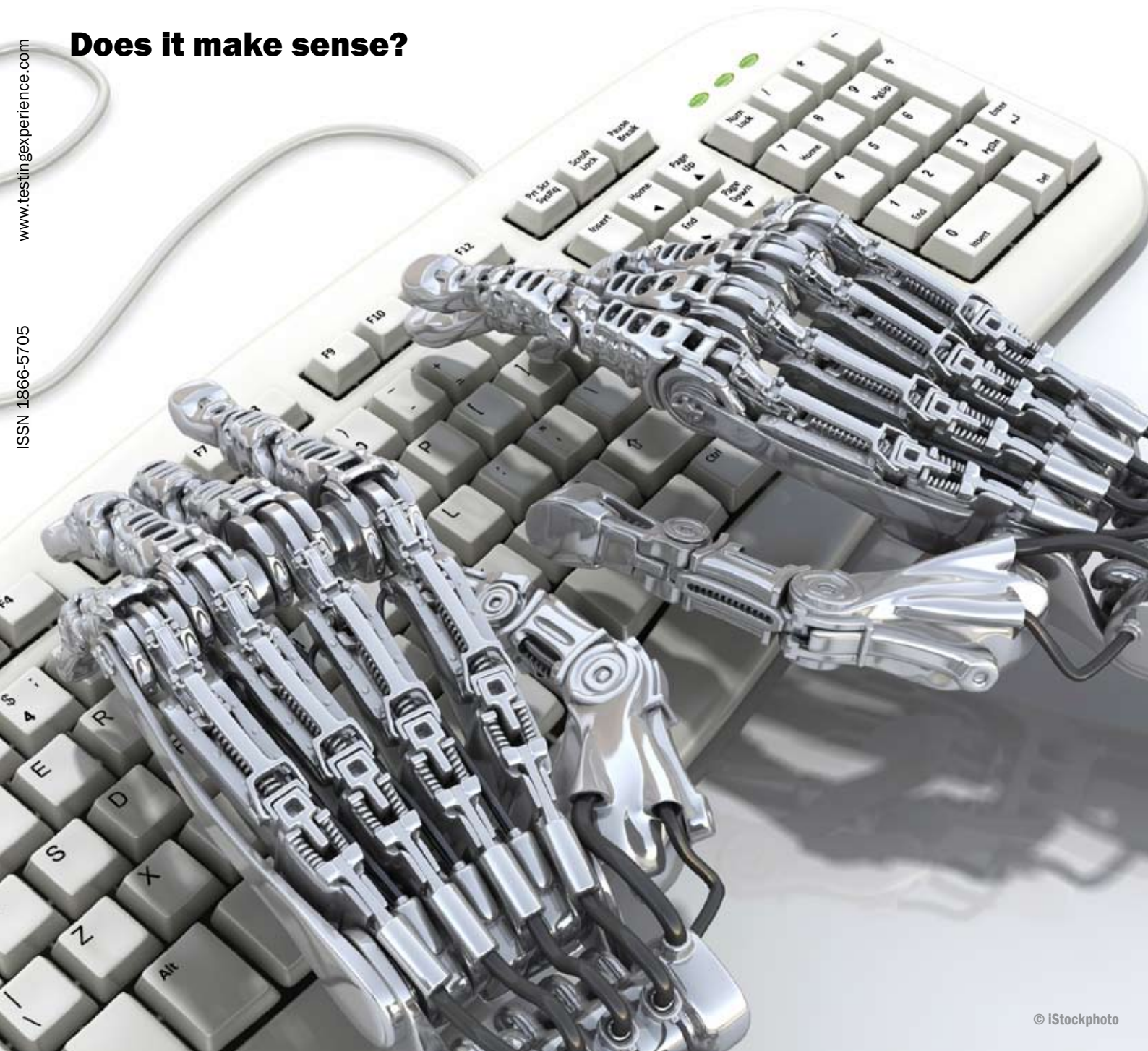


te testing experience

The Magazine for Professional Testers

Test Automation -

Does it make sense?





Erik van Veenendaal is a leading international consultant and trainer, and recognized expert in the area of software testing and quality management. He is the director of Improve Quality Services BV. At EuroStar 1999, 2002 and 2005, he was awarded the best tutorial presentation. In 2007 he received the European Testing Excellence Award for his contribution to the testing profession over the years. He has been working as a test manager and consultant in software quality for almost 20 years.

He has written numerous papers and a number of books, including “The Testing Practitioner”, “ISTQB Foundations of Software Testing” and “Testing according to TMap”. Erik is also a former part-time senior lecturer at the Eindhoven University of Technology, the vice-president of the International Software Testing Qualifications Board and the vice chair of the TMMi Foundation.

Test Process Improvement Manifesto

by Erik van Veenendaal

This column is a sort of follow up from my last column. Again I will be discussing one of my favorite topics, “Improving the Testing Process”. Preparing for a keynote at this year’s EuroSTAR makes one rethink the added value of test process improvement and models like the TMMi. There are many who claim great results by doing process improvement (either software process improvement or test process improvement). There are also many who claim that this is all a waste of time and everything should be done in an “agile way” – whatever that means.

Of course everyone knows or at least has heard about the agile manifesto. At EuroSTAR there was an attempt to create a testing manifesto. If manifestos are a popular thing these days, why not create one for test process improvement manifesto? Basically in the test process improvement manifesto I have tried to define what makes process improvement work and what not. These are my recommendations for a successful application of models like the TMMi based on many years of practical experiences in various industries regarding process improvement.

Test Process Improvement manifesto

- **Flexibility** over Detailed Processes
- **Best Practices** over Templates
- **Deployment orientation** over Process orientation
- **Reviews** over Quality Assurance (departments)
- **Business driven** over Model driven

Flexibility over Detailed Processes

In general, having defined processes supports an organization. Only something that is defined can be improved. It guides new engineers and acts like corporate memory. However building too rigorous processes takes away people values. You want good testers that have the skills to act based on the context of a problem and perceive testing to be a challenging job. Supporting processes are needed but using the processes should give enough flexibility and freedom to testers to allow them to think for themselves and find the best way forwards. You only need “just enough process”.

Best Practices over Templates

Templates are great but even better is to provide examples of how they should be used. What provides more support; a test plan template or three test plan best practices? I guess almost everyone working in practice will choose the latter. When doing test process improvement focus on getting a best practices library set up as soon as possible instead of overspending on defining templates. Don’t worry whether the best practices are the best in the industry. They are the best in your organization and if something better comes along replace them. This is what supports our testing and makes process improvement work.

Deployment orientation over Process orientation

Building process is easy, we have already done this so many times and there are numerous examples to be found. However, getting them deployed and thereby chang-

ing someone's behavior is the hard part. Process improvement is all about change management. I have seen test improvement plans that focus almost entirely on defining the testing processes. In successful improvement projects at least 70% of the improvement effort is spent on deployment – “getting the job done”. Defining the processes is the easy part and should only account for a small percentage of the effort and focus.

Reviews over Quality Assurance (departments)

Communication and providing feedback are essential to project success. It is exactly this what peer reviews, if applied well, do. In principle also quality assurance officers evaluate documents and provide feedback to engineers. However, once to often I have experiences that quality officers, sorry no offence to those who do a good job !!, are too far away from the testing profession. Their feedback then focuses on conformance to templates and defined processes. Little added value to most projects, I believe. I have also experienced organizations where every test plan is peer reviews by one or two peer test manager giving feedback on the approach and content of the test plan. This is what we want, real feedback to we can use.

Business driven over Model driven

Whatever you do, make sure you know why you are doing it. What is the business problem you are trying to address? What is the test policy supported by management? Just trying to get to TMMi level 2 or 3 without understanding the business context will always fail in the short or long term. When addressing a certain practice from an improvement model, there are most often many different to comply. The business problem (poor product quality, long test execution lead time, costs, etc) will tell you which one to choose. Almost continuously review your process improvement against the business drivers and test policy.

When doing test improvement take the above mentioned starting points, values or whatever you like to call them into account. I'm sure when using them in the right way you will get better results. Some have called the manifesto “lean and mean test process improvement”. An interesting thought, perhaps something for a next column



Knowledge Transfer

– TMMi Foundation –

One Day Tutorial with Erik van Veenendaal

April, 1st 2009 in Frankfurt

limited
places

This workshop brings the TMMi model to Europe and is your chance to learn about the latest initiative in test process improvement.

The Test Maturity Model Integration is rapidly growing in use across Europe and the USA. It has been developed to complement the existing CMMI framework. Its growing popularity is based upon it being the only independent test process measurement method, and the simple presentation of maturity levels that it provides.

In Europe the independent TMMi Foundation initiative has been established with the sole intent of elaborating the TMMi standard and developing a standard TMMi assessment and certification method, with the aim of enabling the standards consistent deployment and the collection of industry metrics.

Erik van Veenendaal has much practical experience in implementing the model and helping organisations improve the way they test, and the benefits this can generate. He is the editor of the TMMi Framework model and vice-chair of the TMMi Foundation. The workshop will present these experiences and benefits with the aim of providing the attendees with the information required to justify a test process improvement project.

As well as learning more about the TMMi during the workshop each attendee will be provided with the information and practical materials needed to do an evaluation of their own companies test maturity level.

Key learning points

- Understanding the objectives and (intermediate) results achieved in the TMMi Foundation
- Understanding of the TMMi model and its practical implementation
- Practical application of the TMMi assessment techniques

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