2010 UNDER REVIEW

Intensifying Efforts to Enhance Awareness and Accelerate Capability Development

The year 2010 has been a remarkable year, so far as advancement of our sofware testing industry is concerned. Through the Malaysia Software Testing Hub initiative, a number of key milestones have been achieved and several new activities were introduced to pave the way towards greater achievements in the years to come.

In June, the Q-Laboratory (Q-LAB) was officially opened by Deputy Minister of MOSTI Datuk Haji Fadillah Haji Yusof. The lab had started operating a few months prior to that. The Q-LAB is indeed one of the key elements crucial in achieving the aspiration of MSTH to establish a sustainable software testing ecosystem to meet local as well as global demands for testing services.

Aiming for a wider reach: SOFTEC is envisioned to become a major event in the global sofwtare testing calander. marketplace

Equipped with the latest testing tools and methodologies, the Q-LAB is among the most advanced testing facilities around the globe. It serves the nerve centre for the nation's capability development efforts and the platform for acquisition of leading-edge skills, technologies and methodologies fuel the growth of Malaysia's software testing industry.

On another front, the 3rd edition of flagship event, Software Testing Conference (SOFTEC), was held in July with continuing success both in terms participation and content development. SOFTEC 2010 also attracted interest foreign software professionals. This augurs well with the plan to make SOFTEC a major event in the global software testing annual calendar.

Discussions at SOFTEC 2010 also led to the introduction of Software Testing Straight Talk (STST), a national forum on software testing. A key component of STST is workshop sessions to seek feedback and suggestions from stakeholders on all aspects relevant to the development of national software testing industry. The inaugural edition, STST 2010 was held in October with participation from government, academia and industry sectors. STST is set to be an annual affair for the industry.

To complement STST, smaller forum/ workshops, modelled after STST, have been incorporated into the MSTH roadshow which includes Recruitment Drive for the MSTH Profesional Scholarship scheme.

These focused forums involve discussion/ brainstorming sessions on specific topics among selected individuals and industries most relevant to the location. So far, such sessions had been held in Kota Kinabalu and Kuantan.

As we progress further, refinements of existing programmes are expected in a dynamic market such as software testing. New programmes are also likely to be introduced to expand the current scope of activities as well as cater for new requirements that may arise in the future.

Activitites for 2011 are being planned and mapped out for implementation. Based on the set targets, one can expect even a busier year as the Board will be more aggressive in executing its programmes.

IN THE NEWS

Recruitment Drive Returns to KL, Kuching is Next Destination

After stop-overs in Kuantan and Kuala Terengganu on November 28 and 29 and December 4 repectively, the Recruitment Drive returns to Kuala Lumpur on December 18 and 19.

The MSTB have been conducting recruitment drive at several destinations in its effort to recruit professionals for a six month training that will resulted in the provision of International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB) Certification. Participants may also be offered job placement and the end of the training.

The trainings conducted at the Q-Lab will expose participants on hands-on testing utilising the world-class tools that was installed earlier this year. They will also be tutored to sit for the ISTQB certifications and examinations up to Advance Level.

The last quarter of 2010 also seen the Recruitment Drive being integrated with Q-Talk industry dialogue series to generate greater awareness on software testing. The road-show kicked off in with Recruitment Drive in Penang early October before moving on to Kota Kinabalu (October 29 – 31) and Miri (November 6 and 7). Under the current event calendar, the final leg of the Recruitment Drive will be held in Kuching on January 15 and 16. New schedule are being planned for the rest of 2011.

Evaluating potential: MSTB Q-Industry Manager Badrulhisyam Abu Bakar (right) interviewing a candidate during the Recruitment Drive in Kuantan

MSTB Recruitment Drive

Date:
Jan 15 -16, 2011
Venue:
Pullman Kuching
1A Jalan Mathies

For more information, contact:
E-mail: jobs@mstb.org or
Tel: 03-7874 2985
Mobile: 017 - 206 6079
Website: www.qportal.com.my

EDITORIAL BOARD

COVER STORY

Symbolic gesture: Datuk Haji Mohd. Sharkar Bin Haji Shamsudin (3rd from right) unveiling the Q-TAP logo witnessed by (from left) MSTB Director Amiruddin Jaafar Sidek, Director of Pahang Economic Planning Unit Datuk Mahadiah Mohd, MSTb President Mastura Abu Samah, PTR Executive Directoor Dato' Sharifah Fatimah binti Syed Omar and Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission's Eastern Regional Manager Mohd. Shafie Harun

Software Testing Capability Boost for Malaysian Organisations

The MSTB rolled out another new program designed to accelerate the development of the country's software testing industry under the MSTH initiative. Unveiled in Kuantan recently , the Quality–Test Assist Programme (Q-TAP) is intended to help local organisations to include software testing in their organisation and eventually develop their in-house software testing capability.

Q-TAP includes trainings and certifications of members of the software testing teams from participating organisations. Participants will also be exposed to testing tools and methodologies available at the Q-Lab. And throughout the duration of the programme, participants will receive consultancy and guidance from highly-experienced consultants from Q-Lab.

MSTB President Mastura Abu Samah explained that apart from helping participants develop in-house skills and capability, Q-TAP also helps participating organisations generate highly-skilled and certified professionals in the fields on software testing and software quality assurance (SQA).

"Specialisation in this field will contribute

towards fulfilling national aspirations to attain the status of high income and high productivity economy," she said.

"This is in line with approach adopted for the Economic Transformation Plan (ETP) which are based on 10 Primary Premises as outlined in the 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP), unveiled by the Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak last June.

"Apart from that, software testing also contributes towards achieving several others in the list, particularly those related to innovation, human capital, inclusive development, smart partnership and competitiveness," she said.

Mastura added that the software testing industry is of strategic value to the country. Other than the direct monetary returns, the industry also promotes growth of other industries through improvement in product quality, services as well as work culture.

"As an industry, software testing is a high value-add sector which is rapidly growing around the world.

News Break

Tales of the Smartphones and Software Flaws

The iPhone and Android are competing smart phones. Beside being 'smart', the two have another thing in common: both have bugs in their software, much to the dismay of users.
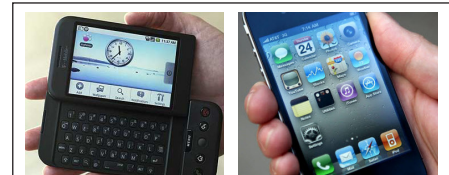
As the world ushered in the New Year, iPhone's software had acted up resulting the built-in alarm clock taking a 'holiday' and keep its silence.

With the Android, meanwhile, your text message may ended up being sent to a non-intended number, courtesy of a fault in the software.

The worse part in these cases is that both bugs have been discovered much earlier, and yet, they were not fixed. Android's problem have been highlighted since June 2010 while the iPhone 4's alarm system issue had surfaced in November.

Based on various online articles, the errors on both iPhone and Android would only occur under specific circumstances, a bug is a bug, nonetheless and it should be fixed.

In the latest development, Apple had committed that the iPhone alarm system would work properly beginning January 3, 2011. The YAndroid party meanwhile, has upgraded the vvv complaint's from medium to critical label. Hopefully this can be read as "the solution is coming out soon"

Flaws inside: Android (left) and iPhone offer tremendous convenience but the software bug can be the deal-breaker

It is not unusual for software to have bugs but not fixing discovered ones quickly enough is a different issue. Perhaps the bugs were more than just faulty codes that simple patches would not work.

Recurring problems could point to design flaws, which are harder to fix after products are released.

Indeed this gives credits to the philosophy of early testing where testing are done throughout the development cycle, right from requirements development stage.

Kuala Lumpur, July 6 & 7, 2011

ZOOM-IN

Delegations from MAMPU and UPM on Official Visit to Q-Lab

One for the album: Delegates from MAMPU and their Q-Lab hosts in a group photo during the visit. The visitors were keen to learn more about the lab and looked at possibilities of collaborations in a near future

The Q-Lab continues to receive visitors from various organisations interested to find out more about software testing and programmes run by MSTB under the Malaysia Software Testing Hub initiative.

The latest visit was by a group from the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation Planning Unit (MAMPU) comprising 11 officers, headed by their System Development Consultant K.Kathirasan.

On hand to greeting the visiting group were MSTB Directors Michael Yau and Amiruddin Jaafar Sidek, who gave a briefing on Q-Lab activities, capabilities and facilities.

The visitors were keen learn more about the lab and explore possible collaborations between the two parties. In the near term, they are looking at some 'proof-of-concept' projects before proceeding to explore further possibilities.

Prior to the visit by MAMPU, a delegation from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) also made a trip to the Q-Lab.

Testing it out: *Visitors from UPM having some 'hands-on' experience*

The delegates comprised lecturers from UPM's Computer Science and Technology Faculty.

During the exchange of ideas and suggestions, the two parties have agreed to have further discussions and work towards a collaboration in such an arrangement where CTFL training and examinations can be offered for UPM's final year student under Q-Cap and UPM lecturers can go on sabbaticals at Q-Lab.

Top Malaysian in ISTQB Advanced Certification

Meet Muhammad Azam Alias. The 26-year-old is the first Malaysian to achieve the full certification under the ISTQB Certified Tester Advanced Level (CTAL). He is currently attached to the Q-Lab under the MSTH Professional Scholarship Scheme administered by MSTB.

The ISTQB's CTAL comprises Advanced Level Test Manager, Advanced Level Test Analyst and Advanced Level Technical Test Analyst. To go for the Advanced Level, candidates must hold the Foundation Level Certificate (CTFL) and have sufficient practical experience, based on evaluation by the Exam Board.

Azam holds a Bachelor of Science (Biotechnology) with Honours degree from University of Manchester, United Kingdom in July 2008. Piror to joining the Scheme, he was an Information Officer at Iskandar Associates, Malaysia

The Scheme entails six months full-time training at Q-Lab. Participants get to train under a real working environment and on real projects and get access to the latest testing tools and methodologies. The programme also includes ISTQB CTFL and CTAL, as well as International Requirements Engineering Board (IREB) Certified Professional Requirements Engineer (CPRE). They will also be equipped with relevant technology and soft skill sets.

LOCAL FRONT

Malaysia Set to Have More Job Opportunities for Software Testing Professionals

Based on information collated over the Internet, there were more than 600 vacancies for IT professionals for testing-related positions in Malaysia in December 2010. Apart from outright software testers positions, other jobs available that require software testing capability include software engineers, software developers, automation testing engineers and QA engineers.

The opportunities also range from entry-level positions, right up to management-level that include project management.

This is indeed a good indication and in line with industry expectation that the number will grow rapidly within the next couple of years.

As explained by MSTB President Mastura Abu Samah, demand for software testing professionals would double or triple as more organisations see the value and importance of software testing and incorporated it as integral to their product development and service deliveries.

Aggressive programmes to accelerate the development of Malaysia's software testing industry under the MSTH initiative is expected to be the major factor in driving up demand for software testing professionals across industries and organisations.

Currently, strong emphasis is put on capability development of individuals and

Centre of Excellence: The Q-Lab plays vital role in MSTH's capability development programmes

more recently, among organisations, through professional certifications.

Through the programmes, the number of certified software testing professionals in Malaysia has jumped from 50 in 2008 to over 700 as at the end of 2010. The target is to have 10,000 certified professionals in five years time.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

More Challenges and Opportunities Awaits in 2011

The New Near 2011 is set to be another busy year at the software testing front, as we continue to intensify our efforts to accelerate the development of the industry. Definitely, efforts will be doubled to generate greater awareness on software testing across the board, capability development would continue to be the key components of MSTB's activities in the year 2011.

Indeed talent development and professional training will remain the main thrust of these activities as it is important that we have a pool of qualified and certified testers if Malaysia is to be the preferred choice for software testing services, particularly on the high-end side.

Among others, we will continue with the recruitment and training of certified testers at the Q-Lab, and at the same time, endeavour to engage top management in the industry through our Q-Talk industry dialogue series. With the introduction of Q-TAP, we also expect greater involvement of Malaysian organisations in our activities.

I would certainly like to encourage organisations, regrdaless of their sizes, to take advantage the schemes being offered and embrace software testing as part of the standard operating procedures in ensuring the quality of their deliveries.

Our annual conference, SOFTEC, will make its fourth appearance in July 2011 and once again I would call for individuals and organisations to take advantage of the pool of international speakers and software testing professionals who will be sharing their knowledge and expertise through workshops, tutorials and keynote addresses.

There are great many challenges for us to face heads on as well as opportunities that are abounds. We are thankful for the supports we have been given from government and the industry and look forward to continuous and greater support in 2011.

On behalf of the Borad of Directors, I wish you all the best and may you have a Great New Year!

NEWS

Kuantan to be the Gateway to East Cost Economic Region

"In fact, the software testing industry has been identified as a new source of economy growth under the 10MP," Mastura said at the official unveiling of Q-TAP in Kuantan recently.

The event was co-hosted by Pahang Technology Resources Sdn Bhd, a Pahang state-owned entity set up to spearhead Pahang's push to accelerate the development of its ICT and knowledge-based economy.

The event was officiated by Datuk Haji Mohd. Sharkar Bin Haji Shamsudin, chairman of Pahang State Committee for Information, Science, Technology and Innovation. Kuantan, Mastura said, is a strategic choice as the gateway for MSTB to expand MTSH programmes to the rest of the East Cost Economic Region (ECER).

Meeting the Press: Datuk Sahrkar (right) and Puan Mastura answering questions from members of the Press after the offical unveiling on Q-TAP

Malaysian Organisations Have Much to Gain

Q-TAP marks the another step forward in efforts to enhance Malaysian capability in software testing as outlined under the MSTH initiative. Prior to this, the focus of has been very much on enhancing capability at individual level.

Briefly explained, Q-TAP is designed to help participating organisations to establish their own software testing units that conform to internationally-accepted standards and practices. It will run for four to six months.

Benefits to participating organisations include ability to establish in-house software testing capability; having in-house trained and certified software testing professionals; ability to develop better testing processes; and ability to achieve better product quality, which eventually translates into higher revenues. Participating organisations will also receive consultancy services from Q-Lab throughout the duration of the programme.

Pertinent features of the programme include:

- Trainings and professional certifications of team members (up to four individuals) from participating organisations at Q-Lab
- Trainings/certifications cover International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB) Certified Tester Foundation Level (CTFL) and International Requirements Engineering Board (IREB) Certified Professional for Requirements Engineering (CPRE) schemes
- Training/exposure to testing tools and methodologies available at the Q-Lab
- Review of participation organisations' existing processes
- Product testing by the organisations' own teams at Q-Lab, under the guidance consultants from Q-Lab
- The teams will return to their respective organisations and continue to:
  - Develop customised processes for the organisation, under guidance from Q-Lab's consultants
  - Continuation of product testing
  - On-site consultation to help the organisations review and improve their in-house testing processes

AROUND THE GLOBE

Bug Halts Missile Testing

The US Navy halted tests of an Alliant Techsystems Inc's anti-radar missile following 6 software or circuit-card failures in the first 12 trials.

It's "a rare occurrence" to stop combat testing so soon, the Pentagon's office of operational testing said in an e-mail provided by Cheryl Irwin, a spokeswoman for the US Defense Department. The office said it doesn't know how long it will take the Navy and Alliant Techsystems to evaluate fixes and resume testing.

Testing stopped on September 3. One hundred flights are planned to evaluate the missile's effectiveness in destroying enemy missile radar, with the initial flights to assess missile guidance, internal diagnostics and pre-launch communications with the pilot, Navy and Pentagon officials said.

The Pentagon uses the tests to determine whether a system will go into production. Minneapolis-based Alliant Techsystems has said it may see as much as US$1.1 billion in revenue from missile sales over a decade if the Navy decides to go ahead with orders. - Bloomberg

NZ Health ID Glitch

Software bug has been blamed for glitches in New Zealand's troubled computer system for identifying patients who are eligible for state funding.

And because of a faulty computer programme, some patients are listed as being New Zealand residents even though they aren't.

Bug + Overloads = Crash

Server overloads and a bug in Skype for Windows have been cited as the reason for the two-day outage for the net phone firm recently.

The two events combined to create a cascade of problems that managed to knock out much of the network underpinning the phone service. Skype is assessing how its network is built to stop the problem recurring.

Writing on the Skype blog, Lars Rabbe, chief information officer at the company, said the problems started on 22 December, when some of its servers that handle instant messaging started getting overloaded.

About 50% of all Skype users ran the buggy 5.0.0.152 version of the software.