

# "It Depends..."

## Context Driven Testing - What does it mean to have *no* "best practices"?

*A personal view*



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<http://compendiumdev.co.uk/context>



# I was a teenage methodology monster!

**\*Gasp in amazement\***

As you see him know exactly what do do, *before he is even on site.*



**\*You will Be shocked\***

As the rework mounts to truly heroic proportions

**\*Can you bear to see\***

Him justify his actions by quoting text book after text book and expert after expert.

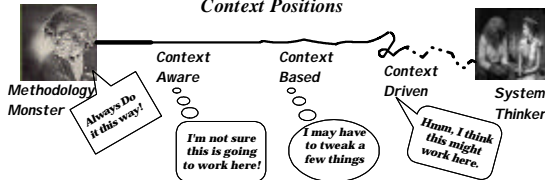
*He can do  
no wrong.*

*Coming soon to a project near you.*



## Introduction

### Context Positions

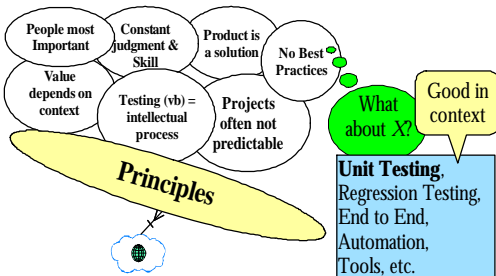


## I ceased my evil ways

*Over time, kind of...*

- ? became more context aware
- ? asked more questions – different types of questions (how? what?)
- ? worked more closely with people – retaining independence of thought
- ? became more of a consultant than a salesman/pusher
- ? became more effective as a tester
- ? Less identification: "I am a structured tester"

## What is context driven testing



[www.context-driven-testing.com](http://www.context-driven-testing.com)

## Isn't Unit Testing a best practice?

- ? *Unit Testing* =
  - Any testing done by the developer
  - Any testing done under the debugger
  - Only testing which is automated at the code level
  - <insert your definition here>

*That isn't well defined enough to be a best practice*

## What about X?

- ? Regression Testing
- ? End to End testing
- ? Full Code Coverage
- ? Automated Testing
- ? Fully Scripted Testing
- ? Automated Test Data Generation
- ? Non-Functional Testing
- ? V-Model, etc.

X is Not defined here  
 X might be good  
 X is not a guarantee of bestness

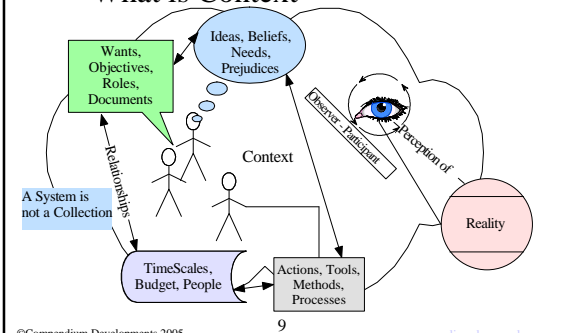
What is the reasoning behind wanting this practice?

## X is a best practice for us

- ? Oh really. Honestly...
  - What extra baggage has X given you?
  - When did you last wish that you didn't do X?
  - Did you ever think...X is a little out of place here?
  - When did you last think of an alternative to X?
  - How did you decide that?
  - What are you actually doing?

It might very well be a good practice here. Let me check.

## What is Context



## What can you expect from context-driven testers?

- ? "It depends..." on the context, but generally (I suspect they will)...
  - Ask a lot of questions of you and of themselves to explore the context and avoid assumptions
  - Change their minds, Re-plan
  - Be able to justify what they are doing, in terms of the context as they perceive it, not in calls to authority
  - Know their techniques and practices – assumptions, presuppositions, pros & cons

## How can you help them?

- ? Tell them not just what you are doing, but what your aims are, what your needs are **Dictate Context Less**
    - Don't say "Do this & that and everything will be ok"
    - Wants are not Needs. Want less, Need more. **Explain**
  - ? Provide examples of general situations you face
  - ? avoid "I'd like to help but..." **Detail**
  - ? Be truthful and trust **Explore**
- Be One **From "Scoring a whole in one" by Dr Edward Martin Baker**

## Identify your Context

- ? What did we say we were doing?
- ? What are we actually doing?
- ? Who for?
- ? Why? What will we gain by doing that?
- ? Remind me - what is our aim/objective?
- ? What could we do instead?
- ? What would happen if we did something else?

## Learning More About Context

- ? [www.context-driven-testing.com](http://www.context-driven-testing.com)
- ? Yahoo group “software-testing”
- ? I recommend:
  - General Semantics, NLP, Gerald Weinberg's books, Systems Thinking/Theory, “Lessons Learned in Software Testing”
- ? Others recommend: *(and I might too, I just haven't explored these enough yet)*
  - Critical Thinking, Epistemology

Visit <http://www.compendiumdev.co.uk/context>