

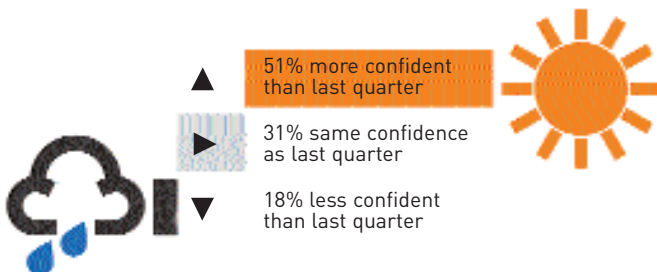


Welcome to the latest edition of MarketWatch from Centre4 Testing, an objective look at the current mood, pay rates, trends and hot topics in the software testing market.

After 7 years of quarterly reports, this issue takes on a new format. We've included all the data we know you've grown to love, such as rate trends and market sentiment from our On-Site solutions, covering contract & permanent recruitment of testers PLUS information for you on what's happening in the sectors covered by our On-Demand Cloud Testers and finally some thoughts from On-Track, our test consultancy teams.

Market Sentiment

Our last issue of MarketWatch reported a resurgence of confidence in the IT market. It's slipped a little this time around but the majority of you, with 51% of the vote tell us you feel more confident about prospects for the next 3 months. In the Spring this majority was a more significant 68%. Its interesting that Test Managers are more confident, at 58% as a subset, than their junior Test Analyst counterparts, with 45% of the vote. After all, we would expect Test Managers to have a view over a longer horizon than their team members. In fact, twice as many Test Analysts as Test Managers felt negative about the short-term outlook, with an overall blended 18% of our survey fearing dark clouds this winter, which is more than twice the number of sceptics last time around. 31% of respondents sat on the fence, expressing equilibrium in the months ahead.



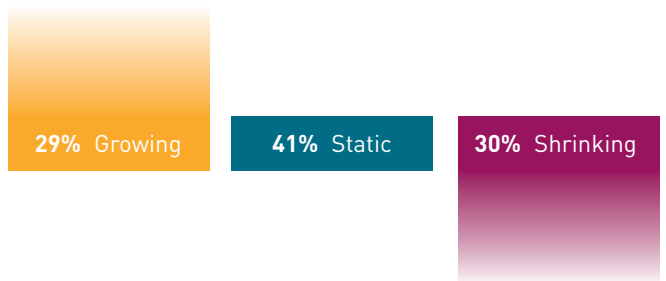
Outlook for the next 3 months

Only a few months ago the press observed that fears of a double-dip recession had subsided and we shared that view. However, recent data on growth has put the experts in a spin and many analysts have published revised, downwards forecasts for the UK economy as a whole. The banking sector, which has been the powerhouse for post-recession recovery, has taken a battering in recent weeks and several banks have reduced their contractor numbers and applied carte blanche rate cuts, akin to a process they went through in 2009. Despite this, we are happy to report that 70% of contributors to MarketWatch have witnessed either growth or no-change in the size of the test teams at those organisations employing them. More specifically, 29% saw an increase in headcount and 41% pointed to a flat-line. That leaves 30% who note a decline in team sizes.

Changes in size of on-site test teams

Those observing growth largely put this down to business expansion for their organisation as a whole, with a few telling us it was merger activity that fuelled a growing testing contingent. Perhaps

predictably, a change in contractor numbers was the usual means of flexing a team size prior to structural change.



ON-SITE



Data for this section of MarketWatch is provided by Centre4 Testing On-Site services, which provides specialist contract & permanent recruitment services.

Earlier this year, pay rates hit £330 per day for contract Test Analysts. This was a jump of 4% on the previous quarter and it comes as no surprise therefore that rates, along with gung-ho confidence have eased a little this time around. The day rate now stands at £328 but remember this is an average that is skewed a little by the relatively high rates paid by the financial services sector, which currently accounts for a large proportion of overall usage of test resources in the UK.



Average pay rate for contract Test Analysts

£328 per day is a notable increase of over 6% on last summer's average £309 per day and is nearly 9% up on the £301 per day average in the summer of 2009. The outlook for day rates is somewhat at odds with the confidence barometer, which although healthy is sounding a note of caution. The dichotomy is that Test Analysts tell us they're hoping for £345 per day for their next contract, which is an unlikely rise of 5%.

The picture for Test Managers is rosier. In the spring issue of MarketWatch we reported an average £442 day rate. In the last 3 months or so this has jumped by over 5% to £466 per day.

ON-DEMAND



This section of MarketWatch is produced by Cloud Testers, Centre4 Testing's solution for On-Demand testing by teams of professional testers working remotely, testing cross-browser, operating system and device compatibility in the real-world.

When testing websites and online applications, it's critical to know your audience and how they access the web. This new section of MarketWatch is an extract of our analysis of the usage of browsers, operating systems and devices. Please contact us if you would like to receive complimentary copies of our regular detailed analysis.

Desktop browser usage



Over the period June to August, the use of Google Chrome grew by more than 10%, from 21.13% of users to 23.41%. This was almost entirely at the expense of Internet Explorer, which slipped by nearly 5%.



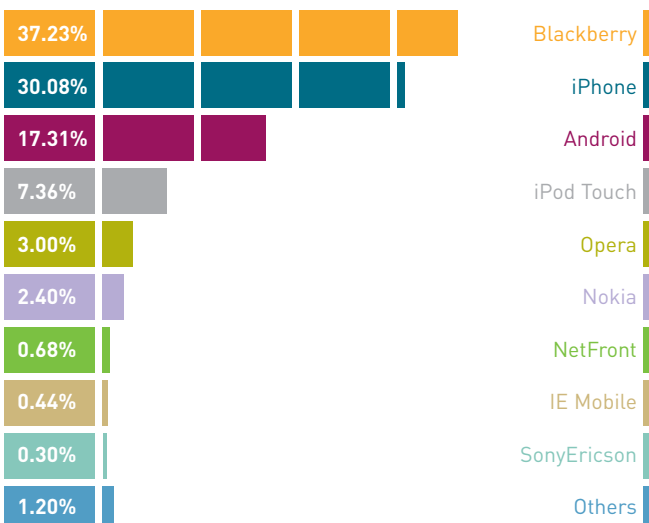
Chrome users up by 10% in 3 months



Both Chrome and Internet Explorer have recently embarked on 4-weekly release cycles but its Chrome that's bringing out new versions - 4 this year alone - and driving users along a mandated upgrade path. Some 90% of Chrome users upgraded from v12 to v13 in August alone.

With 92.16% of web traffic via the desktop, that left 7.84% of traffic in August originating from mobile devices.

Mobile browser usage



Of course, there are many versions of the desktop and mobile browsers that we've included above and we track the use of more than 30 versions.

With usability testing across browsers and devices growing in importance alongside functional testing, Cloud Testers avoids the use of emulators and proves your system in the real-world. Please let us know if you would further information or would like to receive regular in-depth browser, operating system and device usage reports from Centre4 Testing.

ON-TRACK



Centre4 Testing's test consultancy services are branded 'On-Track'. Test automation, performance testing and test strategy are the core focus of the On-Track test practices.

In this issue of MarketWatch we take a brief look at Test Driven Development, an approach to testing that is enjoying the limelight in gaining traction. So what does it mean?

Test Driven Development (TDD) is a development approach that involves developers creating tests prior to any creation of code. The tests are typically implemented using unit test frameworks with tools such as JUnit, NUnit etc. Because the test is written up front, without any code implemented, it will naturally fail. The goal is then to develop code that will enable the test to pass.

TDD tests rely upon the repetition of a very short and tightly contained development cycle and should not involve dependencies on other components within a process. Where testing relies on interactions with other components, this is no longer unit or component testing but instead 'integration' testing. Mocks and stubs are frequently used.

The individual unit tests and component tests can be added to an automated regression suite, which would run as part of the Continuous Integration process. The failure of tests indicating that either additional implementation is required or that previously working code has been impacted by another change.

In terms of where TDD 'fits' in the development lifecycle, it is most applicable at the code development and unit testing stage. In some respects, the Development team is charged with 'self-policing' the adoption of TDD within their development practices but testers are often the advocates of TDD. TDD is referred to as an 'Upside-Down' approach by many developers, requiring a concerted 'mind shift' away from the traditional development approach of developing code before the tests. Early adoption in a project is critical. Once the project is well under way it becomes almost impossible to change the approach. Inclusion in an Agile environment can be fairly seamless and by ensuring that every component is tested can give the developer and subsequent users a greater level of confidence in the code produced. Craig Hodgson, Centre4 Testing's Head of Automation Practice, concludes, "As well as a cultural shift there are other challenges, not least the design and implementation of a pragmatic Automated Test Strategy and whilst the commitment required by you should not be underestimated, the results from TDD can be extremely worthwhile."