



Welcome to the latest edition of MarketWatch from Centre4 Testing, an objective look at the current mood, trends and hot topics in the software testing marketplace. Our report is formed from the results of an extensive survey of our clients and wide community of software testers during March 2011.

In this issue of MarketWatch we highlight the challenges of device testing and the fact that our users now require us to serve up their data on whatever device they are using at that moment in time, including a desktop in the office, Blackberry on the train or iPad on vacation.

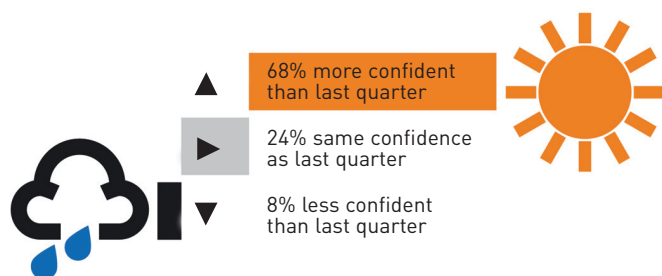
### Market Sentiment

The biggest single message in this issue of MarketWatch is that confidence is surging again. After spiking a year ago and then slipping slowly back towards the Autumn period there's now a real sense of demand in the IT sector as a whole, or at least pockets of it which we'll discuss later.

**“An encouraging 68% of our survey respondents today are feeling more confident”**

An encouraging 68% of our survey respondents today are feeling more confident about prospects for the next 3 months. Although this is short of where we were 12 months ago, when 88% of you felt good about the outlook, the higher number is explained as the outlook for the whole year. In fact our regular index quickly dropped to 66% by the summer and further still to 46% by the end of the year.

The other good news is that only 8% of testers surveyed are expressing any concern about the months ahead, leaving 24% to sit on the fence ie support the status quo.

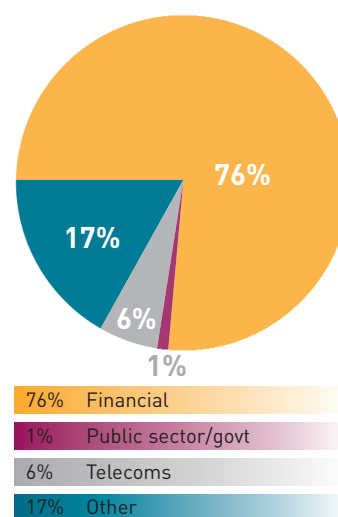


### Outlook for the next 3 months

Fears of a double-dip recession have subsided after the UK's services sector - which makes up three quarters of economic output - saw a rebound in activity. The services Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) compiled by Markit/CIPS surpassed market expectations by rising to 54.7, the highest level since May 2010. A PMI reading below 50 indicates a contraction in the industry. This surge is at odds with what's happening on the High

Street, where the media have reported that sales during February were the weakest for almost two years, "showing just how hard the consumer economy has been hit by rising household bills and declining confidence". Many of us are becoming blasé about these polarized views. It's the same conundrum with inflation which although ticking-up fast, is almost unilaterally explained away by the racy oil price.

### Sectors in demand



Last time around, financial services were the dominant in-demand sector by far and there's no material change this time. Banks are using our services to test unified systems resulting from some of the mega-mergers of a couple of years ago and demand is also being fuelled by regulatory changes, such as the forthcoming Basel 3 liquidity mandates, IFRS9, 'faster payments' and, in the insurance sector, Solvency 2. Ryan Hannigan, Director of Resourcing at Centre4 Testing confirms "clients are clamouring for our more experienced testers who can demonstrate strong topical business knowledge".

### Rate of pay

Pay rates have risen yet again and whilst we derided contract Test Analysts for setting a target of £333 per day for 2011 it looks likely that we'll have to apologise and eat our own words. The average day rate now stands at £330, which is a rise of 4% and tops the previous quarters 3% increase.

Day rates for Test Managers jumped a massive 5% to £442 towards the end of last year but seem to have reached a plateau over recent months, standing at £442 today. This is exactly what Test Managers told us was happening and its gratifying to report that your predictions were spot on. In fact, Test Analysts too are now telling us that they do not expect another rise anytime soon.

## Device Testing

So what does this Spring issue of MarketWatch and the newly announced iPad 2 have in common? Besides being highly topical, content rich, visually pleasing and having a 'must-have' quality! Answer: they hit the street at about the same time and new releases just keep coming around. And that's the point about device testing – just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water, along comes the next iteration. To use Apple's own marketing phrase – "this changes everything, again". Testers are already tearing their hair out with ever-shorter software release cycles and browser compatibility testing, having to contend with the fact that popular browsers Google Chrome and Internet Explorer are entering 4-weekly release cycles. They now have another layer of complexity from a user community that is demanding their applications be served up to them on whatever device they choose and the challenge is only going to get more intense. As Apple themselves state, **80%** of Fortune 100 companies are either currently testing or deploying the iPad.

### "device testing - this changes everything, again"

Even if their internal user base isn't using the iPad or iPhone as a business tool, you can be sure that every organisation with any retail presence is going to have to ensure their applications run on at least a core of mainstream devices. Computer Weekly (15-21 Feb 2011) ran a piece on Domino's Pizza, where the IT Director stated that not only do online sales represent **36%** of total sales, but an iPhone app launched last August has already contributed £1m of pizza orders. He went on to say that an Android application is due to be released this year. Nimble organisations will respond quickly to where users are directing them so don't go thinking that if you've based your strategy around Apple and Android technology, you're home and dry - we know of one lab that supports more than 2,000 devices on over 28 different carrier networks worldwide! But ultimately the assurance often only comes from user acceptance testing 'for real'.

The problem is just as intense in the social-media segment, where Bret Taylor, Facebook's CTO, tells us "mobile is the primary focus for our platform this year (2011)". And, as he says, any update has to suit the many different mobile platforms operating today. HTC have even launched Facebook phones, running Google's Android operating system. We might have grimaced when the marketing geniuses at the newly wedded T-Mobile and Orange came up with the entity name "Everything Everywhere", but they couldn't have summed-up the challenge for testers more succinctly.

### "Everything Everywhere, that's the challenge for testers"

Automating device testing brings its own set of problems. Never mind your huge investment in the mainstream tools, don't be afraid of using the right tool for the job and get yourself some expert advice in short-circuiting your learning curve. Otherwise you'll chase your own tail researching this minefield or, worse, find yourself investing blood, sweat and budget into shoehorning

that tool of yours and making it fit, even when your professional instincts tell you to go a different route. Craig Hodgson, Centre4 Testing's Head of Automation Practice, advises "focus on your deliverables - whilst Selenium, for example, might be the open source tool of the moment, don't forget to apply your evaluation and proof of concept methods to the growing number of options available to you. Licensing costs are only a part of the significant investment organisations make in automation".

## Summary

Confidence in the software testing market is high right now. The financial sector is providing the impetus and two of Centre4 Testing's larger High Street banking clients are gobbling up our high-quality testers. And whilst the press reports a quiet High Street itself, three of the largest brands are demanding testers from us today. But it's likely that rates will start to plateau, having spiked in recent months. As day rates for contractors creep towards consultancy rates, now is probably a good time for organisations to consider innovative budget-friendly services such as our Consultancy-on-Demand solution, where expertise is on hand but is only paid for when it is used.

Device testing brings about a whole raft of new challenges. Those of us old enough to remember green screens could not have imagined the plethora of mobile devices today. As the saying goes, "change is constant" and this is what keeps testing interesting. We've always known that IT provides competitive advantage and the IT Director today has to fight for a budget that not only meets the products and services demands of the business but also delivers these to a growing global user base where social media and mobile devices are increasingly woven into their DNA. And while you're thinking about making your applications device-friendly, why not go the whole hog and consider moving them to the cloud? More in our next issue of MarketWatch.

## Take part in MarketWatch

The information in MarketWatch is based upon the hundreds of conversations that we have with testing professionals each week. You can also complete the MarketWatch survey online and download this survey and others going back to 2003 in PDF format, at [www.centre4testing.com](http://www.centre4testing.com) Our thanks as always to everyone who is contributing and a special thanks to those quoted in this issue.

If you have any thoughts or feedback, including ideas for questions we should ask or analysis we should undertake, please contact us on **01273 666 799** or via [marketwatch@centre4testing.com](mailto:marketwatch@centre4testing.com)



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