

Story Testing Patterns Summary

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I will be available for Coaching and Consulting engagements in January 2013. Please [contact me](#) if you're interested.

| Pattern | Generally Good For... | Generally Bad For... |
|---|---|---|
| "Test that..." | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning Story Testers • Simple Tests • Tests hard to describe using the other patterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced Story Testers that know a better pattern. • Tests with a lot of setup logic or behavior logic(try a different pattern) • Tests where behavior depends on numerous test inputs |
| Given/When/Then | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests that require <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ a lot of preconditions or setup, OR ◦ setup that is important or easily forgotten • Tests that have a specific, non obvious trigger • Tests where there are few expected outputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests that have unimportant/simple/obvious preconditions • Tests where there are multiple different inputs and multiple different outputs • Tests where a single Given/When/Then only describes one of numerous very similar test scenarios |
| Specification By Example - Conceptual or Concrete | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests that have numerous: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Inputs that affect output behavior ◦ Outputs/expected behaviors • Tests where it's important to test a lot of different data scenarios • Tests where the trigger event is somewhat obvious • Any test where it seems like a table would be useful to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ describe the test better, or ◦ help explore all of the possible inputs and outputs for a test. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple tests • Tests that are more about verifying simple UI behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ For instance – “Test that an error message is displayed when the user enters an incorrect password.” • Test where there is really only one input or precondition |
| Bullet Points | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams that are highly co-located with PO • Stories that are very small(2-3 days) • Tests that are very simple • Tests with fairly obvious expected behavior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed Teams • Stories that are large (which is a bad habit anyway) • Tests that are not simple • Tests with non-obvious expected behavior |
| "Test With..." | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams that are highly co-located with PO • Stories that are very small(2-3 days) • Tests that are very simple • Tests with fairly obvious expected behavior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed Teams • Stories that are large (which is a bad habit anyway) • Tests that are not simple • Tests with non-obvious expected behavior |
| Flow Charts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests where the flow of behavior is very complex, and easier to represent with a series of successive questions/answers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally bad for everything else. |
| State Diagrams | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests where a system object can go through numerous (often workflow related) states | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally bad for everything else. |

Remember to strongly prefer index cards(5x8), wiki's, and whiteboards(take photos!) over ALM tools and other electronic documents/tools.