



# Pass on the risks

Every application that is developed has risks, for example functionality that is important to the customer because of possible negative consequences on failure. These risks are important to a tester since they determine which aspects should be thoroughly tested and which aspects have lower priority. A tester will typically learn about the risks by discussions with the customer, product owner and team members. In this activity participants will explore risks related to their application by creating a shared story of failing functionality. Participants are encouraged to imagine the worst that can go wrong with their application when it is being used.

## Activity in one sentence

Create a shared story of failing functionality with a high impact to explore the risks of an application.

## Goal

To create a common view of the risks of an application to determine testing priorities.

## Target group

Team members who would like to improve on identifying high-risk areas which are a priority to testing.

## Necessities and prerequisites

- 2 to 6 participants, preferably team members
- A room with a projector, blackboard or equivalent, enough tables to accommodate participants
- Removable markers
- The start of the story introducing a user of the application and the context. This can be two or three paragraphs setting the stage or a bullet list outlining important aspects
- Camera to record the session, if desired

## Steps

1. Instruct the participants to stand and gather around a blackboard or in a circle
2. Explain to the participants how the shared story of failing functionality from a user perspective will be created
3. Introduce the participants to the start of the story by, for example, reading out loud the first few paragraphs



4. Assign the next team member to expand on the story by imagining the next thing that may go wrong due to failing functionality. The participant should imagine and improvise on the spot. The other participants will listen. Once the participant is finished expanding the story with one failing functionality the turn is passed on. The failing functionality is written down by the participant for later reference
5. The next participant will expand the story with another failing functionality. Once finished, the participant passes on the turn and writes down the failing functionality for later reference
6. Repeat step 4 and 5 until all participants feel they finished a possible user scenario  
When the shared story is finished the failing functionality is collected and discussed. The goal of the discussion is to demine which functionality poses a high risk and which functionality poses a low risk, hereby determining testing priorities

## Outcomes

Participants identified risks of their application by creating a shared story of failing functionality. Hereby they have identified testing priorities.

## Notes

- Encourage the participants to think of anything that can go wrong and not hold back when creating the story. In this activity they are allowed to go over the top to identify all that can fail. During the discussion all relevant risks will be identified

## Variations

- Instead of creating a shared story, have participants write individual stories.
- Instead of creating a spoken shared story, have participants create a written shared story
- Repeat this activity with another user and setting in mind which will allow for different failing functionality



## Example start of story

The only person I have come across up until now is the receptionist. No one is at the coffee machine. The machine is simmering for a bit, so someone will be present, but our paths have not crossed yet. I am looking for my mug, but apparently it is still in the dishwasher. The green one is fine too. Absent minded I fill my mug and walk to my spot.

As I look at the application on my desktop I see it is not an exceptional day. The number of incident is not lower of higher than usual and no incident of exceptional type either. The phone rings as I sit down. Startled I drop my mug and the coffee spills all over my keyboard. Shoot! The keyboard is wet, my spot will be sticky from the sugar. 'Yes? I am sorry could you repeat that?', I say to the person on the other side of the line.

As I quickly sit down on the next spot, I enter into the system the type of incident that has happened. I search for the type, select and add. 'Arg! I clicked on the wrong one! What now?'