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Executive Summary

In 2016, we heard less buzz about agile methods and more about DevOps and “continuous everything,” including continuous delivery, continuous integration, continuous deployment, and continuous testing. The 2015 State of the Software Testing Profession survey showed that DevOps and test automation were at the forefront of many respondents’ minds. In the 2016–2017 report, we confirm that this continues to be true.

While our inaugural survey established benchmarks for attitudes, predictions, and the current state of the software testing profession, the results of TechWell’s second annual survey show the role of tester continues to evolve and adapt thanks to the increasing influence of automation, DevOps,

and agile. Responsibilities and skill sets are still expanding to include more technical skills and domain knowledge. And, most importantly, the role of tester seems to be holding strong for the foreseeable future.

About the Survey

TechWell conducted an online survey for six weeks in May and June 2016 and at the STAREAST testing conference in May 2016. Data was collected from 1,096 software professionals, including testers, managers, developers, analysts, and consultants representing more than thirty industries.

See Appendix 1 and 2 for respondents’ detailed demographic and organizational information.

Key Findings

Top Three Takeaways

1. Testing (still) Isn't Dead
2. It's an Automated World; We Just Get to Live in It
3. Agile and DevOps: Keeping It Continuous

1. Testing (still) Isn't Dead

Our survey showed once again that the testing profession remains pretty healthy. In fact, 80% of respondents disagree with the notion that testing as a profession is dying, and 82% are pushing for “tester” to remain a distinct role. Respondents almost unanimously agree that as long as humans create software, we will need humans to test it. (Fig. 1)

Hiring managers are still on the hunt for software testers. Almost 80% of respondents say their organization maintained or added to the number of testers it employs within the past year, while only one-fifth of respondents say their organization reduced the number of testers. These numbers are essentially unchanged from the previous year's results. (Fig. 2)

Looking ahead, 90% of respondents are confident their organization will continue to employ individuals specifically for testing, i.e., those with “test” in their job titles. (Fig. 3)

“I became a tester by accident. After a career break, I applied for a development job and was offered a temp role in testing while they assessed whether I was good enough to do development. I discovered that I preferred testing.”

—Software tester