

THE
TEST
WALKING DEAD

The Testing Dead

The Zombie Apocalypse Has Already Happened.

A Warning



Zombie Testing?

Zombie testing is any cookie cutter/turnkey application of testing done without regard to how appropriate that testing is for the situation.

Often looks like this:

A small number of 'skilled' people writing test cases for a larger number of unskilled workers to follow.

Origins of the Zombie Apocalypse

A brief history lesson.

In Limerick form

(Apologies for fucking up the cadence in the first line)

WAT?



A brief & unbiased history lesson

Once upon a time, a bloke called Taylor decided that anyone who called themselves a craftsman was dodgy and probably overcharged people, hiding behind the mystic wall of tradition.

He decided to do away with all that and instead took the humanity out of day-to-day work and replace it with recipes that any moron with a modicum of training could do.

The result is the evident in the testing industry as you see it today.

Bird's Eye View of Zombie Testing

Zombie testing is not waterfall testing (but Zombie Testers often congregate under waterfalls)

Waterfall testing is (at least on paper) procedural and by the numbers.

Zombie testers love this procedure because it's in the simple recipe form that they need it to be in for them to execute it without thinking.

Bird's Eye View of Zombie Testing

What happens if you drop that same tester into an Agile context? (big A or small a, doesn't matter) -

They're immediately lost. They complain of chaos and disorganization.

What do Zombie Testers look like?

Zombie Testers come in 3 basic flavors.

The Misguided



The Misguided

Knows only one way, for only one way have they been shown.

Not the most adventurous or self-motivated souls

May have attempted to learn about testing online and discovered the mountains of madness that are the writings of other zombie testers.

Variant: The template weenie

The Passenger



The Passenger

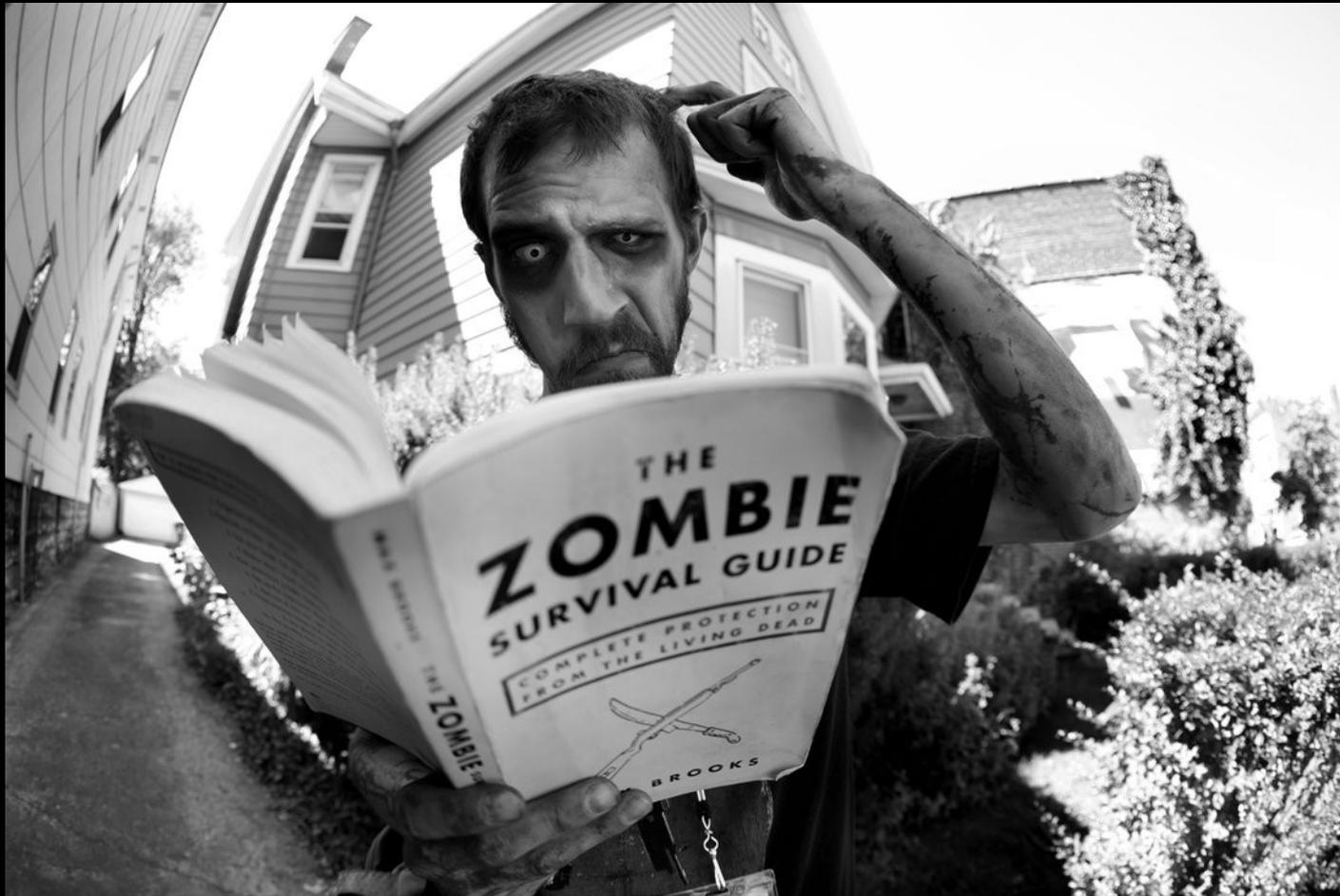
Riding the Testing bus on the way to a better destination.

Typically does enough to avoid reprimand but little more.

Doesn't see a point in improving their testing skills

Variations: The Apathetic

The Confused



The Confused

Believes that they are in 'Quality Assurance'

Enjoys the prestige of the title despite having none of the authority that should accompany it

Doesn't seem to recognize the blame for failure accompanying this position as

'you're doing it wrong'

Variations: The Priest

Is this really a problem?

Why not live and let (un)live?
Are they hurting anyone?

Well, yes actually.

Zombie Test Culture
Segregation of Programmers/Testers
Backlash against testers

The problem is not so much that they exist, but that they are seen as the norm by non-testers.

I have a zombie infestation.
What do I do?

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What do I do?



Dealing with Zombie Testers

Unlike regular zombies, you probably don't want to make that your first option.

Work with the ones who are willing.

What about zombies in general?

You can blog about good testing and run workshops for testers (please do these things)

You can try participating on forums where the testing dead misunderstand loudly at one another

However ...

Zombie testers are being churned out faster than we can rehabilitate them.



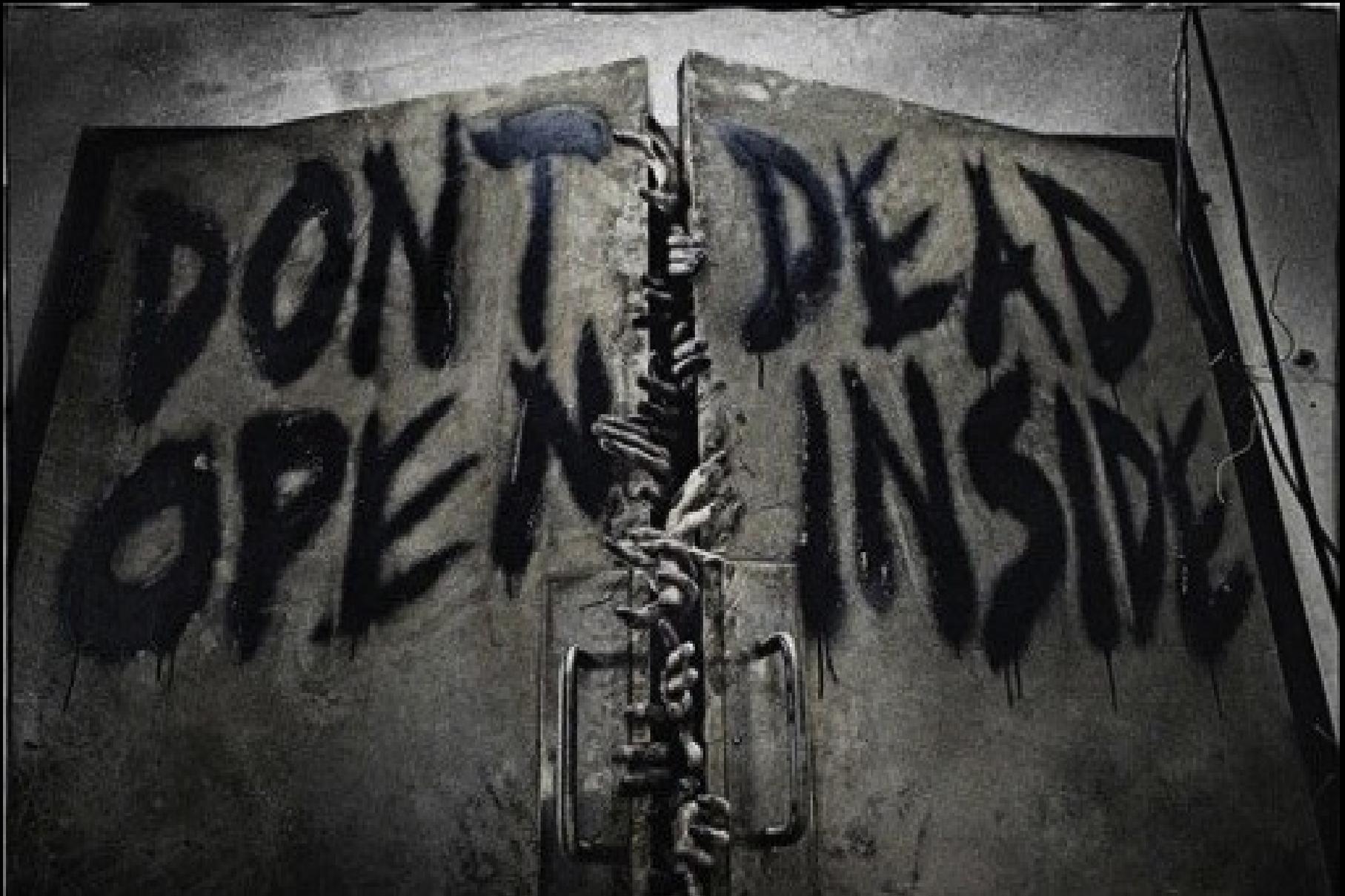
Keep 'em out of the building

Take an active interest in hiring new testers

Help your recruiter and/or HR people understand what you're looking for.

Help them get beyond buzzword bingo

Typical Tester Resume



Keep 'em out of the building

Do they have 6 years of experience or 2 years of experience 3 times?

Can they define software testing without talking about procedures and test cases?

Can they define characteristics of good testing?

Do they display natural curiosity?

Can they communicate beyond grunts & moans?

A brief word on certification

I suspect we sometimes unfairly lay the blame for zombie testing at the feet of certification.

Certification doesn't create zombie testers*

It's a clever way of profiting from ignorance on both sides of the equation.

*but it is like spray-on credibility for them

What's the Real Issue?

We need

the people that hire testers

the people that manage testers

the people that testers serve

to understand what software testing is.

What's the Real Issue?

The challenge is in presenting this to them in a way that is both meaningful and compelling.

Easier said than done, especially for management level people.

How do you deal with Zombie Testers?

The illusion of controllable, measurable testing is compelling and attractive.

The alternative sounds like a lot of hard work.
(Why think if you don't have to?)

They may not think it affects them at all. (I don't care how it gets done, as long as it gets done)

Responses

Interesting questions arise from educating people about what testing really is

How do you measure it?

How do you know if people are doing their job?

If testers aren't responsible for release, what *are* they responsible for?

Responses

Depending on the level of organizational dysfunction, you will likely need to do a degree of re-education of your non-testing peers.

Set expectations - A testers code of conduct – let them know what you will and will not do

Reorganize workflow, release decision making

Propose your own tester measurement solution

What Can You Do?

Present at conferences for Programmers, Project Managers, Recruiters

Offer guest lectures at universities for students of computer science and information systems

Attend gatherings for programmers. Get to know each other. Talk about testing.

Regularly invite these people to your tester events. (Even if you have to bribe them with the promise of alcohol)

References

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Thank You

Questions?

