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Quality assurance is now a business priority to help deliver trusted enterprise digital transformation

Latest edition of the World Quality Report highlights that quality assurance has steadily evolved from an independent activity to a fully integrated function in organizations

Paris, November 5, 2020 – The 12th edition of the World Quality Report 2020-21 (WQR), released today by Capgemini, Sogeti, and Micro Focus, shows the steady evolution of quality assurance (QA) from a backroom discipline to an integral part of wider enterprise digital transformation. Contributing to business growth and business outcomes was the highest rated objective for testing and QA at 74% - up 6 percentage points from 2018.

The WQR 2020 highlights that expectations from QA have been increasing with an upward trend across various strategic objectives including the need for QA to support business growth and the importance of ensuring end-user satisfaction. There has been steady and promising progress hindered only slightly by recurring struggles, also noted in previous editions, that include skill gaps and getting a return on investment on test automation.

The adoption of agile and DevOps is steadily increasing, but challenges remain

In line with the trend observed in the last two years, this year too saw an acceleration in the adoption of Agile and DevOps methodologies. While there is a marked focus in increasing the level of test automation and shifting testing to the left[1] using Agile and DevOps, achieving higher levels of in-sprint automation[2] and lack of expertise within the QA team to achieve the desired objectives remain challenging.

Expectations of the benefits that AI and ML can bring to quality assurance remain high

The uptake of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in QA has also increased. 88% of respondents said that AI was now the strongest growth area of their test activities, and 86% consider AI a key criterion for selecting new QA solutions. Even though the benefits may not yet be fully in reach, the vast majority are enthusiastic about the prospects for AI and ML. The greatest challenge in applying AI and ML in QA was identified as skill gaps, mentioned by 34% of respondents (down two percentage points from last year).

Test automation: Organizations are working to achieve greater control of their QA activities

Previous World Quality Reports have consistently shown challenges in the test automation arena. In achieving quality assurance to a professional's desired level of test automation, the most common challenge in 2019 was the frequency with which applications were changing. In previous years, the lack of people with sufficient specialist skills and experience within test automation was highlighted. In the 2020 survey organizations expressed a degree of confidence when they were asked for their views on various aspects of test automation: 68% said they have the required automation tools while 63% have enough time to automate tests. However, despite these promising statistics, only 37% felt they get a return on that investment, indicating a gap between confidence and results.

[1] "Shift Left" is a practice intended to find and prevent defects early in the software delivery process.

[2] "In-sprint automation" implies automating the tests in the same sprint in which the functionalities are developed or changed.

COVID-19 and QA: While there are currently many challenges, organizations are taking advantage of the upheaval to improve their entire approach to QA

As a result of the pandemic, 47% of respondents said there would be significantly greater focus on customer experience validation and on usability testing. Meanwhile, 43% of respondents said that the focus on more and better collaboration tools will go up, and 34% said they will need more remote access to test systems and test environments. There have also been COVID-19-related QA implications around security: 83% of CIOs and IT directors said their application security concerns have increased over the past 12 months, likely a result of the move to a remote working world.

"Despite the challenges brought about by COVID-19 it's been a promising year for orchestration and quality assurance in the enterprise," says Mark Buenen, Global Leader of Digital Assurance and Quality Engineering Services at Capgemini Group. *"In fact, COVID-19 has acted as an accelerator for QA, demonstrating its integral importance to operations. It's encouraging to see that QA professionals are optimistic about their testing capabilities. However, as the findings show, this optimism does not always match up to results. By relying more on cloud infrastructure and progressing further with AI for QA, these teams will be able to work faster, smarter and have greater business impact."*

Raffi Margaliot, Micro Focus Senior Vice President and General Manager for Application Delivery Management, said, *"QA teams are being spread thinner than ever before, and have responded by accomplishing more with less. This has helped them prepare for the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which have accelerated new digital transformation initiatives, and boosted those already in progress. This year's World Quality Report offers unique insight into how software quality organizations are adapting to the new normal and the escalated urgency for modernization. Progress has been made across the board, and our customers are now looking to expand automation across their organization, and enhance automation through increased adoption of AI."*

For further information and the recommendations based on the research, access the full report here.

World Quality Report 2020 research methodology

The World Quality Report, which this year interviewed 1,750 CIOs and other senior technology professionals, across 10 industries, from 32 countries, is the only global report analyzing application quality and testing trends. It has been produced annually since 2009. Now in its 12th edition, the 2020-21 report adopted data collection through computer aided telephone interviews. Based on analysis of six respondent groups: CIO, VP Applications, IT Director, QA/Testing Manager, CDO/CMO, and CTO/Product Head, the report surveyed respondents from across the globe through quantitative interviews followed by qualitative deep-dive discussions.

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