

The future up close

WORLD QUALITY REPORT

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AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

Are we witnessing the calm before the storm?

The pandemic completely reshaped the way we work, collaborate, and deliver. With the worst after-effects hopefully behind us, the ANZ IT ecosystem is now evaluating which changes truly add value in this new era.

While off-site, remote, or hybrid working modes were propagated and adopted in the past few years, 'back-to-office' seems to be the flavor of the year. We see dismantled centers of excellence coming back together under more centralized command and control structures now.

While remote work and hybrid models remain common, there is a growing recognition of the importance of in-person interactions to strengthen peer relationships and improve collaboration. In some cases, we are even seeing organizations incentivizing employees to embrace back-to-office as a way of encouraging face-to-face interactions.

But despite these, some past trends remain relevant this year as well.

Things that haven't changed

Agile adoption continues to grow in Australia with varying maturity levels across sectors and organizations. The focus has now shifted to delivering value, aligned with business priorities rather than IT priorities. Overall, there seems to be an increasing appetite to improve systems using agile processes. Enterprises are also trying to strike the right balance between cost optimization and assurance by automating more aspects of testing, while maintaining a strong focus on business alignment.

Along with that, digital transformation remains a constant too. Last year, we noticed cloud migration dominating the scene. The rise of modern technologies like NFTs (non-fungible tokens) and digital currencies, Web 3.0, and more, also pushed the need for robust Site Reliability Engineering (SRE) systems.

Both in Australia and New Zealand, there has been a sharp focus on SRE and its integration with quality engineering and DevOps. This has led to conversations about the skill sets required for this convergence, since SRE aims to ensure stable digital cores.

However as is often seen in the field of IT, the need for stability is always counterbalanced by a wave of innovation – and the need to embrace the new. This year, it is Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced automation.

What's the hot topic?

We call this a wave because that is how it has catapulted into the tech landscape globally. There is a heightened sense of curiosity and apprehension within organizations while approaching AI.

While everyone is keen on taking advantage of AI and Gen AI-infused tools to boost productivity, there's also concern about the degree of disruption it may bring, and the skills needed to adapt to these changes.

Of course, no one wants to miss out on capitalizing on this trend, but there is a need to distill it further to understand how it will play out in various testing ecosystems and processes. What kind of effect can it truly have on enterprise testing? Can it be used to create predictive or preventative techniques? What kind of investments will we or our partner enterprises need to make in AI?

These are the crucial discussions that organizations are having today.

So how is quality engineering dealing with these lofty demands?

Organizations are expecting their quality engineering workforce to be well-versed in cloud technologies, AI, problem engineering, and automation now. They are looking for people with a diverse skill set that spans multiple domains and can swiftly transition between various skill areas to meet evolving demands. We think that prompt engineering skills are the need of the hour from a technical perspective. As QEs, we must also know how to safely take advantage of the Large Learning Model (LMM) in the industry.

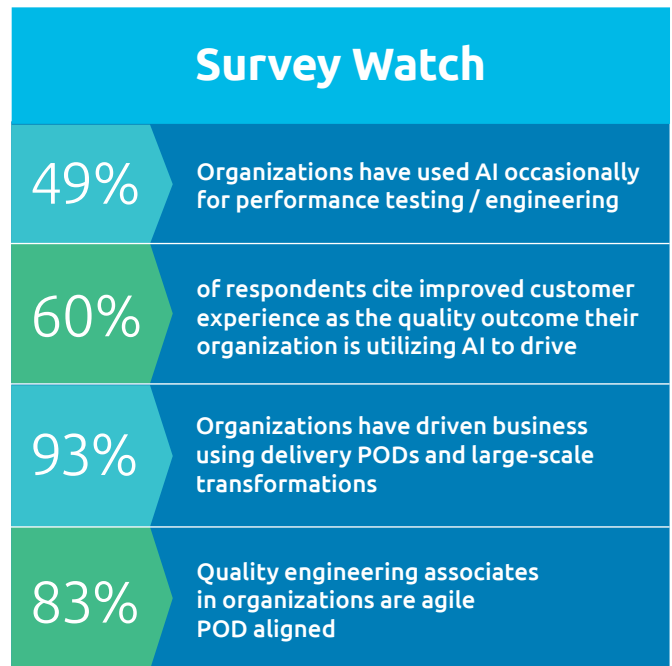
Upskilling and self-learning can be extremely vital for QEs today. Knowing how to leverage DevSecOps, and quickly adapt to Gen AI and full stack engineering while ensuring that IT and quality engineering align with business values and objectives is what we need to bring to the table.

Future trends and challenges

Looking ahead, we think that AI will continue to dominate the quality engineering landscape in various forms – not necessarily just in the realm of Gen AI. Exploring the functionality of automation and testing it from an end-to-end perspective will further gain momentum.

We also think that sustainability will be a topic that will challenge the way we conduct business, especially if regulations to measure impact come into play.

As we continue to believe in the saying “The steady state holds no place in IT,” it will be interesting to see how things transform next year and beyond.



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