

Case Study – ActiveTeach

“When I first arrived, Suman was always my first port of call for any questions – she was my in-house expert

Michaela Heigl, Product Owner

Background

Pearson UK provides educational tools containing a rich variety of content, making learning more engaging and effective.

The ActiveTeach service (now part of ActiveLearn Digital Services) is aimed at teachers providing them with a wide range of teaching and presentation tools to supplement traditional text books.



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Challenges:

- Deliver fortnightly releasable increments
- Adhere to best-practise Agile management principles
- Work closely with stakeholders to ensure continuous improvement

Surge Online say:

Surge Online have been working with Pearson UK since 2009, providing Quality Assurance 'QA' testing services for their various online platforms.

As with all online content providers, Pearson has exacting standards, although with the ever-changing educational environment and given Pearson's dominant position in this market, the user demands placed on Pearson are arguably greater than most.

Therefore, the rigorous testing environment set up and managed by Surge Online is a critical factor in the delivery of Pearson's acclaimed service.

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Pearson ActiveTeach say:

"My QA tester became my 'Internal Auditor' - always able to look at a product's features critically to ensure that we never became complacent" – Michaela Heigl, Product Owner

I began working with Pearson UK in Mar-15 as a Product Owner of ActiveTeach, a front-of-class tool for teachers.

The QA tester supplied by Surge Online was an integral part of my team; indeed, Suman soon became my first port of call for any questions – my very own in-house expert.

"Developers often have an over-optimistic view of a product, whereas QA's can look for faults"

The QA provides invaluable information and feedback to a wide range of stakeholders, both external (teachers, software developers) and internal (Pearson publishing).

Developers often have an over-optimistic view of a product, whereas QA's can look for faults, identify them, and correct them. It is this continuous, repetitive testing and attention to detail that allows us to put out our regular updates with complete confidence.

"QA's are our first line of defence"

Anytime a feature needs to be validated, we first turn to the QA.

For example, when the Teacher Support service receive a query from an end-user (i.e. a teacher), it gets routed through to QA person to try to reproduce the problem or issue they are experiencing. The QA then establishes whether it is indeed a defect or whether the product was intended to function in that manner – in any case, they are integral to the ongoing improvement process.

"Suman became more familiar with our product than anybody else - anytime anything needed to be validated, we could rely upon her"