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Interview with
Erik Davis

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Hands-On Mobile App Testing - The Story behind the Book



- Daniel Knott

It all started in 2010 when I had the opportunity to work on my first mobile project. The mobile team I worked in was responsible for developing a mobile web app, a native Android app and a native iOS app. This was the company's first mobile project and a completely new testing environment for the quality assurance department. Together with a colleague, I had the chance to build up a mobile testing strategy from scratch. We evaluated several test automation tools to see which one fits best in our software development lifecycle. At that time, mobile testing tools were few and far between, and at a very early development stage. We then tried several testing approaches and tools. Of course we failed with some of them, but in the end the whole team, the company and our customers were happy.

Another reason why I wrote this book was because of my blog <http://www.adventuresinqa.com>. I started blogging in 2011 after giving a presentation at the Agile Testing Days in Potsdam, Germany. This was my first talk at a major testing conference and I was the only speaker on the agenda who spoke about mobile testing. After my presentation I was very busy for the rest of the conference as a lot of people approached me to ask about mobile testing, the approaches I use, what kind of tools I use and so forth. The huge interest and the lack of knowledge in mobile testing convinced me to start writing a blog. The goal was to share my knowledge of mobile testing and to exchange views and ideas with other mobile testers, while also improving my written English skills. So far I've written about 90 posts covering mobile apps and testing, and I never expected so many people from around the world to take an interest in my blog. The feedback I got so far has been great and it convinced me to take the next step.

To write a book about mobile testing where my practical experience and knowledge for anyone involved in the mobile business is written down. In the first place I chose Leanpub to publish this book as a self-publisher because this is an easy way to distribute your own ideas with just a single click away. After the book was released on Leanpub, I was very lucky to get a contract with a famous book publisher called Pearson Education (<http://home.pearsonhighered.com/>), formally known as Addison-Wesley an imprint of Pearson Education.

How to start a book

I never expected to write a book in my life. However, due to my blog the idea of writing a book grew in my mind over the years. I always had the idea to write a book about mobile testing, because there are very few good books on the market that covers this topic from a practical point of view.

One day, it was a Saturday when I was bored and alone at home, I just started to draw the first idea of the book. I opened my notepad (a paper based) and I drew a mind map about the possible structure of the book. I had a good day and in a couple of hours the rough table of content of the book was ready. With the help of the mind map I started to check the market for competitor books. Which parts are covered in this books, are there any specific parts missing. This helped me to distinguish my book from others to provide a unique book with lots of great and useful content for my readers.

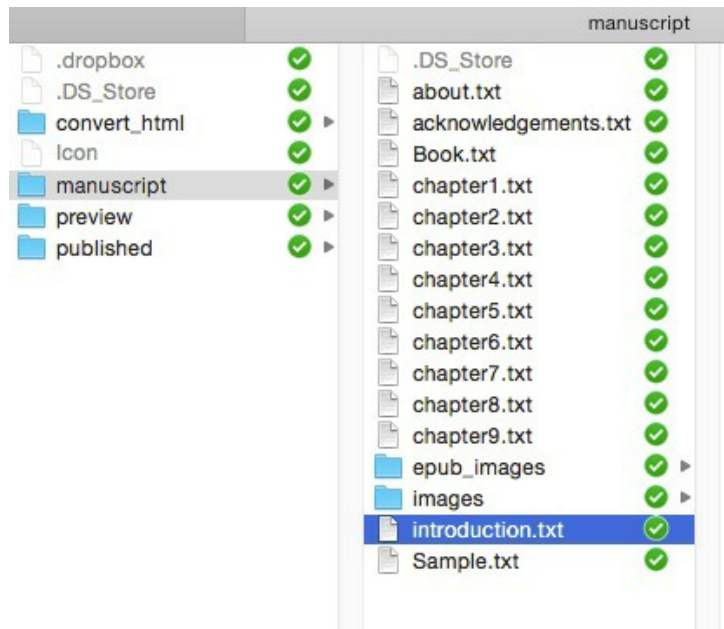
And then I started to write.

How I wrote my book "Hands-On Mobile App Testing"

During my market research I found out that publishing a book would be the biggest and hardest challenge for me as an author. However, during my research I stumbled up on Leanpub, a self-publishing service for eBooks that provide authors the possibility to publish their book whenever they want with the full control of the publishing process and copy rights of the content. I registered on their web page and checked the amazing how to sections and manuals to get started with my book.

I also liked the idea to write my book with Markdown (<https://daringfireball.net/projects/markdown/>) syntax, which is pretty easy and without the overhead of an office-writing suite. I followed the instructions to setup a shared Dropbox account to grant Leanpub access to my book and to have access on every device.

Every chapter of the book has an own txt file and can easily put together in the Book.txt. Have a look at the following image where my Dropbox folder structure is visible.



Whenever you want to create a preview of the current book, Leanpub is offering a nice function to generate a preview of the book in the formats: pdf, epub or mobi. When the generation of the files has been done, those files will be automatically synced to your Dropbox account.

After the setup and structure of the book was done, I started to write the first chapter of the book. I wrote chapter by chapter and when I was not able to write I was doing research for the upcoming chapters to get valuable sources and ideas about the next sections.

In total I wrote more than one year on the book. Of course not full time, because I have a daily testing job to do, but I wrote every evening after my job, most of the time until midnight. I wrote every weekend and on most of my vacation days. For some chapters I also wrote some parts

before I left for work. At the end, I must say, it was a really hard and challenging time but it was lots of fun and I learned a lot about self-discipline and to focus on a certain topic and goal over a longer time. And I think I also improved my writing skills.

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Hands-On Mobile App Testing

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One thing that was really important during the writing session was the feedback from proofreaders. I decided to use my testing network and ask for software testers from various areas to read my chapters and to provide feedback. If you don't have access to free proofreaders, Leanpub is a great platform to publish chapter by chapter and to get direct feedback from your readers. However, this was no option for me, because I wanted to sell a book that was finished and not incomplete.

Working with proofreaders is essential and I would not suggest publishing a book without proofreading. The proofreading process was fun and sometimes also really hard because the remarks of some chapters meant for me, to rework sections again and again to be sure that everything is looking good.

At the end of writing the book I recommend to do something else for 2-3 weeks. Don't look at the book, the chapters and anything that is related to the book. It will free your head and mind and will help you to focus again to read the whole book again before going live. During this reading session I found lots of typos and stuff that was missing or written wrong. When the last and final proofreading was done, I published the book.

Publish and Marketing for the book

However, publishing the book doesn't mean less work to do. Already during the writing sessions I wrote down some marketing and promotion ideas. Because publishing a book on Leanpub doesn't mean people will recognize it right away. I wrote down a list of people from my testing network that should be informed after the book was published to spread the word about it and maybe to tweet or blog about the book. This was really useful for me.

The second channel I used was social media, of course. I tweeted several times a day about the book and the URL where the book is available. I posted the information on professional social networks and of course on Facebook. Furthermore, I wrote a blog post on my own blog <http://www.adventuresinqa.com> to inform my readers that a book is now available about mobile testing.

The last thing I did was sending free copies of the book to great testing bloggers and authors to ask them for a review.

At the end I think the way I promoted my book was good. In the first couple of weeks lots of copies have been sold and the feedback I got was really great.

However, to reach more and more people you still need to keep up the tweeting, writing and promoting the book and this is not easy.

When I received feedback it was always good, but I got also lots of request for a printed copy of the book. There are lots of people out there who want to read the book on real paper instead of a digital copy. Therefore, I did some research for print on demand services for books, but I didn't like those services.

Those requests became more and more, I started to find a way to print the book.

Be lucky and find a publisher

Again, I used my testing network and asked people about possible contacts to book publishers. And this time I was really lucky. A big thank you to Markus Gärtner (<http://www.shino.de/>) who introduced me to the book publisher Pearson Education. I send Pearson Education my book in a PDF version for review and couple of weeks later I got the offer and a contract to be part of the Pearson Education author family and I signed it.

After signing the contract, more work has to be done. I had to rework some chapters of the book to fit into the Pearson book portfolio and layout. Several rounds of copy editing and proofreading were necessary to get the final version of the book ready for the printing process. Again I did all this work in my spare time.

The reason why I have chosen Pearson Education as a professional book publisher is pretty simple. In general Pearson Education provides me as an author a great way of printing a physical book that looked good. Furthermore, Pearson Education is doing the worldwide marketing, sales and distribution of the book and I have nothing to do with it and can concentrate on the content. With the help of Pearson Education I am able to reach many more people all over the world who are interested in mobile testing. The book will be available in all major online and offline bookstores and that is just great. I am really looking forward to find my name and book in the bookstores.

When I look back more than one year from now, I must say I would do it again. The time of writing was really great. It was my very own project. I was my own boss and I had to decide everything on my own from the outline of the book to the final layout of the title page and images. I really enjoyed the time. Thanks again to my wife, for the support in writing this book.

The book will be available in the printed version in June 2015. A first preview can be found here: http://www.pearsonhighered.com/pearsonhigheredus/educator/product/products_detail.page?isbn=9780134191713

If you like to get the Leanpub version you can check this page: <https://leanpub.com/mobiletesting/>

About the Author

Daniel Knott has been working in the field of software development and software testing since 2003. He started his career as a trainee at IBM where he was involved in enterprise software development and testing.

After his time at IBM, Daniel studied computer science at the University of Applied Sciences in Wiesbaden, Germany. Software testing soon became a passion during his time at university and the reason why he chose a career in software testing. Daniel has worked at several companies in various different industries where he was responsible for testing web, desktop and mobile applications. During a number of projects he developed fully automated testing frameworks for Android, iOS and web applications. Daniel is a well-known mobile expert, speaker at various conferences in Europe, and a blog author <http://www.adventuresinqa.com>.

Furthermore, Daniel is the founder and organizer of two local software testing user groups in central Germany. One is the Software Test User Group Rhein Main (<http://www.stugrm.de>) and the other one is the Rhein Main Mobile Quality Crew (<http://www.meetup.com/Rhein-Main-Mobile-Quality-Crew>). He tweets at [@dnlnkntt](#)