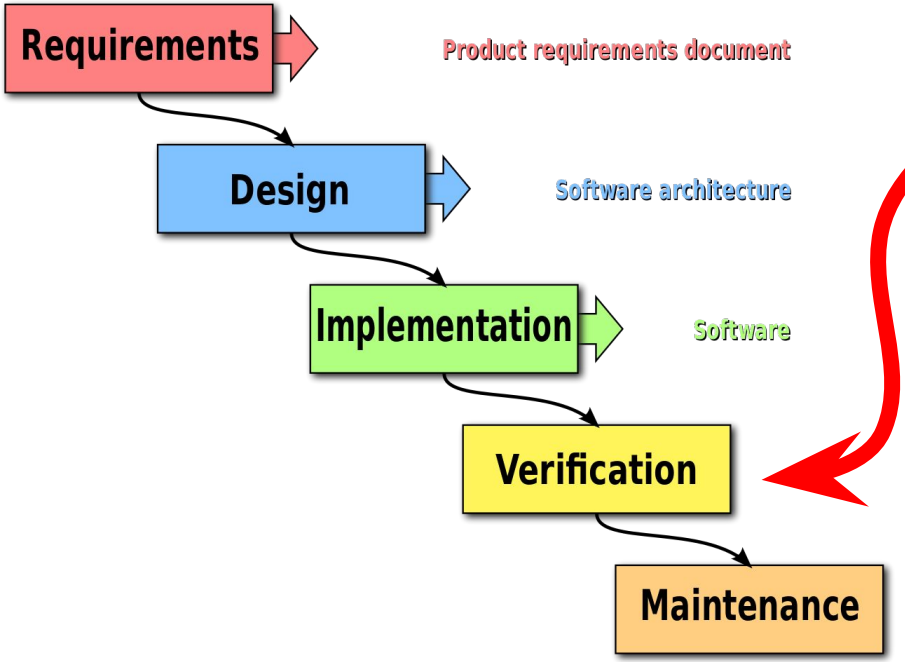
The future of testing...
...is distributed

Alister Scott, Automattic

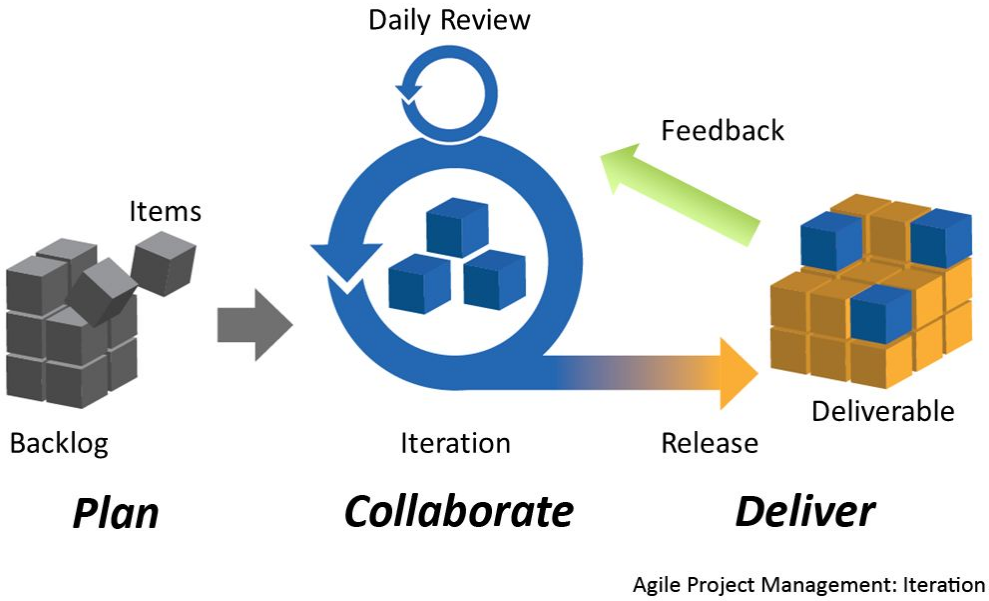
First there was waterfall...



- Separate QA team
- Testing at the end
- Big bang releases

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterfall_model

...then there was 'Agile'...



Agile Project Management: Iteration

- Cross functional, co-located teams
- Testing closer to development during 'sprints'
- More frequent releases

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Agile_Project_Management_by_Planbox.png

...but what happens next?

"The future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed."

~ William Gibson

About me

- Alister Scott from Brisbane, Australia
- Excellence Wrangler at Automattic
- → watirmelon.blog
- Father of three
- Interests include hiking, tea, blogging, cacti & succulents

and watermelon

About Automattic

WordPress.com Woo JETPACK

- Founded in 2005
- 550 employees
- 53 countries
- 100% *distributed*
- Open vacation policy
- No hurry, no pause
- Welcome to the chaos

Distributed?

REMOTE

- Some staff central, some ‘remote’
- Communications favour central
- Still rely on central things (security, systems etc.)
- A remote QA team in the Philippines is an example

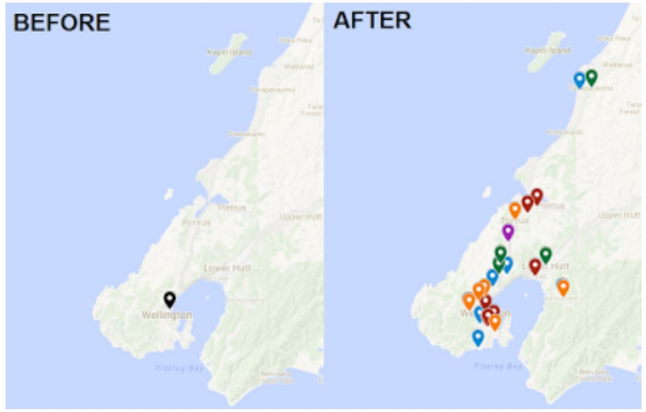
VS

DISTRIBUTED

- Everyone dispersed anywhere, no central, no ‘remote’
- Equal footing for communications
- Everyone can do anything (eg. super admin, self service)
- Automattic is an example, zero offices, *everyone* is remote

Distributed is closer than you realize

- SaaS tools
- HR/Payroll
- Legal
- People in your own office
- Every time you email/text someone
- Every open source project works in a distributed manner



Working locations of testers before and after the earthquake

http://katrinatester.blogspot.com.au/2016/11/finding-vibe-of-dispersed-team.html

The future of testing is about utilising the power of distributed

Automattic

- ~220 developers: 4 testers (55:1)
- All teams distributed
- All testers distributed
- Asynchronous communication + meetups
- Encouraged to work on things not assigned to you
- No sprints, release all the time
- Small ‘pull requests’ (PRs) - easy to review, test, release
- Reviews required, external testing optional, developer accountable
- Everyone does support rotations
- Everyone does a paid trial

Flow Patrol

- If PRs are bricks, what about the wall?
- Flow focus: what happens in the voids?
- End-to-end automated tests cover baseline flows
- We test for real life: forked flows, stress-cases, desktop bias, scroll bleed
- Supplement Flow Patrol w/ horizon testers - real users testing in real life

https://make.wordpress.org/test/handbook/glossary/

“in a distributed world where everybody can, and does, test, what’s your point of differentiation?”

8 ways you can differentiate yourself

1. **Understand users** (spend time on support)
2. **Understand development** (ask to work on bug fixes)
3. **Understand automation** (build bots)
4. **Focus on flow** (automate end-to-end)
5. **Practice continuous recursive dogfooding** (use your own products)
6. **Write open source bug reports** (use animated gifs)
7. **Learn about different cultures** and timezones (UTC)
8. **Try async** (you probably already are)

no hurry, no pause

The darkside of distributed

- **Lonely** → find community out of work
- **Accountability/overwork** → daily goal/everyday accountability
- **Hard to communicate (blockers)** → document/move on, aggressive transparency [1]
- **Focus** → exercise, outside time
- **Work and home and life becomes one** → ???

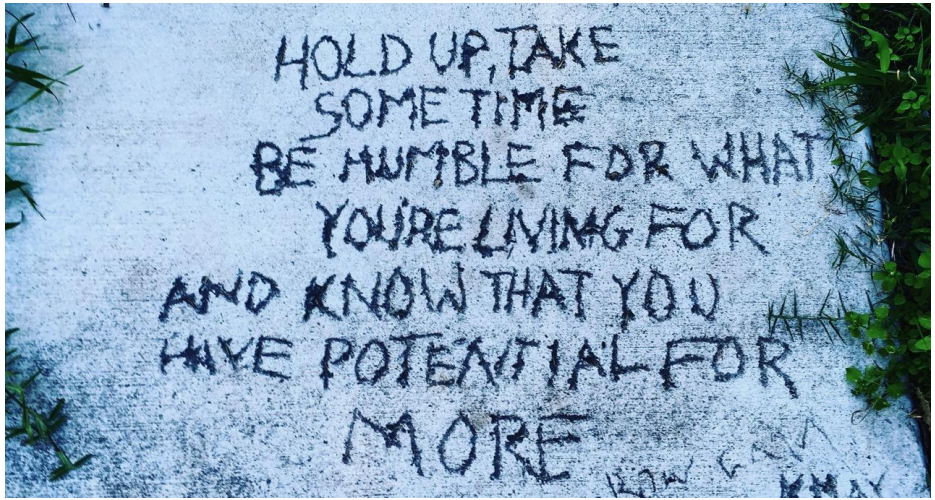
"I can't remember—do I work at home or do I live at work?"

[1] https://s12k.com/2015/08/25/working-remotely-and-the-virtue-of-aggressive-transparency/

Image: http://www.newyorker.com/cartoons/a20805

The future of testing is distributed.

Prepare yourself for that future.



Q&A

“The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time.”

~ Abraham Lincoln

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