Test Tools for Free
Do you get more than you pay for?

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A map for our adventure
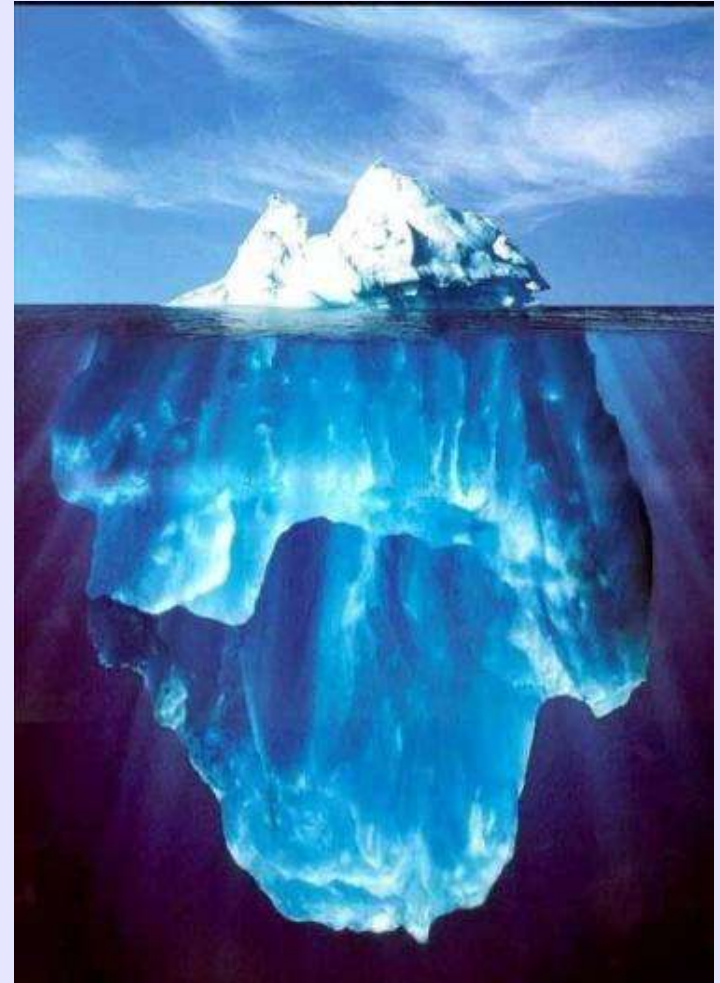
- The free test tools iceberg
- Open source and freeware culture…
- Meets testing culture?
- Spotting free tools that work
- Tools for wizards only
- Tools you didn't know you needed

Exploring the iceberg…

- In June, 2001, I published a list of 17 known freeware test tools
- My list is now 828 items long and still growing!

Open Source Culture

- Programmers
- Don't like solving the same problem twice
- Value competence
- Prefer Unix
- Are only starting to learn about professional testing skills

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Freeware Culture

- Prefer Windows
- Don't like to share source code
- Shareware isn't so bad
- Grew up on electronic bulletin boards

Testing Culture?

- Some aren't programmers
- Some don't know much about testing, either
- Feel guilty when commercial tools don't work
- Few know about free software
- Like to break things.

Culture clash

- Testers want tools that work
- The Open Source community doesn't appreciate people who complain about free software, especially if they're non-programmers

Going mainstream

- For free software to go mainstream, we have to have a critical eye

- When I review free software, I'm brutal

- But… everything we get from open source programmers is a valuable gift
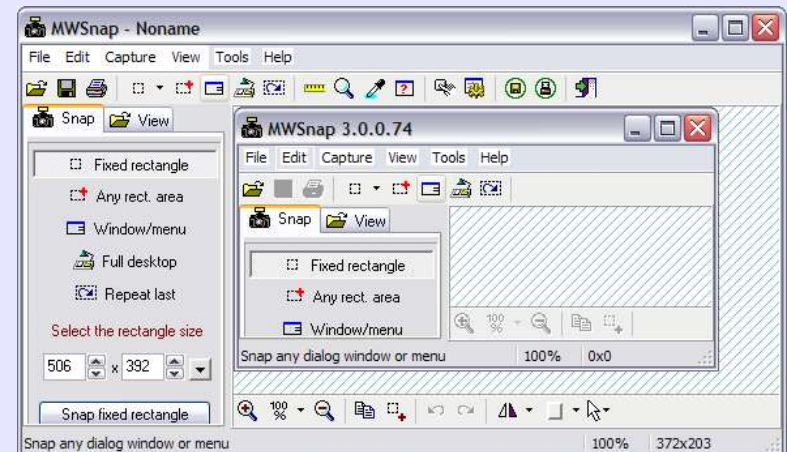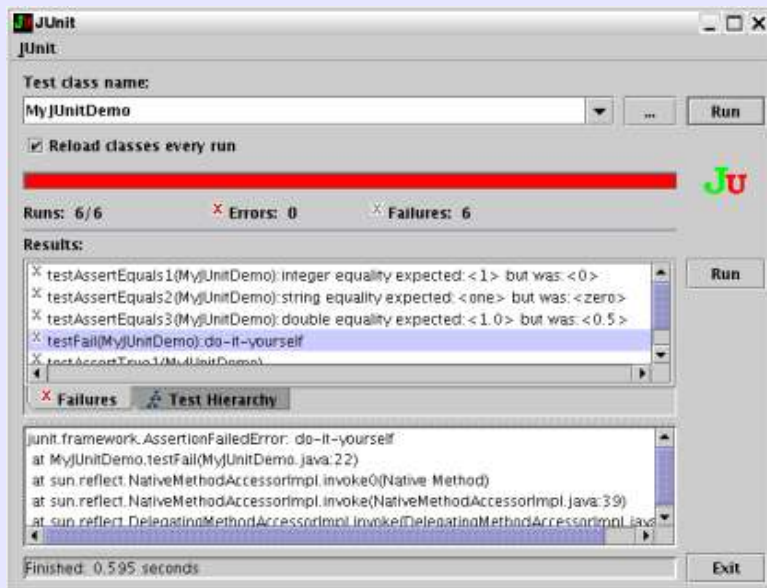
How to spot a good free tool?

- Recently updated
- Good user community
- Decent web page home & documentation
- Reasonable installation process
- Bottom line: less cost to support than you'd pay a commercial tool vendor

For example

- Only two tools have earned a "Production" rating on *Open Testware Reviews* – JUnit and MWSnap

For wizards only

- Can't tell what platforms are supported

- Doesn't install / compile

- Confusing documentation

- Unreliable and features don't work

- Author or mailing list doesn't respond

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Hope for the future

- Huge potential – free load test tools
- Could save $100,000+
- No artificial limit on virtual users!
- But, they're hard to use and buggy
- Luckily, load testers are advanced testers and the best suited to figure them out

I didn't know I needed that...

- Learn a scripting language – Perl, Python, Ruby (all free)
- Try a free bug tracking tool
- The big guns: fault injection
- Don't forget test design & test data generation
- Keyword-based automation
- Keep on the look out for more!

References

- "Test Tools for Free" tejasconsulting.com/DFWUUG/freewaretools.html

- "How to Become a Hacker," *The Cathedral and the Bazaar*, Eric Raymond

- testingfaqs.org

- opensourcetesting.org

- Agile Test Automation, James Bach www.satisfice.com/presentations/agileauto.pdf

- *Open Testware Reviews* - tejasconsulting.com/open-testware/

References

- "Let's Hear It for the Underdogs," tejasconsulting.com/stqe/underdogs.pdf

- Additional information on tejasconsulting.com/ and tejasconsulting.com/ancient-writings.html, including

  - "What Flavor is Your Freeware?,"

  - several articles on free test tools,

  - and reviews of *The Cathedral & the Bazaar* and *Open Sources.*

Thanks for listening!

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