

WHEN IS AUTOMATION USEFUL?

Recently I helped write a proposal aimed at investigating whether or not to automate regression testing of a system is worth the investment. Looking at their current time spent in regression testing I started wondering when it is worth automating the hell out of everything and when it is just eating money on being hip to have tests automated.

I guess it all depends on a combination of things, such as time spent in regression testing, effort and investment needed to automate things, knowledge about test automation in house (e.g. does an external need to come in and do it for you?), how often do you need to run through regression on the platform, can all of regression be automated or just a part of it etc.

So, seems like you have to be a bit of a mathematician to see if test automating is worth your while, doesn't it?

Let's get realistic then instead.

I truly believe the easiest way to see whether test automation is your piece of cake, there's one very effective way to do it: set a clear goal on what you want to achieve with test automation and based on that do a Proof of Concept. In other words, try it out. This is assuming you have the knowledge to write the code for test automation in house.

Start off with a little bit of research to figure out which tool will quite likely work best for you, there are plenty of Forums out there, or simply ask some fellow testers out there. Take

the tool, or for all I care the demo version of some tool, you hope will work for you and try it out. Automate a few tests, just to see how fast it can be done. Do not try to make it all pretty, perfect and reusable immediately. First focus on what's important: will it work? Does it help me get to my goal?

If it does, cool, now you can start for real, refactor the PoC-code or simply throw it out and start from scratch.

This of course becomes a slightly different story if you do not have the knowledge in-house to write the code yourself, or if you simply have no clue where to start with test automation.

If this is the case, please do not adjust the approach all that much. It is still the best, in my view, to let someone prove to you that their approach and their choice of tooling indeed is the best for your application and organisation. Keep in mind that at the end of the line, you still need to be able to use and maintain the tool and automated tests yourself, in-house. Having some contractor for that running around constantly makes the test automation effort an extremely tedious and expensive one.

Source : <http://martijndevrieze.net/2012/03/19/when-is-automation-useful/>