

## Test Design with Mind Maps

Today's tip is two-fold.

As a first part, it's a great example of a rapid test design practice with XMind mind mapping tool, provided as [experience report](#) by Darren McMillan.

- o Mind mapping
  - o Increases creativity
  - o Reduces test case creation time
  - o Increases visibility of the bigger picture
  - o Very flexible to changing requirements
  - o Can highlight areas of concern (or be marked for a follow up to any questions).
- o Grouping conditions into types of testing
  - o Generate much better test conditions
  - o Provides more coverage
  - o Using templates of testing types makes you at least consider that type of testing, when writing conditions.
  - o When re-run these often result in new conditions being added & defects found due to the increased awareness
- o Lean test cases
  - o Easy to dump from the map into a test management tool
  - o If available the folder hierarchy can become your steps
  - o Blend in easily with exploratory testing. Prevents a script monkey mentality.
- o Much lower cost to generate and maintain, whilst yielding better results.

As a second part, I link you back to 2006, to the article "[X Marks the Test Case: Using Mind Maps for Software Design](#)" by [Rob Sabourin](#).

- o Mind Maps to Help Define Equivalence Classes
  - o Identify the variables
  - o Identify classes based on application logic, input, and memory (AIM)
  - o Identify invalid classes
- o Mind Maps to Identify Usage Scenarios
- o Mind Maps to Identify Quality Factors

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**Darren McMillan**

November 3rd, 2010 - 14:28

Thanks for the mention, to anyone reading the example provided here is a summary; I'd strongly advise looking at the full post on my blog if you'd like to consider rapid/lean test case design.

Mind maps are fantastic I honestly can't praise their benefits enough, not just for test design but even as a way of noting down test idea's or observations of how to improve your testing. Whatever you use them for you'll find they free your mind and allow you to produce much better results



**Chris McMahon**

November 3rd, 2010 - 14:30

mind maps:

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### Authors

- [Albert Gareev's website](#)
- [Anne-Marie Charrett's blog](#)
- [Jonathan Kohl's blog](#)
- [Julian Harty's website](#)
- [Karen Johnson's blog](#)

<http://chrismcmahonsblog.blogspot.com/2006/11/mind-maps-for-testing-and-other-things.html>  
<http://chrismcmahonsblog.blogspot.com/2007/01/minimum-number-of-tests.html>

[Mike Kelly's blog](#)

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**Lisa Crispin**

November 3rd, 2010 - 14:37

We mind map test cases / strategy for our more complex themes and stories, it works well. First we tried doing it in FreeMind and posting the maps on the wiki, but they were too hard to read and the programmers couldn't understand them. We tried mind mapping on a big whiteboard instead, then translating the high test cases we come up with into our more usual bulleted-list format on the wiki. Detailed test cases usually end up as automated tests (many of which end up in our CI regression suites).



**Carsten Feilberg**

November 3rd, 2010 - 17:18

Here's what I wrote about mind maps..  
<http://carstenfeilberg.blogspot.com/2010/11/organizing-test-ideas-with-mind-maps.html>



**Albert Gareev**

November 4th, 2010 - 10:05

@ Lisa Crispin  
In my opinion, FreeMind is too simplified and thus deviated from the original Buzan's concept of mind mapping. I can understand why programmers didn't like the diagrams...

It's different with XMind, MindMeister, and other tools that allow creating rich diagrams.

BTW, in the latest XMind version you can create and share mindmap templates.



**Faizel**

November 6th, 2010 - 23:46

I agree with Albert. FreeMind is far too simplistic when Using Mind Maps for these tasks. The good news is that you can import FreeMind into nearly all commercial Mind Map Software Packages, including Xmind.

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