

# Provenance & Profiling

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Is your car German or Japanese? Are your chocolates from Belgium? And your wine, which country might that be from? There's a good chance you know the answer to some of those questions. Our culture places value on provenance. That is, we care where our possessions originate. It's something we tend to notice.



Furthermore, we ascribe, often without our notice, characteristics to things because of their provenance. For example, that's a Japanese radio - its reliable but not cheap, etc. I often do this un-empirically, without measurement or examination. (that's a flaw)

For software testing, our automatic identification of provenance can be both a useful tool and a distraction.

Noticing where or from whom a feature originated can be enlightening. You may learn over time that a particular team or person tends to implement certain things well, and others things not so well.

This has a tendency to help me to find some bugs relatively easily with individual teams. The first time it may have been time-consuming to see an issue. On subsequent releases, annoyingly easy.

That emotion is useful. Its an indication that you have, maybe subconsciously, profiled the team. You can direct your response to that feeling, in constructive ways. For example, searching for a root cause or suggesting the addition of some unit tests.

It can be useful to think and deliberate over how you may have profiled the teams or people. Again, this is valuable 'intelligence,' the profile can help with planning your time and focusing test automation efforts. Though, the pattern also embodies a form of bias. You should be aware that you are subject to this bias, and routinely double check your assumptions.

It would be easy to concentrate too long on easy to find - known unknowns that were easy to spot thanks to your biased view. To increase our opportunities for discovering new types of issues, set aside time for investigating the app in other ways.