

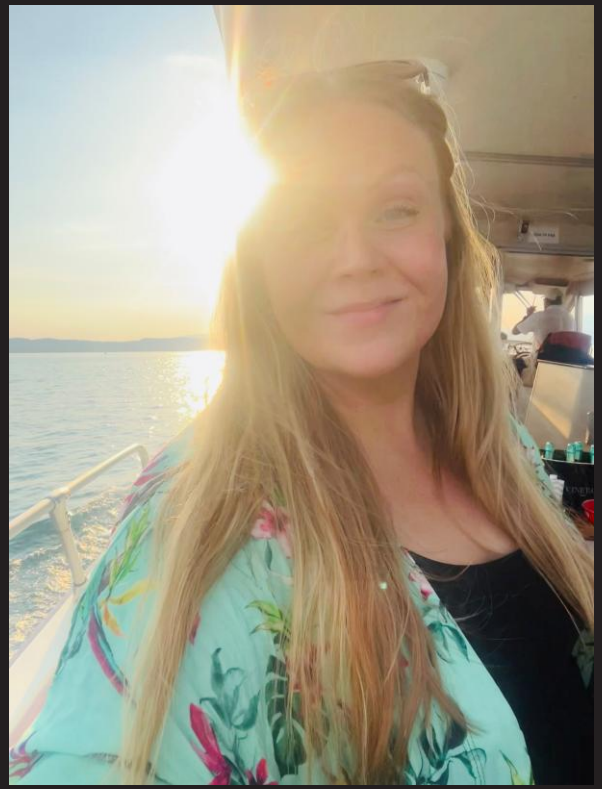
TESTING
ASSEMBLY

TRACK 2 – Auditorium

11:15–12:00

Rethinking Environment Issues
A Practical Model Beyond “It’s an Environment Problem”

Ulla-Mari Schroderus · LähiTapiola



About me - Ullis

Work
Service Manager, Quality Leadership @ LocalTapiola
Passionate about quality, collaboration and people

Beyond Work
A mom of three (teenagers), one dog
Testing my wings as a conference speaker

What Matters to Me
Treating people with respect
Looking at the bright side of life
Creating sustainable quality

The environment is broken

But what exactly is broken?

“The environment is down.”

“The data is wrong.”

“The integration does not work.”

“Something must have changed.”

“It worked yesterday.”

A technical failure can be real while still being only the final expression of a wider systemic problem.

Where the problem appears ≠ where it begins

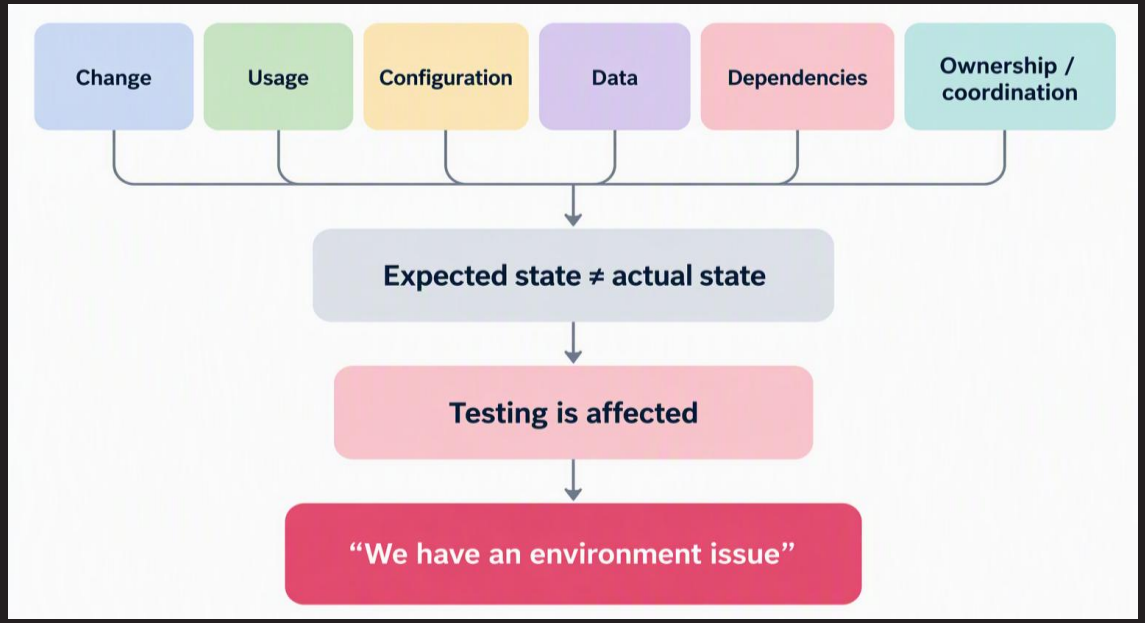
Visible problem	What the system experiences
• test execution stops • data is missing or inconsistent • service is unavailable • integration fails • unexpected behaviour appears	• unclear ownership • insufficient state visibility • hidden dependencies • conflicting usage • unmanaged change

What can be called a test environment issue?

A test environment issue is a condition in the test ecosystem that prevents or compromises meaningful testing.

Environment or service unavailable
Incorrect or inconsistent data
Incompatible versions or configuration
Broken integration or dependency
Unexpected environment state
Interference from other usage

How an environment issue can emerge



Why fixing the incident is not enough

We are often good at restoring the environment. But restoration is not the same as learning.

Testing stops
A technical fix is made
Testing continues
Nobody investigates the operating conditions
A similar issue returns



I Intent & Ownership
S State Awareness
S System Understanding
U Usage Patterns
E Events & Change Visibility

I – Intent & Ownership

Shared use does not automatically create shared ownership.

Why does this environment exist?
Who owns its ability to support testing?
Who can make decisions?
Who is responsible when several systems are involved?

S – State Awareness

An environment can be technically available and still be unusable for testing.

What is running now?
Which versions are deployed?
Which services are available?
What is degraded but not completely down?
What changed since the last successful test?

S – System Understanding

A system can fail between the boxes even when every individual box appears healthy.

Which systems, integrations and batch processes are involved?

What must be available for one business flow to work?

Who understands the end-to-end dependency chain?

Is that knowledge documented or held by individuals?

U – Usage Patterns

Environment stability is partly created by user behaviour.

Who is using the environment?
For what kind of testing?

Are teams competing for the same state, data or capacity?

Are changes made during another team's testing?

Are people using the environment as originally intended?

E – Events & Change Visibility

Every incident has a timeline, but not every organisation can reconstruct it.

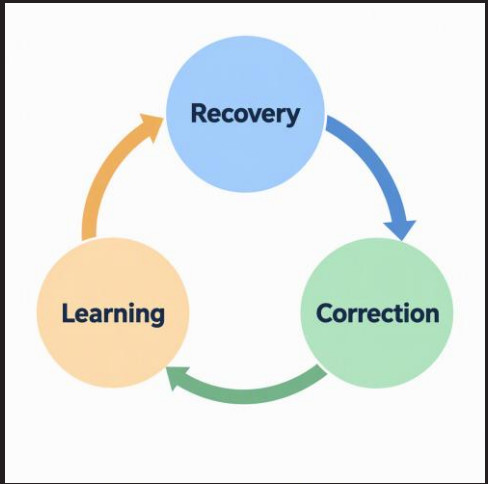
What changed?
When did it change?
Who knew?
Who was affected?
Can the change be traced to the failure?
Was the impact validated after the change?

One issue, five perspectives

Do not diagnose the environment through only one lens

I – Intent & Ownership
Who owns the recovery and the decision-making?
S – State Awareness
What is actually running and available now?
S – System Understanding
Which dependencies are involved?
U – Usage Patterns
Who else is using or changing the environment?
E – Events & Change Visibility
What changed before the issue appeared?

Fixing the Issue is not enough



How do we restore testing?

How do we prevent recurrence?

What did this issue reveal beyond the technical failure?

The next time someone says:
“It’s an environment issue.”

Ask: What is the environment trying to tell us?

The environment is often where the problem appears.
Not where it begins.

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