

Bugs: Attributing the Correct Severity

General Categorization

The most common Bug Categories in a test are:

- Malfunction
- App Crash
- Spelling/Grammar error
- Display Error
- Other (should only be used if none of the other options apply)

Please note that some tests will have additional/fewer categories than the ones shown here. The Bug categories available to you, will vary depending on the type of test or product you are testing. For instance, some tests may have more precise bug categories to choose from, e.g.: video error, audio error, Loading issue etc. **“Other”** should only be used whenever a bug does not fit one of the other predefined categories.

The possible Severity levels you can choose from are:

- Low
- Medium
- High
- Critical

Reproducibility

“If your bug is not reproducible it will never get fixed.” Every bug submitted has to be reproducible. A bug that is not reproducible would be accepted only under special circumstances and with a low severity.

Severity/Category

The matrix below shows which severities should be attributed to which bug categories

	Low	Medium	High	Critical
Malfunction	light grey	green	green	light green
App Crash	light grey	light grey	light green	green
Spelling/Grammar	green	light green	light grey	light grey
Display Error	green	light green	light grey	light grey
Other	green	green	green	light green

■ green = typically used ■ light green = can be used ■ light grey = rarely used



Helpful questions

In addition to the matrix above, the five questions below should help you rank a bug's severity. If you can answer more than half of the questions with a "yes", consider picking one of the higher severities suggested from the matrix. If you cannot, you should go with a lower severity from the matrix.

Q1: Is there no workaround for this bug?

Q2: Does the bug affect a main functionality of the testing object?

Q3: Does the bug cause the application to halt or crash?

Q4: Is it likely that the bug will be detected by an average end-user?

Q5: Is the bug a stopper? In other words: Does the bug prevent the user from using at least one other functionality of the app?

Keep in mind that this only a guideline, not a template that you need to uncompromisingly stick to. There will always be exceptions (e.g. categorizing a severe usability issue, which is strictly speaking not a bug, as "other/low", so the client is aware of it).

What does this look like in practice?

Example 1: I am testing an E-Commerce Website and I find:

- A URL link to the "Legal Imprint" section of the website is not working = I attribute this a **medium** severity (because even though this issue is categorized as a malfunction – and we know that malfunctions typically have at *least* a severity of 'medium' – this Bug does **not** affect a core function of the website).
- A link in the checkout process is not working e.g. the "Add to Cart" or Purchase button = I attribute this a **critical** severity (because a core function of the website is not working and the user may be forced to abandon the process altogether).

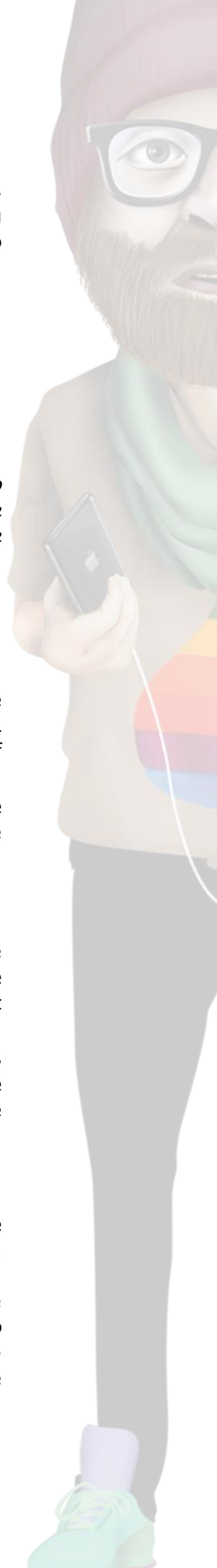
Example 2: I am testing an online banking app and I find:

- The "Complete Transfer" button on an online banking app is not working and the user cannot complete a bank transfer= I attribute this a **critical** severity (because a core function of a banking website is negatively affected here – the user is not able to complete their transaction).
- An info icon on a page does not work = I attribute a **low** severity (because this does not affect a core/important function of the website and the user may be able to arrive at the information some other way e.g. searching the website FAQs).

What do we mean by a "core function" of a website/app?

This is one of the main purpose(s)/goals of a particular website or app. For instance, one of the core functions of an e-commerce website is to enable users to purchase items.

A Bug that **prevents** a user from achieving a goal related to a website/app's core functionalities (it is not possible for the user to complete a desired action that relates to a main function of the app/website and there is no easy workaround e.g. a user has no way to complete a purchase and must abandon the process altogether) will usually be attributed a severity level of "critical".



Explanation of Bug Categories & Their Corresponding Severities

- **Malfunction** – Something not working or functioning as intended/designed
Example: A button is not clickable or not reacting
- **(App) Crash** – A digital product e.g. app/website freezes (you cannot interact with it anymore) and/or it unintentionally closes
- **Spelling/Grammar** – Spelling or grammatical errors found on the website/app
- **Display Error** – Content is not being displayed as intended
Example I: Words/images etc. being cut-off from view
Example II: Written text inside of a button is too long (spills out of the container)
Example III: Words/Images are mis-aligned on a page

