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Canadian Energy Utility Standardizes and Optimizes Quality Assurance with Inflectra

SpiraTest and Rapise implemented along with new QA process to streamline the testing and release of over 100 applications

Industry
Energy & Industrial

Objective
Implement a standardized QA process and toolset for testing all applications being deployed to ensure consistency and reliability across vendors and teams.

Approach
Looked for a solution that could help standardize their QA processes.

Business Outcomes

- All applications are now independently tested by QA prior to release
- Ability to reuse existing test cases for large financial systems
- Single test process for all projects, regardless of technology or vendor

Technology Outcomes

- Replaced use of MS-Office documents with a central test repository
- Able to implement test automation with results visible in the same place

"Since we implemented SpiraTest, not a single project goes live without going through the QA process. This could never have happened before, with our manual process."

– Quality Assurance Lead

Streamlining quality assurance and implementing test automation of commercial applications

This large energy utility was faced with an ever-increasing number of new and updated applications to test. They didn't have enough time to test everything being released. The adoption of SpiraTest let them standardize and streamline their testing process to handle the workflow. Once SpiraTest was in place, the company implemented Rapise for test automation of their longer-term systems to increase efficiency.

Background

This energy company is a vertically integrated electric utility based in Nova Scotia, Canada It is privately owned, and provides electricity to 500,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers.

The company doesn't create software applications itself, but primarily tests third-party commercial software developed by vendors. 95% of testing is user acceptance testing (UAT) of test scripts written by business analysts and executed by dedicated testers.

There are typically 10-15 testing projects happing simultaneously, from brand new products being introduced, to upgrades of core systems, such as Maximo.

Challenge

The company didn't have a standard process for testing. Each project used its own approach, determined largely by the external vendor. Furthermore, the vendors were supposed to do their own system tests, but the quality was inconsistent, with many vendors not supplying the necessary test result evidence.

Implement a new process

The first step was to implement a new standardized process for requirements management, test case design, test planning, and execution.

Migrate from documents

Prior to using SpiraTest, the company was using Excel spreadsheets for managing their test cases, test results and defects. They were using MS-Word documents for storing their requirements, with limited traceability between the documents.

Once the process had been proved out using Excel, Nova the company decided to select and implement a modern test management solution to improve the process.

Solution

The company conducted a comprehensive vendor selection, using the DAR matrix from CMMi to rank the solutions against 15 desired features, weighted by importance. 80% of the score was based on the features, and 20% was based on the cost / price.

SpiraTest had the highest weighted feature map of all the tools considered, with the rich set of functionality and ease of use being top differentiators.

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Solution at a Glance

Tool and Process Together

Although a tool won't solve the problem, equally a process that doesn't have an effective tool will be unworkable. The company have been very pleased with SpiraTest since adopting it five years ago. They liked the fact that SpiraTest could adopt their preferred QA process rather than having to change their process just to fit into the tool.

From the beginning, the company have been very happy with SpiraTest, the frequent updates and strong support from Inflectra have ensured successful adoption.

Test Automation with Rapise

Once the QA process was established with SpiraTest, the company has been steadily adding automated testing of their applications using Rapise.

One of the challenges of test automation is that it takes longer to create tests, so the greatest ROI is with applications that will be used over multiple years, with multiple updates to test. Approximately 25% of the application portfolio are using Rapise for test automation.

Benefits

Easy to Implement

One of the best things about SpiraTest was that it was easy to implement within their new QA process.

According to the QA Lead:

"With SpiraTest we have process and tool working together."

Unified View of Test Results

One additional benefit of using SpiraTest and Rapise is the fact that there is now one repository, one way to write test cases, one place to get results.

The company has used the large set of pre-built integrations to add other testing tools into their process such as JMeter for load testing.

Enabling QA Success

The Inflectra suite has been successful in helping the company achieve their desired end state, with all applications passing through QA prior to deployment.

Other departments within the parent company have now begun adopting Rapise and SpiraTest, based on the experiences of the company described above.

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