MICRO FOCUS

Customer Success Story

Enterprise Developer
Enterprise Test Server

The National Government Employee Pensions Board (SPV)

Increasing IT agility and improving collaboration with Micro Focus.

Overview

The National Government Employee Pensions Board (SPV) was established in 1963 and is one of Sweden's largest providers of pension services. It is responsible for administering the pensions of over 800,000 public service employees and pensioners, and employs 400 people.

Challenge

SPV operates in a highly regulated and specialised environment. During the late 1980s a mainframe environment was introduced which now hosts 25 different COBOL-developed systems containing more than 5,500 programmes. Micro Focus Mainframe Express tool was successfully used for continuous system development. Mats Bergman, System Developer for SPV, explains: "With eight major product releases each year, development and testing is a continuous process. Limited mainframe capacity meant application testing could only be done late in the development cycle when fixes tend to be more expensive. In recent years we have started to use a Visual Studio-based development environment for our Web services and front-end applications. We wanted to introduce a common toolset for all our developers and exploit the latest COBOL mainframe compiler functionality which was not available on Mainframe Express."

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MATS BERGMAN
System Developer
SPV

Solution

As SPV used Mainframe Express as part of its development process, it looked to Micro Focus® Enterprise Developer® for z Systems to provide the latest mainframe compatibility and a modern Visual Studio-based IDE. It meant the two development teams could share the same toolset. Microsoft Team Foundation Server (TFS) provides off-mainframe source code management and is closely integrated with Visual Studio.

Instead of using valuable mainframe capacity required to support the day-to-day running of key applications, Micro Focus Enterprise Test Server® enables SPV to perform a variety of pre-production testing on low cost commodity hardware, avoiding unnecessary cost and delay.

Bergman comments: "We upgraded from Micro Focus Mainframe Express to Enterprise Developer for z Systems and Enterprise Test Server, to implement a continuous integration environment, using TeamCity to build a test server environment. We now use the same development technology across the teams and have a test environment at our disposal at any time resulting in shorter test cycles and higher code quality."

SPV
Statens tjänstepensionsverk

At a Glance

Industry
Government

Location
Sweden

Challenge
As a successful Mainframe Express user, SPV was familiar with the benefits of developing off mainframe; not only in terms of developer efficiency but also mainframe MIPS savings. However, as SPV developed many of its distributed applications in Visual Studio it was looking at unifying development tooling. It also wanted to use the latest IBM Enterprise COBOL compiler on the mainframe and could not do this with Mainframe Express.

Solution
SPV upgraded from Micro Focus Mainframe Express to Enterprise Developer for z Systems and invested in Enterprise Test Server. The same development technology is now used across the teams with increased flexibility in building and testing mainframe applications.

Results
+ Increased development team collaboration with a unified development toolset
+ Improved product quality through more extensive and frequent code testing
+ Closer collaboration with business testers
+ Introduced an agile, parallel, development process

"Using Enterprise Developer for z Systems in our parallel development processes means that code changes can be released on the mainframe and our Windows environment simultaneously, supporting an agile development cycle, using Enterprise Developer, TFS and TeamCity."

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System Developer
SPV

The development team makes code changes and checks the code into TFS. TeamCity is then used to build the changes as part of the continuous integration process and deploys the changed code to a test server environment for testing purposes.

Source code control has moved from the mainframe to an open environment and TFS is integrated with TeamCity to support parallel COBOL and .NET development.

Results

With most of the development and testing done in the Windows environment, the mainframe environment can now entirely focus on the "heavy lifting" involved in running the day-to-day SPV business. The same development and testing process is used across the COBOL and .NET development teams, leveraging modern tools. Using Enterprise Developer makes developers more efficient and it allows SPV to use the latest IBM Enterprise COBOL dialects on the mainframe.

Bergman comments: "Our developers are very comfortable in the Windows environment and it makes it easier for us to attract new talent into the team. Using Enterprise Developer for z Systems in our development processes means that code changes can be released on the mainframe and our Windows environment simultaneously, supporting an agile development cycle, using Enterprise Developer, TFS and TeamCity."

Now that testing does not consume mainframe capacity, more extensive and frequent tests can be done, as Bergman explains: "We could not test all of our code at the same time and our business testers would only be involved at the end of the development cycle. With our new Micro Focus environment, as soon as a code change is created it can be tested and our testers are often working on different releases in parallel, it's an iterative cycle. The process has brought our business testers much closer into the development cycle. As we prefer to fix problems early on rather than when we are about to go into production, the whole testing process is much less stressful for everyone involved."

He concludes: "Using the Micro Focus solutions has increased our confidence in the quality of our production releases and we are able to include more enhanced functionality in each release we issue. In the future Enterprise Test Server will be used to provide mainframe test harnesses to our .NET developers, allowing them to test their changes earlier in the cycle, off-mainframe. We also plan to introduce test automation to further streamline our processes and reduce the time it takes to develop and test application changes. The Micro Focus solution has exceeded our expectations."

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