Monash University

Introduced an agile and iterative testing process while saving costs with Silk solutions

Overview
Monash University was established in Melbourne in 1958. It serves nearly 70,000 students who have many study options available to them across seven campuses in Australia, plus campuses in South Africa, Italy, India and China. Close to 16,000 staff support Monash’s enviable ranking in the top 1 percent of the world’s universities.

Challenge
The testing team at Monash University is responsible for the testing of its student management system, HR database, helpdesk system, and various other systems which the universities’ staff and student communities use regularly.

The University would rely on external testers, as Glenda Wright, Test Manager at Monash, explains: “The outsourcing of load and performance testing for enterprise-wide projects was costly and we wanted to improve the quality and consistency of test reporting. To reduce this reliance, we felt we needed to introduce an in-house, automated, testing function which could cover all significant protocols. Tools such as JMeter and Tsung were sufficient for Web HTTP testing but we felt we needed a more robust solution to help us at an enterprise level.”

Solution
Monash University explored several options to bring the testing function fully in-house. It was felt that the Micro Focus suite of Silk products offered larger protocol coverage and its licensing model was more appealing than some of the alternative options. Silk Central, Silk Test and Silk Performer were introduced and were soon up and running as integral parts of an agile development and testing process, supported by JIRA as a defect management tool.

Wright comments: “Using the Silk tools, a step by step execution process can be followed for troubleshooting during test scripting so that issues can be pinpointed. Scripts are generated easily and the user-friendly GUI enables new staff to come up to speed quickly. Tests can be run on demand and scripting is more robust, so slight GUI changes in an application...

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GLENDA WRIGHT
Test Manager
Monash University

At a Glance

Industry
Education—Higher

Location
Australia

Challenge
Monash University needed to reduce its reliance on external testers to save costs and improve testing quality and results. The University wanted to introduce an effective in-house testing facility.

Products and Services
Micro Focus Silk Performer
Micro Focus Silk Central
Micro Focus Silk Test

Success Highlights
+ Significant productivity improvement
+ Increased product quality and governance
+ Reduced helpdesk workload
+ Comprehensive and customized reporting
+ Full technology coverage
do not significantly affect the script. If need be, Silk allows tests to be run many times so that bottlenecks are ironed out before an application hits production.

The rich reporting generated within each of the Silk tools can be customized depending on the target audience. The testing project scope and requirements determine how often reports are delivered to the stakeholders, but they are created in a matter of hours without unnecessary overhead. Reports also support the automation of work which previously required a manual effort.

The Micro Focus support during the Silk implementation was second to none, according to Wright: “Micro Focus provided outstanding training, customized to our environment, on the Silk tools. Overall, the support received has been great. The support line resolved issues on the spot or with minimal turnaround time. Support staff spent time screen sharing and provided an overview so these issues can be avoided in the future. The comprehensive documentation and helpful online community also provided guidance to resolving issues. This has been one of the most positive experiences with a vendor.”

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Results
Monash University has introduced an agile and iterative testing process, performance and load testing 95 percent of projects before they are deployed to production. The majority of performance and load testing is now completed in-house, saving time and money spent. Wright comments: “Our in-house testing environment allows parallel testing, saving time to produce results, with more business traction for change, and finer detail in monitoring and test results. Product quality has improved, and we have noticed a decline in reported incidents across the University. That has in turn improved the confidence in our testing cycle.”

She adds: “Silk Performer has proven to be efficient. The quality of the test reporting has improved and our confidence has increased by doing the performance and load testing ourselves. Scripting, testing, defect management and re-testing is performed internally for our in-house systems.”

Using in-house load testing with Silk Performer has enabled Monash University to service a much larger load of prospective students and on its Open Day website up to 100,000 hits were recorded.

Wright concludes: “Silk has provided productivity improvement in our testing cycle and has increased confidence in our quality governance and control. We are delighted with the results and feel Silk has given us an innovative automated testing solution which puts the University at the forefront of testing technology.”