

# National Trust

Using Micro Focus® Silk Performer™ to streamline performance testing across the organization

## Overview

The National Trust is a charity that works to preserve and protect historic places and spaces. Its large workforce of employees, seasonal workers and volunteers tirelessly helps protect some of the most important spaces and places in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This includes historic houses, gardens, mills, coastline, forests, woods, fens, beaches, farmland, moorland, islands, archaeological remains, nature reserves, villages and pubs.

## Challenge

The National Trust website can receive up to 100,000 hits per hour during peak periods such as Easter or the school holidays. As a charity, the National Trust depends on its supporters and,

as the main communication tool, the website is vital. It is constantly updated to reflect new activities and events at National Trust properties. On a regular basis these changes are tested to ensure that the website's overall performance hasn't been affected.

The details of its membership are also captured in an Oracle CRM system, which is accessed by call center staff who carry out administrative work such as processing changes to details and membership payments. In peak times, up to 300 people could be using the CRM system concurrently. A robust set of performance tests is also needed to support the CRM system's various upgrades and changes, and to handle the ever-increasing traffic to the website.

## Solution

Stephen Jenkins, Performance Test Consultant at National Trust, explains: "We needed a tool that could support the Oracle Forms technology underpinning our CRM system. When we found that Silk Performer could do this and manage performance testing for all our other internal applications, including our website, we knew it was the solution for us."

Silk Performer was implemented and put to the test. Stephen continues: "We need to replicate the potential website traffic volumes in a test simulation. Silk Performer makes this easy for us. We've lost track of the number of



## At a Glance

### ■ Industry

Charity

### ■ Location

United Kingdom

### ■ Challenge

The organization must ensure that its CRM system and website can perform under peak loads.

### ■ Solution

Use Silk Performer to manage performance testing for internal applications, external websites, and CRM systems.

### ■ Results

- + Introduced a well-structured performance regression path that can be run with very little script change
- + Provided the ability to include all core, legacy systems into the new performance testing process
- + Improved understanding of potential impacts of graphical changes to the site through accurate page rendering information

**"Intuitive script creation, the ease with which we can change scripts, run dynamically changing scenarios, Silk Performer's ability to support multiple browsers—it all adds up for us and we basically haven't found anything we couldn't do with Silk Performer."**

### STEPHEN JENKINS

Performance Test Consultant  
National Trust

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the times we've identified and fixed a potential performance issue in the testing process, preventing it from becoming a problem on the live website. Our website is our calling card for our supporters, so we cannot afford for anything to go wrong with it.”

The CRM system is also subject to continuous change. For example, the National Trust recently made a number of functional changes around its membership creation processes. This had to be reflected in the CRM system and managed within the performance testing cycle. Silk Performer made it easy to introduce the new fields into the current test script, and the new fields were included in the next test run.

### Results

The ease of test scripting and high level of protocol support is also useful in supporting the National Trust's internal applications. Thanks to Silk Performer's flexibility, the organization was able to include all of its core, legacy systems into the new performance testing process.

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The clear statistics are a bonus. The user experience is vitally important to the charity and so response times are carefully monitored. Silk Performer supports AJAX, used on the National Trust website, and provides very accurate page rendering information, useful for the team to understand the potential impact of graphical changes to the site.

The National Trust continues to grow and Stephen Jenkins comments, “Using Silk Performer, we have introduced a well-structured performance regression path, which can be run with very little script change. We don't need to re-engineer our scripts whenever there is a subtle change. Silk Performer has provided us with the ability to readily and easily execute our performance regression pack in line with our release processes.

“The support we've received from Micro Focus has been fantastic. Whenever we log an issue, we receive an almost instant response. Our applications will continue to evolve as we grow as an organization, and Silk Performer will be instrumental in ensuring our technology can cope with this.”



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