

Accero Software

CASE HIGHLIGHTS

Profiled Organization: Accero Software.

Challenge: Speed up and improve the quality of regression and performance testing on the frequent builds of their multi-platform—Web, Windows, UNIX and ZOS—payroll processing software.

Solution: Automation Anywhere automatically runs tests for each new build of the application and creates a log of platform-specific issues, if any.

Benefits: Automation Anywhere has freed up the small QA department from the drudgery of regression testing to focus on more important look-and-feel issues.

“The executable programs make the time and cost of deploying Automation Anywhere to the entire QA team very reasonable.”

- Mike Monpetit, Software Development Lead, Accero

BACKGROUND

Accero Software, formerly Cyborg Software, has been in the business of payroll processing for over 30 years. With offices in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, Accero offers fully compliant payroll, human resources (HR), and human capital management software for licensing as an in-house solution or as an out-sourced payroll processing partner for mid-sized and Fortune 500 companies. Among the approximately 200 Accero employees, in three countries, are payroll and HR experts, core technicians, and developers responsible for keeping the payroll applications compliant with the laws of different countries and their states/provinces.

In recent months, the software development team took on the task of creating a new Web interface for the application’s general release. Pretty soon, the QA department was being called upon to test four or five builds of the application in one week, with most of it being regression testing. Not that it was unusual for the QA team to be doing routine regression testing, because it was something that had to be done in the wake of any bug fix or module enhancement to ensure that the existing technology had not been broken. Although the application does not vary much across the many platforms that it operates on—Web, Windows, UNIX, and ZOS—and most changes usually only affect the backend, the QA team routinely tests it on every platform before releasing it for use.

PUTTING QUALITY BACK INTO QA

Until October 2008, the QA department at Accero did all of the process testing manually—not the best use of QA talent, according to Mike Montpetit, Software Development Lead at Accero. The testing was crucial because payroll processing being what it is, only a stable and robust application that meets compliance standards can be released to clients. But considering that there was usually a new build deployed each day, the QA team spent countless hours testing simple functions, such as “add”, “save”, “delete”, and “go to”.

Automation was clearly the answer but it had to be completely reliable, given the compliance needs of the software.

A Web search yielded a few automation applications, some of which worked with Accero's software and had some nifty features. But none had the ease-of-use that Automation Anywhere offered. Montpetit's decision was more or less made for him when he realized that with Automation Anywhere he would soon be able to train the QA team to write their own test scripts and run them because the software is so intuitive.

AN AFFORDABLY EXECUTABLE SOLUTION

Ease-of-use may have been Montpetit's primary reason for choosing Automation Anywhere, but the software's executable programs feature was the icing on the cake. Being able to create executable programs that don't require separate licensing made the process of deploying automation tests to the QA team that much more reasonable in terms of cost and time. Now the executables are run on an as-needed basis, as frequently as necessary.

"It's so easy to use, we can train QA folks to create test scripts. The ease-of-use and quicker testing will create substantial savings for us."

- Mike Monpetit, Software Development Lead, Accero

Thinking ahead, Montpetit has three prospective uses for Automation Anywhere that could greatly benefit Accero and its clients:

1. To automate performance testing by having multiple computers log into the system simultaneously and perform tasks at the same time.
2. To push files via FTP to the client through the mainframe at Accero's data centers. An automated process would be set up to drop a file into a folder at a specific time and FTP it to the client. (At present not all clients are directly linked to Accero but they hope to use Automation Anywhere to seed the technology to all clients in the future.)
3. To assist in automating the many backend processes that Accero will eventually lose as they outgrow the existing technology.

ALL THIS AND SAVINGS, TOO

It is still too early for Montpetit to attach a definite figure to the return on their investment in the enterprise version of Automation Anywhere. But he is confident that they have already broken even, despite the initial cost—in time and resources—of developing automation scripts.

He believes that as Accero puts out more versions of its application over the next year or two, and the regression testing gets done faster than ever before, the savings realized will be even more substantial in terms of testing hours and development time.

If you found this case study useful, we invite you to discover how Automation Anywhere can give your business an edge – visit www.AutomationAnywhere.com



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