



Amica reduces software deployment times by 95–98 percent

IBM UrbanCode Deploy software helps automate software release processes

Overview

The need

Issues with the software deployment processes at Amica resulted in broken deployments that brought testing teams to a halt and left developers scrambling to troubleshoot the issues.

The solution

The company's teams began to roll out IBM® UrbanCode™ Deploy software to create consistent, automated and repeatable deployment processes.

The benefit

For projects using the IBM UrbanCode Deploy software, developers have been freed from having to troubleshoot deployment issues. The solution has also virtually eliminated downtime for testers.

Amica was in the middle of a massive project. “We were replacing our policy admin system as part of a large modernization effort,” said Greg Calderiso, information systems officer in Amica’s corporate information systems department. “We had a large amount of resources on the project, including business users, testers, developers, business analysts and project managers.” However, issues with the company’s deployment processes were causing inefficiencies. One large testing team would be forced to sit idle whenever a deployment was unsuccessful, while developers lost valuable time troubleshooting version and environment issues. “We knew we needed a solution to automate our deployment process,” Calderiso said. “We also needed to make our process repeatable and consistent.”

Managing a complex deployment environment

Amica is a mutual insurer that provides auto, home and life insurance. The company’s environment includes numerous web services, multiple web apps and core applications. Dozens of developers were checking in code, which the company then had to deploy to multiple environments.

Using IBM UrbanCode Deploy software takes the guesswork out of the software deployment process. “Now, there is always a source of truth that we can go back to. The UrbanCode Deploy software can give us a real-time view into our deployments,” said Greg Calderiso, information systems officer in Amica’s corporate information systems department.



“With the UrbanCode Deploy software, we can reject a bad build and leave the environment alone until the issue has been fixed. And then it’s just a click of a button to push the deployment out when we’re ready.”

— Greg Calderiso

The process of making sure that it deployed the correct version of each service and application to numerous test, production and backup environments had become extremely difficult. “It became a logistical nightmare to try to ensure that the proper version of the right code was installed correctly on each environment,” Calderiso said. For each release, project managers would send an email to the project team to make sure everyone’s code was checked in and ready for deployment.

When issues arose with the deployment, Calderiso frequently found that they had been caused by application inconsistencies, rather than a code defect. “Not that our code was always perfect,” Calderiso said, “but more often than not, we found that deployment problems were caused by inconsistent code or the wrong versions being staged by development teams.”

Creating consistent, repeatable processes

Amica created an Application Configuration Management (ACM) team, which implemented IBM UrbanCode Deploy software, integrating it with the company’s existing open source tools. The team worked with the Client/Server Infrastructure (CSI) team to use the IBM UrbanCode software to create repeatable deployment processes that help it deploy the correct versions of each web service and application, along with the correct version of all the dependent code, which significantly reduces compatibility issues. Using IBM UrbanCode Deploy software, the team can then re-create a deployment quickly. “We can take a snapshot of one deployment and move it over to another environment,” Calderiso said. “So we get a significant time savings that way.”

As part of a more comprehensive DevOps approach, the ACM also embedded static code analysis tools into its build and deploy processes. The tools analyze code every time it’s checked into the company repository, and if it doesn’t meet a certain quality threshold, the tools reject it. This process helps prevent defects from being deployed in the first place.

Solution Component

Software

- IBM® UrbanCode™ Deploy
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Cutting deployment times by 95–98 percent

In the past, it took the Amica team three days to deploy a web service. “Now, if it’s a new web service that we have never deployed before, it takes one hour. If it’s an existing web service, it takes 15 minutes,” Calderiso said. That translates to a 95–98 percent reduction in deployment time. Developers have been freed from having to troubleshoot deployment issues. For projects using the IBM UrbanCode Deploy software, the solution has also virtually eliminated downtime for testers. “We have drastically reduced environment downtime for projects using UrbanCode because we now have these quality gates that prevent us from deploying bad code,” Calderiso said. “With the UrbanCode Deploy software, we can reject a bad build and leave the environment alone until the issue has been fixed. And then it’s just a click of a button to push the deployment out when we’re ready.”

Calderiso and his teams plan to continue configuring the company’s applications to use the IBM UrbanCode Deploy software so that they can achieve these efficiencies across all development and testing efforts.

For more information

To learn more about IBM UrbanCode Deploy software, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website:

ibm.com/software/products/ucdep



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IBM Corporation
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Produced in the United States of America
December 2014

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