Pearson VUE saves time and money by automating code build and deployment

IBM UrbanCode Deploy software helps reduce time to market

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Overview

The need

Guy Speier, senior group manager for the business intelligence (BI) group at Pearson VUE, wanted to change his team's time-consuming manual release and deployment processes, which often involved dozens of steps.

The solution

Speier and Mark Muellner, senior developer at Pearson VUE, used IBM® UrbanCode™ Deploy software to automate their group's software deployment processes.

The benefit

Pearson VUE projects significant annual cost reductions with IBM UrbanCode Deploy software. Automated releases save hours of staff work per release, and automated testing reduces production issues, improves software quality and shortens the time needed for manual corrections.

Headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Pearson VUE delivers millions of high-stakes tests each year for customers in the licensure, certification, academic admissions, regulatory and government testing marketplaces. As the world's largest testing organization, Pearson VUE works to stay agile and competitive. "Our focus right now is staying ahead of the up-and-coming firms. We're constantly trying to innovate and improve our products and services. We want to keep our finger on the pulse of what customers are looking for," says Guy Speier, senior group manager for the business intelligence (BI) development team at Pearson VUE.

Reducing manual release and deployment steps

To stay ahead of the competition, Speier set out to reduce the team's time to market. "We took a hard look at our processes and realized that one of the biggest opportunities for improvement would be cutting down the time from when a developer makes a code change until that code change is actually usable in production," says Speier. The group's time-consuming manual release and deployment processes involved dozens of steps. Development and operations teams experienced frustration with their inability to move code to production quickly.

With IBM UrbanCode Deploy software, Pearson VUE can release higher-quality software faster and more frequently. "We're saving a remarkable number of hours of work, but at the same time we're deploying much more frequently. So we're actually doing more with less," says Guy Speier, senior group manager for the business intelligence (BI) group at Pearson VUE.

IBM

"Within three weeks, we went from having no automation to having two out of our three major software components 95 percent automated."

— Mark Muellner, senior developer at Pearson VUE

When a production issue arose, the team found it difficult to determine whether the code or the deployment caused the problem. The nature of Pearson VUE's business makes reducing production issues essential. "We cannot afford to have any kind of a problem in production," says Muellner, "because it can, for example, determine the speed at which one of our customers can grant a candidate a license to practice medicine."

Automating code releases

Muellner and Speier used IBM UrbanCode Deploy software to automate their group's software deployment. The group had made three previous attempts to automate deployment, investing hundreds of hours of work with inadequate results. But Muellner estimates that in just 35 hours, he made significant progress with IBM UrbanCode Deploy software. "Within three weeks, we went from having no automation to having two out of our three major software components 95 percent automated," reports Muellner.

Using the new solution, Muellner can create a schedule to automatically pull code changes from a repository, build them and then push them to an integration and regression testing environment. "We will be able to automate the entire process from start to finish. We're going from dozens of manual steps to an automated process where a developer will check code into the repository, and that's literally all they have to do. Code will automatically get pushed from development to test to production," says Muellner.

Solution Component

Software

- IBM® UrbanCode™ Deploy

Cutting costs and time to market

Previously, it took Pearson VUE an average of one day to get a code change to production. In the worst cases, it took up to two weeks. With IBM UrbanCode Deploy software, Speier's team can get changes to production within hours, and deployment takes about five minutes. Speier estimates that Pearson VUE will reduce annual costs significantly with IBM UrbanCode Deploy software. Automated releases save hours of staff work per release, and automated testing drastically decreases production issues that can take hundreds of hours to fix.

This increased agility translates to faster speed to market. "Our customers will be happier to see their reporting enhancements completed more quickly," says Speier. "We've gained the ability to deliver code that will produce actionable data far faster than we could previously."

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/en/ucdep

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