

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FIND FLEXIBILITY IN TESTING THEIR FINANCIAL SECURITIES

AFSA (Australian Financial Security Authority) is an executive agency in the Attorney-General's portfolio that is responsible for the administration and regulation of personal insolvency system, proceeds of crime, trustee services and the administration of the Personnel Property Securities Register. Their purpose is to provide improved and equitable financial outcomes for consumers, business and the community through application of bankruptcy and personal property securities law, regulation of personal insolvency practitioners and trustee services.



Today I had the pleasure of speaking with Sushant Goel from the Business Solutions team at AFSA.

Q: What type of software testing takes place at the AFSA?

It's a bit of a mixture. We test our own software as well as software developed by vendors. Sometimes we engage our vendors in the testing process. When vendors are involved, we mostly perform user acceptance testing. At first running user acceptance tests manually was manageable, but as more people got involved in the process things began to get messy. The testing environment became more complex as we needed to do system integrated testing. Between all of the different systems, different groups of people involved in testing, we needed a more formalized process.

Q: What was your solution prior to the induction of Zephyr?

When I joined the team, we operated in a very ad hoc fashion. Test management basically comprised Word, Excel and email documents cluttered together. There is always a lot that needs to get done; we work quickly so we didn't set up a single repository for all of our testing. As the team grew and testing became more complex it was time to implement a better process. We looked at Quality Center, but it was incredibly expensive and client heavy. After evaluating a few other options, we found Zephyr Enterprise. We wanted something that was affordable, offered a lot of power and functionality but was flexible in how it can be configured.

Q: How do you define "flexible" in terms of test management software?

Zephyr is flexible in several ways; deployment options, integrations and security. In regards to deployment, currently we are using the on-premise version of Zephyr. However, if we needed to move to a hosted environment in the future we can easily switch. Zephyr's APIs make it easy to integrate with other tools. We use the on-demand version of JIRA and it was a simple process to set up the integration. There are various stakeholders in the project who are only using JIRA to manage issues, these stakeholders will never review test cases / test results etc. There are also Business Analysts that use JIRA Agile to manage requirements and with the linkage we can import requirements within Zephyr easily, saving us time. Some of these JIRA users are external to AFSA and the ability to create user groups of JIRA and Zephyr allow us to optimize license costs. The integration allows us to create issues in JIRA On Demand from within Zephyr on-premise. External JIRA users can then access issues from outside of AFSA network. This process is very effective for us as it saves us from setting up remote login for external users which would have been a very cumbersome task that required infrastructure team involvement. Since we work within the government (and a lot of projects are restricted to certain personal) it's important to have security so we can restrict certain users from certain projects, giving us flexible security.

Q: What would you say, were some of the biggest issues you faced prior to Zephyr?

Lack of traceability and test coverage were certainly challenging. Without a centralized system, it was difficult to make sure that all of the requirements were covered as well as monitoring the requirement during the testing cycle. Zephyr made it easy to link requirements to testcases to defects, giving us complete traceability and coverage over testing. We could see testing data by; release, test cycle, component, defect, etc. Now, we can implement literally any coverage scenario we need. These views of coverage give us enough information to communicate our level of testing coverage, and analyze risks based on the development changes. Testers were located in geographically dispersed locations which made it difficult to gather information for reporting. It caused an incredible amount of admin work to gather data, sort through all the testcases individually and classify them in categories; pass, fail, etc. Now, with Zephyr they are all in one location and they can be organized by owner, tested accordingly and easily reused later.

Q: How has Zephyr helped improve your quality assurance productivity?

Learning to use Zephyr was quick and simple. One of the most important ways Zephyr has helped us, was a single simple view that anyone could access. We have project team members in different locations so the real time updates keep everyone in sync at all times. We used to have daily status calls or flood one another's inboxes with emails, now we hardly have calls and significantly cut back on the amount of emails and manual reports. With easy access to a URL and no client site installation, Zephyr has helped us improve productivity and reduce the hassle.