Hmv by: the original software group

Business

Company: The Original Software GroupCustomer: HMVSubmitted by: The Original Software GroupDate: July 2001With over 75 years of trading history, and more than 150 stores in the UK and Ireland, HMV is the UK's premier retailer of music, videos and computer games. The HMV brand, made famous by the instantly recognisable dog and trumpet trademark, has also been successfully exported around the rest of the world, with a further 200 stores trading across the U.

S. A, Canada, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Germany and Ireland. HMV's mission is to provide customer service second to none and maintain its market leading position. This philosophy is shared by The Original Software Group, leading provider of productivity tools for iSeries 400 and the Web. In mid-2000, HMV chose Original Software's solution, TestBench400Ô for testing the company's business-critical iSeries400 applications. Following the initial success of TestBench400, HMV's Quality Assurance team had the confidence to deploy the product to help meet the next business-critical challenge – testing a new system for the Euro in Irish stores where all databases have to be converted.

TestBench400 enables HMV to benchmark the conversion process and run data comparisons. HMV Europe's IT Director, Andrew Clarke fully supports this activity: " With the deadline for Euro software implementation rapidly approaching, it is imperative that we are ready on time and with zero defects. Using TestBench400 saves us time, gets us there faster and gives us complete confidence for the future." Andrew Clarke sees TestBench400 as an important part of the overall development strategy going forward and decided to upgrade from a single license to a multi-site license so that the

development team could also apply TestBench400 to their task and improve software quality. " Now our central development team has installed TestBench400 so we can co-operate much more in targeted testing.

QA writes the scripts and developers run tests. We then know that the software has reached a particular level when receiving the objects. Bringing development into the picture will mean that testing will be even more efficient. Programmers will also perform unit testing in the future with TestBench400″

In-store software live – on time

This is just one of the many projects where HMV has benefited from TestBench400. With the aid of TestBench400, Darren Houghton, QA Manager at HMV (UK) was able to deliver thoroughly tested urgent new developments prior to the pre-Christmas cut-off.

Darren recalls: " Without TestBench400 we could not have installed the software in time. TestBench400 enabled a business-critical system to be live, on time, with full quality assurance." TestBench400 has since become a way of life for Darren and his team, as he describes: " There is an iSeries 400 in every store within the UK and Ireland making us one of the biggest iSeries 400 users in the world. These are also used for data warehousing, a web server for customer information points in stores and as a general web server. TestBench400 has given us better overall testing with all the elements that can be covered.

We spend less time analysing data integrity so that emphasis can be shifted to other things. We can now focus on areas that would not otherwise be tested due to lack of time."

Major benefits through automated testing

TestBench400 was selected following an evaluation that ensured that the product worked with HMV's data and programs. Darren looked at other products but the choice of TestBench400 was never in doubt: " Following a Web search to produce a shortlist, followed by evaluation, it was clear that only TestBench400 provided the flexibility and usability my team and the users needed. TestBench400 is designed for the iSeries 400, is easy to use and thus integrated easily with all our systems". A major benefit for HMV is what Darren describes as " non-destructive" testing.

This means data created for a test is protected and remains available for a re-run. " Before if we ran a testing process which deleted or changed data, we then had to put it back. Testing could be slow and sometimes it took up to a year to implement new software – it was a nightmare!" explained Darren. He went on: " TestBench400, however, can be run on sub-sets of data which can be copied to a virtual database while the core system can run on without change." Finally Darren comments on services: " Original Software also has very good support – its analysts always come up with a solution. They take responsibility and seem to care about the problem.

It is very important for me to give my customers i. e. the stores, a high level of service. Original Software matches that level of excellence and enables

me to provide quality software to my users who, in turn, can give continued

good service to HMV customers."