

CASE STUDY

Establishing Outsourced QA and Testing Processes for a High Growth College Admissions Portal

Customer Profile

A leading online college admission and merit-based scholarship provides free services to prospective college students as they get ready for college applications. The company helps students find the best matches for which colleges to apply to, based on a list of 3000 colleges in their database. Through tools such as Student Profile, private college message center and “What Are My Chances?” Calculator, our client helps students learn about college opportunities they may have otherwise missed and narrow down their choices to best match their requirements.

Project Objective

The company has complex web sites with large amount of backend data and workflows that help students individually match their preference criteria with prospective college admission processes. The target community is young, highly computer savvy and has a short attention span. Hence the site has to engage them very quickly and keep them so with its design, performance and flawless operation. Relevance, currency and accuracy of data is also important and their marketing team adds new colleges to it as well as changes existing college data as needed, on a daily basis. In addition, new web site features and bug fixes have to be incorporated rapidly via short and frequent release cycles.

As the number of registered users continues to grow and has grown rapidly to about 2 million users, they are challenged to keep web site robust and scalable. During the early years while the development team had focused on customer facing business needs and core development tasks, the testing and reliability issues were getting ignored. With growth, they needed an equally strong testing team that would partner with their development team to ensure that testing and QA, could keep pace with the demands of the growing user base and the web site perform consistently on a 24 x7 basis.

Trigent has filled this need for this portal as a QA and Testing partner to meet these goals for the past several years.

Customer Challenges

In order to keep up with rapid changes and market needs, the client development team uses the Agile Development methodology to accomplish frequent new releases to quickly respond to the user needs. This cycle has been typically every 2 weeks when a new release needs to come out. The challenge is that the site has to be

Client

A leading online college admission and merit based scholarship management portal

Project Objective

Test and release “daily build” applications by leveraging follow-the-sun test cycles

Technology

- ✓ PHP
- ✓ MySQL
- ✓ Clover
- ✓ Tomcat
- ✓ Trac

Benefits

The client established a team at Trigent that was leveraged to develop a seamless “follow-the-sun” test cycle. Testing effort was reduced by automation and product quality was increased due to establishment of best practices in QA and testing

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rigorously tested for functionality (both old and new), and for compatibility of their rich AJAX UI application with several standard browsers. They could not dedicate time to develop detailed documentation on new functionality.

The customer could only achieve this frequency of releases if website development and testing were to follow each other in tandem during the 24 hours cycle. The testing team would have to plan testing, execute tests and report issues within a short turn around time of less than 9 hours. In addition, regression testing had to be performed for errors found and reported to be fixed by the development team.

The testing team had to use daily scrum meetings to plan for the workday ahead and work with little documentation and the development test cycle had to follow an Agile model.

Trigent's Solution

Trigent consultants worked with the customer at their US office for knowledge transfer about their business processes and their agile development model. An offshore team was subsequently established for web application testing. A customized test lab was set up offshore to meet our client's needs. Tools such as "Trac" were used for seamless transfer of bugs, tasks and test cases. Also automation scripts were built to support regression testing.

The team was trained to complete the entire cycle of testing in a 9 hour period and also perform regression testing thereafter. During the first quarter, processes were reviewed and refined and this quarterly review has been carried out since then for continuous mapping of development and testing needs.

Client Benefits

- ❑ The client established an outsourced QA and Testing team at Trigent that was leveraged to develop a seamless "follow-the-sun" test cycle
- ❑ A process was established and refined for easy cross-border collaboration between the agile development team and the test team
- ❑ The development and release cycle was accelerated by about 50%
- ❑ Testing effort was reduced by automation and product quality was increased due to establishment of best practices in QA and testing