Car-Part.Com Tests in the Fast Lane with Zephyr for JIRA

CASE STUDY

After being frustrated by their proprietary inventory management system, the founders of an auto recycling business teamed up with the president of an Internet development and Web hosting company to create Car-Part.com. This helpful website, launched in 1998, enables users to easily parse through more than 175 million inventoried auto parts from thousands of different auto recyclers to select the exact part they need.

When Software Tester Jon Lawlor joined the company, he was tasked with streamlining their testing processes. The software development team had already standardized on Atlassian products, so finding a test management solution that integrated with JIRA was a must. After seeking out possible solutions on the Atlassian Marketplace, Lawlor and his team determined that Zephyr for JIRA was the best fit. The software not only enabled better management of test cases, but provided Lawlor and the QA team with a range of important features; test case creation, test execution, metrics and reports as well as end-to-end traceability of user stories tied to test cases and defects.

Testing Before Zephyr

Lawlor noted that before Car-Part.com introduced Zephyr for JIRA, the company was using manual workarounds that comprised of spreadsheets and wikis. This not only created problems when it came to actual workloads, but the organization of team tasks as well. As a result, project team members began seeking out a platform that would fit in their budget while still enabling a tight JIRA integration.

Despite other available cost-effective solutions being available, none could support Car-Part.com's processes as well as provide the end-to-end traceability inside JIRA as Zephyr.
Increased Functionality with Zephyr

While the company’s online, customer-facing platform is a big part of its business model, this isn’t the only software Lawlor and the QA team tests. Internal corporate resources, Web-based deliverables and apps included in physical software offerings are also the responsibility of the QA team.

Lawlor and the other testers primarily leverage Zephyr’s unscheduled test versions for regression testing, supporting its master repository of test cases. One team member will establish a series of features enhancements in need of development and testing aligned with the QA theme. From here, unscheduled test cases are written using Zephyr to test specific issues or requirements. Zephyr also enables the team to run product A/S and smoke tests or close unscheduled test cases.

In addition to Lawlor and the QA team, other departments intermittently work with Zephyr. Because the solution features an easily navigable user interface, onboarding new users is simple.

Streamlined Test Plans and Tracking

Through their usage of Zephyr, Lawlor and his team have realized a number of benefits, including the ability to track progress throughout a project. Lawlor noted that he is able to keep better track of the team’s testing activities. In addition, Zephyr enables the team to quickly and easily create new test cases, or re-use cases that have worked well in the past.

Supporting the Migration from Waterfall to Agile

Car-Part.com, like many businesses today, is in the process of shifting from waterfall development processes to a more agile approach. Some projects are going to remain waterfall while others become agile. Lawlor noted that while the team is still working with waterfall strategies, Zephyr supports both methodologies making it easier to transform as their processes evolve.

Overall, Zephyr has been a successful JIRA Add-on for Lawlor and Cart-Part.com, enabling the QA team to improve test case management and utilize development approaches that best suit the project. Its features provide functionality that the team did not have before, streamlining their work and ensuring support for all critical testing processes.

“"It has a shorter learning curve, which is nice when you bring in new people who haven’t worked with it before,” Lawlor said. “It is easier to introduce them to the concepts because it shares a lot of the base terminology and framework with JIRA, so if they know how to use JIRA, they inherently know how to use a good bit of Zephyr for JIRA. It’s not quite such a training effort.”

“"It helps a lot since we are able to quickly spin test plan and get moving on a new testing effort without a whole lot of upfront work,” Lawlor said.

“"I think that it’s flexible enough that it doesn’t force your hand one way or another,” Lawlor pointed out. “It allows you to do either.”