

Fanfare Uses Mono to Deliver Test Automation for Equipment Vendors

OVERVIEW

Fanfare is a Silicon Valley startup building a commercial software solution to enable test automation for equipment vendors. The company's product, FanfareSVT is an integrated test development environment with a unified approach for rapidly building test cases and automating the equipment Quality Assurance (QA) process. Fanfare also delivers the FanfareSVT Runtime, an application that enables FanfareSVT test cases to be integrated quickly into equipment vendors' existing regression testing infrastructure.

With rising product complexity and global competitive pressure to shorten product release cycles, QA organizations are struggling to maintain quality, in a shorter amount of time, with the same or fewer resources. Fanfare helps equipment vendors, both large and small, break the QA backlog by radically simplifying and accelerating equipment testing.

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Andy Waddell
Sr. Software Engineer
Fanfare

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Given the fast pace of the network equipment industry and its customers' demands, equipment vendors must keep pace with the sharp competitive pressures in their respective marketplaces. Before a new release is rolled out to customers, the vendor's system verification engineers must validate its functionality, a process that can consume weeks or months of expensive resources. Fanfare's customers use FanfareSVT test automation software to complement existing technologies and test processes, simplify and accelerate automated testing, and increase productivity gains throughout the entire system verification engineering organization.

Fanfare also provides a product called FanfareSVT Runtime that makes it easy to move automated test cases into an existing regression infrastructure and bring Fanfare functionality to all non-Fanfare generated scripts. With the FanfareSVT Runtime current testing processes are leveraged, not replaced, so testing does not stop while automation proceeds. Initially, the FanfareSVT Runtime only supported Windows, which was a limiting factor for many of their customers. "Windows support for the front-end IDE is fine," said Andy Waddell, Sr. Software Engineer at Fanfare, "but the Runtime product is deployed on our customers' automated back-end systems that are invariably running Linux."

Fanfare recognized the need for cross-platform support as a requirement early in the development process to accommodate their customers' legacy systems. "Our customers are typically using home-grown automation systems that run on a variety of operating systems," said Waddell.

NOVELL SOLUTION

The existing code base was written in C#, and it was important to be able to leverage that as much as possible to reduce expensive code rewrites. "We considered Java" said Waddell, "but that would have meant rewriting a significant portion of the code, and an investment in time and resources that we could not afford." The Fanfare development team researched other possible solutions, and determined that Mono was the fastest and easiest path to cross-platform enablement. Fanfare then started compiling and testing all of our code with both the Microsoft tools and the Mono tools. "Our code was written pretty aggressively to latest .NET spec with extensive use of generics and the latest, greatest APIs," said Waddell. "At the time, 2.0 support in the Mono compiler was in development, and we were able to work closely with the Mono team to get issues resolved."

RESULTS

For Fanfare, using Mono allowed them to quickly provide a solution for customers who were looking to deploy FanfareSVT Runtime on non-Windows platforms. Waddell figures months of development time were saved by using Mono, and in the end "using Mono made our code more robust and gave us the ability to deploy not only on Linux, but on a wide variety of platforms."