



Walla Walla University Reduces Patching Time by Nearly 70 Percent Using Stat®

Walla Walla University, founded in 1892, is located in College Place, Washington and offers more than 100 areas of study in liberal arts, as well as professional and technical programs. It also offers graduate programs in education, biology and social work. When the university approached Quest, it was in the process of a PeopleSoft ERP system implementation. Dr. Richard Jensen of Walla Walla University led the technical side of the project. The university was installing PeopleSoft 9.0 in a four-part environment composed of many Linux servers and a couple of Windows 2003 machines.

The Challenge

One of the greatest challenges the university faced in its PeopleSoft implementation was keeping up to date on patching, a time-consuming process especially for the university's relatively small implementation team. The team was comprised of eight people, including programmers and one DBA. Universities of a similar size typically have much larger teams.

"We're determined to stay patched," said Jensen. "We've just seen too many Fortune 500 companies that ran into problems costing millions of dollars because they did not keep up with patching. But the problem is that patching takes an inordinate amount of time. We could have a full-time person devoted to it."

The team soon found itself three months behind with patches during the implementation. "A given patch might modify a hundred different aspects of the system," explained Jensen. "And then, another patch comes and does the same thing to an overlapping multiple hundred aspects. And so on. Then you fall behind. And again, we were so short-staffed since we were involved in things like bringing up a new test environment."

In order to get back up to date on patching, the team's DBA spent more than three days working only on this activity. "That's not because he was inadequate," said Jensen. "It's a function of just how slowly PeopleSoft's Change Assistant is at going through the repository, getting the information, transferring it over in little, teeny pieces, extracting, and installing. It's an incredibly tedious process."

Another challenge was identifying needed patches. "Change Assistant is not that effective at telling you what patches you need—it doesn't notify you," explained Jensen. "You have to go through the process of finding out what you need, which also requires time and resources."

The Quest Solution

Jensen decided that a more robust change management solution was necessary to keep up to date with patches. "We were looking for some kind of product that could make the patching cycle manageable for us," said Jensen. "And that was the primary thing we found appealing about Stat."

Stat provides software revision control and versioning capabilities as well as process management, change request tracking and distributed development support. Stat is the only solution certified by PeopleSoft to manage and version control both PeopleSoft proprietary objects and flat files.

"The last time that we did a major patch, it took more than three days," stated Jensen. "Now, using Stat we could do it in a day. And then Stat's going to enable us to roll it around the different environments in a matter of hours."

Stat also proved useful in identifying the patches that needed attention. "We have Stat set up now to fire up Change Assistant and notify us once a month about patches that need to be made," said Jensen.

"As soon as we saw the demo, we thought, well, there's just no competition out there. There's nothing on the market that does what Stat does, particularly not as closely integrated with the PeopleSoft system."

*—Richard Jensen,
Technical Lead, PeopleSoft
Implementation Project,
Walla Walla University*



Overview

Headquarters

College Place, Washington

Services

Higher education

Critical Needs

- Manage time-consuming patching process during PeopleSoft implementation
- Versioning of both PeopleSoft and home-grown application customizations

Solution

Stat for PeopleSoft

Results

- Reduced time spent patching by nearly 70%
- Improved efficiency in version control through change/service requests (CSRs)
- Kept PeopleSoft implementation on track using CSRs for process management
- Gained peace of mind through roll back capabilities

The Bottom Line

Stat saved Walla Walla University a significant amount of time keeping patches up to date. Another time-saving advantage is Stat's ability to roll patches from one environment to others. "If you have four environments, and you've got to patch all of them using Change Assistant, and you contrast that with Stat helping you in that process, it's going to take you basically with a standard setup about a fourth as long," stated Jensen. "So, it seems to me that there's something fundamentally quantifiable there that, no matter how efficient you are, Stat is going to save you about three-fourths of the time."

Stat also enabled the Walla Walla University team to do versioning. "We wanted something that could be kind of a CVS for us for any in-house customizations that we write, as well as our [internally-created] Smash and Grab application," said Jensen. "Plus, we needed to ensure the integrity of PHP scripts. It's also important to keep track of the jobs we're writing, what they're doing, and what state they're in. So we were looking for a kind of CVS on steroids. And Stat really offers that."

Jensen also leveraged Stat's process management capabilities, using the tool to assign and track tasks during the PeopleSoft implementation. "It keeps everyone aware of what everyone else is doing and it's much easier to manage just the flow of who's doing what and what things are left to do," said Jensen.

Stat's ability to roll back changes was also a plus. "We can test a data migration job and see if we need to roll it back," noted Jensen. "It gives us a really quick, clean way of doing our data migration project without being worried about harming anything that really matters," said Jensen.

Jensen is extremely satisfied with Stat's performance. "We'd be completely devastated to have to do without this in the future," he said. "As soon as we saw the demo, we thought, well, there's just no competition out there. There's nothing on the market that does what Stat does, particularly not as closely integrated with the PeopleSoft system."

About Walla Walla

Founded in 1892, Walla Walla University is fully accredited and offers more than 100 areas of study in liberal arts, professional, and technical programs. The largest undergraduate programs are business, education, and engineering. Graduate programs in education, biology, and social work are also offered.

Located on a 55-acre campus in College Place, Wash., WWU also operates a School of Nursing in Portland, Ore., and a marine station on the Puget Sound near Anacortes, Wash. A graduate social work program is offered in Missoula and Billings, Mont.

About Quest Software, Inc.

Quest Software, Inc., a leading enterprise systems management vendor, delivers innovative products that help organisations get more performance and productivity from their applications, databases, Windows infrastructure and virtual environments. Through a deep expertise in IT operations and a continued focus on what works best, Quest helps more than 90,000 customers worldwide meet higher expectations for enterprise IT. Quest provides customers with client management as well as server and desktop virtualisation solutions through its subsidiaries, ScriptLogic, Vizioncore and Provision Networks. Quest Software can be found in offices around the globe and at www.quest.com.