



Stat® for PeopleSoft Enables Large University to Reduce Turnaround Time for Change Requests and Enhancements from Months to Days

Towson University operates a complex technical environment that includes Unix and Solaris application servers, Solaris Web servers, Windows servers, PeopleSoft applications and Oracle databases on the back end. Seeking a comprehensive change management solution for its PeopleSoft environment, the university's IT team chose Stat® for PeopleSoft from Quest Software.

The Challenge

When Towson University needed to move from its legacy system, it selected PeopleSoft to handle the student administration systems. Upon making that decision, the university realized that it also needed a change management system to track modifications, patches, fixes and other system changes applied throughout an application's lifecycle.

"We wanted to achieve more efficiency in our daily operations, obtain more visibility into application modifications, satisfy our auditors and better manage the entire change management process," said Phil Adams, director of information systems, Towson University.

Regular auditing also drove the university's decision to find an effective change management solution. Towson was required to undergo a legislative audit from the State of Maryland every three years. The state audit focused on functional areas, evaluating whether institutions followed appropriate processes as well as met requisite levels of efficiency and data security. In addition, Towson was subjected to strict internal audits every 18 to 24 months.

"The auditors are concerned with data protection and review an individual developer's rights to move data from a test environment into a production environment," explained Craig Tarkington, senior DBA and third-party application manager, Towson University. "They require controls to ensure a separate person is involved in that process and that we provide detailed information about all migration activities."

Towson University wanted a change management solution that would place more security around its processes, automatically maintain an audit trail of all change activity, and help the development team manage issues such as version control and environment synchronization.

The Quest Solution

The Towson University IT team had attended a demonstration of Stat® for PeopleSoft implemented at the University of Maryland and was impressed with what it saw. "We were interested in Stat's versioning capabilities, auditing features, process security, ability to manage PeopleSoft objects and its compatibility with PeopleSoft," said Adams.

After implementing Stat for PeopleSoft, the IT team immediately realized that Stat offered the layer of security it needed to satisfy external and internal auditors. Stat automatically provides an audit trail during all phases of a PeopleSoft deployment, including implementation, production support, migrations and upgrades. It allows authorized users to lock PeopleSoft objects and avoid potential problems throughout the development lifecycle.

Stat's rollback capability also allowed developers at Towson University to quickly revert to a prior version when a problem occurred in production—avoiding hours of system downtime. "Stat's object history feature has proved to be very beneficial with upgrades, enhancements and other issues that arise," said Jeanie Lamsden, lead senior analyst at Towson University. "We've been able to roll back to an older version without experiencing any problems or downtime. That capability also saved us at least a week in

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—Phil Adams
Director of Information Systems
Towson University



Overview

Headquarters

Towson, Maryland

Critical Needs

Change management tool compatible with PeopleSoft that features object security, reporting, and user notification to automate development tasks and satisfy audit requirements.

Solution

Stat for PeopleSoft

Results

- Avoided system downtime and gained the ability to immediately recover potentially critical customizations
- Reduced turnaround time for change requests by 65 percent
- Automatically documented all changes for audit trails and reporting
- Eliminated overwrites and unauthorized changes
- Gained the ability to keep users informed of change request receipt, approval and implementation

technical and functional maintenance time because we did not have to go back into the software and try to isolate the change that caused the problem.”

The comprehensive auditing and reporting of changes and customizations, another key feature of Stat, helped the Towson University IT team stay informed about concurrent development projects. “From a manager’s perspective, the status reports show who is assigned to every change request and where it is in the queue, so no one has to spend time trying to keep track of all of our projects at once,” said Adams. “The summary reports keep me well informed about where we are on any issue, including patches and fixes.”

Stat’s e-mail feature further bolstered Towson’s ability to communicate with its user community throughout the development cycle. The IT team utilizes that feature quite extensively and depends on it to provide immediate feedback to users when a change request is accepted, when development begins, when a change is in test mode, and when a change is approved and completed.

“Stat helps hold everyone more accountable for change requests submitted, ensures change requests are addressed in a timely and organized manner, and keeps our user community informed of the status and progress of their requests—which makes everyone happy,” said Adams.

The Bottom Line

Since implementing Stat for PeopleSoft, Towson University has eliminated time-consuming change management tasks, and increased its development team’s productivity and efficiency levels.

“If we’d had to assume version control, object security, reporting and other change management tasks without Stat, we would have needed to add staff and would have experienced a significant increase in time spent—and headaches—dealing with those issues,” concluded Adams. “It would have required a full-time position for someone to track object security alone. With Stat, we are able to use our existing resources and provide a high-quality, comprehensive and automated change management system.”

Stat for PeopleSoft has enabled the IT team at Towson University to improve its response time to change requests and provide immediate notifications to satisfy the user community. Developers now can begin the development cycle immediately and turn around issues and enhancements 65 percent faster than before. Without Stat, users received a response to a change request in a couple of months and were not informed about the status of the change as it moved through the development cycle. With Stat, the development team’s resolution time is less than 24 to 48 hours for most issues and a week or two for enhancements.

About Towson University

Founded in 1866 and located eight miles north of Baltimore, Towson University is recognized among the nation’s best regional public universities, offering more than 100 bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree programs in the liberal arts and sciences, communications, business, health, education and computer information systems fields. With nearly 19,000 students, Towson University is the second largest public university in Maryland.

About Quest Software, Inc.

Quest Software, Inc. delivers innovative products that help organizations get more performance and productivity from their applications, databases and Windows infrastructure. Through a deep expertise in IT operations and a continued focus on what works best, Quest helps more than 50,000 customers worldwide meet higher expectations for enterprise IT. Quest Software can be found in offices around the globe and at www.quest.com.