

Jan 08 vs. Jan 09 Comparison

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Intent

A brief description of the changes that we introduced into CondeNet between January '08 and January '09

Ticketing and Follow Through

- January '08 - We used multiple non-integrated means to track work and tickets, including: Test Director, Bugzilla, E-mail, Spreadsheets, IM's and sometimes verbal communication. Often it was impossible to track work, who was working on a task, the subtasks involved, and who was the ultimate owner for delivery of a task to CondeNet. The struggles with deliverability were demoralizing and costing us deadlines.
- January '09 - Work is tracked in Jira and as subordinate items are needed in the Savvis environment, tickets are opened in SavvisStation. The effect is we know exactly what needs to be done, who is doing it, and when they are expected to deliver it to CondeNet. Oversight, accountability, and delivery are enhanced. There is a dramatically and rapidly increasing confidence in Savvis' ability to deliver.

Process

Support

- January '08 - IOC & TSO covered CondeNet's applications 12x5 with agreed special coverage in special seasons. Often entire site teams would be on site as a backup because confidence in the support team was low.
- January '09 - Even with the growing pains of establishing a proper process with Savvis, as Style and Men's enter show season the confidence amongst the team is at an all time high. We many indeed decide not to have the entire staff onsite for the length of the show. This is TBD, but the fact that this is under consideration is proof of progress.

Infrastructure Management

- January '08 - Completely opaque, requests for a server or software were approved or denied without much explanation.
- January '09 - Transparency has been driven into ever deeper levels of the organization. An example is the discussion of the financial impact of a runtime platform for WordPress.

Development Process

- January '08 - No established method of reviewing cross team development objective lead to re-implementation of common features.
- January '09 - Reorganization and dedication to cross training along with formalization of team review processes have lead to better common code sets. There is much work to be done here, but progress is being made; tools sets, frameworks, and other core components are being standardized.

Integrated Code Management

- January '08 - None. Our development environment was entirely proprietary, costly and segmented. Often it

would take 10 working days for a new developer to become productive with our tool set.

- January '09 - We have introduced industry standard and open source, where appropriate, tools which are 100% integrated. A developer can start with a JIRA task, track his or her code changes needed for said task. A peer or designated reviewer can then merge and review the code with the developer. The tool will also highlight common mistakes and check that the code conforms. Then this information can be used to develop deployment lists, track development objectives, and deliver statistics on test coverage. This suite of tools are industry standard and open source, every developer has touched them at least once in a career, if not used only these tools.

Application Servers

Java

- January '08 - We were 3 version behind Sun and our runtime platform was reaching end of life with in several months. We couldn't use most of the current open source toolsets because our systems were so out of date.
- January '09 - We are on the curve running with the current versions of Java which allow for more rapid application development, better tooling, and faster code authorship to production cycles.

PHP/Quercus

- January '08 - We were forbidden from using this industry standard. It was regarded as a hobby language. Despite Facebook.com, WordPress and other major sites using it.
- January '09 - We now have two runtime choices for PHP - standard Apache modules with acceleration and Quercus. This allows us a high degree of flexibility and low complexity. Quercus has previously unavailable integration between Java code and PHP code bringing with it a world of integration opportunities.

SOLR

- January '08 - This was forbidden technology, despite it's feature set to cost ratio vs. Autonomy.
- January '09 - We have 3 clusters running and expect to replace the last vestige of Autonomy at some point. Each SOLR cluster has replaced 2+ \$40,000 machines and \$100,000's in new software costs. There have been negligible issues with SOLR as a software product. In comparison to Autonomy, whose Java compatibility layer was so buggy it costs several weeks of development to work around.

Increased Diversity

MySQL

- January '08 - This was forbidden technology.
- January '09 - We have a fully functional, fault tolerant MySQL cluster in development, QA and production.

Alternate CMS

- January '08 - Teamsite was down frequently with no clear path to resolution.
- January '09 - Teasmite is the most stable is has ever been and we have the CMS latitude to research alternate, more modern, more flexible, and less costly implementations. A common publishing platform with a common data model would allow for decreased complexity, decreased cost, and increased syndication and reuse potential.

Agility of Development Environment

Local Dev

- January '08 - Forbidden, although happening for the sake of some projects. Development happened in a

1970's mainframe style, remote access, remote resource, central tool pattern.

- January '09 - Completely local development with the exception of some databases. Developers can work on code, testing, and other tasks wherever they have their laptops. This also allows developers to install and test tools faster.

Decreased Buildtime

- January '08 - Average build time for projects were in the range of 30 to 90 minutes. This is the exact opposite of agility.
- January '09 - Average build time is 90 seconds with test coverage.

Better Integrated Tools

- January '08 - There was no integration of tools. Developers would write code in a text editor, save it to a branch in ClearCase, wait weeks, then check in code. This code would then be reviewed by Tech Leads by hand in a hurry up and wait state as a build deadline approached. Code reviews were often skipped.
- January '09 - Branching is eliminated, code reviews are happening daily, the tools reflect the process, and developer mentoring via interaction with senior developers has increased. Reference notes on Integrated Code Management.

Infrastructure Solidity & Readiness

Resin Cluster Config

- January '08 - WebSphere is dramatically over engineered for most Java applications and setting up a WebSphere cluster can take weeks. Changes in the clustering were often denied or took months.
- January '09 - Resin clustering configuration is standards based and simplified. To configure a cluster requires modifications in two files. Additions or changes in a cluster can be achieved in under 30 minutes.

VMWare

- January '08 - N/A
- January '09 - Industry standard near-utility computing power which allows for unparalleled flexibility in how resources are allocated to individual applications from a pool of available resources. Application instances are standardized allowing for new instances to be brought up nearly on demand.

Oracle w/ RAC

- January '08 - Oracle with disproportionate failover, 3 whole version behind, and a complex Veritas system that did not properly protect CondeNet from downtime.
- January '09 - Three industry standard, integrated, clustered, and redundant Oracle RAC's with massive potential for expandability.

Integrated Monitoring

- January '08 - None.
- January '09 - Fully integrated portal where an administrator can monitor the health of every aspect of our systems, create reports, and view contractual information. The SavvisStation is currently being retrofitted to gather more information for CondeNet.

Access to Domain Experts

- January '08 - While TSO has many experts in many fields they were often domain subject matter experts in Enterprise not Web technologies. When a Web expert was needed expensive consultation contracts were needed.
- January '09 - We have a core dedicated Savvis staff and outside of that a pool of nearly endless experts to

draw upon. In the 8 months of this project we have lacked nothing in this area from Savvis. If they do not have someone, they find someone.