

IT Operations Research Report: Testing Maturity Part II – Applications and Operating Systems

Key Findings:

- Applications heavily influence the approach companies adopt for change management and testing. This is in part due to differences in application complexity, change lead time and downtime costs. Applications driving change management and testing fall into three general camps:
 - Prudent Planners – companies supporting Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Production/Supply Chain Management and Transaction Processing
 - High Stress Environments – companies supporting Customer Relationship Management and E-commerce
 - Laissez-faire Planners – companies supporting Website Hosting
- “Prudent Planners” are generally very large companies, where downtime caused by production problems can be quite expensive. Not surprisingly, most have implemented automated change management and testing procedures. As a result, even though change volume is high, these companies generally have proportionally fewer problems in production stemming from change management.
- “High Stress Environments” E-commerce and CRM seem to face more pressure in making changes to multi-tier applications. IT departments supporting E-commerce are often faced with emergency changes that can cause delays and increase tensions within the department. Companies supporting CRM, on the other hand, face more pressure to reduce the cost of testing compared to the average company.
- “Laissez-faire” Planners are less oriented toward automated change management, even though they are most likely to have staging/testing environments in place. It appears automating change management is of less value when the focus is on Website Hosting. These companies may benefit from greater emphasis on scope or frequency of testing.
- In addition to differences by application, downtime costs are also associated with use of multiple operating systems and the Unix operating system in particular.
- Companies supporting multiple operating systems have nearly double the cost of unplanned downtime than companies utilizing a single OS to support all system tiers (web, data base, application)

Recommendations:

- All enterprises need to recognize the specific application challenges they face in change management and IT operations testing.

- E-commerce applications, in particular, would benefit from improving change management maturity
- Companies utilizing multi-OS environment to support multi-tier applications would benefit from more thorough testing to identify potential problems due to change

Report Availability:

The full report, along with StackSafe's other IT Operations research reports, is available for download at www.stacksafe.com/research

About the Report/Survey Firmographics:

StackSafe, Inc., a provider of pre-production testing and analysis solutions for IT operations teams, commissioned an independent, third-party research firm in May 2007 to conduct a survey of IT operational decision makers. The survey focused on top IT operations concerns, testing/staging procedures, change management and other key topics.

Research Edge, Inc. of Portland, Oregon, a full service research firm recruited and screened 400 respondents who were asked to complete a 30 minute web-based survey. A sample size of 400 provides an error margin of +/- 5% at a 95% level of confidence. Respondents verified company size, job location, industry, scope of IT decision making etc. and were screened against the following criteria:

- Work for a company with employs over 750 employees
- Hold the position of IT Operations manager and/or responsible for IT operations
- Support multi-tier applications as part of their position

About Research Edge:

Research Edge is a full service research firm that specializes in quantitative and qualitative technology research. Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, with partners providing 20+ years of experience with IT research – Research Edge provides worldwide coverage and an emphasis on business-to-business IT. www.resedge.com

About StackSafe:

StackSafe provides software infrastructure testing solutions that enable IT Operations to significantly improve uptime and resiliency. StackSafe's flagship product, StackSafe™ Test Center, directly addresses the challenge of incomplete and ineffective IT Operations staging and testing of changes to multi-tiered software infrastructure stacks. With Test Center, StackSafe provides the first easy-to-use virtualized staging and testing solution that enables IT Operations to understand the business impact of changes—before they touch production systems. Test Center was awarded the 2008 ITIL Innovation of the Year award at the International IT Service Management Conference and Exhibition. Based in Vienna, Virginia, StackSafe serves IT Operations teams across multiple vertical markets.

For more information, visit www.stacksafe.com