



Creating Innovative Solutions

Evaluating Performance of an Assessment Portal

Case Study



The Company

The company is a global Leader in providing Project, Program and Portfolio Management, and Business Analysis Corporate Learning Online Solutions. The company provides training and consulting services to some of the biggest and best-managed companies worldwide to manage today's complex issues.

Challenge

The client has a web-based assessment and analysis platform for rating individuals' project management competencies.

The system is designed around the concept of an assessment session. Once a client has specified their competency framework (a series of competency statements grouped into logical domains), a session is created which serves as the ultimate container for all client-specific customizations and data. Several aspects of the system are configurable, including the competency framework, the custom fields which are supplied at run-time and collected by the system when an individual takes an assessment, and the number of assessors invited to participate.

The client wanted to ensure that the website performed well at all times so that their customers could carry out their transactions smoothly and securely. It was important for the website to support a large number of users without any degradation in performance.

At peak times, there maybe 1000's of users concurrently utilizing the site. The client wanted to work with a specialist testing consultancy that could simulate the maximum user load that the portal could handle and help them tune its infrastructure accordingly.

The client engaged with NeST to perform load tests on their online Assessment portal to test the maximum user load that the portal could handle along with various other parameters.

Solution

The NeST engineers worked closely with the client to determine the profile of the business transactions that were currently supported, and also extrapolated this to outline the anticipated user load for when the client had its peak customer volumes.

This was a complex process as their peak times are around specific campaigns. Each time, there are specific areas of the site that might be affected most and therefore the test plan had to be meticulous to ensure the right coverage.

The main testing objective was to simulate a user load of 5, 10, 45 and 200 concurrent users on the assessment portal, emulating various browsers (IE6, IE7, Firefox, Safari and Opera) with different regional settings (Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese and Spanish) on two Operating System (XP and Vista) . Utilizing NeST's extensive performance testing infrastructure, a run with maximum user loads of 5, 10, 45 and 200 users were conducted with the different settings. Also an additional load of 1500 users were also done at the end of the project. These were carried out over a stipulated period to ensure that the results were more representative of a real life scenario.

The test results were recorded, collated, analyzed and presented along with other observations and recommendations to the client

Benefits

- NeST' flexible test methodology ensured a high level of overall quality and reliability across a very complex test.
- The client cost-effectively leveraged NeST' extensive experience and infrastructure to perform the tests.
- The observations made by NeST helped the client understand the performance characteristics of its online Assessment portal and enhance end-user experience.