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RESEARCH NOTE **MICROSOFT STRAIGHTENS OUT THE STUDIO**

THE BOTTOM LINE

Microsoft Visual Studio Team System enables companies to increase productivity in development environments and adopt cost-reducing strategies such as follow the sun. Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 Ultimate will give users more ways to achieve these improvements. Existing users of the Visual Studio Team System 2008 version will get these benefits when Visual Studio 2010 Ultimate launches.

In mid-October, Microsoft announced changes to the Visual Studio Team System SKU structure that both simplifies the selection process and makes it easier to generate returns on a customer's software development tooling investments. The Visual Studio and Visual Studio Team System family have been simplified into three tiers: Professional, Premium, and Ultimate, all of which include access to the Microsoft Developer Network (MSDN.) A fourth version, the Premium version without MSDN, is also available.

BENEFITS TO USERS

The reconfiguration of Visual Studio Team System to Visual Studio 2010 will provide new functionality in areas such as testing and architectural analysis. It will also enable a more straightforward purchase and selection process.

Faster and cheaper

The restructure of Visual Studio Team System will benefit users by simplifying and accelerating the purchase and selection process. Fewer items in the product offering, with each designed for a particular level in the development environment, means that users can more rapidly identify which version they should purchase and get benefits sooner. It will also make it easier for customers to purchase the right amount of functionality for each role in their development environment, which reduces costs.

The transition is particularly valuable for organizations already using Visual Studio Team System 2008 with MSDN Premium. When the launch happens in the spring, seats of Visual Studio Team System 2008 that also have MSDN Premium subscription will automatically be stepped up by one level in the good-better-best product offering. For example, users with any version of Visual Studio Team System 2008 with MSDN Premium will be moved up to Visual Studio 2010 Ultimate with MSDN. Users of Visual Studio 2008 Professional with MSDN Premium will be moved up to Visual Studio 2010 Premium with MSDN.

TOPICSApplication Development
& Integration

Nucleus has analyzed the impact of this offer on software costs. Upgrading a seat by one level prior to the launch will cost \$450 less than after the offer expires.

There is no additional cost until a user's MSDN subscription is up for renewal, at which time that user can decide to either remain at the higher level and begin paying maintenance at the new higher level, or downgrade back to the lower-level product they were at originally. In order for volume-license buyers to be eligible, they must have software assurance. The offer will not apply to users of Visual Studio Team System 2005.

Nucleus recommends that users of 2005 examine the new functionality in Visual Studio 2010 at each level, since upgrading to 2008 now can be an inexpensive way to gain access to more functionality.

More Functionality

Companies should consider adoption of Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 because it reaches more roles and tasks within the development process than previous versions did. This means that organizations will be more able to make fundamental changes or improvements in its development environment and the benefits will be greater. Improvements from some of the new or improved functionality include:

- Better bug fixing. Testing functionality has been refined so that when manual testing is performed and bugs are encountered, data is gathered in an automated and standardized way, including screen shots, logs, and videos. Because this provides far richer data than a tester's notes recorded manually in Excel, it enables developers to more rapidly diagnose and fix bugs. A feature called Intellitrace records every step and result within a test, which ensures that developers can reproduce a bug in their development environment and enables faster debugging. This is important because typically up to 15 percent of bugs cannot readily be reproduced outside of the environment in which they occur.
- Improved workflows. Architecture Explorer provides a visual representation of the code assets in a project, enabling members of a project team to rapidly acquire an in-depth understanding of them. This enables better decision making at all levels in a project, as well as more rapid on boarding of new project team members. A feature called Gated Check In runs validation checks on new pieces of code and prevents them from corrupting finished pieces of code. This is important because when faulty pieces of new code are added to existing builds, it disrupts workflows and can cause work stoppages.
- Broader adoption. A product based on the Teamprise technology enables software development teams to use the source control, work item tracking, build, and reporting features of Team Foundation Server from other platforms, including Macintosh and UNIX systems, and from within Eclipse-based IDEs.

These new tools are more than just shiny objects. Faster testing, faster debugging, and a better understanding of application architectures all reduce total project costs. Because of the free seat level upgrade available during the launch, current users of Visual Studio Team System 2008 Team editions with MSDN will

have access to these new features at no additional charge until their current MSDN subscription is up for renewal.

How to reduce costs

Nucleus advises companies to take advantage of the chance to inexpensively upgrade their users' seats and use the new functionality to improve productivity in their development environments. In fact, Nucleus found that companies often use the application to fix broken development workflows or adopt productivity-improving strategies such as scrum or follow the sun:

- EDS used Visual Studio Team System to realign its global development environment into centers of excellence. The resulting improvements in productivity resulted in a 286 percent ROI and payback of four months.
- Dell used Visual Studio Team System to create a centralized global source code management system which enabled server consolidation and the redeployment of 100 system administrators.
- A major capital equipment manufacturer used Visual Studio Team System to apply process improvement practices to its development environment. The deployment had an ROI of 203 percent and a payback of six months because of the resulting improvements for project managers, developers, and testers

In each of these deployments, Visual Studio Team System enabled companies to achieve benefits that included improved productivity, lower training costs, faster project cycle times, and an improved ability to utilize least-cost personnel.

The more Visual Studio 2010 functionality end users can access, the more broadly benefits will be achieved in a deployment.

Broader benefits included improved software quality and lower overall development costs. Some users used the cost reduction to become more cost competitive. Others used it to increase profit margins.

CONCLUSION

The Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 launch will be a win for users. Consolidation of the product offering will simplify the selection and purchase process. New functionality in areas such as testing and architectural discovery will enable productivity improvements and further shortening of project cycle times than is available in the current version of the application. Microsoft's offer to elevate existing users' seats by one level in the new good-better-best arrangement can provide significant value. The more functionality each user has, the more they can benefit from improvements to workflows or the adoption of productivity-improving strategies such as centers of excellence or scrum. Users of Microsoft Visual Studio 2005 should consider upgrading to Visual Studio Team System 2008. It is a cost-effective way to acquire more of the functionality that will be available in Visual Studio Team System 2010.