



WITH REALTECH'S THEGUARD!

SMARTCHANGE, IT TOOK US NO TIME

AT ALL TO SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE SECURITY AND QUALITY OF CHANGES TO SAP SYSTEMS. WE ARE NOW ABLE TO AVOID RISKS TO PRODUCTION OPERATION AND SAVE VALUABLE TIME AND RESOURCES. WHAT'S MORE, ALL CHANGES AND ACTIVITIES ARE DOCUMENTED, PROVIDING COMPLETE VISIBILITY AND AUDIT TRAILS. THIS ALLOWS US TO STAY SECURELY PRODUCTIVE.

Andy Van Inwegen, Project Manager, Microsoft

SUCCESS
STORY



REALTECH
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Microsoft Corporation is an American multinational corporation headquartered in Redmond, Washington, that develops, manufactures, licenses, supports and sells computer software, consumer electronics and personal computers and services. Its best known software products are the Microsoft Windows line of operating systems, Microsoft Office office suite, and Internet Explorer web browser. Its flagship hardware products are Xbox game console and the Microsoft Surface series of tablets. It is the world's largest software maker measured by revenues. It is also one of the world's most valuable companies. For more information, go to www.microsoft.com.

SECURELY PRODUCTIVE

The days when the implementation of a change and process management tool in SAP landscapes took many months or even years to complete are over. Microsoft is among those who are now taking advantage of this. It took the software giant no time at all to implement REALTECH's modular theGuard! SmartChange solution, which now makes it so much easier for its employees to plan, implement, and manage changes and functional enhancements in the company's SAP environment. Even the synchronization of parallel development systems is now much easier.



THE CHALLENGE: IMPLEMENTING SEAMLESS AND SECURE PROCESSES FOR COMPLEX SAP LANDSCAPES

Overtakers, that is, transports or development objects that are imported in the wrong order, are now automatically detected and make their way into the production systems in the correct order. Critical objects are automatically identified and their import is prevented. Today, this is nothing out of the ordinary for Microsoft. However, not too long ago, this was far from the case. The processes in its SAP systems were more than 15 years old and no longer suitable to provide appropriate support for the business. Andy Van Inwegen, project manager at Microsoft, points out: "Our processes were designed to provide security and were just not fast enough anymore." Software and hardware components inevitably reached their limits.

Seeing this, Microsoft decided to change the face of its SAP landscape. Previously, Microsoft had run all of its SAP processes in a 4-system landscape that consisted of development, quality assurance, test and production systems. Any changes, functional enhancements, testing, and troubleshooting were performed within these systems. This meant many unscheduled software development projects that had to be completed against tight deadlines. The result was constant delays, overtakers, and incomplete releases. As such, the risk of error was very high. This made IT too slow to achieve the business' needs.



The first objective was to break the SAP landscape up into several landscapes, one for each of the company's five most critical SAP applications: SAP ERP, Global Trade Services (GTS), Supply Change Management (SCM), Business Intelligence (BI), and Business Objects. The second objective was to avoid testing conflicts between maintenance and release development, which had become all too common in the past. This was achieved by adding another quality assurance system to these landscapes, which now consist of six systems each: two development systems – DEV 1 for the implementation of change requests and troubleshooting in the maintenance system and DEV 2 for functional enhancements – two test systems, a pre-production system, and production system. "By expanding our SAP landscapes, we were able to bring a new level of security, flexibility, and agility to our SAP processes and applications," says Andy Van Inwegen in looking back.

More security and quality in its SAP change and transport management, of course, remained high on the agenda: Time-consuming and error-prone manual workflows still existed and were to be reduced to a minimum. On top of that, Microsoft wanted to make its processes and documentation as seamless as possible and implement reliable controls. The need to make corrections after the fact still tied up considerable resources and limited the availability of production systems. "The key to staying on top of highly dynamic environments is to implement seamless and secure SAP change and transport management processes," explains Andy Van Inwegen.

THE SOLUTION: AUTOMATING SAP CHANGE AND TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Microsoft turned to REALTECH and its modular software solution theGuard! SmartChange for help. One of its modules, Synchronization Management, was implemented to automate the synchronization between the company's parallel development systems; synchronization from DEV 1 to DEV 2 is done almost daily and a three-month interval was established for the other way around. The SAP ERP landscape alone sees up to 1,000 changes or change requests each quarter.

The Synchronization Management module reliably analyzes all workbench and customizing objects that leave the test system of the maintenance landscape when a transport request is released and exported. It classifies them as either "non-critical" or "critical", depending on whether they can be easily synchronized from the maintenance landscape to the release landscape by means of a transport or whether they require manual synchronization from within the release landscape. Microsoft is now able to combine all non-critical objects in a single request and to automatically synchronize them. Objects that require manual intervention are made available in delta views to speed up their synchronization. The ability to quickly dive into line by line code comparison between DEV1 and DEV2 is what appealed to Microsoft.

SUCCESS STORY: MICROSOFT CORPORATION



This has enabled Microsoft to conveniently and securely run both development systems and, most importantly, to do so in parallel. At the same time, its maintenance operations with its urgent corrections are no longer tied to the long-term development associated with new releases. Developers, for example, can now work on a new release without jeopardizing the availability of SAP production systems. Errors that were fixed in maintenance will no longer find their way back into the production systems once a new release is rolled out. "Automation has allowed us to synchronize 95 % of our maintenance items into our project landscape," says Van Inwegen.

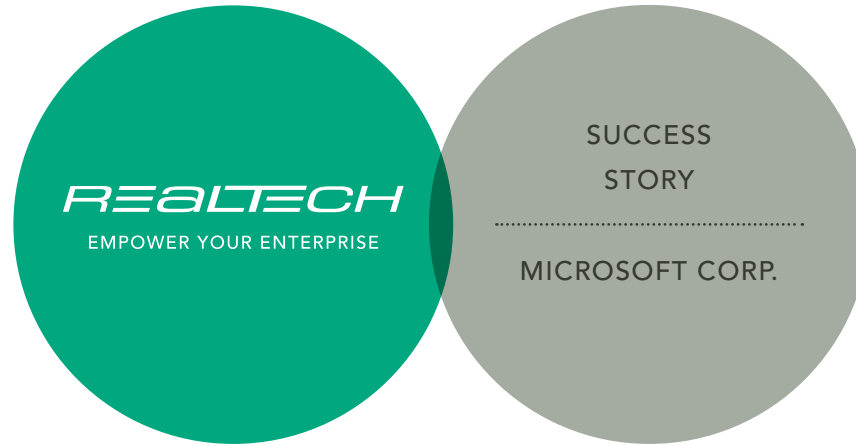
MORE SECURITY AND QUALITY – WITHOUT COLLISIONS OR OVERTAKERS

Microsoft has also come to rely on two additional theGuard! SmartChange modules: Change Process Management and Transport Management are now in place to ensure process consistency and robustness. Standard templates are available that allow Microsoft to describe processes in line with its requirements and to model them using a graphical workflow monitor. "One aspect of our process is to have an advisory board review all changes, which means that they are either approved, rejected, or put on hold," Andy Van Inwegen says in citing an example.

Microsoft worked closely with REALTECH's experts to create workflows in the Change Process Management module to ensure that defined processes are followed. Microsoft also benefits from the seamless integration with the Transport Management module, which automates and securely distributes the transports based on pre-defined routes. All stakeholders are involved and proactively notified of any upcoming process steps. Each change is automatically documented in an audit trail, giving users end-to-end visibility into the change management process.

THE RESULT: END-TO-END PROCESS VISIBILITY ALONG WITH IMPROVED EFFICIENCY, SECURITY, AND QUALITY

Microsoft restructured its SAP landscapes to respond to a changing market and overhauled its 15-year-old SAP processes. It only took a few months to implement the modules of REALTECH's theGuard! SmartChange that enabled Microsoft to automate its SAP change and transport management and to ensure consistent and seamless processes across the enterprise.



ABOUT REALTECH

REALTECH is an international technology company with unique expertise in SAP and Microsoft solutions. REALTECH helps companies shape the future of their IT organization and get the most value out of their IT assets – from consulting services to implementation and efficient operation. It pursues innovation by incorporating the latest in Industry 4.0, cloud, mobile, and in-memory computing in its customer projects.

For more information go to: www.realtech.com

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