

WinRunner Users Must Plan Now for Coming Product Retirement

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HP will end all WinRunner support by 1 January 2011. Users should not only develop migration plans, but also take this opportunity to evaluate their overall application quality management and life cycle tool directions.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Event

On 21 February 2008, HP shared with Gartner details of plans to retire its WinRunner application-testing product by 1 January 2011. Earlier, on 15 February, HP posted a brief notice on its Web site stating that it would end support for WinRunner. That statement did not include timing or migration information, but HP directly communicated those details to WinRunner customers shortly thereafter, including the following:

- Full support (including patches and bug fixes) will be offered through 1 August 2009, and limited support will be offered from that point until 1 January 2011.
- At license renewal time, WinRunner customers will be entitled to a free upgrade to the Functional Testing 9.5 package, which includes QuickTest Professional (QTP) 9.5, all QTP 9.5 add-ins and WinRunner 9.2. (WinRunner will eventually be dropped from Functional Testing.)
- To help customers migrate from WinRunner to QTP, HP will offer automated migration services, as well as migration consulting services at an added cost.

Analysis

Originally a product of Mercury Interactive (which HP acquired in 2006), WinRunner was once a market-leading, widely adopted software test automation tool. As the market shifted away from client/server computing — and the shortcomings of first-generation testing tools (such as the cost of building and maintaining scripts) blunted the success enterprises achieved with WinRunner — Mercury shifted to a new product and code base, QTP, in 2001. QTP provided several productivity benefits, but initially lacked some of WinRunner's programming power and support for legacy technologies — gaps that HP says will be closed in the next QTP release. Still, if customers have built significant extensions on top of WinRunner, this work will need to be redone if they migrate to QTP.

The transition to QTP will give competitors an opening to attack the WinRunner customer base (now only about 10% of HP functional-testing users). However, we expect these competitors to have limited success in doing so unless they match HP's free license swap offer and provide tools to make it easier to transition existing code.

While it is important to select robust testing tools, it is becoming more important to support broader application quality management and life cycle decisions. Therefore, the key decision for WinRunner customers isn't just whether to transition to QTP but, more important, whether to use HP's TestDirector for Quality Center (if they don't already) to support this critical quality management function. Increasing application complexity, use of contract development, and emphasis on validation and verification are driving the need for solutions that tie product requirements to test plans — and that drive quality throughout the project life cycle (rather than trying to "test it in" at the end).

RECOMMENDATIONS

WinRunner customers:

- Take this opportunity to review your commitment to HP's Quality Center product line.

- Unless you wish to shift to a new, non-HP stack of tools for quality management and testing, plan to shift WinRunner licenses to the Functional Testing 9.5 package in the coming year.
- Whether you choose to migrate to HP's or another vendor's offering, use the period between now and end of support to transition your regression scripts and WinRunner extension code to the product targeted for migration.

RECOMMENDED READING

- "HP's Mercury Buy Will Boost Its Competitive Position" — HP's deal to buy Mercury was a boost to its software business and its IT operations management market presence, but it also posed challenges. **By Cameron Haight and others**
- "Quality Management Testing Tools and Market Definition Helps Decision Making" — We define the quality management and testing tool market, and outline this market's subsegments and top-level trends. **By Thomas Murphy**

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