My Life As A Performance Tester

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Dramatis Personæ

<u>CIO</u>: Dawn Haynes

<u>Lead Performance Tester</u>: Scott Barber

<u>Other Company Executives</u>: Dawn's Phone

<u>Scott's 'Inner Voice'</u>: Watch The Slides

Prologue

Scott is in the Performance Test Lab. It is 7:15am. He's been there since 8pm running tests because there is no load generation permitted between 7am and 7pm.

He's wrapping up to go shower, change and get some breakfast (dinner?) before the mandatory 9am team meeting when…

In walks the CIO

Scene 1:

The Task

Scott's Inner Voice

"Are you *kidding* me?!? This site hasn't seen 5000 users this *month*!!

I bet you don't even know what "Concurrent" *__means__*! Did you read that in a LoadRunner case study, or did you just get back from a conference?"

Concurrency Summarized

- Users per hour is a better measure of volume for our application than concurrency.

- 5000 registered users who each access the site once a month equates to about 20 users per hour., BUT...

- A good marketing blitz can lead to dramatically increased numbers.

- Case studies, articles and other people's experiences often contain useful lessons, but those lessons may or may not be relevant to us.

I've got another question...

Scene 2:

Whatzit Do?

Scott's Inner Voice

This is gonna be good!

I love the look on executives faces when they realize that real, living, breathing humans use these applications. ☺

Usage Profile Summary

- Performance is not equivalent across different application usage models.

- To predict performance, the test needs to represent reality.

Do you have any specific performance targets in mind?

Scene 3:

Four Seconds

Scott's Inner Voice

Hey, did she just ask for my opinion?!?

Wow, that rocks! Maybe I don't have to visit Monster.com when she leaves after all.

Response Times Summary

- Response times are all about quantifying user satisfaction, not metric achievement.

- Getting users opinions about performance by conducting user acceptance tests under load is a good way to determine if users will be satisfied.

Dawn's Re-Cap

- So we've decided that we're going to need the site to handle:

  - 1000 hourly users

  - Mostly registering, with some searching & buying

  - User's response time expectations that we still need to nail down with representative users.

Do you think our current production systems can handle that?

Scene 4:

Cap & Scale

Scott's Inner Voice

This always happens. Now she thinks I'm a scalability and capacity planner.

When are folks going to realize that those are barely overlapping disciplines? <sigh>

Cap & Scale Summary

- Performance testers can (and should) feed data to the infrastructure team.

- The infrastructure team should work collaboratively with the performance tester because s/he is the only one who can validate their predictions.

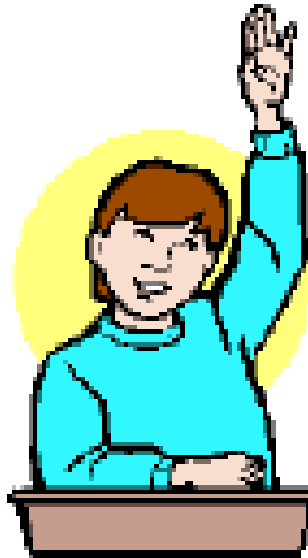- This is one way to start performance testing before any code is written.

Summary

- Not understanding volume regularly dooms efforts.

- Realism in performance tests is critical to relevant results.

- Response times are about user experience, not metrics.

- Performance testing is only one part of the Scalability and Capacity planning problem.

- None of these problems can be overcome without healthy, 2-way, trusting dialogue across the entire team.

Questions

My Life As A Performance Tester

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Credits

This presentation was inspired by Scott's Keynote Address at Software Test & Performance Conference, October 3, 2007, Boston, MA.

Some of this material was developed for, or inspired by, *Performance Testing Guidance for Web Applications*, a Microsoft patterns & practices publication by J.D. Meier, Scott Barber, Carlos Farre, Prashant Bansode, and Dennis Rea. See http://www.codeplex.com/perftestingguide.

Many ideas in this presentation were inspired or augmented by colleagues including Alberto Savoia, Roland Stens, Richard Leeke, Mike Kelly, Nate White, Rob Sabourin, Chris Loosley, Ross Collard, Jon Bach, James Bach, Jerry Weinberg, Cem Kaner, Dawn Haynes, Karen Johnson, and the WOPR community.

Most of the concepts in this presentation are derived from publications, presentations, and research written and/or conducted by Scott Barber. See http://www.perftestplus.com/resources.htm.