Skytap

Ellie Mae Accelerates Global Application Delivery Process and Improves Software Quality with Skytap

» Ellie Mae is the leading provider of software and services for the mortgage industry, and loan originators, lenders, underwriters, and service providers depend on Ellie Mae's solutions every day to complete real estate transactions. Ellie Mae's global application development and testing team is responsible for delivering multiple software releases a year and implementing new integrations and business process functionality to keep their customers competitive. Ellie Mae adopted Skytap to enable a more efficient and collaborative global development process and reduce IT infrastructure bottlenecks in its development process.

Situation

Ellie Mae provides a comprehensive line of products and services including the company's flagship Encompass® Mortgage Automation System, Contour™ and Genesis 2000® loan origination software, Encompass Websites™ for mortgage brokers, and Ellie Mae Docs™ services for document processing. Ellie Mae's ePASS® Network is the mortgage industry's online transaction platform enabling 40,000+ mortgage companies in the United States to easily do business online with leading lenders and over 90,000 settlement service providers. Ellie Mae relies on its 50 person IT team to deliver the full spectrum of applications that enable business growth and to implement new integrations and business processes to keep the company at the forefront of the mortgage business.

Ron Yun heads the software quality team at Ellie Mae had recently been tasked with expanding his team to include offshore resources in China. One of the main challenges Yun needed to solve was an inefficient testing process caused by communication challenges between distributed teams and a test infrastructure that wasn't adaptive and agile enough to keep pace with the ever increasing demands on the team. The internal IT organization was primarily tasked with keeping production systems running, so Yun knew they would have little bandwidth to build out a new testing platform. Ideally, he was looking for a solution that would enable to team to:

- Scale up testing resources during busy periods of the year
- Complete complex test matrices (including cross platform testing) without requiring significant manual effort
- Gain self-service access to virtual IT environments, thus avoiding IT operations delays
- Enable distributed teams to work together more effectively, including sharing datacenter resources of the Internet
- Automate the set-up and tear-down of new environments during the development process
- Deploy new applications seamlessly to Ellie Mae's production systems located in a SAVVIS managed data center

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» **CUSTOMER PROFILE**

Ellie Mae, Inc. provides software and services for the mortgage industry, connecting loan originators to customers, partners, lenders, underwriters, and service providers.

» **CHALLENGES**

- Complex test matrices and test cases
- Testing infrastructure a bottleneck for releasing new software
- Limited IT operations support for application development
- Global team collaboration between 50 person team across China and the USA

» **SOLUTION**

Ellie Mae adopted Skytap for its global application development and testing platform.

» **BENEFITS**

- Delivered higher quality software due to increased test coverage
- Reduced software build download times from 3.5 hours to 4 minutes
- Shortened set-up and tear-down time for new environments by over 85% (1 days vs. 1-2 weeks)
- Improved team collaboration between China and the USA through shared cloud environments
- Reduced bug reproduction time by 80%
- Better security than physical lab machines

» **CUSTOMER HIGHLIGHTS**

"Skytap provides us with far greater flexibility than a physical IT lab. Testing our software on client platforms, such as Windows 7, can be achieved without waiting for IT operations to manually provision machines. Skytap's self-service model and pre-built virtual machine templates means my team can provision a new test environment in minutes."

Ron Yun, Director, Quality Assurance, Ellie Mae

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Challenges

Yun was well aware of the industry shift to cloud computing and was reluctant to invest in on-site virtualization infrastructure which would require hardware, storage, virtualization software, and implementation costs. His IT operations team was unlikely to have the bandwidth to build out a solution quickly and he faced an urgent need to scale resources for upcoming projects, including ensuring Ellie Mae was fully compatible with the new Windows 7 release.

Yun explored some cloud service providers but quickly found most didn't support the complex software stacks Ellie Mae needed to test. "One of our key requirements was being able to test a range of client and server configurations, including the upcoming Windows 7 release, and most cloud providers are designed for web hosting rather than software testing", said Yun. "Another essential element was rich team collaboration functionality to enable my teams in the US and China to work effectively. We wanted an easy-to-use software UI to mask the complexity of virtual environments and the ability to share IT environments in real time between developers and testers."

Solution

Yun discovered Skytap through his relationship with SAVVIS. "When we first saw the demo of Skytap we were very impressed with the effort they've put into user experience and role-based access for team members", said Yun. "Skytap offers the things you'd expect from a cloud provider, such as 'pay-as-you-go' billing, scalability, on-demand access to data centers, but the thing I found most compelling was their focus on delivering a complete cloud solution that our team could be productive with immediately."

Yun started a pilot project with Skytap to evaluate their Encompass product's compatibility with Windows 7. "We had our software test environments created within a day or so of signing up for Skytap. After this, we were able to quickly execute test passes that could have been delayed 4-5 weeks if we'd waited for new hardware to come online", said Yun. "Our QA engineers learnt how to use Skytap's SaaS application very quickly and can now create their own test environments instead of being reliant on IT. It helps us deliver software more predictably and with better test coverage because we've eliminated manual set-up and delays due to IT provisioning requests."

After successfully completing the pilot, Yun expanded the use of Skytap to their China facilities. "Skytap is a fantastic platform for distributed development. Our development team can now push builds to share with offshore test teams in a matter of minutes instead of the 3-4 hours before", said Yun. "In addition, we've seen bug reproduction times come down over 80% because the development team can spin up a snapshot of a datacenter in exactly the state the bug was found. For complex bugs, this saves hours of time trying to replicate the issue."

Benefits

Ellie Mae has now expanded its use of Skytap to the entire application delivery team. "We now use Skytap to test our entire portfolio of products, from the applications we deliver to our customer's desktops to the applications that run in our datacenter", said Yun. "Given Skytap's infrastructure is based on industry-standard virtualization technology, it means we can easily deploy our applications from our cloud test environments to our SAVVIS managed production environment."

Specific benefits Ellie Mae experienced with Skytap include:

- Deployed complete solution in less than a week (including training)
- Delivered higher quality software due to increased test coverage
- Reduced software build times from 3.5 hours to 4 minutes
- Shortened set-up and tear-down time for new environments by over 85% (1 days vs. 1-2 weeks)
- Enabled highly productive team collaboration between China and the USA
- Reduced bug reproduction time by 80%

GETTING STARTED

To learn how Skytap can deliver value to your organization, contact a cloud computing expert at sales@skytap.com or call us at 1-888-759-8278

www.skytap.com