

ViaSat ensures SOX compliance, streamlines Oracle EBS R12 upgrade



ViaSat lowers the risk of change in the eyes of management, auditors and regulators

When ViaSat, Inc., a publicly traded satellite and digital communications company, approached the impending upgrade of its Oracle E-Business Suite to version R12, management took a sweeping, forward-looking approach to testing befitting an organisation engaged literally in rocket science.

Testing is Critical

“As the frequency of our major software change projects increases, we find ourselves more or less constantly in test mode,” explains Aaron Sager, Director of Business Systems and Processes. “We were very conscious of the continuous time demands this put on finance, HR and other functions.”

“We attract talented individuals to ViaSat, but if their focus were test, test and retest, we wouldn’t be able to keep them here very long. We wanted to automate as many tests as possible, not only to lessen the burden on testers but also to execute more tests more often, while reducing our reliance on risk-based testing.”

Sarbanes-Oxley Requirements

Sager says Sarbanes-Oxley requirements also are a priority: “Any changes to our financial systems are heavily scrutinised by external auditors. And in the past, it was very labour intensive and costly to provide completeness of testing assurance. The upgrade to our chart of accounts would be the biggest change in our financial systems in several years, and we knew the audit would be painful unless we raised our game.”



“ We ruled out solutions from HP and Oracle

ViaSat Profile

ViaSat, Inc. (NASDAQ: VSAT), produces innovative satellite and other digital communication products that enable fast, secure, and efficient communications to any location. The company brings today’s new communication applications to people out of reach of terrestrial networks, in both the commercial and government sectors.

The Challenge

To minimize the risk of business disruption from frequent changes to enterprise software through efficient testing that increases the productivity of the organization and generates complete, comprehensive, accurate documentation for continually refining processes, assuring external auditors and satisfying government regulators.

Our Solutions

- > Qualify
- > TestDrive
- > TestDrive-Assist

The Benefits

- ✓ Efficient testing for any application
- ✓ Greater productivity for testers of any type
- ✓ High confidence in audit and compliance reporting

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Original Software

Aaron assigned Patrick Hooper, a Business Systems Analyst on his team, to find the best set of testing tools available. The two agreed on three key requirements:

- Solutions must streamline software testing for business users, enabling the organisation to execute more tests of any application change in a more rapid and accurate fashion than prior methods, such as simple spreadsheets.
- Solutions must document every test, providing a repository of validation for financial audits and compliance with government regulations, as well as support continuing process improvement.
- The tools would be “system agnostic,” not tied to any particular software vendor or technology platform.

“We wanted to **use our new testing solution across the business** - for managing change in our Oracle ERP applications, our Agile product data management software, our Concur expense reporting program, and other technologies like satellite back-office systems,” Patrick explains.



No Writing Code

In Patrick’s eyes, the right tools would be as easy to use for business people as for QA specialists.

He elaborates: “As a systems analyst, I’m focused on business functions. If a software testing solution requires me to write code, it won’t appeal to me. Working with our QA team during the evaluation, we ruled out solutions from HP and Oracle for this very reason. Even if we had the technical skills, it would simply take too long to create and maintain scripts by coding them manually.”

After an online search and review of test management and test execution products, Patrick felt the direction was clear: “No one enables non-developers to design, automate and document **test scripts with a plug-and-play approach** like Original.”

“Original Software allowed a very straightforward audit

With Patrick’s recommendation, Aaron’s blessing and the IT director’s approval, ViaSat purchased Original Software’s Qualify solution for test management, TestDrive-Assist to document tests, and TestDrive for test automation. The upgrade of the chart of accounts became the first project using the new tools.

“We can test far more than we could manually, and with far fewer staff required

Facilitating Governance & Compliance

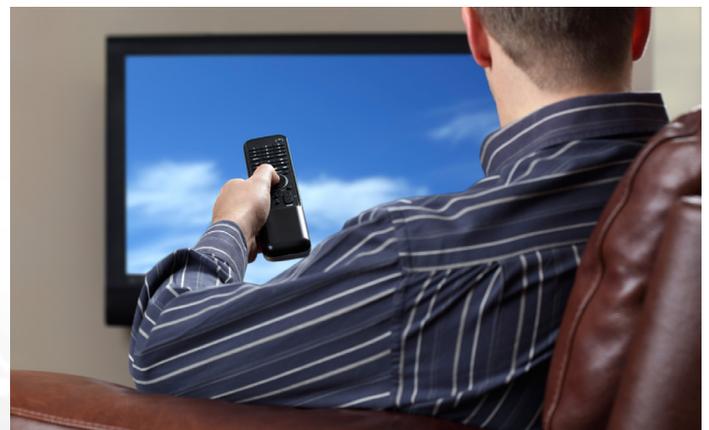
“As a publicly traded company with a substantial amount of government oversight, disrupting the performance of financial management systems is the number one risk we take when making software changes,” Aaron asserts. “Today’s auditors and regulators are technology-savvy and have their own tools for detecting issues and errors in financial reporting.”

“We performed the upgrade using full documentation within Original Software,” explains Patrick. “Every test case was listed and every test was executed and screen shots captured. Now, when a manager does a review they are able to see screen shots and the data entered and the output. And if there is an issue in production, we can go back and see the exact test that was carried out as well as what the results were.”

“Original Software allowed a very straightforward audit when the financial auditors came in and reviewed the changes,” says Aaron. “Previously, it would have taken significantly more time to complete and reach the required level of confidence. It wouldn’t have been as pleasant.”

Orchestrating Change

As ViaSat moves from its successful upgrade of chart of accounts to other Oracle R12 modules, Patrick says the company is “positioned well for later projects as all the results of our initial testing have been captured for automation.”



The team involved in R12 testing draws from multiple departments and includes as many as 75 staff members playing diverse roles. Before deploying Original Software, these large multifaceted teams mainly tracked activity and progress with spreadsheets, email and phone calls. Now, Qualify serves as their collaboration platform.

“For our R12 upgrade we have daily status calls, where we review current reports in Qualify to gauge status in real-time and determine whether we’re on pace,” Patrick says. “In the past, we would have to go person to person, department by department to assemble numbers for reports. The old process gave us a rough estimate at best.”

He explains their new process: “Now, our test cases are gathered by functional area and then by functional steps so we can see how many have been started, passed, and failed. That structure has been highly beneficial. As soon as we have completed the R12 project, we’ll use recorded tests to build a complete set of automatic regression tests to run against future changes. This way we can test far more than we could manually, and with far fewer staff required.”



Raising Quality, Lowering Risk

According to Patrick, a series of tests that are easy and fast to execute will keep raising software quality while lowering the risk of business disruption.

“As a bonus, we’ll use the animation feature to convert screen shots to video training guides for educating new employees about business processes,” he says.

Aaron reserved a final comment of appreciation not for the technology, but for the people behind it: “We really appreciate the support that Original has given us. It has been phenomenal. **We are very, very impressed.**”

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About Original Software

Original Software dramatically reduces the effort required to ensure your enterprise applications meet the changing needs of your business. Knowledge workers and IT professionals around the world use it to streamline processes such as user acceptance testing, conference room pilots, manual and automated testing, project tracking, and regulatory audits.

The software provides the fastest way to capture and share business processes, validate application functionality, and communicate real-time project status. You can apply it to any data-centric application. Our customers report their productivity doubling, tripling, quadrupling – or better – enabling them to deliver functionality more frequently and meet strategic objectives more rapidly.

5 minutes to calculate your own ROI

We are confident our solution can help you deliver a high quality outcome to your Oracle EBS project while accelerating the process and optimising resources. We are also sure you can realise significant cost savings.

Based on our customers’ experience, we have developed an Oracle E-Business Suite Release 12 calculator that can quickly and clearly show you the likely cost savings and return on investment you would gain from deploying our solution. Challenge us to calculate your own ROI.



Contact us +1 630 321 0092 (USA) | +44 1256 338 666 (UK)

solutions@origsoft.com |  @Origsoft

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