

## **The Razor Perspective**

Today, we find the majority of companies that need a Software Configuration Management (SCM) solution will not buy stand-alone enterprise SCM systems; rather, they will either: (1) use SCM functionality bundled with their strategic application platform or platforms (or from the same vendor that provides them) or (2) purchase full life-cycle change management systems that will include SCM as part of a broad suite of capabilities that will encompass help desk, issue tracking, development, asset management, deployment and operations. These companies will also seek to handle change in the same way (as much as is possible) across the heterogeneous environments they will have to manage. If they can, they will prefer to have a single SCM solution that will bridge the different underlying environments and allow them to manage, build, package and release across those different environments.

At Visible, we maintain a philosophy that our customers are better off when they select a tool to fit their process, not vice-versa. Processes have assumed new importance under US Sarbanes-Oxley Act and Visible is able to address this new importance with its products. This is particularly true of Razor, an activity-based, fully configurable and integrated SCM solution. Razor ensures that software development processes are defined and repeatable, minimizing risk to the organization and enabling good corporate governance. Rework costs savings, reduced downtime and quick project ramp-up are some of the by-products of using a solution like Razor.

## **Razor in Large Scale Projects**

Razor, with its greater process control capabilities, is typically used with larger projects and among small- to large-size teams that employ a great deal of variety in their development processes and methodologies. With other tools, process integration is provided through third-party integrations or is primarily manual, automated through homegrown scripts and tools. Support for per project customization of the process and variant branch/merge models is not a critical requirement of these tools. Typically, CVS and Visual Source Safe are examples of tools that are used with small projects which feature small teams that tend to follow less defined or more agile development methodologies. Branching is performed only when necessary and the main code-line (mainline) is the main work line. For smaller projects the mainline is protected and constitutes a release. All new changes are performed in a single work branch that later becomes the next release.

For larger projects, changes are performed in multiple branches that correspond to whole sub-projects that are associated with large components of the application. This style features large and complex code merges. For packaged application development a completely different style is followed whereby broad configuration changes are made to



the mainline with a completely different development methodology. Branches are rarely used, but change sets or change package support can be very helpful for managing large-scale change.

Within this context, Razor allows development processes to be defined and enforced. For example, a process definition could be created whereby acceptance testing must be done after each weekly build, or that code may not be checked in without a problem ticket, or that all defects and enhancements have states of: created, classified, reviewed by change control board, prioritized, assigned, fixed and tested. Transitions may need to be defined between the states and the metadata may also need to be captured for each state.

The primary difference between other SCM tools and Razor is the rich support available in Razor to ensure that development processes are defined, enforced, repeatable and auditable. Another critical requirement of activity-based SCM tools is that they must support multiple development processes. Since no one process/methodology combination will be sufficient for all projects, Razor enables you to implement the process/methodology that is right for you and your organization.

## **Razor Business Justification**

It is important for you to understand that as a customer, Visible protects your investment in Razor. Visible continues to take a series of steps that result in a more open and integrated product line, shifting its emphasis towards broader, integrated life-cycle management solutions. These steps are being driven by Visible's customers who need to support rich, process-oriented development activities and by their need to manage a broad range of application components throughout the life cycle. This year, we welcome several major product enhancements including the refinement of targeting features to roles in the new administration interface and web-based access to issue management and version control activities. Visible also plans to release a certified plug-in for Eclipse, more extensions to Razor's Issues and a highly configurable template for variant development processes within an organization. All of these represent significant ROI in a process-centric SCM product such as Razor. Add to that, the productivity savings from implementing a rich, process-oriented development plan encompassing a broad range of application components throughout the life cycle. Add to that, the cost savings from an enterprise-wide consolidation of diverse SCM licenses and time savings from working with a single vendor.

In summation, when performing your evaluation of SCM tools, we urge you to focus on the cost reductions and the productivity gains in performing a ROI analysis especially where you can standardize on or consolidate on as few SCM solutions as possible. Be sure to include risk in your ROI analysis. When creating a short list of SCM options, concentrate on flexibility of process support, since no single development process will meet every project need. Also be very sure there's a need for completely integrated



processes to control mainframe and distributed system (Unix and Windows) code. Other cost drivers may include:

Ease of Use

Support for a range of IDEs

Support for a range of developmental processes

Integrated Program Management

Virtual Team Support

High performance and throughput for distributed developers

Release Management

API for external applications

Impact analysis and reports

Role-based definitions

Configurable processes

Auditing/Reporting

Virtual Team support

Customized User Interface

## **Concluding Remarks**

The fact that SCM has recently become so important should come as no surprise because the application development environment today is more complex than ever before. More roles are involved in the development of line of business applications involving a greater diversity of skills. Also, there has been an increase in the number of processes and methodologies that employ newer and more complex technologies. SCM is increasingly at the heart of this complexity, being employed (with a range of processes, enterprise cultures and project management styles) to bring order to the complexity. At Visible, it is our belief that Razor, with its flexibility and ease of use will enable you to better manage this complexity.

We also believe the answer to choosing the right enterprise solution is simple: know your people and know their needs. This is why we value our role in your company right from the first point in time you contact us. In our role as your solutions provider, we endeavor to merge your product requirements with our knowledge and product capabilities. We take the time to understand your goals and objectives. If we can't help you then we will tell you, so as not to waste time and resources. In the event that we can help you then our goal is to provide you with a solution that is overall characterized by reliability, availability and scalability - one that fits your change management strategy today as well as tomorrow.