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Empowering Rapid Delivery of Quality Software

Inaugural Edition

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January 29-31, 2013 - Microsoft Conference Center, Redmond

***Development & Operations
Integrated in the Enterprise***

***Requirement Management
In The Modern Application Lifecycle***

***TFS Taskboard on
Microsoft Surface***

***Load Testing Using
Windows Azure***

Team
Culture,
Project
Culture**

**BONUS
Video**

**A Lap
Around
TFS 2012**

Featured Event



15

Features

04

Welcome to ALM Mag

Editor's Welcome



05

Magic Quadrant for Application Life Cycle Management

The June 2012 Findings

by Thomas E. Murphy, Jim Duggan



07

A Lap Around Visual Studio 2012

See new enhanced User Interface, Features and functionality

by James Tupper



08

Integrating Development & Operations for the Enterprise

The adoption of DevOps is now an established industry trend

by Keith Pleas



- 16** ***Requirement management in the modern application lifecycle***
Managing requirements can be hard... here are some answers
by Martin Hinshelwood
- 32** ***Podcast Podium***
Interviews with Agile Evangelists
by Derek Neighbors
- 33** ***TFS Taskboard on Microsoft Surface***
Goodbye Post-It Notes
by Anna Russo
- 34** ***Agile At The Enterprise Level***
Agile requires consistent collaboration among stakeholders
by Bob Savelson
- 36** ***Load Testing Using Windows Azure***
A reusable inexpensive solution with easy infrastructure management will increase performance testing adoption
by Tarun Arora
- 42** ***Team Culture, Project Culture***
Team culture offers a simple approach to solving complex problems
by Tobias Mayer
- 46** ***The History and Back Story...***
The Chicken and the Pig Story Brought to Life
by Mike Vizdos



Welcome



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Mission Statement:

"Our mission is to promote,
support and empower
rapid delivery of quality
software."

Welcome to the premier issue of ALM Mag, the only online e-magazine dedicated to focus on topics of interest to the ALM, DevOps, Agile and TFS community.

This column will be an occasional addition to an edition. I much prefer the community experts take the stage maximizing the benefit through the provided value you'll get from each issue. Their contributions are presented as true to the original format as possible. You may even notice some "English" spelling.

However, I feel it important to set the stage and let you know that this magazine is to be all about the content. Content covering a wide spectrum of interest to the community: topic areas and different viewpoints.

Viewpoints will be provided in both overview and in-depth formats sometimes taking a position, outlining pros and cons, pointing out strengths and weaknesses, asking the tough questions in order to stimulate thought, not just rubber-stamping a process or tool but mostly striving to provide balanced coverage and commentary.

This electronic publication will feature the following and more:

- Articles and Videos: Reviews, How To, Step-by-Step, Top Tips
 - Primary tools, Process, 3rd Party Integrated or Bridging Tools, Books, Events
- Surveys, Studies
- Interviews – ALM Leaders, Evangelists
- Tutorials, Courseware
- Event Spotlight, Calendar
- IT Humor / Cartoons

ALM Mag the magazine will be available on desktops but primarily aimed at the three major mobile tablet platforms: pcPad, aPad and iPad.

I wish you many hours of enjoyment over the coming issues as you build a library of knowledge and resources you can turn to support you daily.

Warmest Regards,
Keith Denham

Keith Denham

P.S. Don't forget, this is an interactive magazine, tap on the audios and videos and tap on the highlighted links to see additional related content.

Tap on the Index Page Button at the foot of any page to return to the Index.

Gartner Magic Quadrant for Application Life Cycle Management



Gartner, a leading industry analyst firm, evaluated 16 vendors based on their completeness of vision and ability to execute in the Magic Quadrant for Application Lifecycle Management. We invite you to [download the complete report](#) for insights into how Agile and the cloud technologies are driving adoption of ALM.

Summarized by
Keith Denham

**Derived from the
original work by
Analysts:**

*Thomas E. Murphy,
Jim Duggan*
5 June 2012

The application life cycle management (ALM) tool market is focused on the planning and governance activities of the software development life cycle (SDLC). Traditionally, this has been the combination of software change and configuration management (SCCM), requirements management and quality management. ALM is evolving, with a focus on coordinating the planning and execution of software projects with an emphasis on work items, planning iterations and coordinating actions across teams. The market has been driven by organizations that need to improve efficiency across teams, and to build and sustain engineering productivity. Most companies were doing one or two things, but were not following a comprehensive ALM approach. Three trends are driving companies that demand an integrated team approach:

Enterprise Agile — Once projects move beyond small teams of developers, tools that enhance collaboration and reporting (but don't get in the way) are critical.

Cloud computing — The ability to build applications that use cloud technologies and tools that leverage the cloud are critical to improving operational efficiency.

Mobile Web — The rapid uptake of mobile devices, as well as growth in number of browsers, brings back the challenge of multiplatform variant complexity.

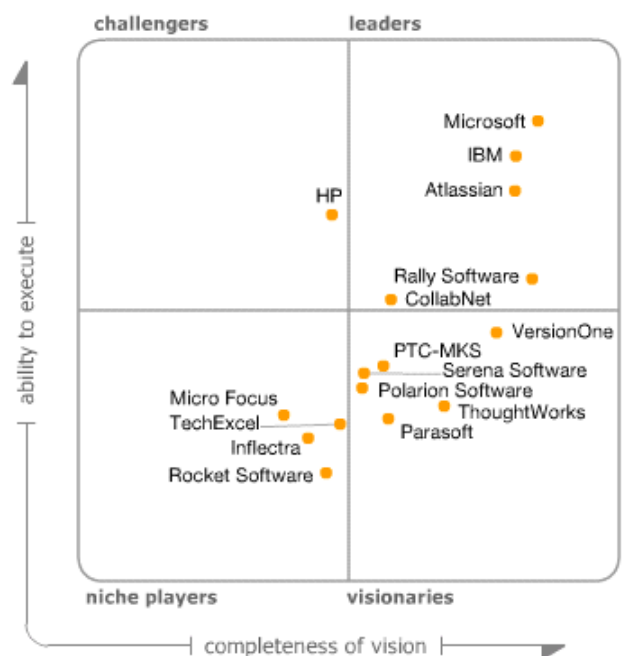
These trends emphasize issues we have seen during the past five years that have been the basis for the adoption of integrated ALM products, rather than silos: Agile teams, geographically distributed projects, complex processes or complex products. Although we are seeing more integrated ALM adoption, clients rarely start with a vision of massive enterprise deployment, and many of the products evaluated in this market are evolutions of siloed solutions. Consequently, we see initial deployments proving the concepts, then a move to viral adoption and

broader build-out — for example, requirements management may be deployed first, then test management and the connection of requirements to test cases.

Although products are evolving from silos of function, most companies have several overlapping ALM solutions, rather than one. This reinforces the need for tools to work together, and for solutions that bridge the silos with workflow, reporting, etc. Furthermore, most companies will continue to need a mixture of application development solutions. The more diverse your business and technology, the more diverse the tools you will need to support delivery. Evaluations should place a high value on tool-to-tool integration mechanisms, using XML and representational state transfer (REST) or broadly adopted proprietary mechanisms.

One key driver for a move to ALM is the move to Agile — in particular, scaling Agile to larger projects and distributed teams. Agile elements include task board, burn down, velocity and other reports, user stories and continuous integration. Pure Agile teams are often looking for focused tools that support the practices common in Agile development, and the leading providers also have strong support via training and education materials. [download the complete report](#)

Figure 1. Magic Quadrant for Application Life Cycle Management



Source: Gartner (June 2012)

As of June 2012

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A Lap Around Visual Studio 2012



James Tupper
ALM Consultant
[Northwest Cadence](#)

View this introduction to the major new features and improvements in Visual Studio 2012. Expect to see the new enhanced User Interface, Agile Planning Tools, Requirements Gathering Tool, Stakeholder Feedback Tool, Updates to the Developer and Tester Experience, Version Control Improvements, and DevOps Integration.

The list goes on but the ride starts here, so buckle up and join us for this lap around Visual Studio 2012.

Recommended Audiences

Business Decision Makers, Developers, Technical Decision Makers

Streaming Video only available when connected to the Internet

When Online tap this screen icon to play the video
Once playing, tap the full screen icon and rotate your tablet



Click on the graphic above to play the video

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James Tupper, ALM Consultant at [Northwest Cadence](#), is experienced with both software and hardware development, extending Visual Studio Team Foundation Server using its APIs, and customizing TFS in unconventional ways. James has also developed solutions using the TFS work item tracking for complex scenarios not centered on software development. A certified Professional Scrum Developer, James writes often on the Northwest Cadence blog.



[Northwest Cadence, Inc.](#) provides training and consulting services across the United States. The exclusive focus on Software Process and Microsoft ALM tools ensures clients benefit from deep technical expertise, sound process acumen, and hundreds of practical experiences on ALM projects. They partner with software development teams to improve processes and business results.

Integrating Development & Operations for the Enterprise



Keith Pleas
Organizer and
Conference Chair for the
[ALM Summit](#)

Executive Overview

EOrganizations that use practices and tools to integrate development and operations can significantly speed up their ALM process and enable continuous delivery of software. With continuous delivery, internal and external customers benefit from quicker access to new applications, features, and fixes – and the organization benefits from that increased usage and satisfaction as well as having higher quality software at a lower cost. The philosophy and practice of this deeper integration between development teams and operations is often referred to as DevOps.

DevOps practices are particularly well suited to the *Software as a Service* (SaaS) delivery model used in cloud computing, where continuous delivery has become standard. These successful practices are being extended to the enterprise to realize the value of continuous delivery. This consistency is even more important for companies whose applications bridge the gap between private and public clouds through *hybrid IT*¹. Many forward leaning organizations are further able to fuse these two traditionally distinct roles into one single DevOps role, resulting in even less friction throughout the ALM process.

The adoption of DevOps is now an established industry trend supported by numerous vendors, including many ALM tool providers. Looking forward, analysts at Gartner recently predicted that “By 2016, 40% of organizations will implement DevOps processes to support continuous delivery and simplified release management.”² Visual Studio 2012 can be used with System Center 2012 to enable continuous delivery of applications and creation of a build-measure-learn feedback loop.

hybrid IT enables companies to use private clouds for application delivery and also take advantage of public cloud infrastructure to create resource flexibility and address temporary infrastructure demand needs. Gartner Predicts 2012: Application Development (Dec 2011).

Integrating Development and Operations

The goal of every software project is to deliver maximum customer value – high quality software that customers can put to immediate use to add value to the enterprise, delivered at the lowest overall cost. The ALM

¹ *hybrid IT* enables companies to use private clouds for application delivery and also take advantage of public cloud infrastructure to create resource flexibility and address temporary infrastructure demand needs

² Gartner Predicts 2012: Application Development (Dec 2011)

process helps organizations manage and integrate all of the phases required to deliver this value. Specific activities in the ALM process are usually tailored to meet an organization's specific needs. These common activities include: requirements management, architecture design and enforcement, development, testing, issue tracking, release management, and finally, operations. While many companies treat development and operations as separate activities often reflected in the organizational structure and distinct toolsets, it is critical to integrate these two functions. This integration provides savings and increases the velocity with which software is delivered to customers and creates a differentiating advantage over competitors. For someone with a development perspective, this can be expressed as extending *Agile* practices to operations. Additionally, this integration is crucial to implement a feedback loop wherein data is continuously gathered in production and shared with the rest of the development process in order to evolve new software delivery investments.

The DevOps Workflow

DevOps practices must start at the very beginning of the development cycle by infusing operations requirements into specification documents and into acceptance criteria for tasks and work items. They continue into tests that check for compliance for operations readiness (operations acceptance tests). When this is done right, these tests can actually be reused by the operations engineers to check if operational software is running well, saving them time from recreating these tests. Various development and test labs can also be used to validate new software and make sure not only that it performs correctly, but that it can run well on hardware and software platforms maintained by the operations team. In well integrated teams, the operations team is responsible for creating the production images

used in development and test labs. New tools can take this further by making the images and the generation of labs available using a self-service system for even more seamlessness and efficiency.

The next key interaction between development and operations occur when software is delivered to users in production. In contrast to traditional software distribution, where software is deployed – via *software configuration management* - through a controlled set of stages that require explicit promotion, the practice of continuous delivery employs automation for both testing and promotion of validated software to production environments. In effect, the software - if it passes rigorous automated testing - is delivered automatically to users. *Cycle time* is a basic measure of the speed by which valuable software is delivered to customers. Good DevOps practices enable continuous delivery, significantly reducing cycle time for critical applications and services.

Another interaction occurs when an exception – planned or unplanned – occurs while the software is running in production, and data about that production incident is communicated back to the development. Giving development access to production incident information – in context - provides a huge advantage in crafting and delivering an updated release. *Mean time to repair* (MTTR) is a basic measure of the maintainability of software and a key performance metric for software teams. Good DevOps practices enable faster production issue detection and repair, significantly reducing MTTR for critical applications and services.

One more key interaction happens when output from the instrumentation of that software in production is used to inform development. Software instrumentation can be of particular advantage to development when it provides production usage data that

allows development to focus on features of the software that are most used and provide the highest value to the organization. The propagation of usage data is called *telemetry* because it enables data measurement by developers who are remote – without direct access – to the production software. *Analytics* makes use of telemetry data to help organizations visualize data gathered from production and discover meaningful patterns, which will allow them to learn how their software is being used so they can evaluate enhancements.

These interactions between development and operations rely on more than just a coordinated handoff – they require deep collaboration with a shared understanding of the artifacts involved, shared issue management, and shared visibility. As a general practice, it has proven more efficient to work with a common system for managing each of these artifacts than to maintain separate systems and perpetually propagate between them to keep in sync. The highest level of integration occurs when the integrated DevOps role is introduced into an organization, resulting in the lowest level of friction within the ALM process.

Microsoft Technology for integrating Development and Operations

Microsoft has extensive experience in developing software for both development and operations, and their products also incorporate experiences gained from delivery of a large portfolio of internal applications, as well as providing the public-facing Microsoft Online Services.

By leveraging this expertise, Microsoft has developed a new framework which includes tools and practices to help organizations benefit from a more integrated development and operations workflow in order to deliver software faster and more consistently.

Visual Studio 2012 and Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2012 have been enhanced in partnership with the System Center 2012 family of products to provide a comprehensive solution for the continuous delivery of applications.

Operations readiness enablement

Readiness for operations has to be expressed much earlier in the development process using acceptance requirements, which are in turn reflected in architecture design, software development and test plan definition and generation. These operations acceptance tests, architecture considerations and tests can be captured fairly easily in Team Foundation Server and Visual Studio and become integral to the development team's function.

Leveraging these acceptance requirements and test artifacts, it is now possible to import development tests into System Center Operations Manager in order to run them as synthetic tests in production. These tests simulate customer interactions and help monitor the health of the production application, making it easier and more precise to monitor the health of an application and foresee problems before customers do (more on this in the monitoring section below). Reusing the same tests used by the development team allows sharing between Development and Operations, increases efficiency and ensures that software in production works in the way it was intended.

To further establish operational readiness, advanced load and performance testing tools provided in Visual Studio Ultimate helps identify *quality of service* (QoS) issues before production volume issues surface at a late stage. Performance profiling tools can be driven by automated test or invoked manually to highlight where an application is consuming the most resources, and the particular

functions responsible for the longest delays.

Automated Test Labs

Virtual environments that simulate the production conditions provide flexibility, versatility, and standardized management options as well as dramatically simplify the automated testing that is the cornerstone practice of continuous delivery. In cloud computing, on-demand self-service provisioning of these environments supports a fully automated, continuous delivery of software.

Visual Studio 2012 includes Lab management tools that allow teams to quickly spin up an advanced Build-Deploy-Test infrastructure. Using predefined environments, teams are assured of clean test environments that can be deployed in a matter of minutes. These test environments mirror production environments without the risk to production, and can be configured to run unit tests, build verification tests, and even automated user interface tests. Since the development work is being done with production images, there is no friction with operations about introducing incompatible infrastructure software and settings.

Test plans can be linked to different test environments and test agents can then be automatically deployed to the target machines in each environment to gather precise data. The value of automated tests extends well beyond the basic pass/fail result and can include code coverage, event logs, replayable IntelliTrace logs, test impact data, and additional information and metrics. These automated tests can even record audio and video of any test runs.

Lab Management allows you to run an entire Build-Deploy-Test cycle in minutes, rather than days or hours. And each test run is complete with test reporting that's integrated

into the end-to-end software delivery process. Teams are assured that they are running the right tests before deploying the right build, to the right environment – automatically or by an explicit action.

Managing Deployment

System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2012 supports a defined set of application types using service templates to help customers design and compose n-tier .Net applications from a template library. It includes support for multiple package types, such as MS Deploy for IIS or the web tier, Server Application Virtualization (SAV) for the business tier, and SQL Data-tier Applications (DAC) for the database tier. Virtual Machine Manager can be used for public and private clouds and supports multi-hypervisor environments. And System Center 2012 App Controller controls private and public cloud resources, allowing organizations the option of integrating a wide range of custom and commodity *Infrastructure as a Service* (IaaS) ³ cloud services.

The Virtual Machine Manager Library provides a catalog of all resources (for example, virtual hard disks, templates, and profiles) that are used to deploy virtual machines and services, including shared folders for file-based resources. In addition to the application itself, typical cloud *Platform as a Service* (PaaS) ⁴ configurations include infrastructure services like access control, service bus, caching, and integration. Using service templates, Virtual Machine Manager guarantees consistency of deployments, allowing operations to associate tests to validate deployment, to roll back to a previously known good deployment if a test fails, and to create a work item with complete information.

System Center 2012 Orchestrator provides additional tools to build, test, debug, deploy, and manage automation in private and public clouds.

³ & ⁴ NIST Special Publication 800-145 - The NIST Definition of Cloud Computing

These automated procedures, called runbooks (see Figure 1), can function independently or start other runbooks in a linked workflow. The standard activities defined in every installation of Orchestrator provide a variety of monitors, tasks, and runbook controls with which operations management can integrate a wide range of system processes. Each activity in a runbook publishes data that is available to any subsequent activity in that runbook. Operations management can use this published data to provide dynamic, decision-making capabilities, which can include creating emails, alerts, log files, accounts, and custom-defined activities.

Integrated production monitoring and diagnostics

System Center 2012 and Visual Studio 2012 work together to provide monitor the health of an application and the platform it runs on and generate precise diagnostic information if an incident occurs in production. This integrated monitoring and diagnostics workflow results in dramatically faster bug fixes, which reduces mean time to repair (MTTR) and results in higher quality software throughout the application lifecycle. Significant investment was made in System Center 2012 to provide low overhead, lightweight application monitoring. Organizations can now monitor availability, reliability, functionality, and

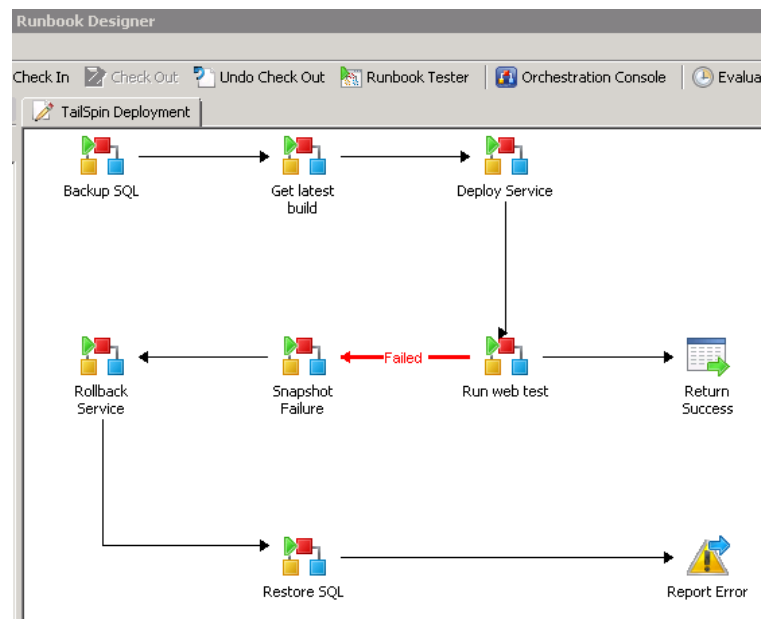


Figure 1: Automated Procedures

Finally, TFS has been extended to enable automated deployment to either Windows Azure Websites or Windows Azure Cloud Services using a *continuous integration* build definition to enable building complex projects with multiple components. TFS can be configured to deploy to Windows Azure using any of the options available with TFS Build. By default, deployment is automatic with every check-in but it can be configured to do scheduled or manual deployments.

performance from every angle with a minimal impact on performance, typically less than 5%.

Monitoring: System Center Operations Manager 2012 provides a comprehensive view of .NET and Java applications across all machines running the component or service. Operations Manager agents monitor each of the application and infrastructure tiers to provide operations with an integrated health model that checks availability (is it up and running), reliability (is the app experiencing

problems), functionality (is the app doing what is expected), and performance. Reliability is particularly important in *multi-tenant* environments where failures are isolated to one tenant. And performance can include such measures as whether the application is taking longer than expected to respond, or is the average response time greater than expected. *Multi-tenant*⁵ software runs on one server, but services multiple client organizations (tenants)

Operations Manager can detect both expected problems (which the application may be able to handle), and unexpected problems (which likely cannot be handled well within the application). Advanced management options include the ability to use an external client agent to capture end-user experience and set different thresholds on per tier basis.

Operations Manager will then collect meaningful information such as workload availability, reliability, performance incidents and create exception alerts which can be communicated to other team members (see Figure 2).

System Center 2012 introduced a new cloud enabled capability called Global Service Monitor (GSM) that extends application monitoring to enable organizations to add “outside-in” testing to incorporate a true reflection of users’ experience with an organization’s web site and applications. The GSM cloud service, hosted in Windows Azure, issues synthetic transactions against web facing applications from Azure points of presence around the globe and reports back the availability, performance, and functionality results to an on-premises Operations Manager dashboard.

Diagnostics: Operations teams using System Center Operations Manager can collect diagnostic information for both handled and unhandled exceptions with call stack and run time state *with no changes required for the running applications*. And by using simple PowerShell scripts, Operations Manager can deploy IntelliTrace infrastructure on any running server in order to automatically collect additional data when needed or requested by a developer with the standalone IntelliTrace collector.

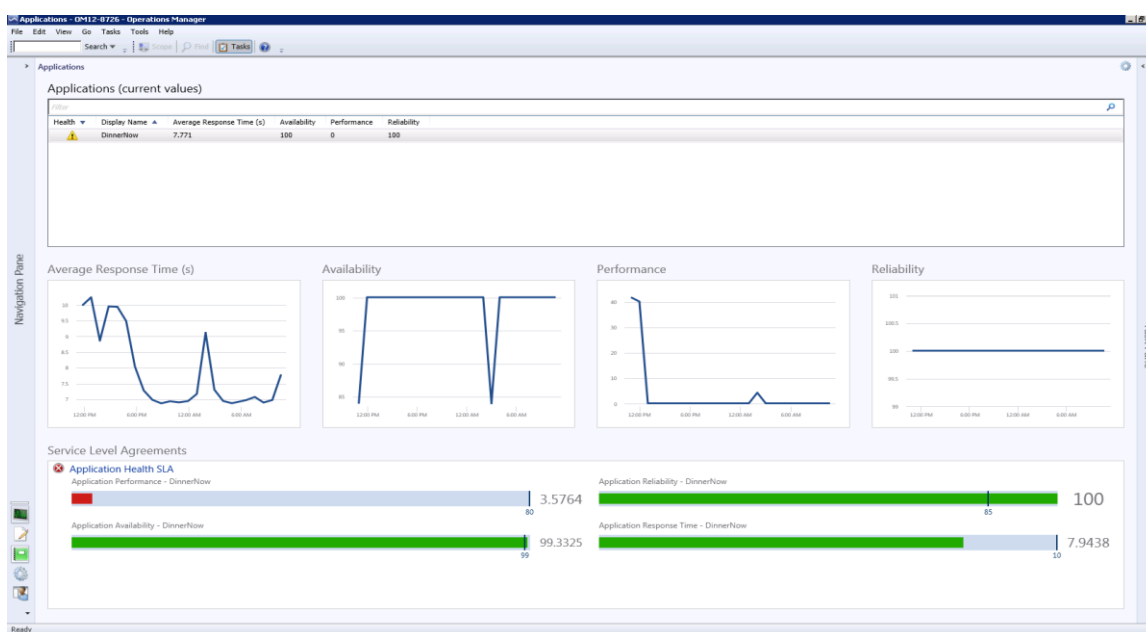


Figure 2: Application Dashboard

⁵ *Multi-tenant* software runs on one server, but services multiple client organizations (tenants)

Operations Management Server and Team Foundation Server (TFS) can be configured to work together to seamlessly communicate significant monitoring alerts from the Operations team to the Development team. System Center alerts can be manually – or automatically – be assigned to engineering (development team) and/or run additional automation scripts. Then diagnostic information can be converted into IntelliTrace log files and attached to the TFS work item and allow developers to run IntelliTrace debug sessions within Visual Studio. This complete 2 way synchronization of systems cuts out layers of process between development and operations teams while allowing both functions to work within best of breed tools they know and love.

Organizations that are not yet using System Center 2012 can still take advantage of Exception Analytics for TFS to capture production exceptions and create TFS work items that includes complete exception information, including a full stack trace and any comments provided by the user who encountered the exception.

The Payoff – Learning through Analytics

Analytics “is the discovery and communication of meaningful patterns in data” ⁶ and is the foundation for an organization to learn how their software is being used – in the real world, by their users. Just as one of the tenets of Agile software development is to “fail faster”, analytics can be used to quickly discover what software features are *not* being used so that development can pivot towards features that add more value. This quickened feedback loop is not confined to small startups: the length of time that an established organization enjoys market leadership is steadily shrinking, making it critical for them to invest in targeted innovation.

Analytics make use of the same production alerting mechanisms that allows software exceptions to turn into development work items. Analytics, however, provides visibility into issues at a business level – highlighting which features are used, the sequence of usage, and – the corollary – which features are dead ends. And analytics gives an organization – and its stakeholders – a rigorous method for demonstrating progress. By adopting analytics, an organization can respond and innovate at the speed of their ALM process.

In essence, software analytics enables an organization to **learn** from the **measure** data they gather from the software they **build**. This allows them to reduce their cycle time, increase the velocity of delivering software to customers, and increases business value.

Conclusion

Integrating Development and Operations teams more deeply, using new practices and tools, is critical to achieving shorter cycle times and reducing mean time to repair. Organizations that integrate these tools and practices into their ALM process will increase the quality and value of the software they deliver. By integrating Visual Studio 2012 and Systems Center 2012, organizations can enable continuous delivery of applications and creation of a build-measure-learn feedback loop.

Keith Pleas is the Organizer and Conference Chair for the [ALM Summit](#). Keith is also a software architect, and has worked with the Microsoft [patterns & practices](#), .NET Framework, and Visual Studio teams. Keith is an internationally known writer, speaker, conference organizer. Keith was a founding board member of INETA and created the [INETA Speakers Bureau](#).

⁶ Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analytics>)

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Requirement management in the modern application lifecycle



Martin Hinshelwood
ALM Consultant
[Northwest Cadence](#)

Managing requirements is hard and no single tool can tell you how to achieve that within your organization. To that end, Visual Studio 2012 Team Foundation Server stays out of the “where do your requirements come from” world and firmly in the “I have my requirements.. what now?” world and indeed the tools built on top of the requirement management system stay in one niche.

UPDATED 2012-09-11: I have updated the list of tools available

The Modern App Lifecycle

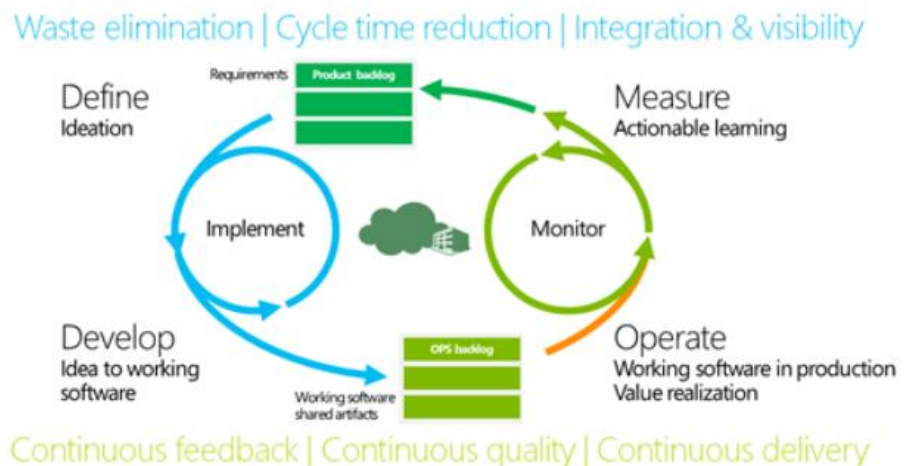


Figure: Requirement Management is part of Define / Ideation

Team Foundation Server aims to become your matter of record or single-point-of-truth for what state your requirements are in, what the details of that requirement are, who is currently working on it and who changed what when.

The system has lists of work item that can have any number of fields with configurable forms and permissions along with many other features out-of-the-box and you can store data against these fields with TFS storing a revision history so we can get back to any version that we like. All users authenticate in some way with a single unified authority so we get [full digital signature traceability through the system](#) which allows TFS to fully support and comply with [Sarbanes-Oxley](#), [FDA](#) and [PCI-DSS](#) to name but a few.

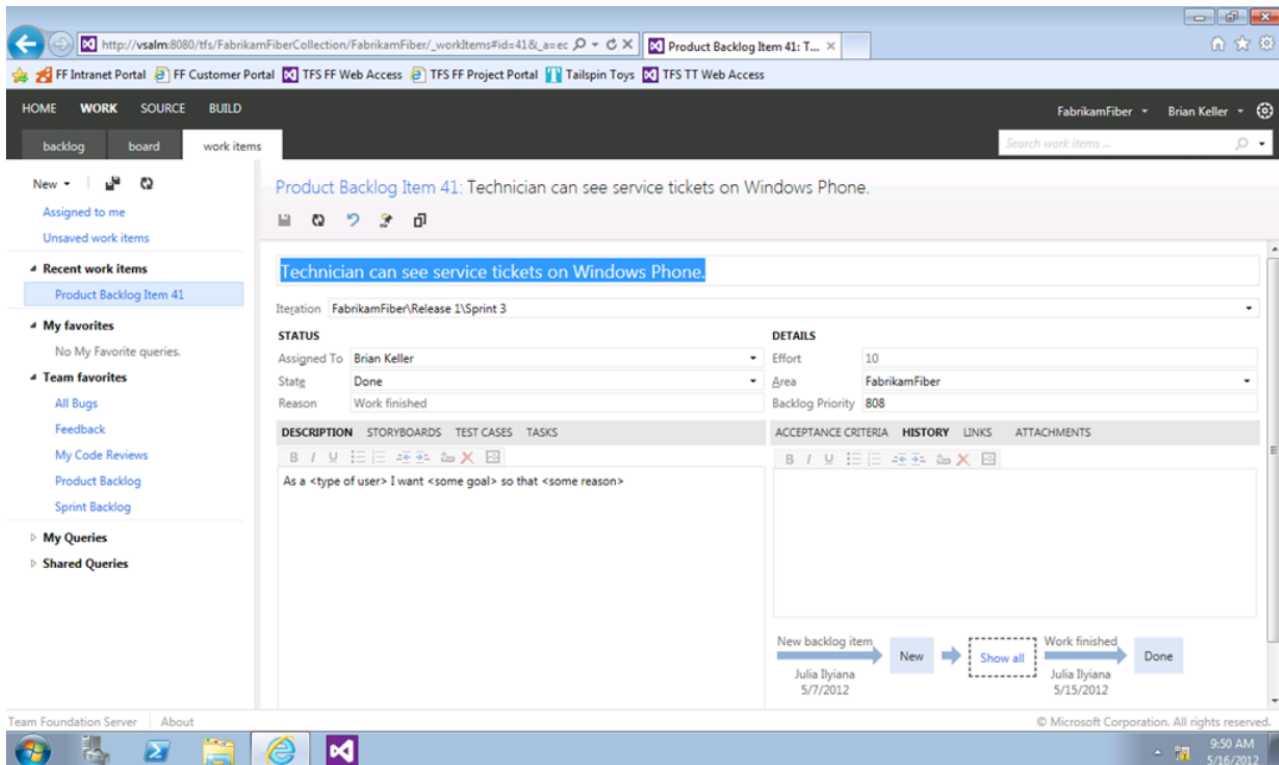


Figure: Storing data in forms and state transition

But while Team Foundation Server fully supports that recording and traceability there are only a few tools for figuring out where the requirements come from.

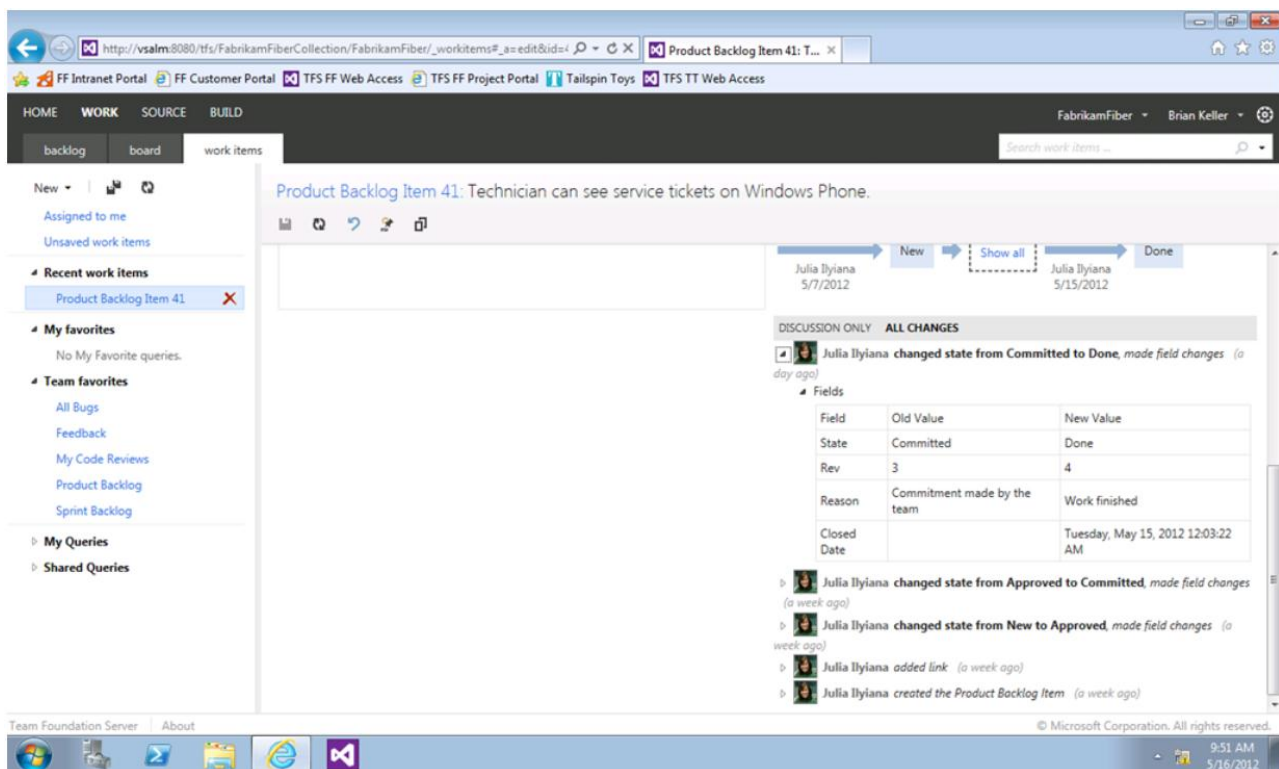


Figure: Traceability of every change to every field



The Problem

The problems that TFS can't solve for you, and no other tool out there can either, is that creating clear and actionable requirements is hard. Capturing requirements is so hard that most, if not all, software created today does not meet the value expectations of the customer. Part of this is due to a gap between the customers understanding of what was asked for and IT's interpretation of that requirement but much of it is the inability for requirements to be captured in a timely and well documented fashion.

```
public bool set_consumer_info(double firstname, double lastname, double ssn,
                             double white, double hispanic, double asian, double indian) {
    this.consumer = new double[6];
    this.consumer[0] = firstname;
    this.consumer[1] = lastname;
    this.consumer[2] = ssn;
    this.consumer[3] = white;
    this.consumer[4] = hispanic;
    this.consumer[5] = asian;

    return true;
}
```

"It gets better though when you see how it's called."

```
// ds is a custom class helpfully called "DataSet"
ds.set_consumer_info(
    Convert.ToDouble(st.ConsumerName/st.NumberOfAccounts),
    Convert.ToDouble(st.CosignerName/st.NumberOfAccounts),
    Convert.ToDouble(st.Socials/st.NumberOfAccounts),
    1,0,0,0);
```

Fig

We need to be able to reduce the requirements definition cycle time and much more effectively capture the details of those requirements so that we can execute. To achieve this we need more than a matter of record and while there are a number of awesome tools out of the box, Microsoft has recognised that it cant be all things to all men, and cant build all tools for all situation. They have encouraged an ecosystem of partners that can fill these gaps and provide value to customers.



Integration Points for Requirement Management

There are many integration points with Visual Studio 2012 Team Foundation Server but the key here is the TFS API and its flexible Work Item Tracking model. The Work Item Tracking system that contains Work item Type Definitions (Requirement, PBI, User Story, Bug, Task, Test Case, etc.) that have Field Definitions (Title, Description, Effort, Remaining Work, State, etc.) all of which can be customised.

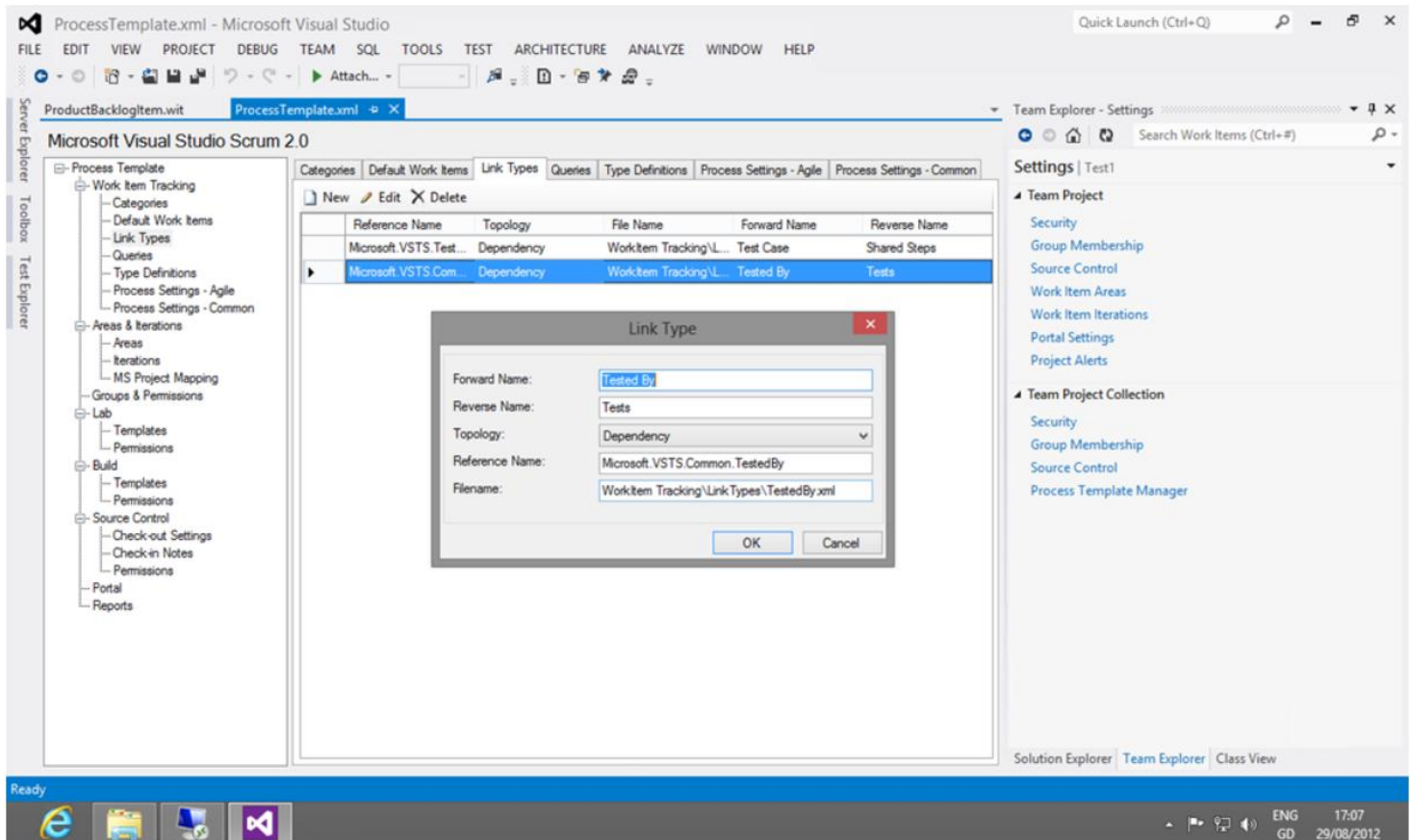
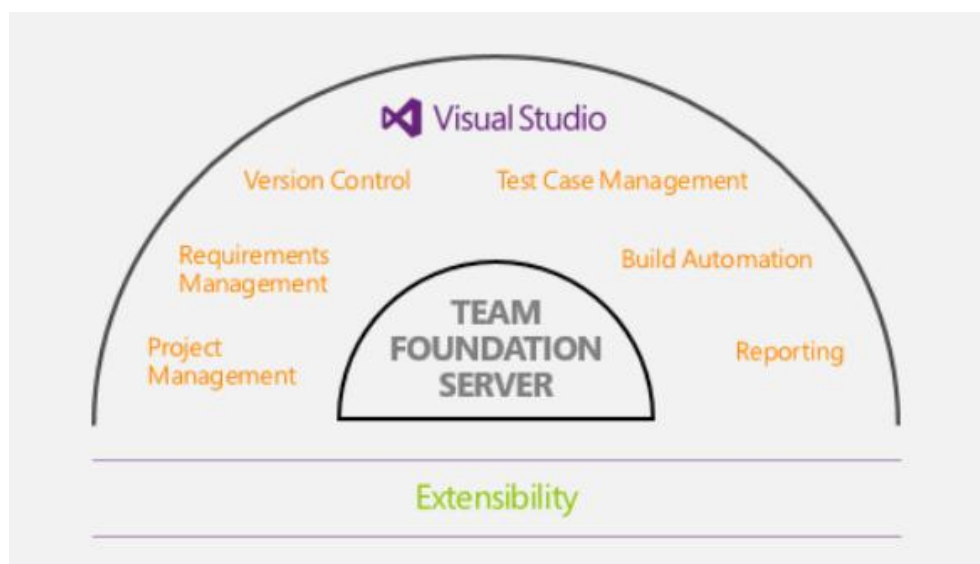


Figure: Custom Link Types

There is a built in linking system that allows not just hierarchical lists, but the ability to create your own bi-directional linking taxonomy. For example the existing process templates contain a “tests / tested by” relationship that allows you to have a directional relationship between a bug and a test case. i.e. a Bug is “tested by” one or more Test Case(s) and visa versa. These links can be between any of the built in artifact types and indeed you can link to your own external artifacts to enable deeper integration with the product.



The revision history is atomically stored for each change but also allows for merging as long as there are no individual field conflicts. This revision history allows for rich reporting that is configurable for each field and you can set the reportability of each of the fields which enables the data they contain to be visible as a detail in the Data Warehouse for lists or indeed as a Measure / Dimension in an Analysis Services Cube for trend analysis.

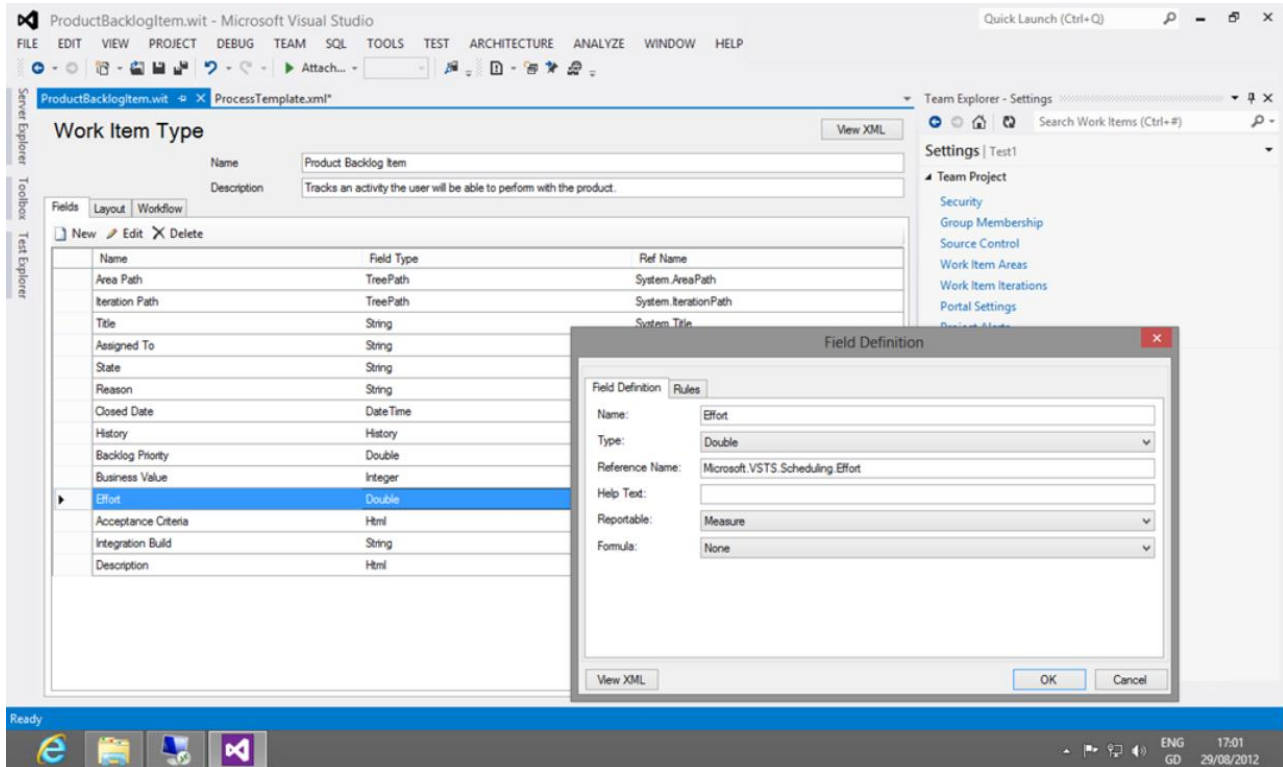


Figure: Customize Work Item Types

Because everyone is authenticated the same across all parts of the system you have a single model for identifying an individual, their permissions and their actions. You can add custom fields to an individual Work Item Type Definition or globally to all Work Item Type Definitions on the Team Foundation Server.

So the Key Integration Points are:

Linking

One or more work items in TFS link by unique identifier to one or more items in the partner system but no sync of data takes place or a one-time only sync occurs (copy).

Syncing

A copy of the work item data resides in both TFS and the Partner system allowing for tight bi-directional integration.

Loading

The partner system does not store any data directly but instead exclusively stores all of its data in TFS.

These integration points represent a tightening of the gap between products and as partner products move from Linking through Syncing to Loading they become able to provide a much richer feature set to their users. Products that get all the way to Loading can concentrate on adding value to their customers while not having to build all of the infrastructure required to deliver it.



Solution: Team Companion from Ekobit (Partner)

If you don't know Team Companion then you should. It is by far the best of breed in integrating Team Foundation Server and Outlook. It lets your team members and managers that spend their lives in Outlook work with Work Items, manage Sprints / Iteration and report right from the familiar ground of Outlook.

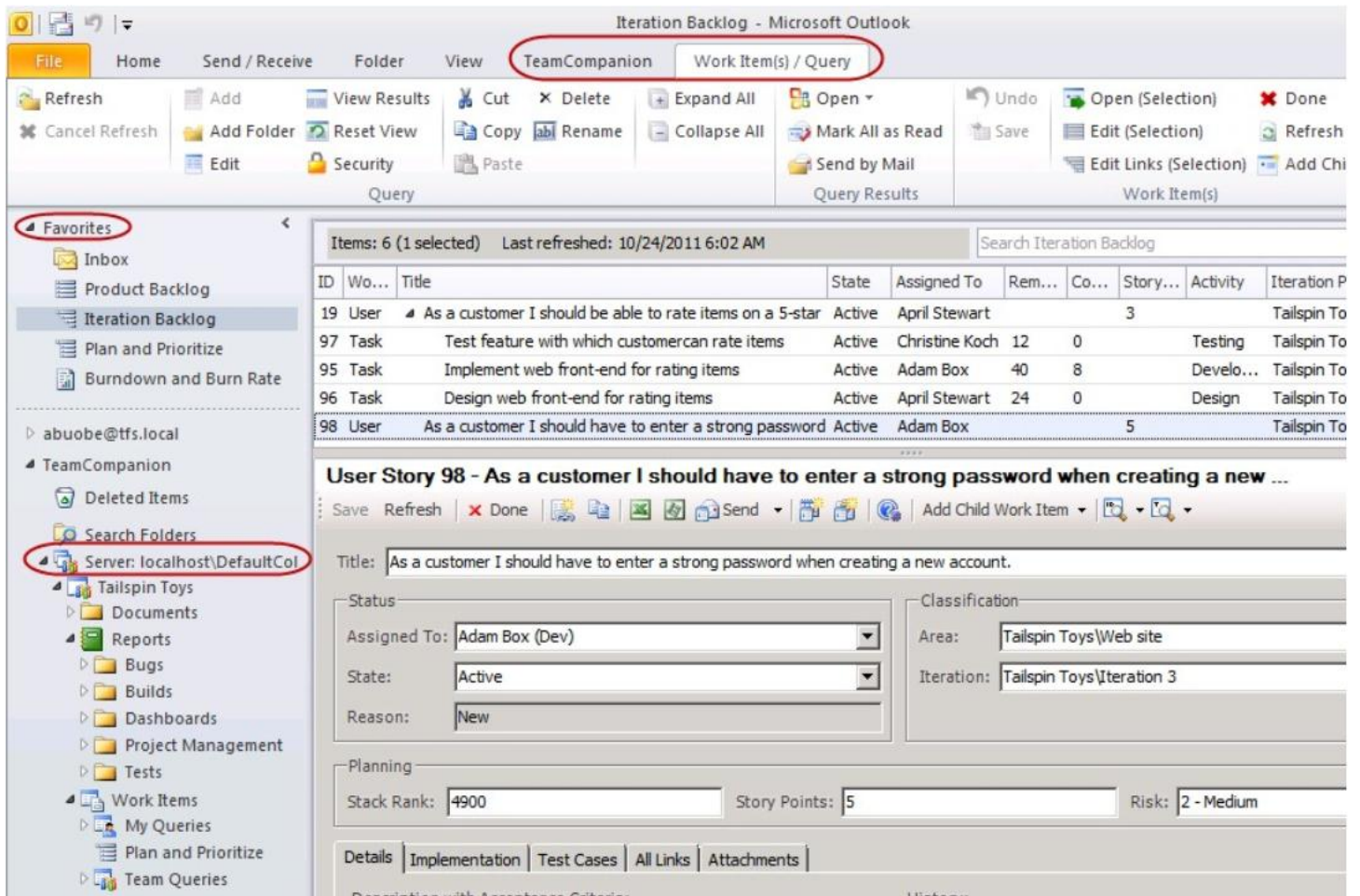


Figure: Work Items from Team Foundation Server In Outlook

By allowing folks to work directly in Outlook the guys at Ekobit have maintained the fluent paradigms from Outlook which manifests in making Work Items “feel” like emails with history and a purpose. In addition you can create Work items from emails and emails from work items with the ability for Team Companion to track that history through both products.

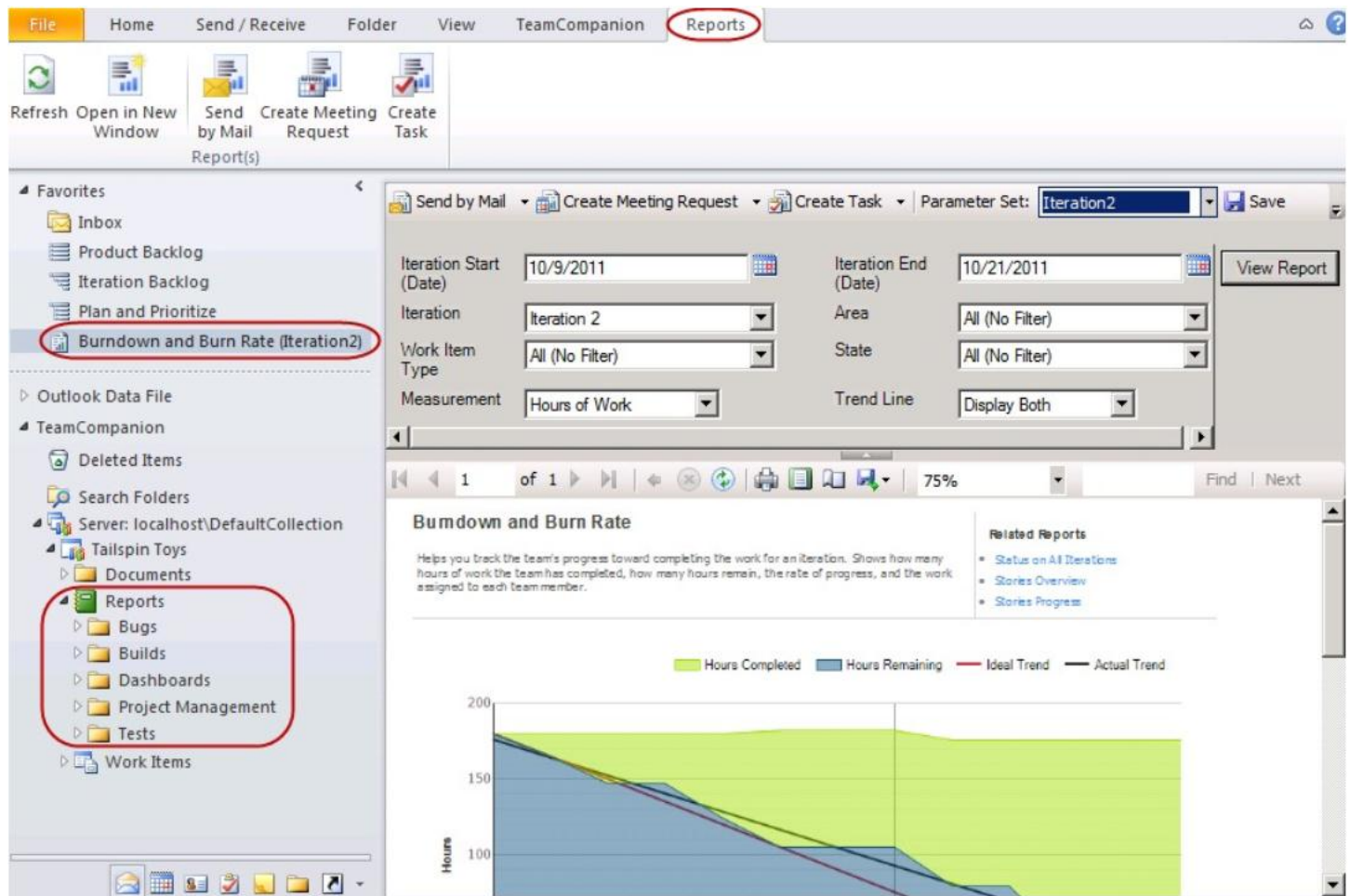


Figure: Access you reports

And its not just work item, you can access both Team Companion real-time reporting as well as surface the reports provided out of the box in TFS.

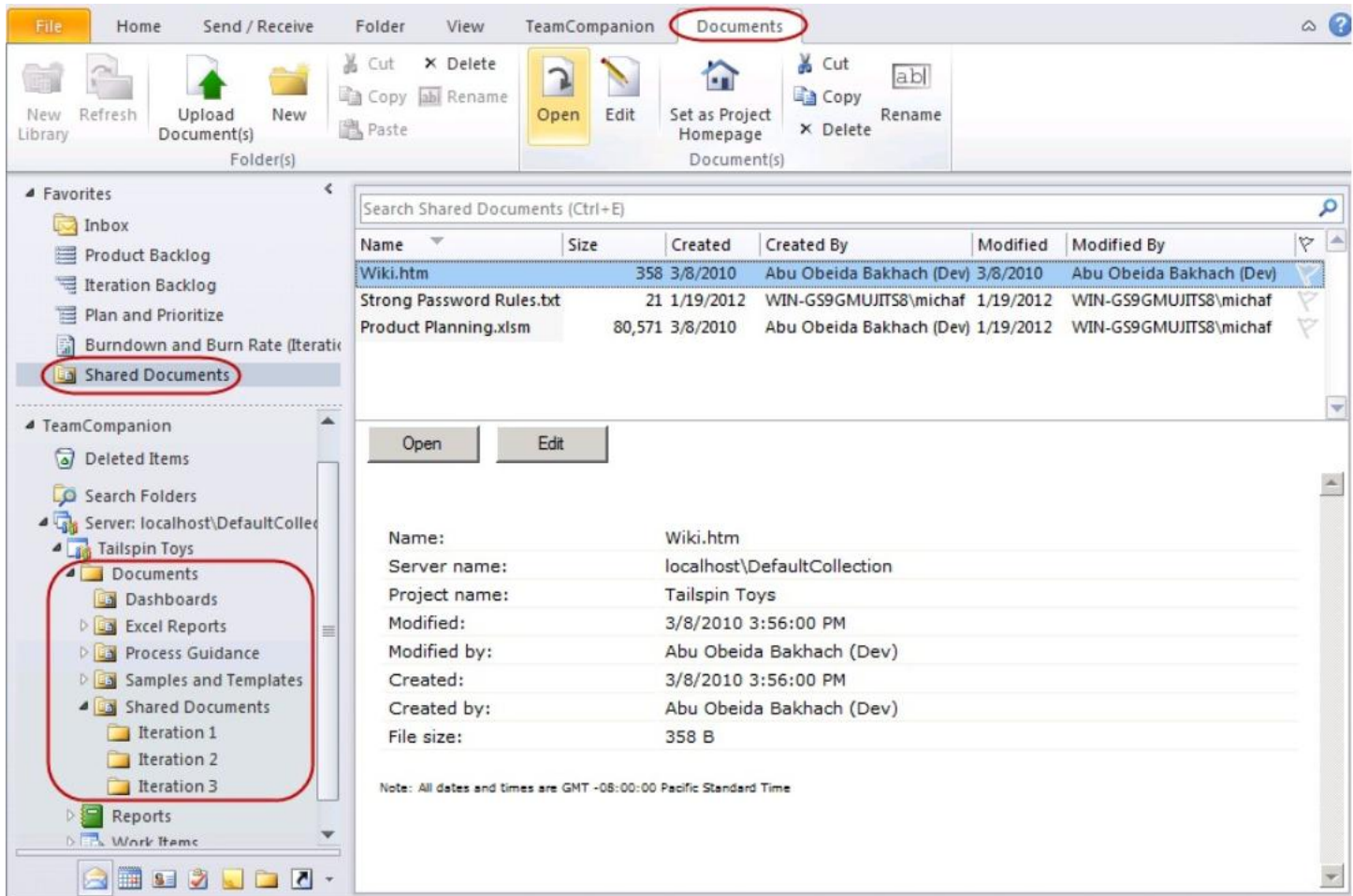


Figure: Even interact with SharePoint

Just as TFS talks and stored documents in SharePoint so does Team Companion again allowing everyone to collaborate against this single point of truth for all data regarding the product. Team Companion integrates with a hybrid Syncing / Loading interaction that is made possible through adding the capabilities of Outlook and its offline capability to the mix. Yes, you can go offline, update your work items and sync when you come back online and if you are using TFS 2012 you can take advantage of the field collision model that allows for merging of work item changes. Much more flexible...

I use Team Companion and so should you...



Solution: Caliber from Borland (Partner)

If you have enterprise teams that require more structure while still allowing teams to decide how best to build and deliver the software that they are building then you need a tool that embodies that vision so that it will grow into that space as you do.

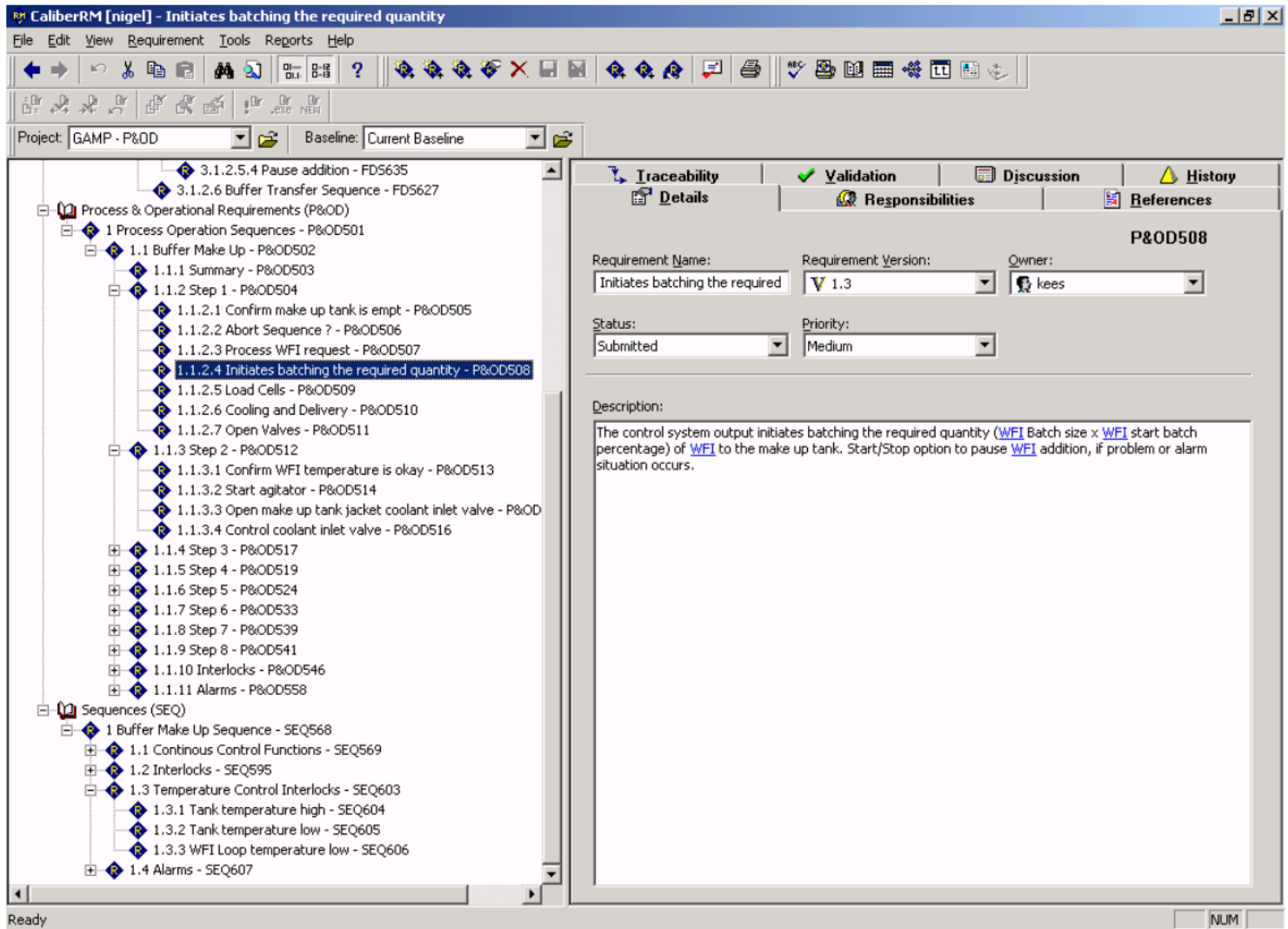


Figure: Ideation and traceability in Caliber

Caliber is best for organizations that need more visibility from inception to delivery of a requirement and especially when there are compliance requirements as there are in many industries. I had the opportunity to meet some of the developers and the tooling and interaction was pretty cool. They are using a "Linking" style integration that allows them to interoperate with multiple systems this gives you the flexibility of Business Analysts using one tool even across multiple development teams building in multiple technologies on multiple ALM platforms. Awesome...



Solution: Agile Project Management Tools from Microsoft (OOB)

The Product Team is betting on its “Agile Project Planning” tools to support the majority of teams. Most teams are not large and most teams out in the wild either are doing Agile or want to be. If you are a team that works in the pure Agile world or your want to just start understanding what you have in inventory then vanilla Visual Studio 2012 Team Foundation Server is for you.

These tools fit into the “Lightweight requirements gathering” category and provide an integrated methods of doing Story Boarding that allows you to create animations and shapes to represent your ideation with ease. You can link these documents to Work Items and break them down into something that can fit into a sprint.

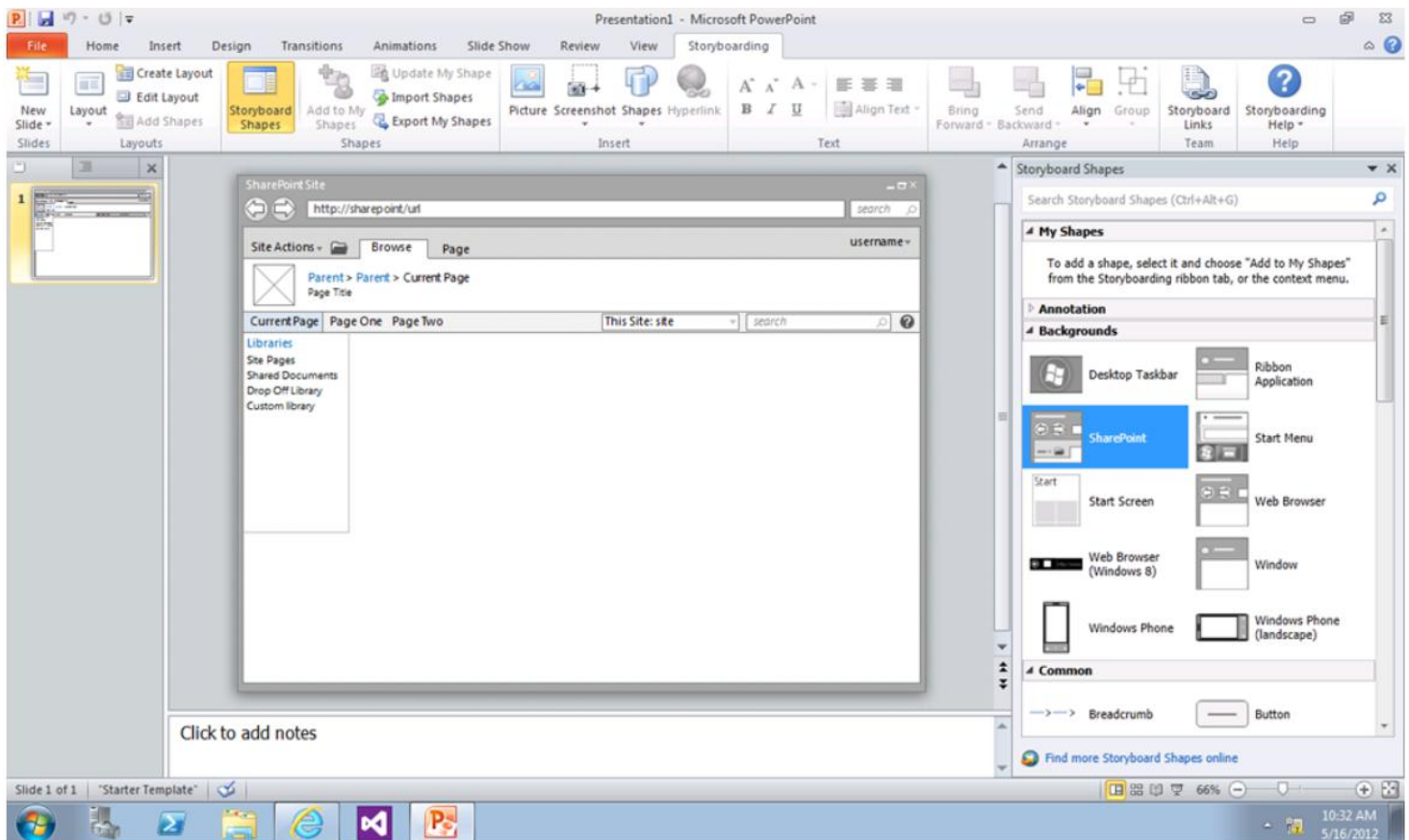


Figure: PowerPoint Storyboarding

In addition to story boarding Microsoft has also provides an integrated feedback mechanism to allow someone in the Product Owner role to solicit constructive and rich feedback from their stakeholders.

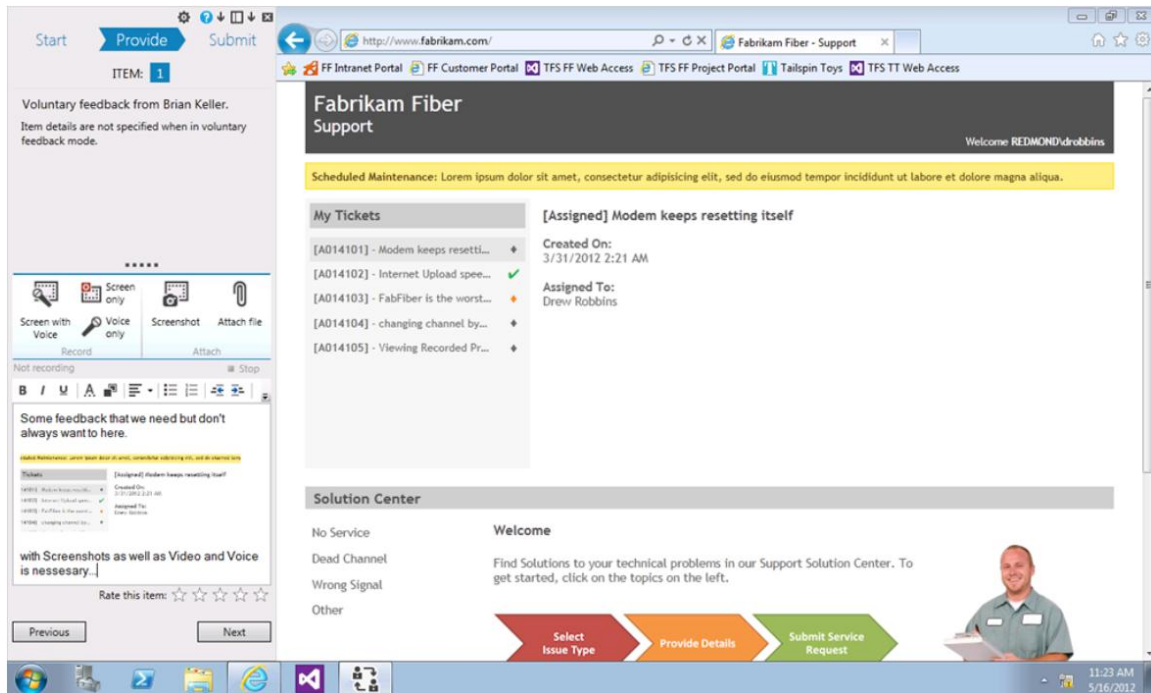


Figure: Constructive Feedback

These feedback responses are stored in a work item in TFS and can again be broke down into actionable requirements or bugs.

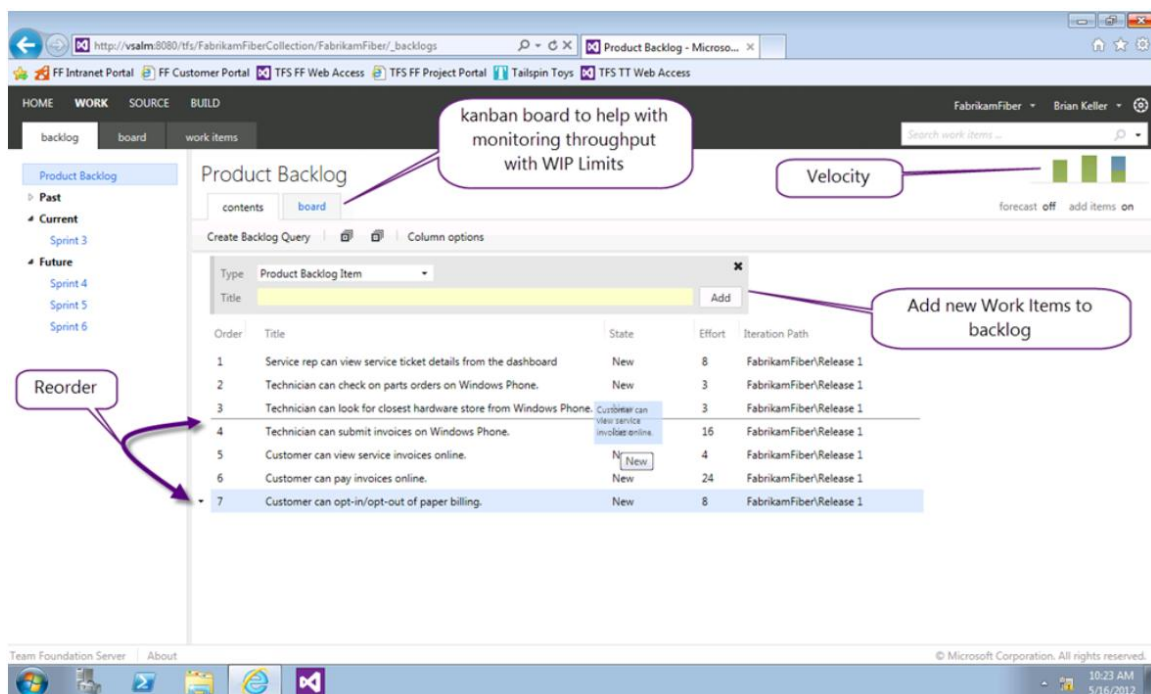


Figure: Product Backlog Management

Once you have a backlog you need to be able to manage it. It is an asset of your project and an unmaintained asset will atrophy and depreciate.



Solution: InteGREAT from eDev (Partner)

If you want to achieve more Formal Requirements within Team Foundation Server then you should be looking towards eDev's InteGREAT product. This tool is designed for Business Analysts that want to do formal requirement gathering. It integrates well with the new Visual Studio 2012 Agile Planning tools to allow your team to agilely deliver incremental and continuous value while your analysts maintain your vision and processes. It even has questionnaires so that you can get make sure that you always capture all of the relevant information during your analysis.

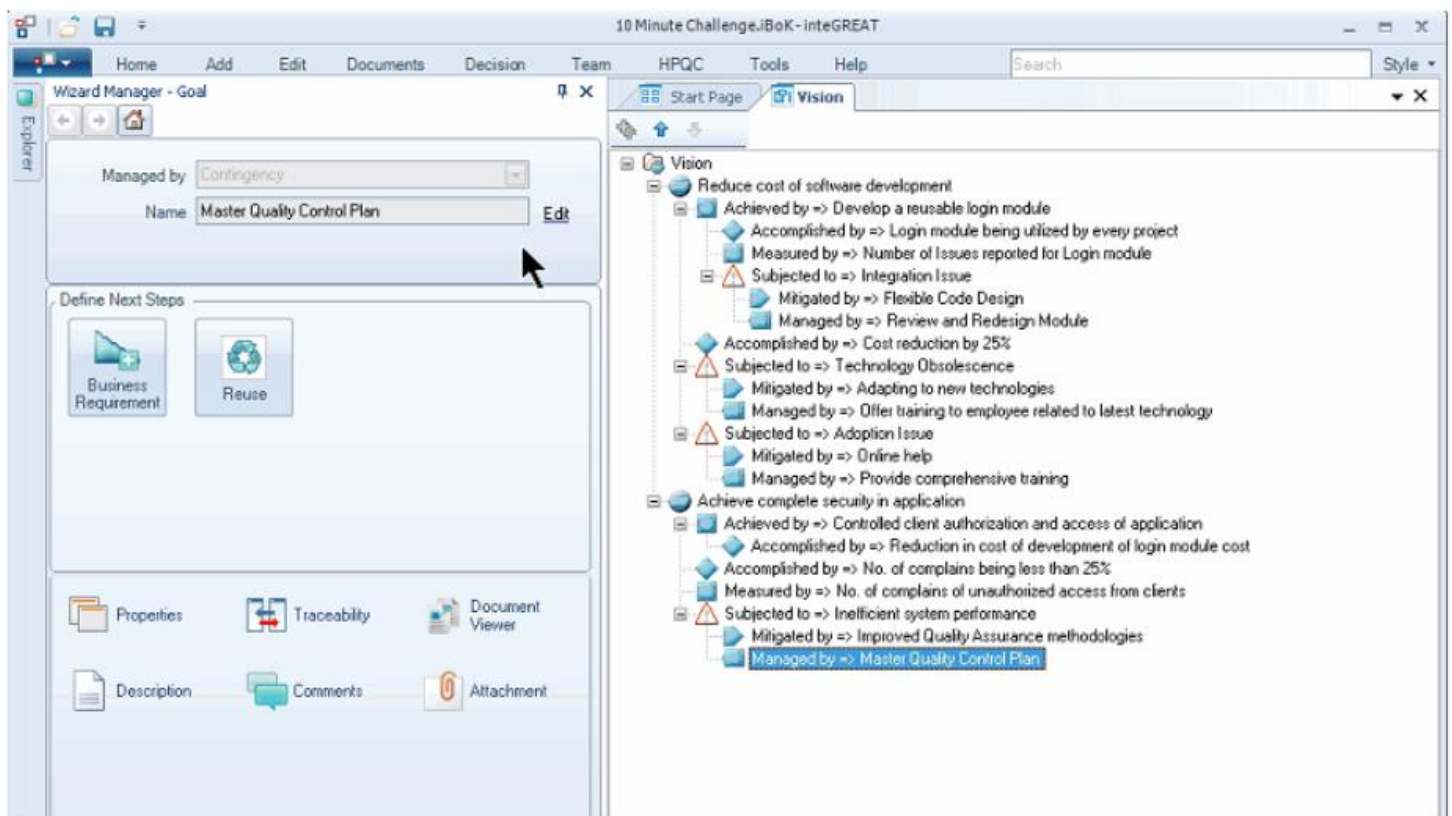


Figure: Manage you Vision

Being able to draw and maintain your business processes all linked to the individual items being delivered by your software teams is invaluable.

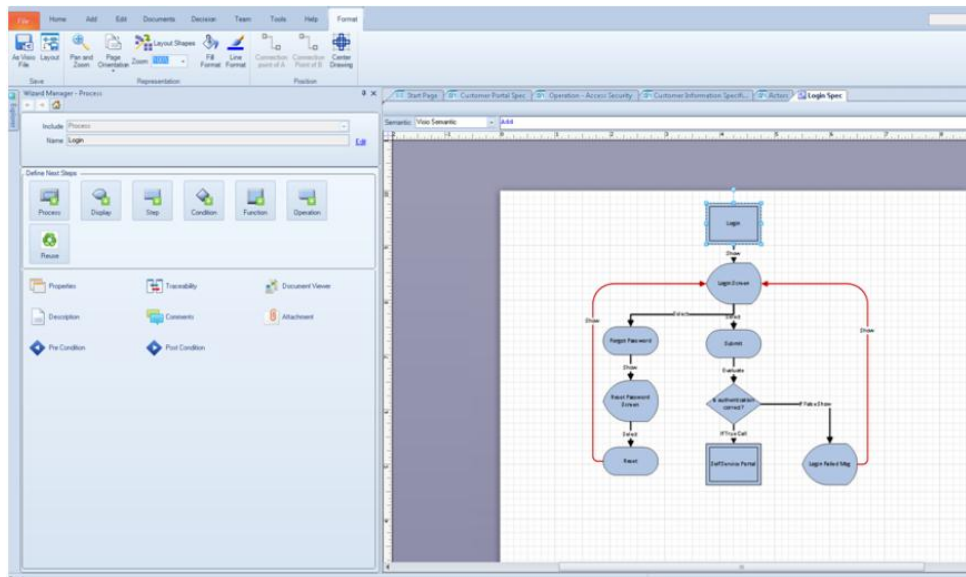


Figure: Business Process Diagrams

Not only that, but its built in reporting tools can help you generate the documentation that you require for audit or just to read.

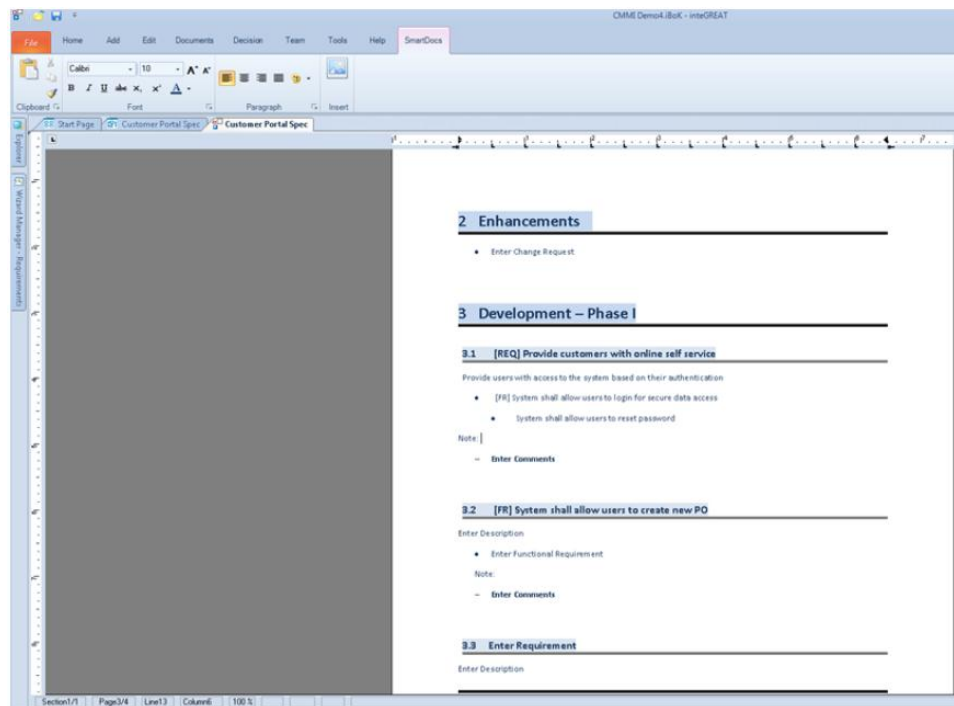


Figure: Generate Word documents

In addition and almost best of all it will allow you to build out all of your pre-identified Test Cases that you can then add to as your teams deliver product.

InterGREAT fills that niche of being able to capture all of the information required, analyse it and present it for teams to effectively execute and deliver. As it links all of the items together and integrates with TFS it reduces the requirements definition cycle by reducing the overall total-cost-of-ownership of your inventory of requirements and the vision that goes into them.



Conclusion

While TFS has built in support and tools for many situations the front end tools can't support everyone. They are building their tooling to support the common cause and that common cause is Agile. While I have mentioned only four solutions above that are many other solutions like **TeamPulse** from Telerik and **Specklog** from TechTalk and I will be delving into these products in the future.

[InteGREAT from eDev](#)

[Agile Project Management Tools from Microsoft](#)

[Caliber from Borland](#)

[Team Companion from Ekobit](#)

[TeamPulse from Telerik](#)

[Specklog from TechTalk](#)

[PowerStory from PowerStory](#)

[Requirements Definition & Management from Blueprint Software](#)

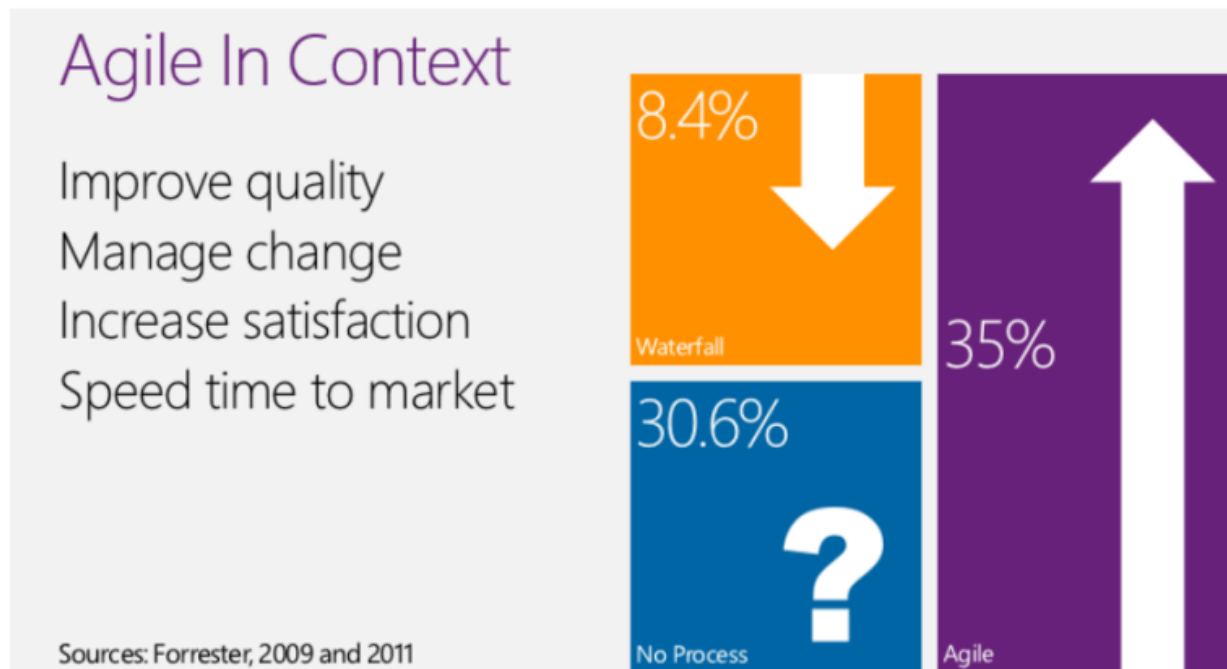


Figure: 35% are doing Agile, 30.6% want to

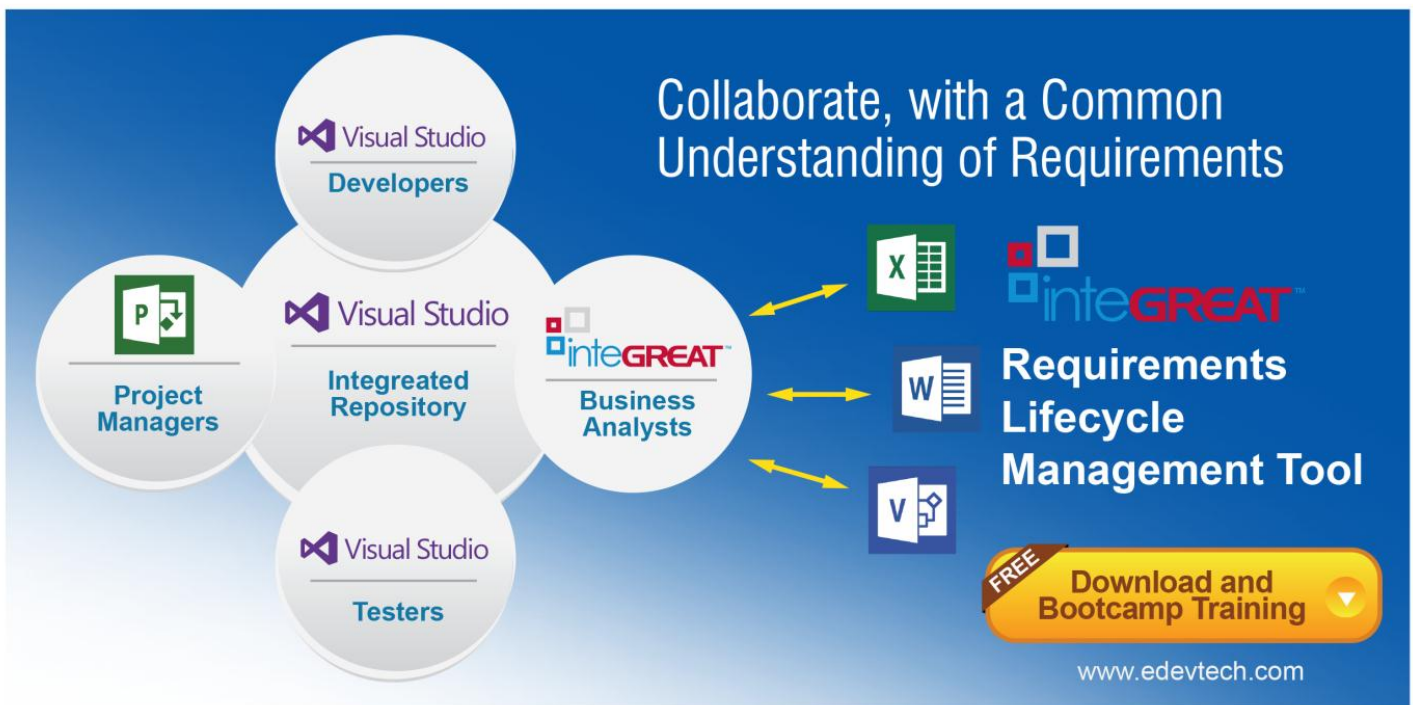
More and more organisations are moving towards a more Agile approach in order to jumpstart their business to support the constant shift in the market place. As more and more companies become more agile, consumers are coming to expect frequent iterations or they will go elsewhere. This may seem like an attention disorder, but their needs are constantly changing in today's world. As consumers begin to expect this model the rolling affect is that the business community is to. Your customers are also consumers and they want their iPad on the corporate network.

Just look at [Brian Harry's](#) recent post on the new [TFS Shipping Cadence](#) and I hope you will see that continuous delivery and the pursuit of tighter feedback loops is an inevitability, not an optional exercise or a tendency that will go away.

The partners and products above will help you on that road to agility and bridge that gap between what you need to do and what the product does in your particular circumstances. Think of the tools above as extensions of Team Foundation Server tailored to fit a niche and indeed all of the above partner products are shipping simultaneously with Visual Studio 2012.

Martin is an ALM Consultant at [Northwest Cadence](#), and [Visual Studio ALM MVP \(2013\)](#). He was named [ALM MVP of the year 2011](#), [ALM Ranger Champion for 2011](#) and was one of the first [Professional Scrum Trainers](#) with Scrum.org. Martin regularly delivers consulting and training while writing for his [Visual Studio ALM blog](#), and is a sought-after speaker.

Modern Requirements Management



inteGREAT & TFS share a single database

Key Features that extend TFS capabilities

Adaptive project methodology support	Completely configurable taxonomy	Project baselining	Automatic document generation
Automatic test case generation	Reusability across projects	Impact assessment	Author and review in WORD
Simulations and on demand Wireframes	Non-Functional requirement library	Automated Function Point estimation	Specification Checker to validate requirements
Wizard authoring for completeness	Legacy Word & Excel import	Conceptual data model creation	Drag & drop traceability

Interviews with Agile Evangelists



Derek Neighbors
[Integrum Technologies](#)

Agile Weekly PodCast

[Agile Manifesto with James Grenning](#)



Click on the graphic above to play the interview

If the graphic above doesn't play for you

[click here for a dedicated player and the option to Download](#)

Derek Neighbors and James Grenning discuss:

- History of The Agile Manifesto
- Embedded TDD
- Estimates

[Agile Weekly Podcasts](#)

[Derek Neighbors](#) is a serial entrepreneur who helps people bring ideas to reality. Derek co-founded [Gangplank](#), a collaborative workspace, in 2008 to encourage local "creatives" to explore innovative ideas. A partner at [Integrum Technologies](#), a consulting services firm, helping companies build high performing teams, Derek teaches entrepreneurship at [Arizona State University](#).

TFS Taskboard on Microsoft Surface - Goodbye Post-It Notes



Anna Russo
ALM Consultant
[Imaginet](#)

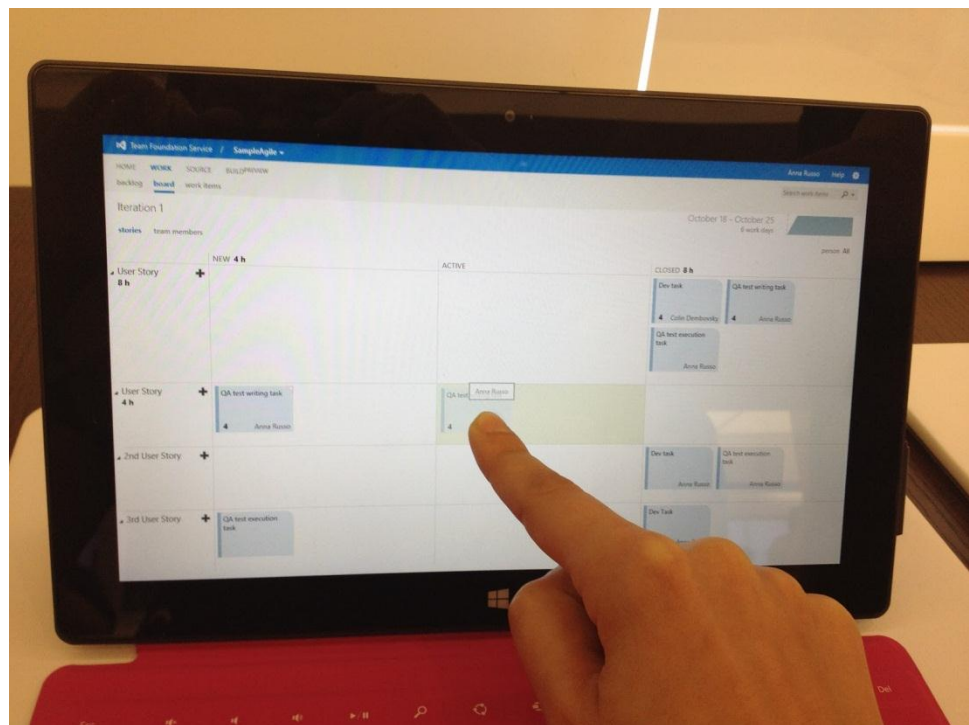
With the Microsoft Surface out I decided to give the drag and drop features of the TFS taskboard a whirl. What's great about this is that you can use the Surface for your stand-up meetings and connect it to a projector via [VGA or HDMI\(sold separately\)](#). Now that's what I call a high tech stand-up meeting!

Once connected to TFS 2012...

Dragging tasks from New to Active on the TFS taskboard is fun and easy. It's so awesome that I can update my work item status with the swipe of a finger.

It's neat that TFS has such a portable rich client and the data stored in a database where you can collaboratively work together.

Try to do that with your post-it notes :)



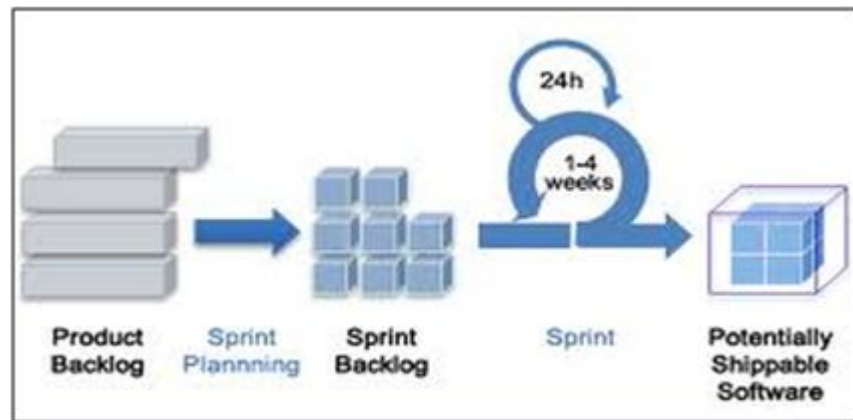
[Anna Russo](#) is an ALM Consultant and MVP with [Imaginet](#), a firm that specializes in helping companies improve software development process with TFS. She has worked with a variety of clients and upgraded/installed TFS, provided training, created custom processes, implemented release strategies, and automated build scripts. Visit Anna's blog [ImprovingSoftwareQuality.com](#)

Agile At The Enterprise Level



Bob Savelson
SVP Sales & Marketing
[eDev Technologies](#)

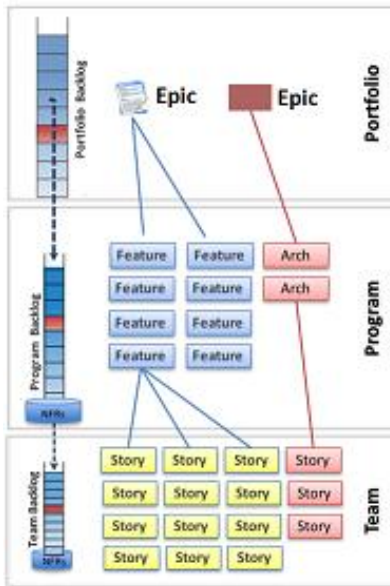
Nowadays, Agile is considered to be one of the best process models for application development in small and medium sized teams, for its incremental and iterative approach. As it is adaptive in nature, Agile requires consistent collaboration among stakeholders for better fulfillment of customer needs. Agile adapts itself to any change and maintains progress. Agile involves frequent releases,



once every few weeks, with small sets of deliverables defined in Sprint Backlogs. The focus of the Agile methodology is obtaining a small set of features to deliver business value early, and continually improving it, adding further functionality throughout the life of the project.

For its adaptive nature with constant collaboration needs and frequent iterations, Agile works fine when it comes to working within a small or medium sized team. But when applying Agile at an Enterprise-level, a number of issues need to be resolved for effective Agile implementation. For many enterprises considering Agile approaches, the absence of effective and scalable Agile requirements processes has been a showstopper for adoption.

Dean Leffingwell, Scaled lean-agile author, methodologist and consultant, has defined an excellent Scaled Agile framework for Agile adoption at an enterprise level, by eliminating issues faced by widely distributed teams and multiple parallel backlogs & iterations. In the framework, he has defined an enterprise as a group of teams working collaboratively on a set of features with effective collaboration, providing high quality applications and better customer satisfaction.

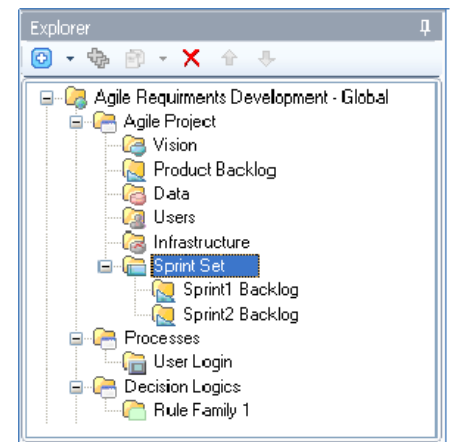


In the Scaled Agile Framework, a Product Backlog is considered as an Enterprise Backlog Model, translating the allocation of strategic investments to the portfolio, program, and team levels. The Enterprise Backlog breaks down into three levels: Portfolio Backlog, Program Backlog and Team Backlog.

The Portfolio Backlog consists of Business and Architectural Epics that are large-scale development initiatives defining the desired solutions. Epics are broken down into Features at the Program level and are maintained in the Program Backlogs. Each feature defines a set of User Stories to be implemented at the Team level. User Stories are then stored in the Team Backlog. Features and User Stories define functional requirements required to achieve an Epic, whereas Non-functional requirements are also identified and maintained at the Program and Team levels.

Leffingwell has scaled iterations into multiple levels in his Scaled Agile Framework. At the Team level, two-week sprints are set that require teams to complete their designated functionalities within the iteration. Outputs from multiple iterations are synchronized and integrated together to release the desired solutions in 6 to 8 weeks. During all these iterations and releases, stakeholders continuously collaborate with each other, and changes are absorbed as done within traditional Agile processes.

In inteGREAT, a flexible framework is provided to support Agile Requirements Development and Management. inteGREAT allows Agile teams to define User Stories through Requirements knowledge objects and maintain them in Product Backlog, further assigning them to different sprints. As inteGREAT bi-directionally integrates with Team Foundation Server, Requirement management capabilities of TFS are leveraged for managing and keeping track of requirements across multiple teams providing support to Enterprise-level Agile implementation.



[Bob Savelson](#), a seasoned veteran of the software development industry, has worked for large outsourcers and built his own requirements facilitation company; helping many clients to optimize their ALM processes and define the 'right' requirements. Today, as SVP at [eDevTech](#), he continues to promote [inteGREAT](#) and [SmartOffice](#) as industry leading requirements tools.

Visual Studio Load Testing using Windows Azure



*Tarun Arora
Microsoft MVP
ALM Ranger
Consultant
Avanade*

In my opinion the biggest adoption barrier in performance testing on smaller projects is not the tooling but the high infrastructure and administration cost that comes with this phase of testing. Only if a reusable solution was possible and infrastructure management wasn't as expensive, adoption would certainly spike. It certainly is possible if you bring Visual Studio and Windows Azure into the equation.

It is possible to run your test rig in the cloud without getting tangled in SCVMM or Lab Management. All you need is an active Azure subscription, Windows Azure endpoint enabled developer workstation running visual studio ultimate on premise, windows azure endpoint enabled worker roles on azure compute instances set up to run as test controllers and test agents. My test rig is running SQL server 2012 and Visual Studio 2012 RC agents. The beauty is that the solution is reusable, you can open the azure project, change the subscription and certificate, click publish and ***BOOM*** in less than 15 minutes you could have your own test rig running in the cloud.

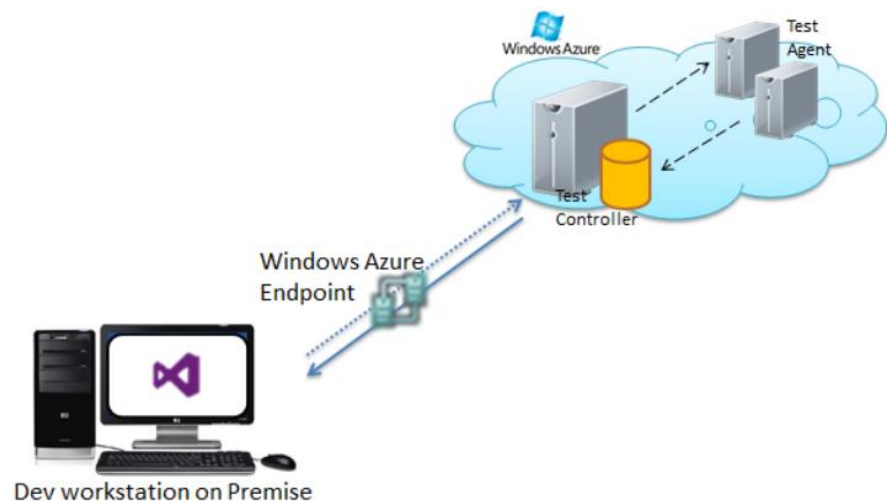
In this blog post I intend to show you how you can use the power of Windows Azure to effectively abstract the administration cost of infrastructure management and lower the total cost of Load & Performance Testing. As a bonus, I will share a reusable solution that you can use to automate test rig creation for both VS 2010 agents as well as VS 2012 agents.

Introduction

The slide show below should help you under the high level details of what we are trying to archive...

[Leveraging Azure for Performance Testing](#)

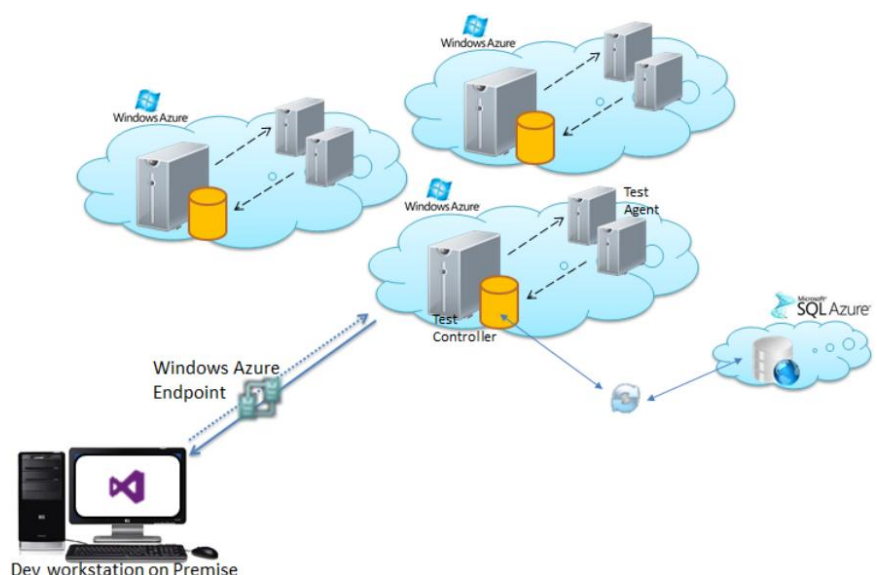
Scenario 1 – Running a Test Rig in Windows Azure



To start off with the basics, in the first scenario I plan to discuss how to,

- Automate deployment & configuration of Windows Azure Worker Roles for Test Controller and Test Agent
- Automate deployment & configuration of SQL database on Test Controller on the Test Controller Worker Role
- Scaling Test Agents on demand
- Creating a Web Performance Test and a simple Load Test
- Managing Test Controllers right from Visual Studio on Premise Developer Workstation
- Viewing results of the Load Test
- Cleaning up
- Use the above work to shape a reusable solution for both VS2010 and VS2012 Test Rigs

Scenario 2 – The scaled out Test Rig sharing data using SQL Azure



A scaled out version of this implementation would involve running multiple test rigs running in the cloud, in this scenario I will show you how to sync the load test database from these distributed test rigs into one SQL Azure database using Azure sync. The selling point for this scenario is being able to collate the load test efforts from across the organization into one data store.

- Deploy multiple test rigs using the reusable solution from scenario 1
- Set up and configure Windows Azure Sync
- Test SQL Azure Load Test result database created as a result of Windows Azure Sync
- Cleaning up
- Have the above work in the shape of a reusable solution for both VS2010 and VS2012 Test Rig

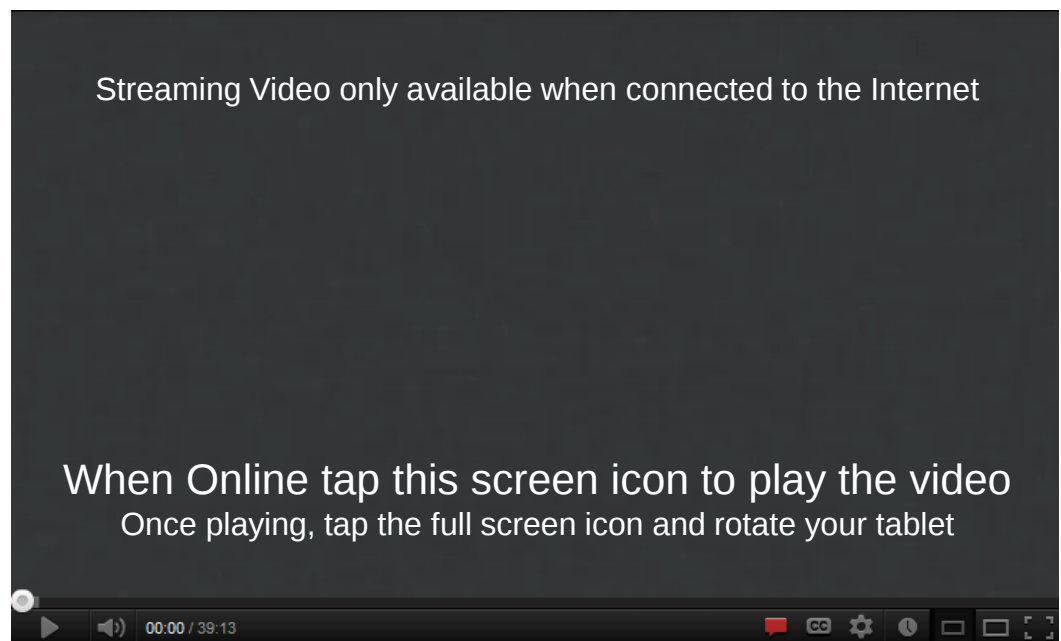
The Ingredients

Though with an active [MSDN ultimate subscription](#) you would already have access to everything and more, you will essentially need the following to try out the scenarios:

1. [Windows Azure Subscription](#)
2. Windows Azure Storage – [Blob Storage](#)
3. Windows Azure Compute – [Worker Role](#)
4. [SQL Azure Database](#)
5. [SQL Data Sync](#)
6. Windows Azure Connect – [End points](#)
7. [SQL 2012 Express](#) or [SQL 2008 R2 Express](#)
8. [Visual Studio All Agents 2012](#) or [Visual Studio All Agents 2010](#)
9. A developer workstation set up with [Visual Studio 2012 – Ultimate](#) or [Visual Studio 2010 – Ultimate](#)
10. Visual Studio Load Test [Unlimited Virtual User Pack](#).

Walkthrough

To set up the test rig in the cloud, the test controller, test agent and SQL express installers need to be available when the worker role set up starts, the easiest and most efficient way is to pre upload the required software into Windows Azure Blob storage. SQL express, test controller and test agent expose various switches which we can take advantage of including the quiet install switch. Once all the 3 have been installed the test controller needs to be registered with the test agents and the SQL database needs to be associated to the test controller. By enabling Windows Azure connect on the machines in the cloud and the developer workstation on premise we successfully create a virtual network amongst the machines enabling 2-way communication. All of the above can be done programmatically, let's see step by step how...



Video Walkthrough–Leveraging Windows Azure for performance Testing

Click on the graphic above to play the video

If the graphic above doesn't play for you

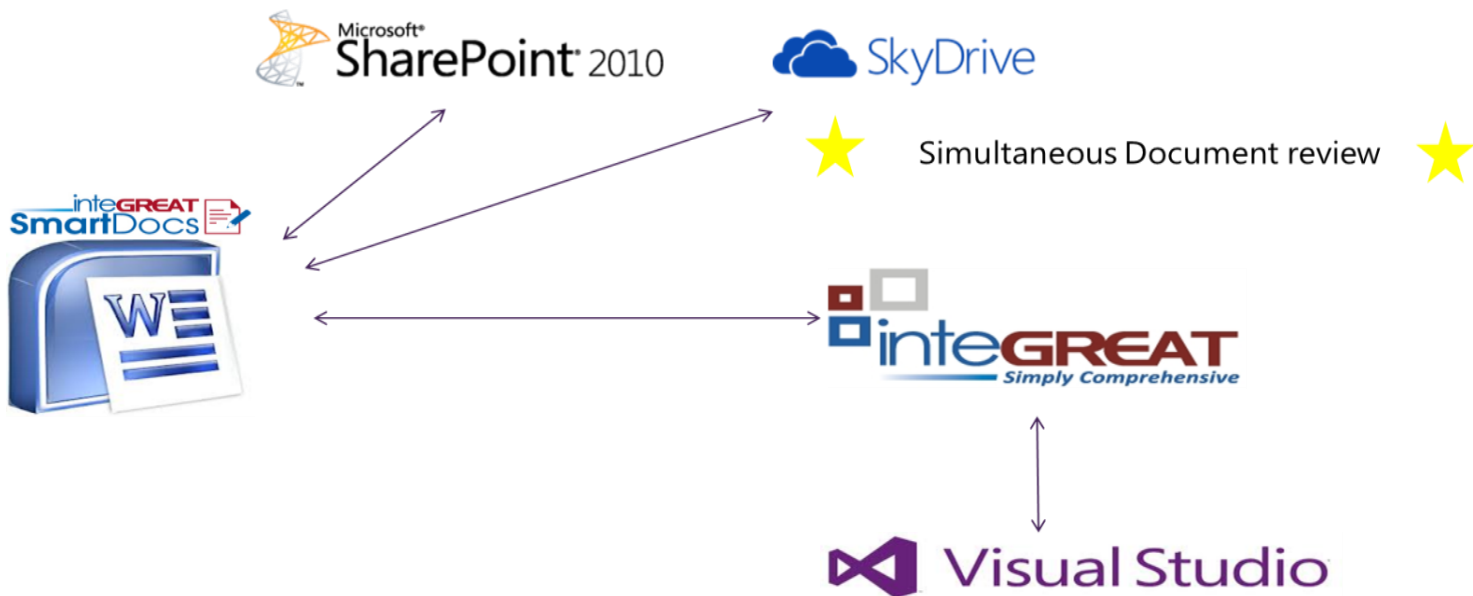
[click here for a dedicated player and the option to Download](#)

Solution

If you are still reading and are interested in the solution, drop me an [email](#) with your windows live id. I'll add you to my TFS preview project which has a re-usable solution for both VS 2010 and VS 2012 test rigs as well as guidance and demo performance tests.

[Tarun Arora](#) is a passionate technologist at [Avanade](#), London. Tarun is a Microsoft MVP and a Visual Studio ALM Ranger. After work he is found moderating MSDN forums, [blogging](#) and writing for MSDN, TechNet, Codeproject and other technology centric websites. For the latest and greatest follow him on [@arora_tarun](#)

Simplicity - Word with real time requirements repository connectivity



"inteGREAT Smart Docs provides TFS users with a very familiar user interface that will enhance its speed of adoption, while broadening its use throughout the enterprise"
Brian Harry - Product Unit Manager for Team Foundation, Microsoft Corporation.

The use of Word, Excel and Visio, while very familiar to requirements project stakeholders, lacks efficiency in reuse, change synchronization and stakeholder collaboration. inteGREAT SmartDocs solves this problem while maintaining the familiar authoring environment of Word. SmartDocs is a **Word plugin** that enables the requirements contained in these documents to be saved to a single source requirements repository; reducing cycle time through the documents' lifespan, dramatically.



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Business Users

Create a SmartDoc in Word - Upload to inteGREAT

Open a SmartDoc Word template and create requirement content. Load the document into inteGREAT and see the requirement hierarchy and traceability established.

Benefit: Any project stakeholder may contribute requirement content in Word, without having to learn a new interface.

Edit a SmartDoc in Word - Upload to inteGREAT

Open a SmartDoc Word document with existing requirements and edit the document adding new content and editing existing content. Load the document into inteGREAT and see the additions and updates reflected.

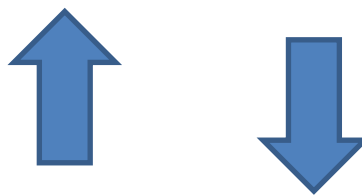
Benefit: Once a SmartDoc exists and has been used for specific requirements, any user may update this document, which in turn updates inteGREAT

inteGREAT SmartDoc Generation

Based on the requirement content in inteGREAT, have inteGREAT generate a SmartDoc, which can then be given to multiple stakeholders simultaneously. The stakeholders may update the document with track changes; return their SmartDoc to the BA who accepts/rejects changes with the results then uploaded into inteGREAT.

Benefit: Collaboration is now simplified through the use of SmartDoc Word documents. Business stakeholders can review and update SmartDocs in the familiar Word interface, and have their changes reflected in the final documentation

SmartDocs Usage Scenarios

Single source Requirements Repository



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Technical Users

Get Work Item from TFS to include in a SmartDoc

When working in a SmartDoc a user may access the existing Work Items in TFS and include them in the SmartDoc.

Benefit: Any stakeholder may reuse existing requirements, allowing for consistency across the project.

Create new Work Item in a SmartDoc - upload to TFS

New requirements created in a SmartDoc can be saved directly as work items in TFS.

Benefit: All stakeholders can contribute directly to the single source requirements repository

Update a Work Item in a SmartDoc - upload to TFS

Existing requirements which are updated by a user in a SmartDoc can be saved in TFS.

Benefit: Stakeholders contribute changes directly to the TFS single source repository.

For More information and to see SmartDocs in action please visit www.edevtech.com or call us at 1-877-473-2881

Team Culture, Project Culture



*Tobias Mayer
Agile Coach*

I've heard a lot over the years about how Scrum is inadequate for managing large projects—some would say managing projects at all—and much has been written about the need for Agile Project Management, or the implementation of a Lean or Kanban approach to mitigate this apparent inadequacy. Broken Scrum implementations are (we hear) fixed by the addition of one or more of these approaches, or even in combining Scrum with a defined (e.g. waterfall) approach. I don't doubt the case studies. In fact, I agree that Scrum is a half-assed way to manage projects.

But what's interesting here is that we stay stuck in the idea that projects must be managed—or even that there need be projects at all. While we hold on to our project-centric mindset Scrum will never be an appropriate solution—and I'd argue that none of the other suggested alternatives or enhancements will be much better. While we try to add layers of agility onto what is essentially an incompatible foundation we will only ever see limited success—and quick reversion back to status quo at the slightest panic. For any truly Agile effort to work we need a complete paradigm shift in how we manage business.

Back in the 1970's or perhaps earlier, the software world adopted what we might call a project culture. This means that the project is king, and the people are there to serve the project. Projects have managers, and if we add more managers we can add more projects, and get more things done at once. So goes the thinking. And what follows is that people become “resources” to the projects. It is the individual contributor who is sought after by the competing project managers, whose attention is frequently tugged in multiple directions, and teams—such as they are in a project culture—are weak entities, frequently broken apart as priorities change and skill-sets are needed elsewhere.

The project culture undermines a key principle of effective workmanship: that of focus. While individuals are pushed from project to project a massive overhead of context switching and thus loss of productivity is incurred. In simple experiments [\[ref\]](#), this cost runs around 30-50%. I'm sure it is much higher in complex environments. Because of this mess we have to hire more managers to better “level the resources”. Moving people around, assigning work, tracking that work, all this needs careful and detailed management, and good project managers are not cheap.

The project culture creates problems that we seek to solve by enforcing the project culture. Reminds me of DeMarco's first rule of bad management: *If something isn't working, do more of it.* [\[ref\]](#)

An alternative to project culture is team culture. In a team culture, the teams are multi-skilled and stable, and this stability leads to enhanced focus and high performance [\[ref\]](#). In a team culture individuals are not assigned to projects—and more interestingly, neither are teams. There is no assignment. Teams take the lead here—they pull work in, as appropriate to their skill set and areas of interest. You can picture a company's projects (or products, sub-products, features) displayed visually in rough order of priority, for all the teams to see. When a team completes a project, it selects another one.

Ideally, projects (like stories) will be made as small as possible; the term minimal marketable feature (MMF) is often used for these small chunks of functionality. One team may take on many MMF's towards a greater product goal, or multiple teams may work on the same product, pulling in the MMFs that are appropriate to their skills. It doesn't matter how this is done, providing we work in a reflective way, aligning frequently with customers. If the teams take the lead, it will get done well. The principle of self-organization says that the people doing the work are the best people to decide how to do the work. And that includes knowing which work they should be doing in the first place.

Team culture offers a simple approach to solving complex problems. It cuts down on unnecessary people-management overhead and fosters a more focused approach to work. Confronting the context switching madness in this way has a two-fold reward: i) it eliminates busy work—which is waste, thus leading to more products being completed in less time, and ii) workers are engaged in a healthy, inspiring way. The elimination of busy work also opens up the opportunity for slack time [\[ref\]](#), where developers can sharpen their tools, research, invent, and play. Companies who allow such freedoms tend to do better than those that keep their workers noses to the grindstone.

I believe Scrum fosters team culture, at least it is a good starting point. Scrum begins with cross-functional teams, accepting work of a transactional nature, and seeking completion before moving on to the



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next thing. The time box limits the amount of work a team can take on. Effective teams generally use the Kanban principle of Limited WIP, only working on one or two transactional stories at a time. Some teams choose not to commit at all, but simply pull in stories according to their WIP limit, being careful not to start something that cannot be finished in a sprint. The important thing here, is not whether teams make commitments, or how they make them, but the fact these are *cross-functional* teams, collaborating with requesters, managing their own time and process, and focusing on the *completion of work*.

If organizations wanting to adopt Scrum would be willing to shift from a project culture to a team culture, they'd find many of the problems associated with project management would disappear. They would reduce (project) management overhead costs, stop calling in consultants to fix whatever the previous consultants screwed up, and they'd see a stream-lined, effective organization emerging right before their eyes. Trust the teams. It's as simple—and terrifying—as that.

[Tobias Mayer](#) is a facilitator, guide, and coach, specializing in Agile transformation. His current work explores the concept of [craftsmanship](#) in this context, focusing on the values and principles that foster an Agile mindset.



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The History and Back Story...



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M

y name is [Michael Vizados](#) and you may not have heard of me (it's a big world). Back in 2004 when I received my Certified ScrumMaster Certificate from Ken Schwaber, he told a story in his class about a chicken and a pig. As many people during that time, I ignored the story and it slipped my mind for a long time.

Scrum and chickens and pigs, "Yeah right," I thought. What does that have to do with *anything* about Scrum and Agile?



Zoom ahead almost ten years later and I look back at what a powerful impact this little story actually would have in my life. Like most people, this story will pass you by like the rest of the noise in our great big universe. Unlike many people, take a breath here. Pause. And think about some time in your life that things took a major *shift*.

Let's get the story out of the way first (I actually screw this up most of the times I actually *tell* this story, but through the magic of writing I should be able to get it right (even if the editors want to hack away at the actual punch line!).

A Chicken and Pig were walking down the street one day and talked about opening a morning place for breakfast. Being really entrepreneurial and pretty open to trying new ideas (think about the Lean Concept ideas heading into 2013) they decided it would be a great idea. The Chicken had a great idea for a name and of course was anxious to try out the idea on his friend The Pig. "Ham 'n Eggs". The Pig looked at him with an astonished look and told the Chicken, "No Thanks, I'd be committed you'd only be involved!"

Wow. Right?

What's the big deal about a little Chicken and Pig and this story? And. How does it relate to Scrum — arguably today one of the most popular of the Agile frameworks in the Software Development world? The easy answer is, the Pigs have, “Skin in the game” and the Chickens, “Lay eggs.” Think about the simplicity of this. I did. And around 2005 I had this idea about a comic strip about a Chicken and Pig in Scrum (kind of like Dilbert but with the focus on Scrum and the real world conversations that pop out of the groups I worked with [and continue to work with!]).

One problem. Or impediment in our Agile world. I cannot draw. I mean I cannot draw even a simple circle that connects most of the time. Yeah, I am that bad at drawing. So I started asking people in the Agile world at the time to PLEASE start a comic strip using my awesome idea of a Chicken and Pig. I talked about the idea for about a year. And the major response was, “Um... Mike... YOU ARE CRAZY.” Maybe they were right (they are). Many people laughed at me about this idea. As with any major impediment, I finally thought, “OK, I’ll do it.” So I hunted around for the most awesome illustrator (using networks of networks of people) who finally “got it” and thought it would be a fun project.

And we finally did something over a year later (after a lot of talking and analysis) and delivered something. People still laughed at me. I think my mother was one of my first subscribers (WOW I GOT A SUBSCRIBER!) and it started to slowly grow.

Why the slow growth?

I did not put a lot of faith in this thing actually sticking. And here is the great thing. It did. It still does. Tony (the awesome illustrator) no longer draws new comic strips after getting over a hundred of them built over the years.

He is still awesome and I owe him a huge debt of gratitude. And so do many of you in this little Agile world we live in. What started as an experiment has blossomed into something way bigger than I ever imagined it could. OK... I do not have a “rock star” status (like our friend who draws the awesome Dilbert cartoons we all seem to still enjoy!). In fact, most people do not even know who I am (because my avatar is the ScrumMaster from the site at www.implementingscrum.com). However, it is used in many presentations around the world each year (the main cartoon has been translated into over a dozen languages so far) and is linked to from thousands of sites across the internet (and within many organizational intranets). Many people subscribe to it and it has a pretty solid following.

Why?

And. Why all this background about a cartoon about a Chicken and a Pig and Scrum?

I mean, really?!?!?

If you have never seen the Agile Manifesto, take a look at it at www.agilemanifesto.org. Heck, even if you have read it in the past, it will be good to refresh your memory. The Manifesto has been around for over ten years and it still exists and it is *new* to people every day as they enter into this journey I call Agile. It is not going to change (people have tried to change it and will continue to try over the years). Agile is here to stay. People are improving on it by creating offshoots in various vertical markets and other “things” you can do in an agile manner outside of Software Development. But the Agile Manifesto is about Software Development and it is here to stay.

So are the Chickens and Pigs in Scrum. As you may have realized, Scrum does not equal Agile (even though people equate that as fact,

as wrong as that *perceived* fact is!). Some people actually have this visceral reaction to the story of the Chickens and Pigs. Some people hear it and laugh it off. Some people are just learning about it (still). The story is not just associated with Scrum (much like Agile does not equal Scrum); however, it is pretty well known by now. And the story will continue to throughout the years. It's fun. It causes reactions in people. Some people laugh. Some people cry (well, actually now that I think of it I have never seen anyone actually cry over this cartoon).

Here is the important thing: The story (and cartoons) about Chickens and Pigs get people talking. Over the years the tagline for the site has evolved into, "Starting Tough Conversations about Software Development."

And that is something that is important for us to examine in this magazine — and beyond.

Within these pages (or on your screen most likely) you'll learn some new things. Maybe some of them are not so new. Here is my challenge to you (especially if you want to gloss over something because it *is* familiar to you — keep an open and beginners mind and let's see just what is possible. Take something from this magazine and apply it *today*).

Also, feel free to join me at www.implementingscrum.com if this is a topic that interests you. There are over a hundred comic strips out there and over six years of blog postings about various topics (mostly related to Scrum although sometimes I get off topic — life!). Heading into 2013 people there will join me on a new journey. Interested in joining me on this journey? The content is free.

What I am finding though is that sometimes *free* is the most expensive thing you will ever do.

Thanks for taking the time to read this overview and "my story" of where I have been. Let us know what you'd like to see examined more within the pages of this magazine that will help you move a little forward each day.

[Michael Vizados](#) is a world traveler, author, Scrum & Agile Consultant, speaker, and the person behind implementingscrum.com.

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