RENOVITE PERSPECTIVE

What's killing the innovation star?

By Rod Bungey, North America Sales Director, Renovite Technologies

Video killed the radio-star – a virtuous song and an even better message if you apply it to business. The ATM industry has survived for years without much evidence of innovation, but that's changing. Cash doesn't have the clout it once did; the time has come to innovate or evaporate.

Yet for innovation to accelerate in the ATM industry, one of software development's most crucial yet harried practices must change: testing.

Unshackling innovation

Until recently, ATM testing was a convoluted, lengthy and mostly manual procedure. Accordingly, it stunted ATM deployers' capacity and desire to modernise. Poor testability obstructed the route from conceptualisation to deployment.

While the pressure to deliver new services is never going to go away, the speed and quality of testing and the amount of resources required have taken a major step forward thanks to the advent of cloud-native technology. Using cloud-based automated end-to-end testing, organisations will be able to significantly cut down the time spent on-site working with physical ATMs, as well as on executing tests. Manual becomes automatic, releasing resources which can be reinvested elsewhere.

Employing a sandbox approach, cloud-native test environments can rapidly be spun up to test new services without impacting day-to-day business operations. New services can be thoroughly tested pre-deployment using virtual XFS ATMs, reducing risk while providing scope for imagination when developing new service ideas.

The depth and breadth of testing and the ability to repeat tests quickly without any additional costs mean the quality and accuracy of testing is supremely better than manual testing. Manual errors in the re-testing process are eliminated and test intelligence reports provide an unparalleled amount of insight for development teams.

With the advent of wallet and token technologies, testing infrastructure has widened beyond a simple Card-ATM-Host interaction. Now testing technologies need to encompass the full breadth of the ATM interaction across card and cardless services.

Automation speeds up integration testing by consolidating tools and improving communications between client and server teams, improving collaboration and helping to pinpoint issues. It offers a refreshingly holistic perspective throughout the testing and validation process.

Taken together, these benefits allow organisations to try, evaluate, change and finally deploy new services using a CI:CD pipeline, bringing services to market more quickly and efficiently than was possible previously. Businesses are now able to document, execute and test payment systems with absolute confidence.

21st century ATMs

Innovation in the ATM industry has faced a perpetually self-defeating cycle of legacy technology-led upgrades for the last 30 years, none of which have offered any real sense of progress. Test automation through cloud-native technology is finally changing that.

ATMs have enormous potential in financial services, but they must be perceived as more than just cash dispensers. They need to extend beyond the services of the bank branch and offer a set of financial apps similar to those offered by banks' online portals. For that to happen, deployers need to start introducing new services at pace – reliably, consistently and without posing any risk to existing services.

As banks and other deployers start to break down channel-based silos and offer true cross-channel services, the ability to provide a set of common and integrated test services across the whole portfolio is crucial to reducing costs.

It can't be stated strongly enough how important testing is to the innovation of new services. If an organisation gets it wrong, they will be forced to bear the consequences, reputationally and financially. Automated testing brings an end to that and will fundamentally change ATM deployers approach to – and confidence in – innovation. ■

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