UNISYS

Developing Agility

The Quarterly Newsletter for Unisys EAE and Agile Business Suite Clients

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Demystifying DevOps

By Jim Thompson, Vice President and Chief Engineer, Core Software, Technology, Unisys

Application development used to be slow – then it became Agile.

Tired of waiting for weeks to transform a concept into a tangible, production-ready feature, development shops adopted the Agile methodology in order to push back against the slow, drawn-out approaches they followed in years past. By breaking the process into smaller chunks and having developers, testers, and business development people work in parallel, the hope was that Agile would bring new capabilities to market with greater frequency.

But sometimes, being Agile isn't agile enough.

Even though Agile helped teams divide the development lifecycle into easier-to-digest chunks, many organizations still struggle with release frequency. Spurred by an ever-evolving mix of external pressures and internal initiatives, they're under immense, mounting pressure to generate more and more, faster than they ever thought possible.

The concept of DevOps arose from this pressure.

Fundamentally, DevOps seeks to improve communication, integration, and collaboration between development and operations in order to bring high-quality services to market at a pace – and cost – that aligns with both IT budgets and business goals. Because it emphasizes the importance of testing early in the development process, DevOps helps organizations be continually prepared to push applications and services into clients' hands. **>>**

Developing Agility

In this way, they can respond more nimbly to changing requirements and position themselves to capitalize on new opportunities well ahead of the competition.

And yet, clients tell us they still aren't sure how to incorporate the concept into their operations. This is a telling revelation: Despite the immense value it offers, DevOps has not yet reached a level of pervasiveness where it could be called a common practice.

But why? It may be that DevOps has been discussed, debated, and written about so much that organizations are simply unsure of where to start. So while our clients' teams are certainly aware of DevOps and the promise it holds, putting the concept into practice remains a bit of a mystery.

But here's the good news: with Agile Business Suite (AB Suite™), you've already taken great strides toward incorporating Agile and DevOps into your development practices.

DevOps in the DNA

AB Suite is designed with DevOps in mind. In fact, you can trace their origins to roughly the same time – AB Suite Release 1.0 came out in 2007, the term "DevOps" was first coined at the Agile 2008 conference and widely popularized a year later.

So essentially, AB Suite and DevOps were created as a response to similar business and IT imperatives and built with the same core goals in mind.

To that end, AB Suite offers a repeatable set of processes designed to support Agile development approaches and integrate the lifecycle management aspects of DevOps. It includes a high degree of integration that can help development and operations teams to work in concert to build, test, and release capabilities with better speed and higher quality.

With AB Suite, you're not subject to any rigid design or deployment methodology. Rather, you're free to construct, deliver, and update software within the context of your specific operational function. And thanks to the way the AB Suite toolset ties together logic, data, and presentation, it's simple to add new information into an existing application and have it carry through to end users in a reliable way.

As an example, think about the United States ZIP Code.

When the ZIP Code expanded from five digits to nine, any application that managed mailing information needed to quickly change to accommodate that shift. But, adding four digits can introduce a host of problems if the update has to be added in numerous places or gets accidentally left out of the business logic.

These concerns aren't necessary when you use AB Suite. With AB Suite, you just need to make one simple change and it's carried through every aspect of the application. This means updates can be pushed out faster and any disruptions to internal operations or client-facing services are minimized.

But that's not all. Integration with Microsoft® Team Foundation Server (TFS) brings AB Suite more in line with DevOps concepts. TFS could always be used to define work items and support version control activities. But now that we've integrated AB Suite to work with TFS Test Manager and the TFS Build, you can create test scripts in Test Manager and use the TFS Build to start the AB Suite solution. >>

In fact, under orchestration of TFS, the Build can be automatically followed by test scripts, and if everything is in working order, you can have an application that's primed for production.

Bringing DevOps Home

Internally, Unisys has been an Agile shop for some time. We've embraced the methodology as a means of toggling between large and small releases in a manner that delivers the capabilities our clients demand, without upending their day-to-day operations.

So while we have yet to go all-in with DevOps, embracing some of its principles is our next logical step.

Just like our internal development group, we recognize that Agile and DevOps represent stopping points on journeys you'll make in the coming years. And regardless of whether your progress has been significant or incremental, know that Unisys consultants have the expertise and the experiences to guide you in implementing these methodologies – so your team can deliver on changing requirements faster and add more value to the business.

I encourage you to contact us at ABSuite@unisys.com if you're interested in learning more about the various ways AB Suite facilitates Agile and DevOps processes.

Our Journey From EAE to AB Suite 5.0 for ClearPath MCP

By Vincent van de Logt, Team Manager, Application development,
Stichting Bureau Krediet Registratie

Founded in 1965 by a conglomerate of Dutch banks and financial institutions, Stichting Bureau Krediet Registratie (BKR) is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering socially responsible financial practices throughout the Netherlands.

To this end, our mission statement encompasses three core principles: preventing excessive or predatory lending, limiting the financial risk shouldered by our members, and detecting abuse and fraudulent behavior during financial transactions. Our members include most everyone in the financial sector, such as banks, mortgage lenders, credit card companies, mail-order organizations, and others.

This commitment to protecting the public's financial standing aligns nicely with BKR's IT operations. After all, in order to effectively uphold these goals, we must provide ready access to objective, reliable, high-quality information that can be used to detect and prevent excessive lending and fraud. And with a database containing data on some 8.6 million Dutch individuals – more than half of the nation's population – maintaining information security measures in accordance with national laws and regulations is just as critical.

Two applications play an integral role in supporting these goals. The Central Credit Registration Database (CKI), which manages credit information for our member organizations, and the Verification Identification System (VIS), a fraud detection and prevention application.

These applications include 2,700 function points, 650 Ispecs, and 300 reports. Around 40 IT staff members and four developers support the applications, about 50 internal end users interact with them daily, and another 300 or so external users connect to the applications via XML or an Internet portal. The applications perform nearly 100,000 credit checks, 60,000 document checks, and 100,000 credit changes per day. And, everything runs on a ClearPath® Libra 4290 system.

To keep CKI and VIS in their positions as mission-critical aspects of our operations, we knew some change was in order. For example, we wanted to modernize our development practices while bringing them more in line with Microsoft's development roadmap. Along those same lines, we also realized it was important to operate the applications in a manner that caters to how the younger generation of IT professionals prefers to work.

Based on these needs, we determined the time had come to migrate CKI and VIS from Enterprise Application Environment (EAE) to Agile Business Suite.

Getting There

Our migration started with an assessment workshop executed by Unisys in the spring of 2014. This was an important first step, as the workshop gave us a good picture of the elements in each application that would require attention throughout the migration process. **>>**

With this information in hand, we began the actual migration effort in April of 2015.

We worked closely with our Unisys team – which included a project lead and two AB Suite experts – throughout the process as they guided us through installation, configuration, and migration. A developer, system manager, and client coordinator from BKR acted as the primary contacts with Unisys during the migration.

The Unisys team also took great care to provide the appropriate training during the project. After a couple days, we felt we had sufficiently supplemented our in-house knowledge and effectively prepared the team to go live on AB Suite.

Going Live

We went live on AB Suite 5.0 on July 9, 2015. The production environment delivered exactly as expected, with just a few minor issues related to reports and end-user screens. Because we were an "early adopter" of AB Suite 5.0, we weren't surprised we ran into these issues and expect they'll be fixed soon.

Our development team has not had that much time to spend in the new environment – right now, they're still learning. But, I'm confident that once they become familiar with AB Suite, they'll appreciate its modern environment and the ease with which they can develop new capabilities. Plus, AB Suite will be especially attractive to any new hires who join our team from college, since they learned their trade on development environments based in Microsoft Visual Studio®.

Migrating our CKI and VIS applications to AB Suite is a decision that holds a lot of promise for BKR in terms of our ability to continue safeguarding the financial well-being of the Dutch citizens.

It's certainly a worthwhile process for any organization that's looking to modernize its development practice. Having just completed this effort ourselves, I'd advise any team that takes on a similar project to pay close attention to post-migration configurations and work closely with Unisys to resolve any issues or incidents as quickly as possible. Do these two things, and you should be well positioned for a successful migration.

Exploring AB Suite Is Easy – and Free!
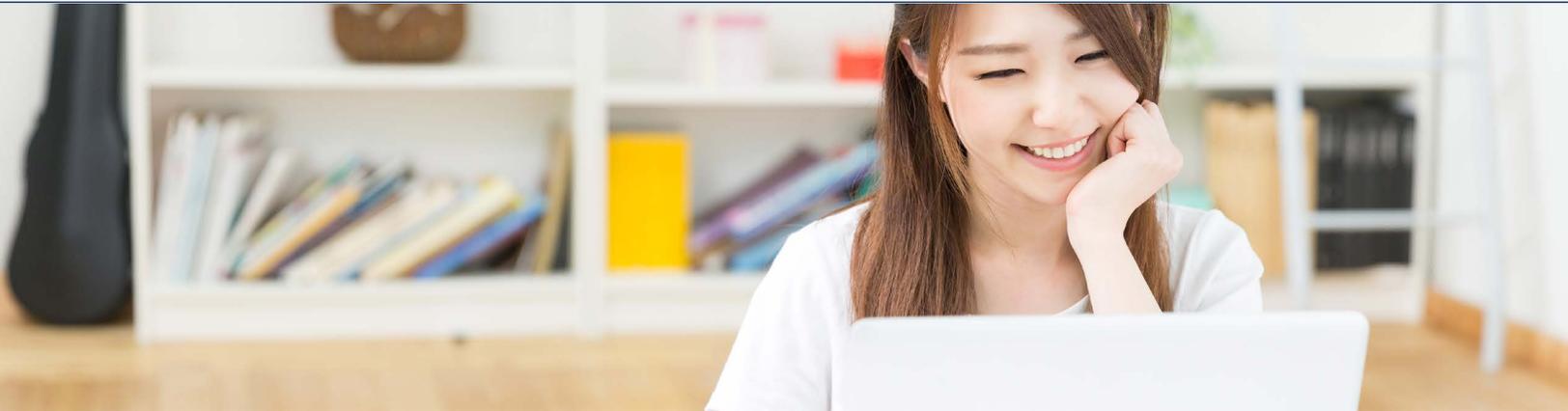
Whether they wish to install it at home for training purposes, or use it to build a small test application, more and more EAE developers are looking for a simple way to get their hands on the Agile Business Suite software.

While any organization with current maintenance and software subscription update (SSU) contracts for the EAE style codes has the ability to order the full AB Suite product at no additional charge, we're happy to announce a new, easier way for first-time and existing EAE users alike to experience AB Suite on an evaluation basis: AB Suite Express.

Available as a complimentary download, AB Suite Express makes it fast and simple for new users and existing EAE clients to explore the many ways this powerful development tool can benefit their businesses.

Best of all, AB Suite Express is a complete evaluation version of the AB Suite package. It includes AB Suite Developer and the AB Suite Runtime for Microsoft Windows®. Plus, it features the Sample system, so you can look at the AB Suite code, along with Builder, which lets you see an example of how the end result of your work could appear in production – without writing a single line of code.

While robust documentation is also part of this download, additional materials can be found on the Unisys support site.

All told, we believe AB Suite Express offers anyone interested in AB Suite a great opportunity to familiarize themselves with the product prior to executing the EAE to AB Suite migration.

Please note that AB Suite Express is a version of AB Suite Release 5.0, so in order to run the software, you will need to have Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 and Microsoft SQL Server® installed. You can begin the download process from the AB Suite homepage.

If you have any questions about downloading, installing, or running the AB Suite Express software, please reach out to us at ABSuite@Unisys.com. We'll be happy to help!

Q&A: Achmea and the Agile Business Suite Cross Reference Utility

The Agile Business Suite cross reference (XREF) utility is designed help you assess the overall impact a change could have on your environment. With it, you'll be able to understand where a specific data item is updated, where the system purges records from a particular structure, the methods a routine calls, and how you ended up at a specific line of logic.

In a recent Developing *Agility* article about the tool, we were fortunate enough to have Dutch insurer Achmea provide several screenshots of their healthcare policy and claims processing application, IKAZ, after it was loaded into the XREF utility.

The leading insurance provider in the Netherlands, Achmea has over 50 people working in its AB Suite environment, including about 30 developers. IKAZ is a very large application with over 1,600 Ispecs and 600 reports, and different instances of it are used by several of the company's unique brands.

Seeing as Achmea helped us develop the product by providing valuable feedback as an early adopter, we wanted to learn more about everything the company is doing with the XREF utility. So, we recently spoke with Paul Bouwhuis, a developer and software architect at Achmea, about how he and his colleagues use the XREF utility and what they like best about the tool.

Developing *Agility*: Tell us a bit more about your role at Achmea.

Paul Bouwhuis: As a software architect I, along with some colleagues, am responsible for keeping the "polis" part of the IKAZ solution consistent.

All change requests come to us first, so we can analyze the impact before they are implemented.

DA: Which roles within Achmea typically use the XREF utility?

PB: The XREF utility runs on the same server as AB Suite Developer. Only developers, database administrators, and operations have access to this "development server," and they can all use the XREF utility. In reality, the developers use it much more frequently than the database admins. One prerequisite to use XREF is that you must be able to read AB Suite logic lines in LDL+.

DA: How do they use it?

PB: We mostly use the XREF utility to analyze code, to see where we use what and why. It also helps us understand the consequences of a potential change and identify where structures, tables, and columns have been updated.

It's also a helpful quick-reference tool during development or testing. For example, for showing which fields are part of a structure. I personally find it easier to do this with the XREF utility than within AB Suite, but there are developers who use it much less. >>

DA: What are some features of the XREF utility you find particularly important?

PB: The most important one is of course the ability to search via the "dynamic search," which allows us to compose customized searches that can look for specific lines within the entire source, as well as within an element.

Aside from this search function, there are many other features we also find important, such as the capabilities that help us see which structure changed, get a Profile overview, and show source code in a separate window from the results of dynamic search.

DA: How has the XREF utility improved the way you work?

PB: The quality of changes are better because the change analysis is easier to do – I can analyze them directly in the tool, without looking in AB Suite itself. This is possible because the "Documentation" tab is also available in the tool. All code changes are documented by a short text, so I can easily see if a program has changed recently.

DA: How easily did your team learn to use the XREF utility? Did you organize a formal training program?

PB: The XREF utility is quite easy to use. We did make a short user guide, and that was enough for everyone to learn to use the tool – we hardly get questions from our developers about how to use it.

DA: Feeding the XREF SQL Server database requires use of the Public Model (PModel) utility. How often do you update the XREF utility out of the AB Suite Model?

PB: Recently, we started doing it once a week. Before that, it only happened by request.

We now unload the Model from AB Suite and load it into the SQL Server database automatically via a scheduled script. At this moment we unload only the development environment. We've thought about doing it for our acceptance and production versions in the near future, and we expect to refresh our development environment daily soon.

DA: You provided feedback as an early adopter of the XREF utility. How did you go about getting updates and additions built into the tool?

PB: We always expressed our wishes directly to Rob Henrichs. He would discuss them with Nigel Tunnicliffe and together they would make a decision about whether or not to implement it. It's been a real fast cycle.

Thanks again to Paul for taking the time to speak with us. If you'd like to learn more about the XREF utility, please email us to plan a demonstration.

Getting Started with EAE and Microsoft Team Foundation Server

By Jim Nichols, Lead Engineer, Unisys

In March 2014, Unisys announced the end of Phase 1 support for the legacy, UREP-based EAE version control software. The termination date for engineering-level support was June 30, 2015.
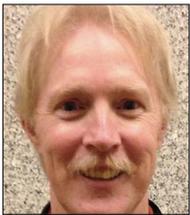
If you're using the current EAE version control software, then it's time to begin your move to the exciting alternative we've provided: an MSSCCI API interface to Microsoft Team Foundation Server (TFS). And you need to start today!

So, how should you begin this transition? The first two steps you should consider taking depend on what you're already doing in your environment:

- If necessary, obtain the Microsoft licenses and MSDN subscriptions you'll need to acquire and install TFS and its supporting software (note that when using the MSSCCI API interface with EAE, you have the flexibility to implement TFS 2010, 2012, or 2013)
- Train your staff on TFS

The next step may be the most critical to getting this project kicked off and headed in the right direction: contact Unisys to schedule a three-day, onsite EAE Version Control Workshop.

At a high level, the workshop is built to help you **begin** the transition to TFS. To that end, during this highly interactive service engagement, we'll work with you to:

- Discuss your current source control environment, including the processes developers follow today, how changes move from test to production, which special tools are used, and your unique auditing considerations
- Describe the various ways you can use the new tool

- Provide steps to move existing EAE models to the new environment
- Demonstrate basic operations (check in, check out, etc.)
- Define the new processes your developers will follow
- Outline the new steps needed to release changes

Clients have found that the workshop plays an essential role in allowing them to execute the transition in a timely manner – and do so without relying on a lot of trial and error.

Once the transition to TFS is complete, you'll be well positioned to take the next big step in the future: the migration to AB Suite, where the development environment is tightly integrated with Visual Studio and TFS, and ready to take advantage of the full capabilities offered by TFS, including TFS Build and TFS Test.

Please contact us at ABSuite@Unisys.com for details about the workshop and to begin your transition from the UREP-based EAE version control product to TFS.

> "The version control workshop was a worthwhile exercise. It allowed us to compare our current UREP version control and release processes against Microsoft Team Foundation Server and identify the changes to our processes in order to use TFS."
>
> — Brian Heitkamp, Database Administrator, Job Service North Dakota

Important Changes to the Agile Business Suite Engineering Team

The past few months have seen several changes in the AB Suite engineering team. As you might know many of the people involved personally, we wanted to share some of these changes with you.

First and certainly foremost: **Diane McGonigle** retired at the end of July after many years with Unisys. She held several program management and engineering positions, and most recently served as the AB Suite migration manager. In that role, Diane was the engineering team's focal point for all AB Suite migration projects around the world. She also contributed as a speaker at many AB Suite events and webcasts.

Please join us in extending a big, heartfelt **THANK YOU** to Diane for her immense contributions to the program.

Mike Heggen served for many years as one of the two AB Suite engineering directors. He's since moved to a new role, where he'll work to strengthen the program management teams for other software products. **Curt Leong** becomes the sole engineering director for all aspects of the EAE and AB Suite products.

After a recent stint on the program management team for the *Forward!* By Unisys™ enterprise computing platform, **David Bonillo** is back with the AB Suite family as a member of the AB Suite program management team.

Ibrahim Sifri, a long-time engineering manager within the EAE and AB Suite team, is now the support manager for AB Suite. In this role, Ibrahim will be the worldwide focal point for AB Suite support.

In addition to her duties as an EAE and AB Suite engineering manager, **Lilly Pushpa** has taken on the role of support manager for EAE and will now act as the key contact for EAE support around the globe.

The team looks forward to providing excellent support and working closely with the EAE and AB Suite user community.

If you would like more information about these changes, please contact us at ABSuite@unisys.com.

Info Center

New additions to our libraries of How To documents, white papers, and other useful information include:

- **White Paper:** Deploy an AB Suite Application (**New**)
- **White Paper:** AB Suite Windows (.Net) with MS Windows Server 2012 R2 Failover Cluster and SQL Server 2014 (**New**)
- **Utility:** ABSLogAnalysis (**Updated**)
- **Demonstration:** ATT Connection Mode Configuration Option (**New**)

To view these and other resources, simply go to public.support.unisys.com and choose "Documentation" in the "Public Information" box located on the left-hand side of the screen. No special login is needed.

We also encourage you to view the list of available AB Suite training courses. These courses are a great educational resource and include a lot of graphics, interactivities, simulations, and demonstrations with voice-over narration.

Be sure to visit the ClearPath Customer Education homepage to view the AB Suite Course Catalog and other helpful education and training resources.

To stay up to date on the latest happenings in the ClearPath world, please subscribe to the ClearPath Connection newsletter.

And please note that the next major AB Suite release will be AB Suite 6.1. Naming this release AB Suite 6.1, not AB Suite 6.0, was an internal decision and does not have any consequence for our users. Its availability is planned for Q4 2016. For more details, please read Client Technical Bulletin number 7625.