Automic Extends Capabilities of PeopleSoft Process Scheduler at University of Florida

The Institution

University of Florida (UF) is a major, public, comprehensive, land-grant, research university.

The state's oldest, largest and most comprehensive university, Florida is among the nation's most academically diverse public universities. Florida has a long history of established programs in international education, research and service. It is one of only 17 public, land-grant universities that belongs to the Association of American Universities.

The Challenge

As the fourth-largest university in the United States, University of Florida (UF) has nearly 50,000 enrolled undergraduates with a support staff and faculty of 15,000 full-time employees and another 15,000 part-time. The business of running one of the top universities in America is like any other modern business–it relies on its IT systems to survive and thrive.

In 2003, the state of Florida began to divest itself of management duties for UF, transferring responsibility for day-to-day financial tasks, human resources and payroll processing from state government oversight to the university. After a careful search for solutions, UF selected PeopleSoft Higher Education to handle the new workload as well as to update their existing software systems. This US$25 million project is the largest PeopleSoft Higher Education implementation in the United States.
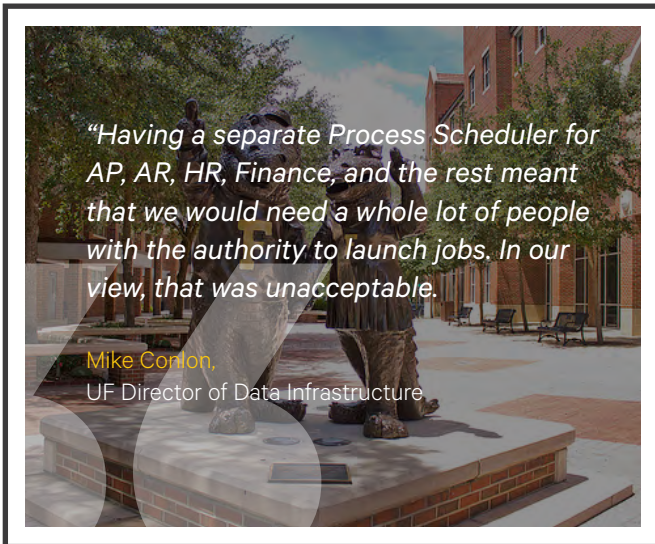
BUSINESS CHALLENGES
- Integrate PeopleSoft with Cognos and Informatica
- Control jobs in multiple Process Schedulers
- Reduce need to manually submit jobs

AUTOMIC SOLUTION
- Centralized control of all workload
- Eliminate need for manual job submissions
- Enable integrated process flows across PeopleSoft instances and wider applications

CUSTOMER BENEFITS
- Reduce number of people authorized to run jobs manually
- Reduce cost of operation
- Deliver results faster and more consistently to the business

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Mike Conlon,
UF Director of Data Infrastructure

From the beginning UF was committed to employing a flexible centralized scheduler to control all batch processes for their enterprise applications. The PeopleSoft onboard Process Scheduler cannot schedule across modules. Instead, it requires a different Process Scheduler to run for each. The UF team realized that the basic functionality of Process Scheduler would limit the complexity of their batch schedule.

Another issue was Process Scheduler's inability to schedule across platforms and applications-meaning there would be no way to coordinate the processing of PeopleSoft with the equally large and complex BI system they were implementing.

"We don't do things half-way," said Mike Conlon, UF director of data infrastructure.

Rather than implement the PeopleSoft system piecemeal, UF immediately converted most of their legacy finance, data warehouse and HR systems to the new PeopleSoft software. In little more than a year they had researched and purchased hardware, set up the software packages and met their goal of having PeopleSoft Finance, HR, data warehouse and Portal live in development.

They also found time to bring Cognos and Informatica online to provide data warehousing, reporting and ETL. All the system lacked was an efficient infrastructure tool that would allow these applications to process information seamlessly.

The Solution

"Having a separate Process Scheduler for AP, AR, HR, Finance, and the rest meant that we would need a whole lot of people with the authority to launch jobs. In our view, that was unacceptable," says Conlon. "We needed a solution that would scale well and allow us to have a versatile scheduling system where all schedules, with both PeopleSoft and non- PeopleSoft jobs, could be created, monitored and executed from a central location."

This central location is the Automic platform graphical user interface. Within six months UF had created all PeopleSoft, Informatica and Cognos batch schedules in the Automic platform. The Automic solution also works with the UF legacy mainframe systems, monitoring to ensure jobs complete successfully, managing all backups and automating FTPs and data transfers from the legacy systems into PeopleSoft.

"Our production scheduling people were very appreciative that, from an architectural/ infrastructural point of view, we had thought to include the Automic platform in what we were doing," said Conlon. "In our legacy environment, though we tried to keep things centralized, we had a number of batch schedulers and we knew that we wanted to avoid that going forward. Unfortunately, that's exactly how PeopleSoft operates. We've got really big jobs, that have to run correctly, and if you keep doing things that way, they'll keep banging into each other. So the idea of the central scheduler was pretty clear--it was going to help us solve our major operational difficulty: having different job streams from different offices colliding and causing problems."
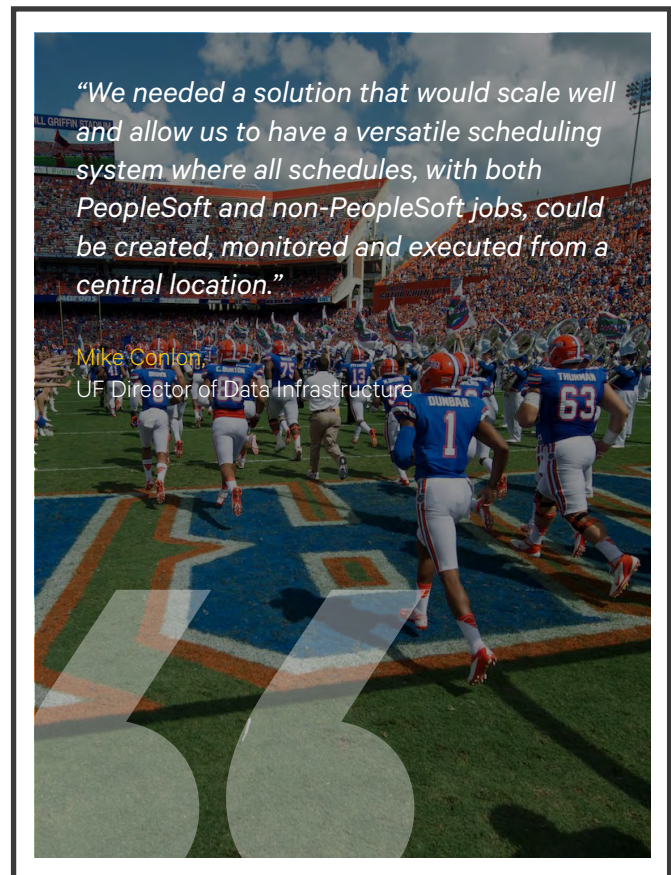
The Automic platform extends the capabilities of PeopleSoft Process Scheduler while maintaining a tight integration with the application. The Automic platform allows users to customize their enterprise automation plan to include features such as dynamic variables generated at run-time, single- and multi-threaded processes in a single job stream, automated error checking and if-then failure logic, automatic report distribution via fax, email, pager or FTP, and much more.

Furthermore, a Automic platform job stream, or chain, can include processes from virtually any enterprise application, allowing users to trigger PeopleSoft processes upon the completion of a financial feeder program, for example. The Automic web-based GUI provides a central view of all processes running in the system, allowing administrators to launch, restart or kill jobs from any web browser on the network.

The Results

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In the future, UF is looking to migrate from their legacy mainframe student system to the PeopleSoft student module. There's no doubt that when this happens, the Automic platform will be there, speeding development times, easing integration difficulties and accelerating processing.

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For more information or product demonstration please visit www.automic.com