

Questions and Answers

Managing Requirements in ALM: A Short Practical End-to-End Best Practice Demo Webinar

Q: Does the developer enter technical specs in ALM?

A: Yes, they can. Rule of thumb is anything goes, as long as the supporting process for the team is in place. The PM can capture even a risk/issue register in ALM, business analysts their business/functional documentation and the developers their technical specs (inclusive of diagrams – only in the rich text tab of the requirements).

Q: How do you link func spec in ALM to business requirement in Caliber?

A: In essence, both Caliber and ALM have the same goal in mind: to model and manage requirements. Although I think that at face value using both could result in duplication of work, one might want to utilize one more over the other, so in that case you should make use of the open API in ALM to connect to Caliber's and do a sync exercise in between.

Q: Will there be a second part of the presentation to cover other areas?

A: There will be more presentations, covering other functional areas in ALM, but if you are interested in a particular topic, please drop an email to skonkoy.vivit@sbcglobal.net.

Q: Given the effort to copy and paste each requirement, can you not simply import requirements (e.g. a specific requirement doc template)

A: Yes, that is possible using the Word and Excel add-ins

Q: It's much cleaner and quicker and that way all documents updated in SharePoint are automatically updated in ALM. Our BA simply adds a comment letting us know when the requirements have been changed or updated and an email is automatically sent to the tester tied to the requirement.

A: Not sure I understand the question, but there are major differences between SharePointSite (SPS) and ALM. Although they both use the same type of version control, you cannot work on the requirements in SPS as you would in ALM. The workflow mailer and approvals based on groups can also be set in ALM, and you would cover the requirements in ALM with tests, which is not something one can do with SPS.

Q: For questions 1 and 2...My testers simply attaches the document through the link functionality from SharePoint.

A: That is also a good practice. If your team cannot all access QC/ALM, then the best solution is to have generic requirements with URLs/links pointing to a version control medium (such as SPS). It only makes the generation/extraction of testing requirements/test cases a bit more delayed, but otherwise, I don't see any major downfalls to using this method.

Q: or should interfaces be requests that trace to each other?

A: Not sure I understand fully, but interface requirements can be setup/customized in QC/ALM relatively easy, and by using the traceability matrix functionality (impact analysis really), one can trace FROM and TO between these requirements (irrespective of their type).

Q: Is it best to handle interfaces (other applications to integrate with) as requests or tests or as sub requests?

A: If your process employs CIT (component integration testing) before SIT (system integration testing – functional) then I would say to definitely keep your up/down stream interfaces requirements separate. At least this way one would be able to differentiate between different failures in the requirements, namely

either technical (back-end) such as interfaces, messaging queues, 3rd parties etc., or functional (front-end) such as actual functionality/features being testing in your application under test.

You might want to look into creating/validating these requirements under sanity or smoke (to some degree and depending on your project context).

Q: Could you please explain about the Traceability Matrix?

A: Traceability Matrix is nothing more than an Impact Analysis tool whereby you link entities (requirements) in between them (TO and FROM), meaning that your targeted requirement will receive an AUTOMATIC alert when your source requirement has been modified. This way one can ensure that the testing (especially useful for regression) does not miss out by discarding changes effected upon a series of requirements which happen to have ripple effects on additional functionality/features (represented here by your secondary/targeted requirements).

Q: After the analysis has been completed on estimates, is it possible to export this information into a report that can be shared with the team?

A: Absolutely. The main folder used for analyzing the estimates can be reported on, using either standard or customized templates, in order to obtain all the info pertaining to the risk based analysis, as well as requirements (parents and children) residing under this particular folder (with a level of granularity chosen by the "reporter"). One can then export/print this report to PDF, effectively creating a pdf-ed baseline of the information acquired from ALM.

Q: Is it possible to restrict access to specific documents depending on the role? e.g. allow only read access, allow read and write?

A: Yes, it is possible. This can be achieved via version control and coupled with a smart conditional workflow (if user part of this group then rule A, B...). Version control is actually optional, as the same results can be obtained via the workflow directly.

Q: Is it possible to upload documents into the tool so, if our requirements were originally input into a word document, can we upload this without retyping all of the information?

A: Yes, it is possible to upload straight from MS Word or Excel using the add-ins. Usually retyping is just duplication of work, so one has to import to ALM smartly and effortlessly.

Q: We need to improve the way in which we capture feedback from our stakeholders - will the comments feature in this tool help us do this? So, can a number of stakeholders access the requirements via this tool and provide feedback on a specific requirement that will be visible to the rest of the team?

A: Yes, that is exactly what the feature is intended for. Many stakeholders in your project can access QC/ALM and provide their feedback on a single particular requirement, and all their feedback would be retained in ALM which now acts as a single centralized repository of information. All the comments/descriptions and fields will be visible to the whole team, or just to specific groups of users (depending how one sets up the access control).

Q: Can we produce dashboards showing us how many requirements have been written at a program level vs. project level?

A: Dashboards are dependent on the information/data available in ALM, so if you set up your requirement details properly (in your case, you might want to look at having a drop-down in an user defined field, maybe with values such as "PROGRAM LEVEL" and "PROJECT LEVEL", with sub-lists containing values such as "OPERATIONAL", "BUSINESS" etc.), then your dashboard (or at least one of the graphs/reports) would focus on this particular customization, allowing you to have the high-level view that you desire. The

drill-down can show you exactly how many requirements are at a program level, how many at a project level, and you can break the information down to the very last piece of granular information.

Q: When versioning is enabled in v11 or 11.5, can the assets to be managed be specified? Or are all assets subject to version control when it is enabled?

A: Unfortunately one cannot select which assets would be subjected to version control. VC is enabled at a project level, and once activated it will work with ALL requirements records (requirements module) as well as the test cases/scripts (test plan module).

If you wish to manage only a specific set of records, you might want to look into the possibility of using the workflow to achieve it. Something to explore along with the QC guys or HP itself.

Q: Is there version control for requirements?

A: Yes, there is, see the above question.

Q: How do you keep the history of business sign off on a requirement by requirement basis. Example SRS 1 vs. SRS 1.5. Which version of the requirements were signed off on SRS 1 vs. 1.5?

A: If you use Version Control along with a proper workflow mailer process, then whatever gets signed off by simply choosing a different value in a particular user defined field, e.g.: SIGN OFF (with values YES/NO) which in turn would trigger a response in the workflow (e.g.: check out item and send email to x,y,z), then ALL of the users actions (and I mean ALL of them) would be kept as part of the HISTORY tab for that particular entity/requirement. Essentially, you can also compare the differences between SRS 1 and SRS 1.5, see who was the authorizing/sign-off user, what values were modified, and if need be (e.g.: if SRS 1.5 is incorrect) to restore previous versions of that particular record (e.g.: SRS 1 restored). With VC, it's pretty much like this: anything anyone ever does gets kept in the history (provided there is a consistent usage of VC with the check-ins/outs), for posterity, analysis and auditing purposes.

Q: How do we associate use cases with our functional requirements?

A: You got 2 choices: either create use cases as children requirements to your main functional/business requirements, or simply create use cases as test cases (test plan) to cover/link back to your main functional/business requirements. If you're looking at more advanced Agile features, I'd recommend that you check out the Agile Accelerator (project template) for QC/ALM or at the new upcoming HP product called Horizon.

Q: Can multiple types of risk (Legal, Operations, etc.) be associated with a single requirement? What does the risk register look like?

A: Yes, you can associate risks (as records within QC – requirements) to main functional single requirements. You can use a hierarchy method (parent = main requirement, children = issues and risks), or simply use different folders to indicate what sort of records you are looking at.

Although this is not the main functionality of QC/ALM, it can be done with a fair amount of work on the process behind it and some level of customization for your project.

Q: Is there an email work flow to identify when the next resource can begin their piece of work?

A: Not by default, but any email workflow can be customized for a project in order to reflect the requirement modeling process. So yes, you can use ALM to have a conditional response workflow (incl. emailing functionality) set up for your teams.

Q: I have a question about your version control on in the project and the use of any QTP? Have you witnessed any issues with QTP not checking in properly?

A: I am unsure of any issues with QTP. If you could give some examples we could enquire and have the HP teams' responses...

Q: Did you notice any major step forward in ALM 11.5 compared to former version ALM 11?

A: Yes, at least for:

- Sprinter 11.5 (extra features),

- Business Views for reporting,
- Improvement for the site admin vis-à-vis licensing (and releasing thereof from the end users perspective)
- Jetty being a better web server than Jboss
- Lab Management (extremely useful for your performance and automation teams using virtual machines/hosts to perform their scripts on)

That is what I am aware of – there is a “what’s new” pdf document distributed with 11.5. Let us know if you want us to send it over to you.

Q: Is there any integration with PPM for resource hours and project management?

A: Yes, the information from ALM is supposed to be directly integrated with and consumed by PPM.