NE₁ONE

By Calnex

GAMES TESTING GETS FASTER AND MORE RELIABLE AT CD PROJEKT RED WITH NE-ONE NETWORK EMULATOR

CD PROJEKT RED is a games development studio founded in Poland in 2002. It develops and publishes video games for personal computers and video game consoles. The studio's flagship franchise, games from The Witcher series, has sold over 25 million copies worldwide.

In GWENT: The Witcher Card Game, gamers clash with their friends in fast-paced duels that combine bluffing, on-the-fly decision making and careful deck construction. The game is played over a best-of-three series of rounds, as players unleash their hand by slinging spells and diverse units with special abilities and use clever tricks to deceive their opponents.

THE PROBLEM

CD PROJEKT RED needed to make sure that their new game, GWENT: The Witcher Card Game, which at the time of writing (2018) was in Public Beta, would work properly under different network conditions across multiple platforms — PC, Xbox One and PlayStation 4 - in order to deliver a good gamer experience.

The studio had previously used network emulation software to mimic real-world networks and so, already recognized the value using this type of technology brought to the games testing process. The problem was that their existing network emulator would only run on a single PC, making effective collaboration between the Development and QA teams difficult. Clearly, it was time to find a replacement.

CD PROJEKT RED's Network Programmers Coordinator, Dan Latocha explains, *"We were looking for a device that would be reliable and easy to use for both Development and QA teams, and allow us to share test network configurations between them."*

"Our development and QA teams were both involved in the selection process. It was important for us to find a solution that would help improve the network issues workflow. The idea was that QA would prepare test network scenarios and pass the game breaking ones to developers. We also wanted it to be easy to set up, accurate and reliable, especially for the QA team. They had to be able to trust given results."

THE SOLUTION: SIMPLICITY OF USE IS KEY

CD PROJEKT RED began looking for their replacement by surveying the emulator market and drawing up a shortlist of potential candidate products. Following a series of discussions and presentations the studio decided the NE-ONE Professional Model 20 was going to be their preferred solution.

NE-ONE Professional Network Emulator provided the simplicity of use CD PROJEKT RED were looking for

Marcin Pieprzowski, Tech QA Analyst, CD PROJEKT RED explains, *"What made us choose the NE-ONE Professional over the competition was its simplicity of use. Our QA team, in particular, also likes working with the visual scenario editor which enables them to build complex scenarios from pre-prepared "standard" examples making the process become much faster and approachable. NE-ONE Professional's Network Scenario Builder is one of the best features the network emulator offers, as it makes it easier to use for less tech savvy testers. Other solutions we evaluated offered almost no reusability of configurations"*.

CREATING THE RIGHT TEST ENVIRONMENT

CD PROJEKT RED decided to set up the NE-ONE Professional in their server room and found no real challenges in using the machine. Next they created special lab VLANs for routing traffic through the NE-ONE Professional emulator. Anyone working with the network has a managed switch and can route their traffic directly through the NE-ONE Professional if needed to experience the required network conditions. This works well for both PCs and consoles, and the QA team finds this process very straightforward.
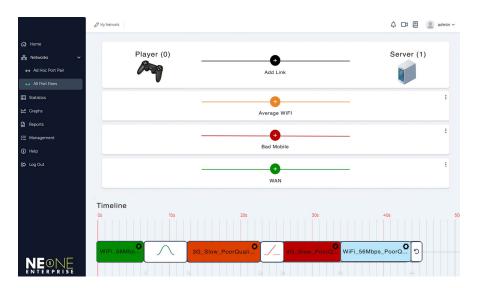
BENEFITS

For the Development team, the best thing is that they can easily load network scenarios prepared by QA and reproduce the same conditions each time. For QA teams, the most important feature is the Network Scenario Builder. They also like that the NE-ONE Professional makes QA tests reliable.

When asked what the major benefit of using the NE-ONE Professional Network Emulator has been the QA team replied that it is the confidence in test results. Other benefits include improved workflow between QA and the Network Teams.

The biggest visible benefit is probably that CD PROJEKT RED can now test on consoles in the same way as they do on PC which was not possible previously.

BENEFITS (CONT.)

The QA Team liked working with the Network Scenario Builder to build complex environments

Dan Latocha summarizes it by saying *"NE-ONE Professional saves us time and, in return, money. Testing has gotten faster and more reliable. The machine replicates real-life scenarios, which results in many issues being discovered and fixed. There is less guesswork and, when it comes to consoles, less cables destroyed from being pulled from the wall. QA loves it. The device is seeing a lot of use."*

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