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WEBINAR TRANSCRIPT

Accelerate Secure Software Delivery with AI Enabled QA and High-Fidelity Data

SPEAKERS:

Steve Griffin – Head of Sales, Assurity Consulting

Grant de Leeuw – CEO and Co-founder, DataMasque

Reg Prasad – GM of Practice and Solutions, Assurity Consulting

Steve Griffin: Good morning and welcome to the Assurity and DataMasque joint webinar on accelerating secure software development with AI enabled QA and high-fidelity data. I am Steve Griffin, your MC for the session, and I am joined by two fantastic panellists: Grant de Leeuw, CEO and co-founder of DataMasque, and Reg Prasad, GM of Practice and Solutions at Assurity. Let us dive straight into the panel discussion. How do you see the intersection of AI, data privacy, and software quality evolving over the next three to five years, particularly for financial services and government platforms?

Grant de Leeuw: Data is absolutely the lifeblood of AI tooling, and when you get into regulated industries like financial services, government, and healthcare, the use of data is rightly restricted. What we are seeing is that organisations are struggling with how to ensure the privacy of their customer data while trying to experiment with AI. We have not seen a lot of AI use cases directed to the customer because of the risks of exposing sensitive data to these models. This is not just a future challenge; companies are grappling with it right now.

Reg Prasad: To add to what Grant is saying, in test environments, a lot of customers are still using 80 percent to 90 percent production like data. AI is very reliant on good data, and over the next three to five years, the collection of data is only going to grow. The challenge is securing that data, especially with recent attacks on large datasets, while still making it work for application building and coding.

Steve Griffin: Grant, what actually inspired the creation of DataMasque?

Grant de Leeuw: DataMasque was born out of the frustrations we saw within organisations trying to get access to internal data. Teams want access to production data to do their jobs, but due to privacy and data breach risks, it is locked down. We saw teams either trying to get security exemptions to use customer data or creating fully synthetic data that had no relevance to actual production. We created DataMasque to provide high-quality, high-fidelity data that is representative of production but with none of the downside risks. It is actually better than customer data because you get all the benefits and none of the risk.

Steve Griffin: Reg, how has Assurity's approach to QA adapted to the rise of AI and the demand for secure, production like test data?

Reg Prasad: When we go into customer organisations, one of the first things we ask is about the quality and security of their datasets. If we are building our quality strategy and applying AI, it is critical that whatever is coming in is of high quality and processed securely. AI is often seen as unsafe, which is why we rely on the security of the data and partner with DataMasque to ensure fast creation of data alongside strict masking and security.

Steve Griffin: Grant, what makes DataMasque's synthetically identical data especially valuable for organisations with sensitive data?

Grant de Leeuw: A lot of masking tools de identify data by turning everything into perfect records, like perfect email addresses, but we all know production data is messy. If you test on perfect data, it no longer represents the real world. We mask down to the field level, meaning we maintain all the idiosyncrasies and imperfections found in the original data, like an incorrect email or a date of birth from 1900, while fully protecting the PII. This ensures lower environments actually represent production systems safely.

Steve Griffin: Reg, can you walk us through how the Assurity and DataMasque partnership supports the full testing cycle?

Reg Prasad: Data migration is a critical area; when data moves across environments, that is often when problems are realised and impact the end-to-end testing cycle. DataMasque helps by layering the data safely, which helps us run performance harnesses that mimic production closely without the security risks.

Steve Griffin: Grant, what are the biggest risks of using production data in non-production environments?

Grant de Leeuw: For every one production copy, there can be eight to ten copies in lower environments like development, QA, and analytics. These lower environments are less secured, less governed, and accessed by more users. Users are the greatest risk to an organisation. The biggest risk is a breach, but additionally, if real customer data is discovered in a lower environment, the entire project stops immediately while they figure out how to mitigate it, which severely slows down innovation.

Steve Griffin: So how do Assurity and DataMasque help organisations accelerate delivery without compromising compliance?

Reg Prasad: In New Zealand, open banking legislation means data will be flying in and out of production, and many organisations are not ready for it because we have not been strict in controlling data. We work with customers to accelerate delivery while putting the necessary guardrails in place.

Grant de Leeuw: Doing this upfront actually speeds things up. People often think extra security slows projects down, but if environments are de identified inconsistently, testing breaks. By de identifying data consistently across all environments, your data integrity remains intact, and everything speeds up because you did it right the first time.

Steve Griffin: Quickfire question for both of you: What is one thing organisations should stop doing immediately to improve the security and speed of testing?

Grant de Leeuw: Stop signing security exemptions to use customer data in lower environments.

Reg Prasad: Stop taking data privacy for granted. You have to put the work in; you cannot just randomly skew or mask data without proper processes.

Audience Q and A

Steve Griffin: We have a question from the audience: How do AI enabled QA and data masking tools change the economics of test environments?

Grant de Leeuw: I want to clarify something important: we actually use absolutely zero AI in the DataMasque tool. Everything we do is rules based because masking needs to be deterministic, not probabilistic. AI hallucinations are real; if we hallucinated and failed to mask even one percent of a 2.5 billion row database, that is a major data breach. The economics are clear: time to value. By sorting out your data layer properly, you eliminate the months spent getting sign offs to use customer data.

Steve Griffin: That ties into another question: In financial projects, how can we ease customer concerns about using AI driven tools when they worry about security?

Grant de Leeuw: Again, zero AI in our tool gives customers comfort. Additionally, DataMasque is a dark site deployment, meaning we deploy onto your infrastructure. No sensitive data leaves the environment, and DataMasque has absolutely no backdoor access to it.

Steve Griffin: Final question: What advice would you give test leads trying to convince leadership to invest in secure test data solutions?

Grant de Leeuw: Speed. If you remove the sensitivity but keep the value of the data, there are no data sovereignty or breach risks. It frees everything up and speeds everything up.

Reg Prasad: Quantify the impact. Start small, take 10,000 lines of data, put it through the masking process, showcase the results, and prove the business case.

Steve Griffin: Thank you to our presenters for the great insights, and thank you to everyone for joining.