Pros and Cons of Commercial and Open Source Test Automation Tools

OPEN SOURCE

COMMERCIAL

PROS

OPEN SOURCE
- » No up-front technology costs (open source is free)
- » Flexibility
- » Works with multiple languages & platforms
- » No licensing, so you own everything you build
- » Large communities of support online

COMMERCIAL
- » Ease of Entry—less time and effort to implement
- » Doesn't require a team of strong coders
- » Documentation is much more thorough and easier to understand
- » Most vendors have live support from dedicated employees
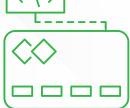- » Built-in reporting capabilities are robust

CONS

OPEN SOURCE
- » Requires a pretty technical team, skills-wise
- » Maintenance can be tough for certain tools
- » OS frameworks can be really specialized and changes to it can be tough
- » Dedicated support can be tricky

COMMERCIAL
- » Can be VERY costly
- » Tool is licensed, so you pay fees, and never truly "own" anything
- » Not as flexible—they are often built on a single platform and have a very specific focus, so it might be good for one thing, but you would need something else for other things

Advantages of a Balanced Test Automation Framework

- » Utilize certain commercial tools for the very specific thing they are best at, which saves a ton of development time and costs trying to emulate that thing with an open source tool
- » Lower cost of annual licensing fees if you use open source for a chunk of the framework vs combining several commercial tools
- » Lower cost of human capital by incorporating commercial tools for certain specific functions

How to Assess What Is Best For You

- » How technical is your team? What languages do they know...and what do you develop your applications in? This could help steer you in the direction of open source.
- » What is your budget for QA and Test Automation in particular? Do you have anything specifically allocated for tools?
- » Have you decided what you would like to automate? UI? API? Back-end?
- » How quickly would you like to start automating?

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