PROD PERFECT

Disclaimer:
Testing on Production

Some ProdPerfect customers elect to test for regressions on their production environment. Often this is because they do not maintain a staging environment that is meaningfully representative of production. Sometimes, they appreciate having the extra assurance that bugs have not made it in front of their user base.

Whatever the reason, ProdPerfect believes its customers should be aware of the risks that may result from having automated E2E testing running against production.

Production data can be affected in ways that are visible to users.

Our tests are generated with a pre-production environment in mind. Our engine does not take into account how the results of the test path may appear to other users. If, for example, a test simulates a user writing a comment on a discussion board, that comment may be visible to other site visitors.

The behavior of site users can affect expected workflows and throw false positives.

For example, if a test simulates purchasing something on an ecommerce site, and all items in the designated category happen to sell out, the test will be unable to complete the workflow.

Automated tests on production can affect product analytics.

In addition to our stabilization builds, which run every hour, ProdPerfect engineers are also regularly running tests in development and interacting manually with the target site. Depending on the volume of traffic your site sees, if you are gathering product insights and making product decisions based on usage analytics, this number of artificial site interactions could be statistically significant and skew your metrics. You might need to filter out our test runs within your analytics. We are happy to work with you to make sure that our traffic can be identified by your team.

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Production credentials are accessible to all engineers within the ProdPerfect org.

ProdPerfect treats all testing credentials with the sensitivity appropriate to staging credentials (stored in private repositories, encrypted at rest, to which only 2–factor-authenticated ProdPerfect engineers have access). We are not prepared to exercise additional security measures on behalf of production credentials.

Automated testing on production can affect site performance and load times.

For most applications, the volume of requests made by our tests is a drop in the ocean, but for some, additional queries to their production database can mean diminished performance for our tests or live end-users.

Production data can accumulate and may require regular clean-up.

Many customers are comfortable with data accumulation on staging, as there are relatively few consequences to wiping the entire database and resetting servers. Buildup on production, however, can require more targeted, manual database clean-up for your development team. Sites are especially susceptible to data buildup if application resources we use or create in the course of our tests cannot be deleted through the UI.

Note these are not all guaranteed consequences of testing on production, but they are all possibilities that a customer should be prepared for. We are happy to work with you to make sure our regression test suite suits your team's needs, reflects the behavior of your users, and gives you the confidence to confidently deploy changes to your application. If you want our test suite to run in production, thinking through the above caveats and finding solutions before we start is something we would love to talk with you more about.