



Table Trac

Table Trac bets on Micro Focus to modernize its application portfolio

Challenge

Casino and gaming software provider, Table Trac needed to modernize its application portfolio and prepare to move into future technologies, while preserving intellectual property and business logic.

Solution

- > Micro Focus Xcentrinity® (BIS)
- > XML Extensions™

Table Trac

Established in 1995, Minnesota based Table Trac, Inc. develops and sells information and management systems that automate and monitor the operations of a casino. The company's comprehensive range of solutions provides casino management with real-time insight into the casino's gaming floor, including table games and slot machine auditing and accounting, as well as the revenue-driving functionality of casino player's clubs and various marketing and promotional programs.

Today, the company's casino management systems are operating in 28 casinos across the United States and in Central and South America. The company's solutions have proved reliable for more than 15 years because of the strength of the logic underlying its products. However, in the face of commercial challenges, the company recognized that its products needed to go beyond reliability and become more innovative and visually appealing.

Accuracy and precision paramount in regulated gaming industry

Today there are more than 450 commercial casinos in the United States in addition to an almost equal number of Tribal gaming operations. Estimates are that casino gaming in the US generates revenues of more than \$60 billion annually. Despite being inundated with data, casino managers have typically found the real-time tracking and reporting of casino operations to be challenging as they require a fast, highly visual way to see both the real-time status of operations and consolidated reports. In addition, accuracy and precision is paramount within an industry that is regulated at federal and state government levels.

Highlights

- > Faster time to market with new products
- > Security improvements
- > Enhanced customer satisfaction
- > 60% reduction in code development

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Dave Livingston,
Systems Architect, Table Trac

Protecting the investment in COBOL

Having made a significant investment in COBOL applications over the years, Table Trac faced a challenge: How to preserve and protect the business logic and intellectual property within its applications, while moving towards a technical platform that would take the solutions and product offerings into the future. As Dave Livingston, Systems Architect says, "We knew we had to offer our customers a route into the future – to take advantage of the capabilities new technologies like wireless keypads, mobile devices, and iPads have to offer. But we didn't want to jeopardize the investment in the applications and business logic that we'd built up over the years. This logic has been lab-tested and proven to meet the demanding requirements of the gaming industry."

Table Trac's applications used the Common Gateway Interface (CGI) as the interface between COBOL and the browser, a solution that carried a severe overhead in terms of code. By moving to a web services environment as the basis for a three-tier architecture, hundreds of thousands of lines of code could be eliminated – increasing performance and significantly reducing complexity. Table Trac considered rewriting its entire offering – some 1400 programs – by re-implementing the company's core business logic.

Even if the costs of carrying this out were not prohibitive, Dave Livingston points to the logistical problems and potential threats to the business of taking this route, "Choosing to adopt one of the current solutions du jour, new Java, new Ruby, new Python, would involve a steep learning curve in-house, or bringing in external consultants who wouldn't have our understanding of the gaming industry. We already had a perfectly sound environment in COBOL. After all, it's what banks and other financial institutions use – and our products have to have similar levels of reliability, resilience and precision, all the while meeting the strictest regulatory requirements."

Migrating over 1 million lines of code

Table Trac turned to Micro Focus for assistance in migrating over one million lines of code to a web services environment – immediately eliminating the need for CGI thereby removing 400,000 lines of code plus almost 300,000 lines of HTML templates. Table Trac was able to preserve its business logic and intellectual property and, at the same time, dramatically increase the speed of development. As Livingston explains, "A recent new feature written into our latest version would have taken around 40 hours to develop with CGI. Using the enhanced XML features in Micro Focus Xcentrisity Business Information Server and XML Extensions, this was achieved within 30 minutes."

The benefits have been extended to Table Trac's customers – enabling role-based security to be greatly enhanced across the 1400 programs that make up the company's product suites – a development that would have taken up considerable resources if the CGI overhead was still in place.

Dave Livingston explains, "At the back-end the COBOL remains the same and is transparent to the end-users. This, combined with the advantages that the web services front-end opens up to us, means that we can bring innovations to market much faster, literally putting new technology into the hands of those casino associates who work right on the gaming floor alongside the player – like our innovative iPad tool that gets a complete status update from a particular slot machine wirelessly and seamlessly. It took only fifteen minutes to write the application."

"We can deploy to every computer onsite, from iPads and iPhones to a traditional PC – instantly and without client-side software to maintain. This propels us years ahead of our competition and positions us ideally for the future. "

Dave Livingston,
Systems Architect, Table Trac

Intellectual property and competitive advantage preserved

Clearly, the advantage of adopting this migration approach from Micro Focus has been of enormous business value to Table Trac and its client base. The intellectual equity embedded in its enterprise systems continues to deliver competitive advantage, while the company is able to take its offering to the next level and capitalize on the advantages that new technology delivers.

A final word goes to Dave Livingston, the Systems Architect who, before engaging Micro Focus was facing that particular dilemma. "A web services architecture gives us the ability to develop reliable gaming management systems based on proven business logic. We can then deploy to every computer onsite, from iPads and iPhones to a traditional PC – instantly and without client-side software to maintain. This propels us years ahead of our competition and positions us ideally for the future."

About Micro Focus

Micro Focus, a member of the FTSE 250, provides innovative software that allows companies to dramatically improve the business value of their enterprise applications. Micro Focus Enterprise Application Modernization, Testing and Management software enables customers' business applications to respond rapidly to market changes and embrace modern architectures with reduced cost and risk.

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