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CHALLENGE

DoIR needed to find a cost-efficient alternative to the mainframe, that could be implemented quickly, while causing minimal disruption to business operations.

SOLUTION

> Micro Focus Net Express®

> Micro Focus Server™

BENEFITS

> 50% reduction in annual running costs

> Improved agility

> Faster response times

THE CUSTOMER

Western Australia is a large and mineral-rich state with many opportunities for resource industry investment. The Western Australia Department of Industry Resources (DoIR) is the body that regulates and manages exploration and mining and helps facilitate major industry investment projects.

The department is responsible for granting and maintenance of titles to explore and mine for minerals and petroleum, as well as recording geological information. To do this effectively, the department maintains a register of titles, surveys, compliance records, environmental assessments and other important data. It has an extensive range of geotechnical data services and products.

The DoIR also monitors adherence to environmental, health and safety legislation and processes in the mining and petroleum industries.

THE CHALLENGE

DoIR had been using outsourced mainframe services since 1998 and felt that performance was falling away while costs had increased. *"We were looking toward the end of our mainframe outsourcing contract and didn't want to renew without investigating what options would be open to us. We felt that there had to be a better way of delivering the information systems and were keen to explore any option. While not specifically searching for an in-house solution, we felt that bringing the applications back in-house would give us a greater level of control, as well as reduced ongoing costs,"* said John West, manager application delivery, Information Services Branch, Corporate Support Division, DoIR.

"We evaluated our options and felt that moving to a Windows server environment was the most cost-effective and appropriate solution because it gave us access to more open and convergent technologies," he said. The DoIR legacy environment included eight core mainframe-based information systems, 1000 programs that ran using CICS (Customer Information Control System) and COBOL on the mainframe, 1500 copybooks (sets of common routines that can be shared between applications), SAS business intelligence software and IBM's DB2 database. The system replicated every two minutes to 20 servers including those in 11 regional offices.

THE SOLUTION

The department issued a request for proposals to move its systems from the existing mainframe to an alternative environment. From all the responses, there were two types of proposals. The first group focussed on re-writing the applications in other technologies, while the second proposed migrating the applications to a LAN-based environment while retaining the original COBOL source code.

"Whichever option we chose had to deliver results while causing minimal disruptions to the department's operations. It was very important that we minimized the time, cost and risk to the greatest degree possible," said West. *"After reviewing the responses to our RFP it was clear that the migration option was going to be significantly less expensive and faster than rewriting our applications.*

Once DoIR had chosen the migration path over rewriting, it was faced with a choice between two COBOL integrated development environments (IDEs) to recompile the applications for use on Microsoft servers.

"Migrating to Windows using Micro Focus was one third the cost and two years faster than rewriting our applications. We've also cut our annual running costs by more than 50 percent."

John West,

Manager Application Delivery, Information Services Branch, Corporate Services Division, DoIR

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"DoIR evaluated both with Micro Focus Net Express being the preferred IDE. It was the quality of Animator that formed the basis for our decision to use Net Express for the project," said West.

"Animator helps us run the program and step through the source code at the same time. It was exceptionally productive, as we could see when we hit a bug exactly what was happening. Animator allows us to comprehensively test and debug our applications and its intuitive interface made it easy to trace program execution. It is a powerful productivity tool that was not matched by the other offering.

THE RESULT

"Using Net Express to recompile our CICS/COBOL applications, we found that 90 percent of programs required no hand-tailoring or individual attention. This high level of accurate automation from Net Express saved us significant time," West explained.

The project took 10 months from trial, through pilot, to final implementation and cutover. It was completed on time and under budget.

Within the new environment, DoIR runs its 1,000 COBOL application on Windows 2000 servers and Micro Focus Server is used to deploy the COBOL applications within the Windows environment. DoIR also moved from IBM's DB2 database to DB2 Universal Database (DB2 UDB), a version of DB2 that is able to run on Intel-based machines. DoIR also uses IBM's TX Series CICS transaction manager and Microsoft's SNA Server.

West continued, *"The migration process using Net Express helped us maximize the use of our existing source code. It also minimized testing and training as users didn't need to learn a* new application because the core programs had not been changed, simply moved from the mainframe to Windows.

"Now our system response time for user requests is less than three seconds and, as we have regained control of our applications by bringing them in-house, we can be more agile in response to the department's business changes and requirements. Our staffing levels, particularly in the area of help desk and operators, have also fallen by more than 60 percent and we have a genuinely happier user community."

"Net Express provided a fast, easy-to-use environment for the project's developers and the response and follow-up from Micro Focus was always timely and of high quality," West concluded.

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 and Management software enables customers' business applications to respond rapidly to market changes and embrace modern architectures with reduced cost and risk.

For additional information please visit: www.microfocus.com