WorkSafeBC: Aligned IT infrastructure with strategic business direction

Micro Focus supports cost saving and improved performance

Highlights

> Immediate cost saving of $2 million

> Significantly improved batch performance

> Reduced and simplified IT footprint

> Aligned IT infrastructure with strategic business direction

> Enhanced integration opportunities

> "Micro Focus technology allowed us to move to a more flexible, lower cost virtual platform environment, supporting our SOI and SaaS business solution direction. We are impressed with the flexibility of our new infrastructure and look forward to further modernizing our applications to better serve our clients."

Mike Larson,
Director, Technology Services,
WorkSafeBC

At-a-glance: WorkSafeBC

WorkSafeBC is dedicated to promoting workplace health and safety for the workers and employers of British Columbia, Canada. In the event of work-related injuries or diseases, WorkSafeBC works with the affected parties to provide return-to-work rehabilitation, compensation, health care benefits, and a range of other services. 2.19 million workers are covered in almost 218,000 employers. WorkSafeBC receives nearly a million claims-related documents per year. That is about 4,000 documents and around 16,000 pages per day.

Solution

> Micro Focus Enterprise Server
> Micro Focus Enterprise Developer

Challenge

WorkSafeBC has a range of business-critical applications which had been running in a mainframe environment since the early 1990s, consuming over 1,600 million Instructions Per Second (MIPS). However, WorkSafeBC has a strategic IT direction towards Service Oriented Infrastructure (SOI), providing a system for describing Information Technology (IT) infrastructure as a service. The main objective is to make business benefits measurable by taking a service-oriented approach to IT. This strategy goes hand-in-hand with providing Software as a Service (SaaS) where software is centrally hosted and licensed on a subscription basis. Finally this then enables WorkSafeBC to move into cloud computing services with Platform as a Service (PaaS) allowing clients to develop, run, and manage Web applications without the complexity of building and maintaining the infrastructure typically associated with application development.

These measures will increase WorkSafeBC's business agility, improve efficiency and position the applications well for future modernization. The unprecedented levels of flexibility required to support this strategic IT direction led WorkSafeBC to look at a new architectural infrastructure as well as supporting technology.

Industry-leading solution with Micro Focus

WorkSafeBC considered a variety of solution options when researching this modernization project, as Mike Larson, Director, Technology Services, explains: "After extensive evaluation we felt

Micro Focus Enterprise Server and Enterprise Developer were well-proven solutions from an industry-leading company, giving us the confidence to move forward."

WorkSafeBC decided to move the existing core application workload to server-based technology running on Windows Server 2008 R2. This standardized its operations on the Windows .NET platform and consolidated IT operations on a smaller platform footprint, reducing operating costs.

In a 14-month project, nearly 700 COBOL programs involving close to 1,500 JCL jobs were moved to a virtualized Windows environment with the help of a systems integrator and some specialist assistance from Micro Focus. Larson comments on the project: "Close involvement of the business was crucial to our success, including their strong ownership in testing and support for production cut-over."

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Early cost benefits realized

Although the modernization project was imperative to WorkSafeBC, it was important that its clients would not experience any downtime or inconvenience, as Todd Yule, Director Strategic Planning and Business Management, explains: "Direction from our CEO was to ensure the move to a virtualized Windows environment remained 'invisible to our clients'. We achieved this through a strong program leadership bearing in mind the range of technologies and the variety of vendors involved."

A critical early step in the modernization process was to move WorkSafeBC's suite of Claims and Assessment applications from a mainframe infrastructure to an agile, virtualized environment. Completion meant a $2 million reduction in operation costs and a significantly reduced IT footprint. The cost savings were realized through elimination of major infrastructure technology components, consolidation of third party software licenses and reduced maintenance fees.

Benefits of an agile IT environment

The Windows environment has significantly improved batch performance through the opportunity to re-architect the environment around virtual server flexibilities, some application clean-up, workflow improvements and database and query tuning.

Larson talks to the increased agility afforded by the simplified and virtualized IT footprint: "During 2015 we need to move our data centre from Vancouver to Kamloops. Our new infrastructure has drastically reduced the risk and expense of doing this."

With the suite of Claims and Assessment applications now in its new, virtualized, home, WorkSafeBC has noticed that a host of integration opportunities has opened up through the homogenous Windows environment.

Ready for the future

Larson concludes: "Micro Focus technology allowed us to move to a more flexible, lower cost virtual platform environment, supporting our SOI and SaaS business solution direction. We are impressed with the flexibility of our new infrastructure and look forward to further modernizing our applications to better serve our clients."

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.