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Case Study

Parklane Systems

Relativity provides secure, real-time, data access, at a fraction of the time and cost of a rewrite alternative.

Overview

Parklane Systems develops occupational health and safety software and workplace risk management solutions. Parklane is one of the leaders in health and safety software, and continues to expand with elements for incorporate industrial hygiene, medical, pandemic planning, and human resource needs.

Challenge

Health and safety in the workplace is an issue which concerns most employers, small and large. Legislation is in place to ensure workplace incidents are recorded and reported and employers and employees are supported, both practically and financially. In order to comply with this, companies need to keep clear records and, as these systems often contain personal and confidential data, such as social security numbers and personal health information, it is vital that system access is tightly secured. The Parklane solution is a system customers can trust; one that keeps this data organized, safe and in one place. In addition, there is the comfort of knowing data is protected against unauthorized access and inadvertent data corruption which is common in spreadsheets.

Balancing the needs of a user who wants to keep their data as private as possible, and the larger organization that would like to use this data for analysis, while staying within the legislative boundaries, is a challenge Parklane was looking to solve, as Lee Males, Executive Vice President at Parklane, explains: "Our solution is designed so that one version satisfies all the market segments we service: different government departments; healthcare organizations; education; manufacturing companies; etc. While we provide thousands of standard reports within our application, we found that customers would also like the ability to prepare their own custom-made reports through tools such as SAP Crystal or Cognos. It would give them control over their own data and the ability to use the data set in different ways."

He adds: "We deduced that a relational database would serve these needs. Our application

"We are able to provide our users with access to their COBOL data as if it were a relational database and this capability has given our stable application the ability to incorporate contemporary reporting and analytics tools."

LEE MALES
Executive Vice President
Parklane Systems

parklane SYSTEMS

At a Glance

- **Industry**
  Software and Technology
- **Location**
  USA
- **Challenge**
  Balance the needs of users who want to keep their data as private as possible, and the larger organization that would like to use this data for analysis, while staying within the legislative boundaries.
- **Products and Services**
  Relativity
  RM/COBOL
- **Success Highlights**
  + Massive productivity gain compared to rewrite alternative
  + End user determines data access levels
  + Customers can prepare reports using SAP Crystal or Cognos
  + Built-in integration with data warehousing solutions

> **"With hundreds of programs included in our application we estimated it would take four developers four years to complete the re-engineering work required. Our RM/COBOL platform is very stable and we really don't want to put customers through a major conversion so we looked for an alternative solution.**
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> **LEE MALES**
> Executive Vice President
> Parklane Systems

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is OpenText™ RM/COBOL-developed, using traditional data files, and we looked at rewriting this to a relational dataset to satisfy our reporting needs. With hundreds of programs included in our application, we estimated it would take four developers four years to complete the re-engineering work required. Our RM/COBOL platform is very stable and we really don't want to put customers through a major conversion so we looked for an alternative solution."

Solution

Market research highlighted OpenText™ Relativity as a solution to this issue. Relativity brings the benefits of relational database (RDBMS) technology to COBOL applications that use traditional data files for application data. Relativity presents COBOL data files as a relational data source enabling other software tools to easily access application data. It is compatible with OpenText™ RM/COBOL, OpenText™ Net Express, OpenText™ Server Express and the Micro Focus™ Visual COBOL by OpenText™ product line.

Implementing Relativity enables Parklane customers to determine the boundaries of data access within their organization. The ODBC interface provides a relational view of the data so that non health and safety users can use it for generic reporting purposes. Customers can also use Relativity to integrate with data warehousing, using back up and business intelligence features within tools such as Cognos.

Males comments: "Our application is Windows-based with Web-based elements. We have created a very stable environment for our solution and it is important to us to provide ongoing application development without any disruption to our customers. They use our solution to manage their health and safety processes and don't need to be aware of the back-end development effort, it just needs to meet their requirements."

The Parklane application saves costs by providing total transparency into health and safety processes and audits. The system has been instrumental for its customers in cost recovery and has even been known to provide full ROI within only two months of implementation.

Results

Males concludes: "Compared to a rewrite effort, Relativity has given us an enormous productivity gain. We are able to give our users access to their COBOL data as if it were a relational database and this capability has given our stable application the ability to incorporate contemporary reporting and analytics tools.

Relativity really doesn't need much hands-on support, but Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) is always there if we need any help. It is great to see the continuing development around COBOL which fills me, and our customers, with confidence that our solution will have a bright future."

Learn more at
www.microfocus.com/opentext

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