ULTRAQuest

Boise Cascade Office Products, A Case Study

Web-to-mainframe reporting

CUSTOMER OF:

- **UltraQuest Reporter**
- **UltraQuest Applications**
- **Batch**

Boise Cascade Office Products has pioneered data warehousing concepts for more than ten years, using Select Business Solutions' NOMAD Report Writer for mainframe environments. More recently, they began looking for a Web-based reporting solution to extend their reporting capability to a wider audience. Boise's objective was to improve end user self-sufficiency, reduce IT involvement, and decrease turnaround time. They tried numerous solutions, including client/server and screen scraping. Ultimately, the one that worked, by combining mainframe power and Web interface, was Select's UltraQuest.

Boise's criteria included a Web interface, distributed access, full functionality, and the ability to continue using the mainframe's processing power and existing databases. The following are some of the first initiatives being implemented:

- **Consolidate reporting tools.** Prior to UltraQuest, end users utilized a multitude of reporting tools. Joan Daniel, Data Warehouse Project lead stated, *"Other PC-based products lacked functionality, ease of access to mainframe databases, did not provide enough detail, or simply did not work as advertised."* As the numbers of users increased, it became necessary to migrate to easier, friendlier tools for non-technical end users. Joan further said, "To them reporting is another tool among others. They have no time to read manuals and should not have to switch between reporting products. They need one product that is intuitive to use and provides all the functionality needed to perform any task. UltraQuest Reporter is the only product that we have found to achieve this."

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- **Expansion of standard reporting practices.** Before using UltraQuest, their methods of reporting from mainframe data included screen scraping, exporting data, and 3270s. Multiple reporting products slowed down the creation of reporting standards and conventions. With UltraQuest, IT is implementing one access method and reporting product to service 40 district centers throughout the United States. All end users, at any location and at any time, will be able to use one set of tools and their Web browsers to accomplish all tasks.

- **Support complex database management.** Boise has 72 databases supporting coast-to-coast operations for sales, marketing, accounting, and logistics. Retaining these databases on the S/390 is valuable, especially since Boise depends on the mainframe to do all heavy processing of data and reports. But, many of the reporting products tried did not handle the mainframe's large databases and could not be used effectively. UltraQuest supports Boise's large databases as well as their DB2, VSAM and QSAM formats. Furthermore, UltraQuest's two-tier architecture reduces the need to duplicate databases on different midrange platforms, create new schemas, keep replicated data in sync, or create new security systems. IT continues to use familiar databases on the mainframe. Reporting power is provided, data analysis is enhanced, and data integrity is preserved.

- **Customized reporting systems.** To effectively deal with growing numbers of non-technical end users, while improving services, IT had created custom mechanisms to automate some tasks. For example, with a workload of approximately 1400 batch jobs per month, and for users who did not know JCL, IT provided custom screens to create JCL. To enable the enterprise-wide sharing of reports, IT implemented a custom-sharing library. With UltraQuest, these mechanisms are built-in, freeing IT resources, while affording location users the data they need to make sound business decisions and provide customized reports to their customers.

To obtain more information, please contact **Select Business Solutions at 888-472-7347 or at www.selectbs.com.**

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