

IBM focuses on realtime customer needs with integrated digital media library.

Overview

■ Challenge

Increase responsiveness to customers, reduce publishing and distribution costs and provide realtime access to product-related promotional imagery for global technology leader

■ Solution

IBM Worldwide Image Library (WWIL), an integrated, Web-based repository and on demand ordering system for high-resolution digital product images

■ Why IBM?

IBM and IBM Business Partner Ancept designed and implemented an integrated, extensible, open standards-based solution that enabled WWIL to respond more effectively and in realtime to users' need for promotional imagery

■ Key Benefits

More than \$600,000 saved annually by eliminating redundancies among group-specific image collections; additional \$68,000 per year saved in CD-ROM production and shipping costs; enhanced responsiveness to user demands; heightened user satisfaction



The IBM Worldwide Image Library houses digital media from more than 20 IBM business divisions, including high resolution images that can be delivered on demand in a variety of formats.

For corporate marketing departments, maintaining the visibility of company products is a crucial task. Equally critical is the job of ensuring that these offerings are portrayed attractively in the media and in catalogs. To meet this need, companies maintain vast libraries of promotional photographs, diagrams and other visual images. The organizations that use these pictures expect them to be available in a broad variety of digital formats, accessible in realtime over the Web, through powerful, intuitively searchable virtual libraries. And the companies that can respond to this need are gaining a competitive advantage.

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—Nicki Morelli, Manager, Sales Support Information, IBM

Integrated solution that helps enable On Demand Business

Key Components

Software

- IBM DB2® Content Manager, Version 7.1
- IBM DB2® Universal Database™ for AIX®, Version 7.1
- IBM WebSphere® Application Server, Version 3.5
- Ancept Media Server, Version 2.7

Servers

- IBM @server pSeries™

Services

- IBM Global Services

Business Partner

- Ancept, Inc.

One company that is successfully meeting this challenge is IBM. Headquartered in Armonk, New York, IBM recently introduced a centralized, Web-based repository—known as the IBM Worldwide Image Library (WWIL)—for its product-related promotional images.

WWIL replaces an older content management system that had served IBM's marketing staff for nearly a decade. Nicki Morelli, manager, sales support information at IBM, explains: "Our legacy archiving system had no content-sharing functionality or integration support. The application was unreliable, running on PCs so old that we could no longer find parts or service. Only one individual had the knowledge to maintain its customized code. Our users needed pictures immediately, and we could not satisfy the demand in a timely way. To fill the gap, other IBM groups had begun operating costly private repositories with no central control of image quality or standards compliance."

Now, WWIL has eliminated these problems. Based on IBM's own products as well as those of IBM Business Partner Ancept, Inc., the image library provides one-stop shopping for some 700 internal and 10,000 external users, including sales agents, media contacts and IBM Business Partners, who use the images to develop marketing collateral materials and Web sites. Through WWIL, these users access nearly 20,000 high-resolution images per year. Implemented with the help of IBM Global Services, the solution was developed using IBM DB2 Content Manager, IBM DB2 Universal Database, IBM WebSphere Application Server and Ancept Media Server, and runs on powerful IBM @server pSeries systems.

According to Morelli, IBM's new digital media asset management system has added tremendous value to its public relations efforts and delivered powerful business benefits to the company. "Corporate-level control of image quality and timeliness improves IBM's appearance in the public eye and enhances the visibility of our products and services," she notes. "Furthermore, WWIL eliminated the need for separate group-specific image collections, saving more than \$600,000 per year in redundant repository operation and maintenance costs. Customers are delighted that they are getting precisely the images they need, delivered right to their desktops, the instant they need them. As a result, IBM is saving an estimated \$68,000 per year in CD-ROM production and shipping costs."

"We chose IBM Global Services because of its proven skills in delivering topflight total solutions to industry-leading customers. We selected Ancept to deliver the specialized technologies best suited to our needs."

—Nicki Morelli

IBM expertise empowers the enterprise to concentrate on business

As a first step in developing the integrated digital media asset management solution, Morelli and her sales support colleagues turned to IBM Global Services. "We were not required to use an IBM resource," she explains. "But we chose IBM Global Services because of its proven skills in delivering topflight total solutions to industry-leading customers. We selected Ancept to deliver the specialized technologies best suited to our needs."

IBM Global Services used Ancept Media Server search, retrieval and media management software as the front-end application for the IBM technology-based WWIL solution. Together, IBM Global Services and Ancept designed and implemented the new Web-based digital media asset management system in just 18 months while meeting IBM's complex infrastructure requirements.

Open standards support powerful integration

When users log on to the WWIL Web site at www.ibm.com/common/ssi/imagelibrary, they are first directed to a user login page powered by IBM Registration (IR), IBM's enterprisewide Web self-registration and authentication application, which runs in a dedicated IBM WebSphere Application Server cluster. WebSphere Application Server uses open-standard Extensible Markup Language (XML) to pass Web addresses and login parameters between IR and the Web site's front end.

Once authenticated, users access a search page powered by Ancept Media Server, which runs as a set of Java™ components inside IBM WebSphere Application Server. Users can query by keyword, product name, image category or IBM announcement date. Alternatively, they can perform advanced condition-based searches.

Ancept Media Server uses Java Database Connectivity (JDBC), another open standard technology, to pass search criteria to IBM DB2 Content Manager, which stores images and associated meta data in DB2 Universal Database. Users can download their selected images directly to their desktops or request copies by file transfer protocol (FTP) or on CD-ROMs. WWIL administrators configure the Web application using a Java application to access a gateway server.

On Demand Business Benefits

- More than \$600,000 per year saved by eliminating image collection redundancies
 - \$68,000 saved on CD-ROM production IBM's public image
 - Competitive advantage by enhancing and distribution costs
 - Greater accessibility and responsiveness because of platform-independent Web browser-based interface
 - Ability to further develop the solution at low cost as technologies evolve, due to use of open standards
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"DB2 Content Manager gives us the availability and scalability we need to respond in realtime to the needs of our growing customer base," Morelli notes. "And because images are housed in the robust, reliable DB2 Universal Database—rather than in an application, as with our previous solution—we have the flexibility to modify and enhance the front-end application as future needs may require. This will protect our investment in this best-of-breed information management platform."

Distributed data sources form a single virtual resource

One of WWIL's most powerful features, Morelli says, is its integration of multiple applications, systems and data sources into a single, organic solution. "By leveraging open standards such as JDBC and XML, IBM has created an integrated, Web-based tool for managing and delivering digital content in realtime," she notes. "From a single, convenient, platform-independent interface, our customers can instantly leverage distributed IBM resources—such as our image servers and our CD-ROM production center—as if they were a single resource. And the open standards underlying WWIL will let us continuously develop the solution as technologies evolve, without costly migrations and with minimal added system integration."

Morelli says her department is now considering ways to virtualize the library even further, enabling other IBM groups to integrate their own Web-based applications with WWIL's digital media service. "For example, using IBM on demand technology, any of our product groups could feature a robust search-and-order application on its own Web site, enabling customers to transparently search the WWIL resource for images of its specific products," she explains. Also down the road is the potential for broadening WWIL's range of digital content to include the full gamut of rich media that DB2 Content Manager and Ancept Media Server support—including audio, video and streaming multimedia.

"Our department has always served the marketplace by supporting the visibility of IBM products and services," Morelli says. "Now, by integrating a broad selection of those best-of-breed offerings, we have transformed our own business processes. As a result, we are responding to our customers more effectively than ever before."

For more information

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