IBM

Oregon Judicial Department moves into 21st century with VisualAge Generator

New scheduling system boosts user productivity up to 80 percent

The Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) took a giant leap forward into the 21st century recently. The OJD manages all court activities for the state of Oregon, serving more than three million people in 36 counties. Its responsibilities include scheduling judges, court cases, courtrooms, security and transportation for more than 600,000 cases per year. This was no easy task, with 150 judges and support personnel drawn from the OJD's 1,600 employees. Add in no-shows, remands, illnesses, vacations and conflicting calendars – all requiring additional scheduling – and the challenge became even more formidable.

The answer lay in the judicious use of new technology. The OJD recently developed a new court scheduling system using a leading-edge development tool – IBM VisualAge Generator. The move has taken the OJD from a total 'green-screen' environment to a full graphical environment on the IBM AS/400 platform in less than a year.

"Our previous system was limited in its scope and function, and complemented by manual processes," says William Jennings, OJD applications programming manager. "We wanted to re-engineer the entire court case management system to ensure we had the right personnel in the right place at the right time. We needed a 21st-century application now."

VisualAge Generator: a simple, easy-to-use toolkit

The new scheduling system was driven by three main user requirements:

1. To access the mountains of data stored in the OJD's DB2/400 databases;

2. To quickly and accurately determine the current status of court cases; and

3. To take advantage of a more advanced and intuitive Graphical User Interface (GUI) environment with options such as "pull-down" screens and windowing to better facilitate and support their day-to-day activity.

Industry	Government (Public Sector)
Application	Court Scheduling System
Software	VisualAge Generator OS/400, DB2/400 and Windows 95

After researching a variety of application development tools, OJD chose IBM VisualAge Generator. "We looked at a number of other products but VisualAge Generator won hands down for three reasons," says Jennings. "It generated native AS/400 applications, was easy to use and it provided enhanced functions to boost developer productivity."

"For example, we explored other products that required additional processes to tie everything to the middleware," he says. "With VisualAge Generator, once you're set up, the required linkages are already there."

VisualAge Generator: a robust toolkit that boosts developer productivity

OJD used VisualAge Generator in two environments:

- Windows 95 (to develop "thin" client code); and
- COBOL (for its AS/400 servers).

VisualAge has proven to be extremely compatible with the AS/400 environment and provides a robust development platform," says Jennings. "Our first development effort, the court scheduling application, has generated rave reviews from users for its simple, intuitive GUI.

It has also greatly increased their proficiency in scheduling busy judges. Our training staff reports productivity gains of up to 80 per cent in court scheduling."
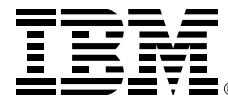
According to Jennings, the application development process was very economical in terms of time and expenditures. Five developers, working with VisualAge Generator, created the entire court scheduling application – which contains 32 GUI's and more than 60 programs – in just four months. "It was a very short learning curve, a project of this size would have taken twice as long with our old tools," says Jennings.

In the future, OJD will be developing a total of 25 applications using VisualAge Generator. Their goal is to create an entire court management system, where all core applications are interlinked.

"We are already starting our second project with VisualAge Generator," says Jennings. "Ultimately we expect approximately 20 percent reuse from our first project. As a result, our developer productivity will increase significantly in the future. Using VisualAge Generator creates a win-win situation for both developers and users."

For More Information

Please contact your local IBM marketing representative, IBM Business Partner or visit us at: **www.software.ibm.com/ad/**

IBM ®