



Florida Division of Retirement Implements 'Retirement Online' by Using Visual Studio 6.0; Users Gain Easy Access to Information Anytime, Anywhere

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Microsoft® DNA architecture used to build online information service; customers gain quicker access to information while Division of Retirement reduces cost of service.

BearingPoint assisted the Florida Division of Retirement to enhance its existing information system by using Microsoft Visual Studio® 6.0 and Microsoft Windows® Distributed interNet Applications Architecture (Windows DNA) to implement Retirement Online, an online customer information service. Staff productivity improved by replacing paper-based processes with online data entry. Changes in business processes enabled division staff to focus on value-added activities that further improved the functionality, stability, and manageability of the division's retirement information systems. Improved business process efficiency provided additional benefits such as better service to members, employers, and retirees. Easier information access by division employees reduced paper processing, data entry errors, and data redundancy. A business value analysis using the Rapid Economic Justification (REJ) framework showed that the Division of Retirement has already experienced:

- Increased operational efficiencies. Operational costs arising from the time needed to correct errors, administrative activities, customer service, and general site management were reduced. Cost reductions were driven by more efficient IT support capabilities and increased efficiency of business operations. Retirement Online enables the division to receive more accurate and timely contributions and payroll information from its constituent state, municipal and school district employers, which also improves the efficiency of those agencies.
- Improved information access, distribution, and quality. Retirement Online enables members, employers, retirees, and internal users to gain easier and more efficient access to information via the Internet. The integration of Internet technology with the division's core business applications has transformed information service requests handled by division staff to a *customer self-service model* designed to replace paper-based processing, reduce repetitive and administrative tasks while providing convenient customer service and information on demand.
- Improved productivity. A reduction in routine paper-based data-entry tasks helped to increase productivity throughout the division as well as in state, and municipal agencies. Retirement Online also enables all paper-based reporting agencies to enter employee-specific information, a task that previously had been provided only by the division. Improved information access also resulted in fewer telephone and mail support requests by customers, thereby reducing support costs and enabling division staff to engage in value-added activities.

The successful implementation of Retirement Online using Microsoft Visual Studio 6.0 and DNA architecture resulted in the division's ability to provide more consistent services to members, employers, and retirees by enabling quicker and easier access to information through an intuitive online interface.

"Our goal with Retirement Online was to deploy a service over the Internet so that members and retirees can easily and quickly get current information on their retirement accounts, and agencies can submit payrolls electronically. We've already experienced gains in staff efficiency and realized cost savings while greatly improving the availability of information to our customers." – Erin Sjostrom, State Retirement Director.

Economic Impact

Return on Assets

The [Florida Division of Retirement](#) has realized productivity improvements and associated cost savings by implementing an online service that enables agencies to submit their payroll and contribution information via the Internet.

Return on People, Processes

Improved information management by replacing paper-based processes, decreasing data entry errors, decreasing data entry redundancy, and improving staff efficiency to serve their customers.

Business Benefits Summary

Solution Provider – [BearingPoint](#)

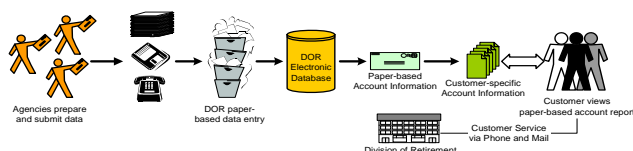
Productivity – Division improved the service to its customers with existing staff; agencies that submitted information substantially improved staff productivity that resulted in significant time and cost savings being realized.

Best Economics – Reduced customer support costs by decreasing telephone and written support requests. Increased the quality of the service yet maintained current staff levels.

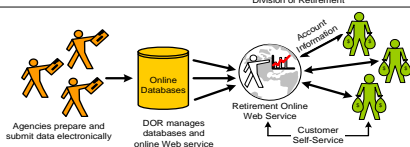
Dependability – Integrated with legacy systems, enhanced data quality, ensured data integrity, increased operational efficiencies, and improved customer service

Information Entry and Customer Access Process

Before - X Weeks



After - X Days



Business Process Improvement

Retirement Online, a Web-based retirement information system, combines Internet communication tools with automated data entry processes that encourage self-service among active members, benefit recipients, and reporting units. Retirement Online empowers users by allowing 24/7 access to information and services. As a knowledge repository it enables division staff to concentrate on value-added services by minimizing routine paper-based work processes and mail-in and telephone customer support.

Retirement Online extended the capability of the existing Windows-based data entry system. The Microsoft solution, which integrated with imaging and workflow for incoming member requests, replaced existing microfiche records with online images through a batch-file conversion.

The pre-deployment IT architecture consisted of Oracle 8i, ViewStar, Microsoft SQL Server™, PL/SQL, PowerBuilder, and Crystal Reports. The new system integrated with existing support for employee enrollment, agency establishment, contribution reporting, benefit calculations, retired payroll, accounting, survivor and disability benefits, and records management, thereby contributing to a lower cost of owning the new system.



Technical Perspectives

Microsoft Visual Studio 6.0 is a set of development tools used for building applications in Microsoft Distributed interNet Architecture (DNA). Within Visual Studio 6.0, the Visual InterDev 6.0 development tool is used to create data-driven Web applications that use both HTML and Active Server Pages (ASP). ASP uses client-side and server-side scripting to implement business rules and return data from the database. Visual InterDev enables developers to embed scripts into a Web page and offers design tools to enhance the appearance of the Web site.

Visual Studio 6.0 also includes Microsoft Visual Basic® 6.0, a development tool that can be used to develop enterprise-wide applications and COM components. As one of the primary components in the Windows DNA strategy, users of Visual Basic 6.0, can develop high-performing, scalable COM components that will interact natively with Windows 2000 Component Services.

Visual Studio 6.0 also includes Microsoft Visual SourceSafe® 6.0 version control software. Visual SourceSafe includes version tracking, version comparisons, branching, and release merging and management. Although Visual SourceSafe is integrated with the Microsoft Visual Studio 6.0 application development suite, including Visual Basic, Visual InterDev®, and Visual C++®, OLE Automation interfaces can also be used to configure Visual Source Safe for use with many third-party development tools.

Technology Enablers

Microsoft DNA Architecture, the precursor to Microsoft .NET, provides a robust, proven, and tested platform that is designed for developing next-generation enterprise applications and building online Web services. The Division of Retirement used Visual Studio 6.0 as the development environment to build Retirement Online and used the following Microsoft technologies for the runtime environment: Windows 2000 Server, COM+, Distributed COM (DCOM), Windows 2000 Component Services, Network Load-balancing, Microsoft Active Data Objects and OLE DB, Microsoft Internet Information Server, Active Server Pages (ASP), and the Microsoft Windows Active Directory® service.

“Visual Studio improved payroll reporting and enabled customer-specific retirement information to be accessible by our members, employers, and retirees through Retirement Online. This has helped us eliminate paper-based payroll reporting, reduce redundant tasks, and improve operational efficiencies throughout our organization while providing a forum for our customers to get the information they need when they need it.”

Cathy Smith - Retirement Administrator - Bureau of Enrollments and Contributions

“The implementation of Retirement Online has been a tremendous addition to the array of high quality services the Division of Retirement provides its membership base. Through Retirement Online, we have been able to enhance the level of service, providing members easier access to information in a timelier manner. Equally as important have been the high amount of customer usage and the universally positive feedback about its content and ease of use.”

Doug Cherry - Retirement Administrator - Bureau of Retirement Calculations

Visual Studio and Microsoft DNA Enable More Efficient Use of People and IT Resources

Retirement Online enabled the Division of Retirement to improve its internal information collection systems and enhance staff productivity. Technical benefits include:

- Implementation of rules-based processing in stored procedures
- A modular custom design that improved customer data access and the ability to grow and expand system functionality.
- Reduction of manual paper-based processes, which allows division staff to spend more time interacting with customers and improving service.
- Implementation of more efficient processes that result in time and cost savings.
- Improved data control and integrity that reduces data redundancy.
- Improved security of transaction-based processing.
- Application-level security, which controls access to certain types of processes.
- Retirement of costly mainframe legacy platforms, which yields significant cost savings.
- Migration of staff from task-oriented functions to value-added functions. The system now performs many of the routine, manual processes.

Web Services: Information Anytime, Anywhere

With more members getting closer to retirement age, it was vital that the Division of Retirement used the latest communication technologies to provide its customers with a flexible way to access their retirement account information. Testimonials from members and retirees attest to the success of Retirement Online.

- *“The Division of Retirement should sell this program to other government retirement systems as the information contained within is fantastic!!!”*
- *“Kudos!! What a fantastic Web site. All the information I need is accessible and easy to understand. You get an A+ from this old teacher. Thanks for a great site.”*
- *“Having information at your fingertips like you have provided is such a help. Thank you!”*
- *“I am impressed with The Division of Retirement’s new online services, the quality, ease of navigation, and content. Job well done!”*
- *“Just wanted to let you know how impressive and informative your site is!! Have a great day and be proud of your site! This note happens to be from a Web designer too.”*
- *“Today was my first visit to your site - just wanted to comment that it is an exceptional job - clearly one of the best organized and logical sites I’ve experienced. Great job!”*
- *“Just a quick note to let you know I really appreciate the online access to my retirement account. This is really nice to be able to go in and see your account status without having to call somebody. Thanks again for the great Internet site!”*

For More Information: Please visit www.microsoft.com/value or email value@microsoft.com.

The information contained in this document represents the current view of Microsoft Corporation and the Florida Division of Retirement on the issues discussed as of the date of publication. Because Microsoft and The Florida Division of Retirement must respond to changing market conditions, it should not be interpreted to be a commitment on the part of Microsoft and the Florida Division of Retirement, and Microsoft and the Florida Division of Retirement cannot guarantee the accuracy of any information presented after the date of publication. This study was conducted and completed when BearingPoint was known as KPMG Consulting.

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BearingPoint has assessed the Microsoft Rapid Economic Justification (REJ) study done at the Florida Division of Retirement for compliance and consistency with BearingPoint methodologies, comparative databases and industry experience. BearingPoint has examined the assumptions, data and collection methods and conclusions of the Florida Division of Retirement with a view to ensure the cohesion and reasonableness of the findings. In our opinion, the study conforms to REJ methods, and the conclusions drawn by the Florida Division of Retirement and Microsoft Corporation are reasonable based upon the data provided. This opinion represents the opinion of BearingPoint and is not a warranty or representation of any kind with respect to the work performed by the Florida Division of Retirement and Microsoft Corporation.