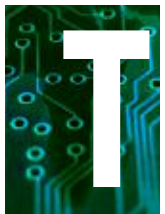


BY ALEXANDER PRAUN

WebFOCUS Monitors Network Infrastructure for T-COM

INTRANET
REPORTING
SYSTEM
DELIVERS
UP-TO-THE-
MINUTE
QUALITY DATA
REPORTS FOR
EXECUTIVE
MANAGEMENT



Telecommunications companies need to continually assess information about the speed, quality and reliability of the services they offer to their customers. Most telecommunications companies rely on quality data reports for this purpose—detailed summaries of the communications network that reveal the status of the entire infrastructure. In order to respond effectively to the constantly changing dynamics of the telecommunications market, the information in these reports must be flexible, intuitive and instantly accessible.

A large telecommunications enterprise such as T-Com, the fixed-line division of Deutsche Telekom, depends on a diverse IT landscape composed of many different databases and information systems that have evolved over the years. This heterogeneous environment makes centralized reporting difficult. Gathering, organizing and presenting quality data information from this vast network of hardware, software, and networking gear is an ongoing challenge.

Despite these inherent challenges, T-Systems—the information and communication technology (ICT) service provider for major business accounts within Deutsche Telekom Group—prides itself on offering customers the best possible service for their global communication needs. Delivering on that promise begins with a careful analysis of the IT operation, with up-to-the-minute status reports available at all times to company executives.

SNAPSHOT

ORGANIZATION: T-Com, the fixed-line division of Deutsche Telekom, one of the world's leading telecommunications companies

THE CHALLENGE: Gather, organize and present quality data information about a diverse IT landscape composed of a vast network of hardware, software, and networking gear

THE STRATEGY: Consolidate quality data in a central data warehouse that can be accessed from any location via user-friendly query and analysis tools, in a variety of formats

THE RESULTS: More than 5,000 people throughout T-Com can access up-to-date information about data quality from intuitive reporting interfaces on the corporate intranet

INFORMATION BUILDERS SOLUTIONS: WebFOCUS, ETL Manager

To accomplish this objective, T-Systems created a data-warehouse and intelligent reporting solution that keeps managers in touch with all the facts, figures and performance statistics relating to the network infrastructure. Dubbed the Systematic Quality Monitoring System (SYMOSY), it uses WebFOCUS from Information Builders to streamline important data transfer, reporting, and analysis activities.

High-Quality Statements—Anytime

Before SYMOSY was developed, accessing quality information was difficult for T-Com. “We had to ensure that the reports supplied by the different departments were comparable in order to avoid inaccurate interpretations in our quality statements,” explains Klaus Geiger, project leader at T-Systems.

To consolidate the quality information and arrive at a

ly formatted reports required by corporate managers.

The technical planning of the reporting system was less time-consuming but just as important as the data analysis exercises. T-Com experts were particularly cautious about their choice of reporting software, since there were already 30 suppliers in the data-warehouse section. They selected Information Builders’ WebFOCUS because they believed it represented a best-of-breed Web-based reporting and analyzing system.

WebFOCUS meets enterprise business intelligence requirements through one cohesive Web-based reporting solution. Its flexible reporting tools enable the creation of richly formatted reports from enterprise data in real time. In the intuitive, drag-and-drop WebFOCUS environment, developers can rapidly create and deploy compelling reporting applications. WebFOCUS also supplies all the advanced Web-based features people need to use reports effectively, such as integrated hyperlink drill-downs, scheduled delivery, built in management tools and a choice of output formats.

“Information Builders’ reporting system runs across all conventional platforms and can access more than 85 database formats across native interfaces—including all the databases in use at T-Com. Its Copy Manager extraction process is straightforward and reliable, and we were impressed with its robust Web architecture.”

– Klaus Geiger,
Project Leader,
Deutsche Telekom Group’s T-Systems

“single version of the truth,” T-Systems decided to create SYMOSY for T-Com. As the overseer for the project, their mission was to create quality reports based on the operating data so that flexible, up-to-date, comparable information would be available at all times.

The core of the project involved creating a data warehouse that could filter precise quality information from the flood of usage data—information that could then be exploited by executive managers for corporative decision-making. Developers carefully analyzed the information that was needed and weighed this knowledge against the operative data that was already available. Based on this knowledge, they created a data model to support the rich-

T-Com also purchased Information Builders’ ETL Manager, a set of extract, transform, and load (ETL) tools that developers use to automate the creation, maintenance, and expansion of data in a data warehouse. ETL Manager simplifies the creation of ETL processes, even when heterogeneous data structures are involved.

According to Geiger, WebFOCUS did very well in pre-trial tests connected with the project. “Information Builders had plenty of strong points in its favor,” Geiger says. “Its reporting system runs across all conventional platforms—from mainframes to PCs—and it can capably access more than 85 database formats across native interfaces—including all the databases in use at T-Com. Its Copy Manager

extraction process is straightforward and reliable, and we were impressed with its robust web architecture. ”

Building a New Reporting Platform

As soon as the decision was made to purchase the Information Builders software, events moved quickly. Within 10 months, developers at T-Systems had completed the bulk of the development and deployment work. They devised a data model according to a star schema, implemented rules for the transfer and integration of data, and created a warehouse of reporting data in accordance with those rules. They also initiated training measures and devised a broad security strategy for controlling user access to the new reporting environment.

T-Systems trained key end-users in parallel with these development activities and sought their input at each critical juncture. “It’s important to include future users of the system in each development phase,” explains Geiger. “By giving careful consideration to their wants and needs right from the beginning, you ensure a faster implementation and better acceptance of the system.”

Before releasing the data-warehousing solution for production use, systems analysts at T-Systems meticulously tested it with original data. According to Geiger, the results were very promising. “Even in the test phase, we were able to extract meaningful quality information,” says Geiger. “It was clear that we had reached a significant milestone with the new system.”

Extending the Capabilities

As a direct result of the positive effects of the SYMOSY project, the performance range of the data warehouse has been expanded since the initial release, and the mechanism for generating quality reports has been enhanced as well. According to Geiger, developers continue to deploy a wide range of analysis and reporting tools as part of this ongoing enhancement process.

With the data warehouse in production, T-Com now has all the right building blocks in place for exploiting the full benefits of the WebFOCUS business intelligence tool. Using the company intranet or the Internet, managers can access precise quality information in various formats, including PDF, HTML and Excel.

Information Builders’ distribution capabilities enable T-Com to use their existing technology and data-communication infrastructures to deliver useful business information in any format, anytime. PDA synchronization, wireless e-mail, and the unique ability to query information systems via e-mail are all possible through the WebFOCUS environment.

“Telecommunication companies are a good fit for WebFOCUS because they operate in dynamic markets, for which the reporting tools are ideally suited,” concludes Dieter Wolf, Country Manager, Information Builders Germany. “Thanks to this technology, it is easier and more cost-effective to generate quality data reports. The information in our reports is much more reliable and up-to-date than ever before.”