

# NSPCC takes a rational approach to development with REAL Solutions and IBM

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## Overview

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### ■ The Challenge

To improve its relationship with potential and existing supporters, the NSPCC wanted to redevelop its main Web site. The challenge was to increase donations by enhancing the Web site, rapidly and cost-effectively. This ambitious project with complex requirements highlighted a shortage of in-house skills.

### ■ The Solution

The NSPCC is working with REAL Solutions ([www.realsolutionsuk.com](http://www.realsolutionsuk.com)) to implement IBM Rational Software Modeler, which provides a comprehensive project design and communications tool. Requirements management and documentation will be handled by IBM Rational RequisitePro and SoDA, while Rational Unified Process will ensure best practices in project management. REAL Solutions is also transferring skills to the NSPCC with tailored training courses, enabling in-house staff to respond quickly to future business needs.



### ■ The Benefits

Revised architecture allows the NSPCC to take advantage of componentised software that can be re-used as the Web site grows, allowing expansion of fund-raising activities and enhanced supporter relationship management. In-house training provides cost-effective Web development, and total costs of Web operations have been reduced.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) is the UK's leading child protection charity. It coordinates 177 community-based projects throughout the UK, and provided ongoing services to 20,500 children and young people in 2004/5. The charity has around 2,500 employees and its FULL STOP Appeal has raised more than £200 million since 1999.

Although a charity, the NSPCC has many of the features of a large enterprise, including a requirement for robust, high-performance IT systems which match the pace of operations. When new opportunities for fund-raising and marketing arise, the charity needs to be agile enough to take advantage – if key channels like the Web site are to be effective tools, continuous development is a must.



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*Fred Thwaites, Business Systems Manager, NSPCC*

The NSPCC’s IT department realised that in the long term, costs could be reduced and change cycles shortened by taking a more modular approach to development. If the components of one application can be reused in another, time and money will be saved, and if the components are easily replaceable, the overall shelf-life of the application will be lengthened.

“Looking back over projects we had done in the last five years, I could see that we would do better to develop reusable components and avoid having to start from scratch every time,” says Fred Thwaites, Business Systems Manager at the NSPCC. “As a large enterprise, we needed an industry-leading development environment, so it was natural for us to turn to IBM.”

#### **Single modelling environment**

The NSPCC initially chose to implement IBM Rational Rose XDE, and is now upgrading to IBM Rational Software Modeler (RSM), a visual modelling and design toolkit which enables users to document and communicate varying views of a system under development to all the stakeholders involved. RSM supports the industry-standard Unified Modelling Language (UML) and is built on the Eclipse platform, enabling it to integrate easily with third-party development tools.

“We are currently using several other Eclipse-based tools, and knew that we could use RSM as a one-stop shop, bringing all the functionality we need into a single modelling environment,” says Fred Thwaites.

As some of its staff lacked experience in object-oriented languages, the NSPCC worked with REAL Solutions, an IBM Premier Business Partner, to provide training.

“REAL Solutions designed a course tailored specifically to our needs,” explains Fred Thwaites. “It was important for our in-house team to develop confidence in using the tools, and the success of the training means that our analysts will be able to use RSM and the Rational Unified Process for all planning, design and testing from the end of this year.”

Requirements management and documentation will be handled by IBM Rational RequisitePro and SoDA, ensuring efficient project management with a high degree of traceability.

#### **Better customer relationships**

IBM Rational Software Modeler is being used in a number of NSPCC projects, including a major redevelopment of the charity’s Web presence.

“The existing Web sites treat visitors to each area as separate individuals,

whereas frequently it is the same person registering for several different activities or purposes,” says Fred Thwaites. “For users, this was an uncomfortable and unproductive way to interact with NSPCC. We need our Web presence to treat users in a coherent manner if we are to improve relationships with our supporters, enhance their user experience and increase the revenues to the charity.”

RSM’s advanced design, discovery and documentation capabilities are helping the NSPCC to develop a new, consolidated Web site which handles users more intelligently. The Web site will also feature a new content management system, accelerating the publication of information to the Web and lessening manual update workload for staff.

### **Modular architectures**

The deployment of Rational Software Modeler means that the NSPCC can plan and design software in greater detail and with a high degree of process-led control. Even complex projects like the redevelopment of the Web site – which involves around 40 internal and external stakeholders – can be managed easily.

This level of control gives analysts and developers more time to think strategically, and facilitates the design of modular architectures

whose components can be re-used in subsequent projects. “Even if the cost of developing the individual components is relatively high, we expect overall costs to fall because we can use each one many times over,” explains Fred Thwaites.

With a componentised framework already in place, many projects will require considerably less original coding, saving workload for staff and ensuring that the NSPCC can react to emerging situations in an agile manner.

“Rational Software Modeler is a vital part of the NSPCC’s development strategy, giving us the tools we need to develop intelligent software quickly,” concludes Fred Thwaites. “IBM Rational development tools provide an enterprise-class modelling and design environment, keeping our IT infrastructure flexible enough to meet business challenges fast.”

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*Fred Thwaites, Business Systems Manager, NSPCC*



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