IBM Business Partner

Oil Search Limited

About Oil Search Limited

An oil and gas exploration and development company that has been operating in Papua New Guinea (PNG) since 1929, Oil Search Limited has approximately 900 employees in PNG, Australia, Yemen and United Arab Emirates. This publicly listed (Australian and Port Moresby Stock Exchanges) organisation is one of PNG's largest companies and owns approximately 70 per cent of that country's oil reserves and is responsible for around 14 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product and 20 per cent of its export revenue.

Overview

■ **The Challenge**

Cost-effective access for staff in all Oil Search locations to a range of intranet Web-based business applications via satellite, for staff in all Oil Search locations, including remote sites throughout PNG and elsewhere in the world. Enable the business to create business applications quickly and inexpensively.

■ **The Solution**

In partnership with IBM Business Partner* Task Exchange and using IBM Lotus Domino Express® software, Oil Search developed and implemented – within a six-week timeframe – a

secure and flexible intranet along with a range of applications and databases, which are replicated to IBM Lotus Domino servers located at each Oil Search Limited operational area.

■ **The Benefits**

Ability to use only a Web browser as the single interface for business applications. The realisation of true business on demand through easy, rapid and inexpensive expansion of business systems. Low cost communications even to remote operational sites throughout PNG and elsewhere in the world. Enhanced compliance and safety through document control and management.

task exchange

Cost-Effective and Fast Remote Intranet

In October 2003, with the successful acquisition of Chevron Niugini Limited, Oil Search Limited was appointed to succeed ChevronTexaco as operator of all PNG's producing oil projects. While the transition was recognised as providing major opportunities for Oil Search Limited as well as the PNG people, it gave the company only six weeks to install a new system that would provide nearly 900 employees with a range of intranet Web-based applications.

According to the company's Applications Systems Team Leader, Jonathon Payne, the two primary challenges lay in system speed and cost efficiency.

"We have sites in the PNG Highlands where the only means of network communication is via satellite – an expensive and relatively slow option," he said.

"The need was for a solution that would inexpensively and quickly provide full Oil Search intranet resources to every site, regardless of location."

Adding further to the time challenge was the requirement to develop many of the applications that would be delivered via the intranet – applications such as an IT help desk, document library and legal compliance database. Importantly, they were applications that would provide a vital bridge between the company's Australian headquarters and its growing number of remote operations.

IBM Lotus Domino Express®

With the majority of off-the-shelf software solutions seen as far too inflexible to meet the growing business needs of Oil Search Limited, the company opted to purchase IBM Lotus Domino Express® and partner with Task Exchange, an IBM business partner and dedicated IBM Lotus Domino specialist in the small-to-medium business sector.

"For Oil Search, Domino represented by far the best fit at a number of levels," Task Exchange Director, Rowan Mitchell said. "It fitted in technically with other IT systems and a third party mail server, meaning there was no need to change anything within the existing environment. From the application development perspective, we were able to work with Oil Search IT staff on developing feature-rich Web-based Domino applications rapidly and keep well within a fairly tight budget."

Single Interface for Applications

Just as with any business, Oil Search Limited is constantly identifying the need for application software that will improve overall business efficiency. By utilising IBM Lotus Domino as the application environment, the organisation is benefiting from the ability to have applications developed quickly and deployed only at the server, rather than at each PC across the network

"The Domino-based applications we had Task Exchange develop for us can all be accessed via a standard Web browser, which is part of each PC's standard operating environment,"Payne said.

"This means, that as soon as the application has been deployed to the main Domino server, the other Domino servers pick it up during replication, making it immediately available to every one of our users."

Applications that have already been developed and deployed include those for: travel requests, IT licensing register, corporate forms library, asset manager, continuous improvement databases and an IT help desk.

Mitchell stated: "The ability to develop applications quickly, deploy them across a network almost instantaneously and require only a Web browser at the client to access and run those applications is great for the business, but it has particular benefits to users.

"When they sign in, their browser presents them with everything they need in one place – from news to a to-do list of documents and forms that need to be actioned. Essentially, the system does an automatic search of all the databases and provides the user with a summary of everything that needs to be brought to their attention."

Business On Demand

Throughout 2005, Oil Search Limited is planning to extend its operations by drilling a range of exploration, appraisal and development wells in PNG. At the business level, a key challenge for the company is providing staff at each site with full access to Oil Search Limited network resources, in particular the new Domino-based intranet.

According to Payne, the speed and ease with which Oil Search Limited can deliver that access is set to deliver significant benefits to the company. "It doesn't matter where in the world a new Oil Search site is established," he said. "All that's needed is for someone to fly in with a Domino Express server under their arm, set up a communication link back to head office and initiate replication of the databases.

"The underlying advantage of this is that users have fast local access at each location, while at the same time, it's cutting down dramatically on communication traffic and costs. Importantly, as soon as the new server is in place, every user at the new location has access to the same networked resources as all other users around the world. It's a major part of making sure everyone knows they're part of the same team – regardless of whether they're located in the PNG Highlands, Yemen or Sydney."

Low Cost Communications

In commenting further on the communications requirement, Mitchell said: "Some of the Oil Search sites, particularly those in the PNG Highlands, have only satellite-based communications. If the company had to establish a 24 x 7 satellite communication link to provide staff with on-line access to applications, the cost would be prohibitive. On top of that the speed at which the satellite link would operate simply wouldn't be fast enough to give people the levels of performance they need.

"By having each of the remote servers replicate the databases on an as-needed basis, all the files and data are actually stored on local servers. The result is that performance for even remote location users is just as fast as it is for those sitting in head office; and from a cost perspective, communication costs are only a mere fraction of what they might otherwise be."

Ensuring Compliance and Safety

Safety is an all-important issue within the mining industry; and the need to ensure Oil Search Limited staff members are kept fully apprised of all safety requirements and measurements is one of the company's top priorities. Helping achieve this is a IBM Lotus Domino based document control application developed by Task Exchange, which has been designed to maintain a register of users who have opened a specified document.

"This is a dangerous industry and it's absolutely essential we ensure our people, wherever they are in the world, are up-to-date with the latest safety information," Payne said. "When a new or updated document is posted to the intranet, we can see at a glance who has and – just as importantly – has not opened the document. We can then follow through on that information and work to ensure every staff member is working to the same standards.

"Essentially, Domino Express has given us a cost-effective means of delivering a growing number of standard business solutions but in a totally unique business environment."

For more information

If you would like to speak to an IBM Sales Representative, please call **132 426** in Australia or **0800 801 800** in New Zealand.

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