



Datix pilot Reporting Services in .NET migration with Dataline

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Jonathan Hazan – CEO, Datix

Datix was founded in 1986 and has been developing patient safety management software for the healthcare industry ever since.

Their software is currently being used by 75% of trusts in the British National Health Service, and they also have a strong client base in North America (where their clients include the US Department of Defence, who use Datix software on the Patient Safety Reporting Project)

For more information about Datix, visit their website at www.datix.com

Originally developed in 1995, the Datix patient safety management system had been running successfully on the Gupta SQLWindows/Team Developer platform for fourteen years before the decision was made to port the application suite to a more modern environment.

In selecting Dataline and the Porting Project to help them with their migration, Datix were adamant that the process should be a smooth and efficient one, with minimal impact on the business. Since the majority of their customers were already running Sql Server, they were also keen to convert their portfolio of 150 plus reports to Microsoft Reporting Services. Thus they laid down the challenge.

The Problem

With the healthcare sector in the UK undergoing a period of rapid and intensive technological change, it was crucial for Datix to ensure that their software could continue to meet the requirements of this market well into the future.

Questionmarks over the technical direction and support provided for the original toolset and the increasing scarcity and cost of developers with the appropriate skill left management faced with the dilemma of whether to rewrite the system from scratch or migrate.

Given the years of development and sophisticated knowledge that went into building the original application suite, the central role played by reports and the need to get a solution to market as quickly as possible, porting presented itself as an attractive option.

The Solution

The decision to work with Dataline in conjunction with the Ice Tea Group's Ice Porter™ technology was made after an initial assessment and proof of concept had confirmed the feasibility of the project.

"We had made a careful assessment of the business case for migrating our software to .Net so we already knew there were considerable advantages to porting compared to a rewrite. But it was the combination of automation technology and Dataline's well defined process that convinced us this was the right approach"

Porting presented a number of advantages to Datix – aside from the ready availability of relatively inexpensive .Net developers, the technology and methodology approach used for the Porting Project offered vastly reduced risk, cost and timescale compared to the alternatives.

The Project

The Datix application suite consisted of around 300,000 lines of code with many dependent libraries and around 150 reports. A key aspect of the application was the built-in report designer which allows users to design ad hoc reports and specify their properties using the Report Builder ActiveX object. This functionality was replicated in Microsoft Reporting Services using a purpose-built XML-based Document Object Model (DOM) developed specifically for the project.

Datix CEO Jonathan Hazan, was particularly impressed with the way that Dataline kept him and his colleagues abreast of developments at all times, saying of the process: "Migrating our software over to .Net couldn't have been any smoother really, Dataline were exceptionally professional, efficient and trustworthy".

Reporting Services

The stipulation by Datix that Reporting Services was to be the target reporting engine was made achievable through Ice Tea Group's efforts in bringing forward the development of a new Reporting Services translator - months ahead of their proposed schedule. The Datix project became the pilot for this latest addition to Ice Porter's migration capabilities.

John Cuthbert, managing the project for Dataline observed "We expected to have to put a lot of effort into testing the new translator and were concerned about impacting the project timescale, but a combination of ITG's focus, our systematic testing and the Datix team's efforts in the acceptance phase have enabled us to bring everything in without blowing the project plan".

Datix and Dataline are now working together to extend the Document Object Model to add graphing functionality to the existing reporting capability.

Hazan commented: "With our expansion into the US and Canada, it's really important that we were able to offer Reporting Services as our standard reporting platform. I'm delighted that our partnership with Dataline and the Porting Project has enabled us to achieve everything we hoped for."

