

Technology:

MS-SQL Server,
WinForms .NET

Project size:

4 man years, ongoing

Team size:

2 developers, 1 manager

HML

Mission-Critical Database Migrated From Access to MS-SQL Server

The Client

Founded in 1991, the HML Group provides a range of property services to the UK commercial and residential sectors, including property management, insurance and ancillary services. The company has undergone significant expansion since 2001 by focusing on high quality service, and now serves well over 22,000 residential customers as well as a wide cross-section of blue-chip clients.

The Challenge

HML had an Access database that quickly became mission-critical as the business grew. When the database started producing ominous sounding errors, HML contacted Blueberry to find a short-term rescue plan to stabilise the database. It quickly became apparent to Blueberry that Access was not a suitable platform on which to build HML's multi-user databases.

The Solution

Blueberry recommended re-implementing the project and migrating the backend data storage from Access to MS-SQL Server.

The new system is a true three tier database with a WinForms .NET client tier, a .NET web services middle tier and an MS SQL Server backend tier which is

written in Transact SQL. The client and middle tier use .NET 2.0.

- * Blueberry put in place deployment tools to allow new builds to be distributed to all users transparently. Previously, every user had to copy files from the server whenever an upgrade was supplied.
- * Two systems were created - 'Live' and 'Test' - to allow users to gain familiarity and verify functionality before updating to the live system.
- * Blueberry migrated the backend data storage from Access to MS-SQL Server - completely eliminating the errors that users had previously been experiencing.
- * Blueberry developed a WinForms.NET framework, which they called Property Management System, and which ran side-by-side with the Access forms front-end, with both connected to the same backend database. Gradually, the forms in the Access database were replaced by PMS and the access front-end was discontinued.

"The new system is a true three tier database, which has become the core of HML's strategy for business growth."

Peter McChesney
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