MERCY SHIPS CRUISES CALM WATERS BY RELYING ON ARTINSOFT FOR THE MIGRATION OF THEIR BUSINESS CRITICAL LEGACY APPLICATION

"ArtinSoft has given us the opportunity to save many additional lives and improve the quality of life for many more across the globe. Using Freedom® to migrate our old system to a more modern one has given Mercy Ships access to the infrastructure required for us to triple our global operations."

- Kelvin Burton, Chief Technology Officer, Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships relies on a fleet of ships to bring relief and aid to needy people worldwide. Their need to track donors and volunteers for recruiting, government reporting and solicitation convinced Mercy Ships - an all volunteer, nonprofit organization - that it needed a globally accessible, powerful and reliable Web-enabled database management system. Using the Internet, Java-based applications and Informix® database technology, Mercy Ships now tracks information on more than half a million donors, enabling it to utilize the data from anywhere in the world and continuously improve its recruiting efforts. One of Mercy Ships' strategic objectives over the coming years is to triple its global operations and significantly increase the number of countries from which volunteers and donations are sought.

"It is the combination of Java and Informix's Java-optimized database platform which will enable Mercy Ships to deliver its strategy to expand its global operations for the foreseeable future," explained Kelvin Burton, the computer department manager for Mercy Ships. "What was critical to the achievement of this project was the ability to migrate from a procedural Informix® 4GL language paradigm direct to the fully maintainable object-oriented paradigm of Java. ArtinSoft's Freedom® programming language migration service fit the bill perfectly. Not only were we able to complete the project with impressive speed, (but) the quality of Java produced by the Freedom service was so high that we were able to deploy the new system very easily. A project we would have expected to take us at least 18 months only took several weeks. As a result, Mercy Ships will be able to move ahead much more rapidly with our plans to provide the key support systems that will allow us to significantly expand our global volunteer work."

To achieve its objective, Mercy Ships specified the following target architecture:

Programming Language	Java
Database	Informix Internet Foundation.2000
IDE	Borland JBuilder 3
Operating system	SuSE Linux 6.3
Hardware	Compaq Proliant Hardware

Key Project Issues

"The Mercy Ships system is distributed across many nations and on a dispersed fleet of ships," said Rod MacKenzie-Shannon, ArtinSoft's Director of Services. "The system has a widely distributed fund-raising base, with donations coordinated remotely. In addition, administration and communications with their seagoing vessels requires robust applications, which require the minimum of maintenance. So the migration of their existing Informix 4GL system to a more

modern programming language such as Java has enabled their application to be more flexibly deployed much more readily in an increased number of cities and ships. What we have done is to transform the Mercy Ships application to enable significant operational expansion of their system, yet enabling their limited support resources to be focused on more value-added work to meet the all-important, increasing demands of their global mission."

Brian Pierson, Informix's manager for database migrations, said he is very pleased with the target architecture of Foundation.2000™, Java and SuSE Linux operating system delivered by ArtinSoft. "It is Informix® J/Foundation™ that will really provide valuable performance benefits. The Foundation.2000 platform and our unique Informix® DataBlade® technologies are fully optimized for Java, and this is a very strong combination for Web-enabling applications to provide future growth opportunities for dynamic enterprises. Informix, in concert with its strategic partners, is able to deliver an even wider range of solutions to meet the specific needs of any organization that wants to be successful in the rapidly expanding i.Economy."

Future Benefits

Kelvin Burton expresses excitement about the new opportunities that will be open to him in the future: "Now that we are in the Java environment, the cost of deployment in other countries can be kept to a minimum, as any 'entry level' desktop hardware can be used. With some additional development, people wishing to support our mission will now be able to make donations and volunteer their services electronically to Mercy Ships via the Internet. In addition, our application can now be re-architectured much more readily, including the more efficient distribution of middleware and driving Java into the engine to optimize transaction performance. ArtinSoft has acted as a very valuable bridge from the older sunsetting to the latest sunrise technologies in a single, simple step. I am very pleased with the way that ArtinSoft and Informix worked closely together to create a world-beating solution in record time.

About Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships is an international Christian humanitarian organization which utilizes oceangoing vessels as hospitals, relief and development vehicles, and has a goal to serve one million people per year.

Mercy Ships currently owns and operates three ships: *Anastasis, Caribbean Mercy* and *Island Mercy*. A fourth ship is soon to be put in service. Since 1978, thousands of volunteers have served on board the ships, some for weeks, some for years. At present, the volunteer staff exceeds 700 long-term and thousands of short-term people from at least 40 different nations, serving together with 15 supporting land-based offices, the majority in European countries. The common goal is a dedication to provide free help for people in desperate need. A variety of surgical procedures are performed on board the ships. Additionally, land-based Mercy Teams address poverty-related problems and diseases. Mercy Ships volunteers seek to serve others through medical care, community development and training, as well as construction of clinics, schools, churches and training centers. Mercy Ships was a previous winner of the Smithsonian Award for technological innovation for "the best societal uses of information technology from across the world."