

Activus reduces time to market and costs by licensing the Visual Basic Upgrade Companion

This leading Independent Software Vendor, with headquarters in Bristol, UK, managed to save about 14 man/months by using ArtinSoft's state-of-the-art VB to .NET tool to cost-effectively migrate its flagship Act-isure application, while securing compliance for its customers in the international health insurance sector.

Situation

Founded in 1992 and headquartered in the UK, **Activus** is a leading worldwide supplier of application software and implementation services to the medical insurance, protection insurance and assistance markets. Their flagship product, **Act-isure** is a comprehensive processing platform for protection insurers, with installations in the UK, Ireland, USA, Middle East, Far East, China and Africa.

Used by insurers, managing agents, third party administrators and business process outsourcers in several countries, this software package integrates product, client, policy, claims, accounting and reporting modules, providing a lifetime view of all client information, transactions and correspondence, with full multi-country and multi-currency capabilities for both domestic and international operations.

Activus' Act-isure is a client-server application. Technically it comprises 59 VB6 projects (885 total files and in excess of 550,000 code and design lines), It has a database layer, supporting both Oracle and SQL Server versions 7, 2000, 2005 and 2008.

A clean interface, sophisticated functionality and the possibility to create independent rules for each customer without programmer involvement are some of the most important features of this application, which make it very flexible and adaptable. However, Activus and its many customers determined that the application's strategic direction required it to run on the .NET platform.

Solution

Due to time constraints and the value of the complex business logic embedded in the application, Activus didn't favor a manual rewrite. After extensive market research they chose to engage with ArtinSoft to assess the best option to move forward to migrate **Act-isure**.

Customer Profile

Leading British ISV serving the medical insurance, protection and assistance markets worldwide.

Business situation

Activus wished to enjoy the technological advantages inherent to the .NET platform, by migrating Act-isure to .NET meant . In addition it allowed the development team to standardize on .NET development, the company's Act-isure web services product range already being based on the .NET framework.

Solution

Due to time constraints and the value of the complex business logic embedded in the application, Activus chose to migrate the system to VB.NET in-house, using ArtinSoft's Visual Basic Upgrade Companion and one migration architect to support the internal team.

Benefits

By using ArtinSoft's Visual Basic Upgrade Companion, Activus was able to cut down the number of EWIs by 45% and the total migration time by about 14 man/months, compared to the Upgrade Wizard that ships with Visual Studio. By moving to the .NET platform, Activus will ensure the future evolution of its application, through a faster development environment and continued

After a thorough assessment performed by ArtinSoft upon the application and Activus' specific needs, it was decided to maintain the current application's architecture and move the visual controls to .NET native controls. Additionally, coding patterns were consolidated, for example, by standardizing on Structured Error Handling ("Try..Catch"). An ADO to ADO.NET upgrade and the conversion of Modules to Static Classes were also contemplated as part of the solution.

Activus chose to migrate the system to VB.NET in-house, using ArtinSoft's Visual Basic Upgrade Companion and one Artinsoft migration architect to support the internal team. The target language was chosen mostly because the developers responsible for the maintenance and enhancement of the VB6 application were already familiar with VB.NET.

Expected Benefits

Compared with the standard utility that ships with Microsoft's Visual Studio, using ArtinSoft's tool considerably reduced the number of Errors Warnings and Issues; it was estimated that the Visual Basic Upgrade Companion produces 45% less EWIs than the Upgrade Wizard while migrating Act-Isure from VB6.0 to VB.NET. Translated in time to fix those issues, Activus will be able to cut down the migration time substantially from the original internal estimates

Functional Equivalence preserving all the business logic is the main goal of the migration project, but by moving Act-Isure to the .NET platform Activus expects to ensure the future evolution of its business critical application, through a faster development environment.