



Overview

Country: United Kingdom

Industry: Government Services

Customer Profile

With offices in England, Scotland and Wales, Momenta offers a wide range of program management services that help government agencies reach both businesses and the public across all major sectors.

Business Situation

Momenta wanted to replace its Access-based reporting application with a high-performance reporting solution that would be easy to maintain, evolve, manage and support.

Solution

Momenta migrated two databases to SQL Server and turned to SQL Server Reporting Services and SoftArtisans OfficeWriter to generate 500 reports a week for the KTP Program.

Benefits

- 1800X faster report generation
- Flexible report authoring
- Integration with Excel & Word
- Central management
- Easier maintenance

Major Performance Gains With SQL Reporting Services and OfficeWriter

"In the past, it would take 5 hours to produce a report. With Reporting Services and OfficeWriter, it now takes just 10 seconds. And the spreadsheet is more complex!"

Claire Newell of Momenta

Momenta, a leading program management consultancy, needed a centralized reporting solution for the Department of Trade and Industry to replace a legacy application that was facing increasing performance problems as data increased. Momenta found that its staff could create reports faster and make them more accessible by using SoftArtisans OfficeWriter with SQL Server Reporting Services. The company has completed the first phase of migrating from a dual database platform (a Microsoft Access 97 database and SQL Server 2000 database with Access 2002 interface) to a SQL Server 2000 and SoftArtisans OfficeWriter solution. In addition to generating user-friendly reports in native Microsoft Excel and Word, Momenta discovered that OfficeWriter for Reporting Services could generate a complex report in 10 seconds, compared to the five hours it used to take with the Access-based application.



"It's no longer just a data dump into a boring report. The users are very excited because now they are utilizing reports with informative charts. All of the information is in one eye-catching spreadsheet."

Ian Brownbill of Advent Information Technology

Situation

Momenta offers a wide range of program management services that help government agencies reach both businesses and the public across all major sectors, including environment, health and education.

Momenta is a business unit of AEA Technology, one of Europe's leading environmental consultancy and technology companies. With over 1,600 employees, AEA operates from many locations worldwide, including the UK, US, Canada and the Netherlands.

One of Momenta's key clients is the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) within the UK Government. The DTI oversees the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) program through which UK companies can obtain and learn how to implement knowledge that is key to their business future from the research base. KTP, in the process, also provides business-based training for high-caliber graduates intending to pursue a career in industry and stimulates new research themes for the research base.

At the heart of the program is a reporting solution, built by Momenta, that keeps nearly 150 higher education institutions connected with 15 UK government-funding organizations, 30+ regional advisers and nearly 5,000 businesses. This reporting solution distributes approximately 500 documents per week.

Solution

Until recently Momenta generated the reports for the KTP program from two databases – a Microsoft Access 97 database and a SQL 2000 with Access 2002 front end. The two databases dumped data into an Excel spreadsheet that linked to a Word document, featuring pre-defined Mail Merge fields.

It would take a full day to design a report and then distribute it to the 14 individual desktops in the KTP office. After a lengthy report-design routine, the KTP office users were still not ready to take advantage of these reports. Since the databases contained incredibly large queries and views, the generation of the report would often take as long as five hours.

Based on a recommendation from database development experts, Advent Information Technology of Warwickshire, UK, Momenta decided to revamp their reporting environment in early 2006. Advent Information Technology recommended that Momenta move from Microsoft Access to SQL Server. This would allow them to leverage SQL Server Reporting Services as their reporting infrastructure and SoftArtisans' OfficeWriter to provide the native Excel and Word formatting within the Reporting Services reports.

The two databases were merged within SQL Server, providing a centralized reporting environment with just a single database. Not only did the upgrade to SQL Server and OfficeWriter completely eliminate the need for both databases, it allowed Momenta to provide reports to its end users in a time period more suited to today's technologically advanced business needs.

Benefits

Momenta and the KTP program have enjoyed a plethora of benefits since moving to SQL Server Reporting Services and OfficeWriter, including faster report creation, easier report access, reduced IT administrative issues and total end-user satisfaction.

Just One Hour to Design and Distribute

Under the former reporting solution, it would take an entire day to create a report and then

"It's been a remarkable improvement in the time it takes to design and deliver a report. What used to take a day, now takes just an hour."

Dr. Claire Newell of Momena

many hours thereafter to distribute it manually to each KTP office user. Every report had to be laboriously designed and then sent to each desktop.

OfficeWriter's utilization of native Excel and Word formats simplified the report-design process.

The reporting application is also much more streamlined and powerful with just one database. In the past, it would take 3-5 hours to produce a report. With Reporting Services and OfficeWriter, it now takes the application just 10-15 seconds to yield a report.

And for the end users, accessing the reports has never been easier. Since Reporting Services is web-enabled, distributing the reports is as simple as pointing the users to the report server. The distribution obstacles that Momena had faced previously were now completely eliminated.

"It's been a remarkable improvement in the time it takes to design and deliver a report," said Dr. Claire Newell of Momena. "What used to take a day, now takes just an hour. It has been a great boost in productivity for both the IT staff and the end users."

Administrative Issues Eliminated; Reliability Improved

"The switch to Reporting Services and OfficeWriter has eliminated a large number of administrative headaches that we faced under the previous solution," said Newell. "With one centralized database, it is much easier to maintain the code."

Previously, Momena had to be diligent to make sure all users were utilizing the correct versions of Access, Word and Excel. Now everyone gets the same report because Reporting Services makes the reports easily

accessible via the Web. Reporting Services also offers report scheduling so each user is notified when a new report is available

"In the past, we had one person dedicated to creating and distributing new reports," said Newell. "Because report generation has become so hassle-free, the workload can be spread among three people rather than one administrator. Before, if that one administrator was not available, it would create a bottleneck in the report distribution."

Report production is now much more reliable because the application is a direct interaction between Excel and SQL Server. Due to OfficeWriter's enterprise reporting capabilities, Momena no longer has to be concerned with large reports, some with as many as 65,000 records, "failing" due to size restrictions within Access. The utilization of SQL Server, OfficeWriter and Microsoft Excel is a powerful and reliable reporting combination.

Total End User Satisfaction

Thanks to OfficeWriter and Reporting Services, Momena is now able to offer more advanced Excel spreadsheets, including some reports with a half-dozen selection fields. OfficeWriter also allows them to continue to use the mail merge functionality with Microsoft Word.

"It's no longer just a data dump into a boring report," said Ian Brownbill of Advent Information Technology. "The users are very excited because now they are utilizing reports with informative charts. All of the information is in one eye-catching spreadsheet. Since all of our users know and enjoy Excel and Word, we no longer need to worry about someone requiring SQL Server or Access skills to effectively use the reporting solution."

"Since all of our users know and enjoy Excel and Word, we no longer need to worry about someone requiring SQL Server or Access skills to effectively use the reporting solution."

Ian Brownbill of Advent Information Technology

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about SoftArtisans, call (877) 763-8278 or visit: www.softartisans.com

For more information about Momena, call +44 0(845) 330-3614 or visit: www.momena.com

For more information about Advent Information Technology, call +44 0(870) 874-4380 or visit: www.advent-it.co.uk

© 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. This case study is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS SUMMARY. Microsoft, Excel, Word, SQL Server, SQL Server Reporting Services, Windows, the Windows logo, Windows Server and Windows Server System are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.
Document published June, 2006

Major Success Leads to Extension of Solution

Due to the immediate success of the Reporting Services-OfficeWriter solution, Momena is planning a major expansion of access to information in the program in the fall of 2006.

"The past solution was difficult to extend because we were limited internally to the individual desktops," said Newell. "We are no longer limited to internal use. We are looking forward to expanding the access to information to external users and providing real-time reports. We plan to add a web interface and portal. We're envisioning that this reporting solution will be extended tenfold to at least 150 users of the external KTP stakeholder community."

Microsoft Windows Server System

Microsoft Windows Server System is a line of integrated and manageable server software designed to reduce the complexity and cost of IT. Windows Server System enables you to spend less time and budget on managing your systems so that you can focus your resources on other priorities for you and your business.

For more information about Windows Server System, go to: www.microsoft.com/windowsserversystem

Microsoft SQL Server 2005

Microsoft SQL Server 2005 is comprehensive, integrated data management and analysis software that enables organizations to reliably manage mission-critical information and confidently run today's increasingly complex business applications. By providing high availability, security enhancements, and embedded reporting and data analysis tools, SQL Server 2005 helps companies gain greater insight from their business information and achieve faster results for a competitive advantage. And, because it's part of Windows Server System, SQL Server 2005 is designed to integrate seamlessly with your other server infrastructure investments.

For more information about SQL Server 2005, go to: www.microsoft.com/sqlserver

Software and Services

- Products
 - Microsoft Excel 2000
 - Microsoft Word 2000
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2000

Partners

- SoftArtisans OfficeWriter

Microsoft®