

WRQ® VERASTREAM™ HELPS SPECTRATECH CROSS THE TECHNOLOGY DIVIDE

Integrates new factory with existing
corporate systems

ORGANIZATION

Spectratech International, a wholly owned subsidiary of Southern Lithoplate

WRQ SOLUTION PROVIDER

Fuentez Systems Concepts

PROBLEM

- A corporate acquisition resulted in a mix of diverse platforms (HP 3000, HP 9000, IBM, and OpenVMS), databases (including Access, Allbase, KSAM, Oracle, RMS, Turbo-Image, and flat ASCII files), and applications that needed to work with existing Windows NT servers

SOLUTION

- Used Verastream Integration Broker™ to:
 - Move all mission-critical data to Visual FoxPro databases
 - Design new, ultra-thin client applications with common source code
 - Integrate factory systems with systems at corporate headquarters

RESULTS

- Savings of US\$1,279,500 over existing IT systems

The quickest way for a manufacturing company to increase market share is to buy additional capacity. And that's just what Spectratech International did when they acquired one of the largest, most advanced printing plate manufacturing facilities in the world.

Spectratech, a leading printing plate supplier headquartered in Wake Forest, North Carolina, purchased the Middleway, West Virginia, factory in 1999. A former 3M facility built nearly 40 years earlier, the \$100 million factory had grown over time into a sophisticated web-based facility with object-oriented technology.

Even so, Spectratech still had a major hurdle to overcome: IT systems at the 3M factory were totally incompatible with those at Spectratech.

The Factory: Already a Verastream Success Story

At the time of the acquisition, the factory was a model of operational efficiency. But it hadn't always been that way.

Over the years, the once-profitable factory had gradually lost its ability to effectively support a growing business. By 1991, the operation required 50 to 60 software applications, running on five different hosts, accessing four different databases, via four different network protocols.

Because connectivity between systems was non-existent, employees' desks were often cluttered with three or four terminals. "Data retrieval, cross-referencing, and correlation were nearly impossible, except by hand," said Jim Jennis, former senior manufacturing specialist at the factory and current technical director at FSC (see sidebar on back). "The only way to integrate data was to exchange floppy disks via Sneakernet. As a result, key information was often unavailable and sometimes lost."

Five years and several integration attempts later, Jennis finally found a solution that met all his needs. It was WRQ® Verastream Integration Broker™. With Verastream, Jennis and his team were able to redesign

and port most of the major production, inventory, process-control, and quality-control systems to thin-client and web-enabled applications—without shutting down a single server.

"The benefits were tremendous," said Jennis.

"Application development times were cut by 65 to 75 percent. Application maintenance time was cut by 80 to 85 percent. Dynamic application partitioning allowed us to improve scalability and performance with zero unscheduled downtime. The bottom line is that we saved \$2.2 million in licensing, upgrade, development, training, and support costs."

What Spectratech Needed

Nine months after Jennis had successfully deployed Verastream, Spectratech purchased the factory. The company's first order of business was finding a fast, economical way to integrate the factory into their NT-based enterprise.

After three months of testing the factory's systems, Spectratech managers voted to retain Verastream as their integration solution of choice. Based on the product's successful history, they knew it would allow them to:

- Customize business processes for customers and employees by integrating any combination of components, databases, and applications.
- Build a scalable architecture to grow with the business.
- Implement new technology as needed, without rewriting any code.

- Complete the integration process with zero unscheduled downtime.
- Reduce current hardware, software, development, and support costs.

Next they chose FSC, a WRQ business partner with expertise in the manufacturing sector, to manage the project. And then the work began.

Crossing the Technology Divide in Record Time

FSC started by installing three Red Hat Linux servers in the factory, along with a T1 link to corporate headquarters. Then they ported all mission-critical networking, file, and print services from NT, HP 3000, HP-UX, and OpenVMS machines to Linux. Following a successful scale-up of these basic services, FSC re-engineered and migrated the rest of the factory's database, application, and web services to the new Linux servers.

In two days, FSC moved the factory's entire web environment and ISO-9000 documentation system from OSU using HTTP on OpenVMS to Apache on Linux. The entire system (including many Perl-based CGI scripts that were running on OpenVMS) ran right out of the box on Linux/Apache.

Then, running Verastream on the Linux servers, FSC was able to port nearly all mission-critical data to new Visual FoxPro databases (Spectratech's existing corporate standard). Using the Verastream FoxPro database adapter, FSC easily integrated the factory's databases and applications with the corporate systems running at Spectratech headquarters. With Verastream, FSC was also able to design new, ultra-thin client applications that run on X Window/Motif and Windows 95/98/NT, or as Java applets, using common source code. As a result, all platforms now have the same look and feel—and no re-coding was required.

The entire project was completed in just six months, again with virtually no system downtime. "Verastream is an industrial-strength pain reliever," said Jennis. "Its object-oriented, platform-independent development tools made it possible for FSC to deliver a reliable, scalable, yet economical EAI solution in a fraction of the time that would be required with any other development environment."

Instant Cost Savings

Not only was the project completed in record time, but the savings were immediate. For starters, Verastream cut hardware upgrade and support costs by 90 percent.

It reduced software and OS licensing costs by two-thirds. And, in addition to promoting widespread user satisfaction, it lowered training costs with its easy customization capabilities. What's more, the complete Verastream/Linux solution saved more than \$1 million when compared to the original operating and database systems it replaced (see table below).

In the future, Verastream will help save even more. "To maintain the existing systems, initial hardware, software, and licensing costs would have exceeded \$500,000, plus another \$200,000 annually," said Ed Casson, CEO, Southern Lithoplate. "But even if we had made these investments, the systems would have been difficult to integrate with our existing corporate information systems. By going with WRQ Verastream and working with the experts at FSC, we saved time and money—and ended up with a great solution."

SPECTRATECH EAI COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS (US DOLLARS) ORIGINAL SYSTEMS VERSUS VERASTREAM/LINUX SOLUTION			
Item	Original Solution	Verastream/Linux Solution	Savings
Hardware upgrade costs	\$250,000	\$24,000	\$226,000
Software, database, and operating system upgrade and re-licensing	\$300,000	\$110,000	\$190,000
Hardware support costs	\$100,000	\$10,000	\$90,000
IT support and maintenance costs	\$400,000	\$40,000	\$360,000
Application development, integration, and porting costs	\$400,000	\$250,000	\$150,000
Estimated downtime costs	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000
Employee retraining costs	\$16,000	\$2,500	\$13,500
Totals	\$1,716,000	\$436,500	\$1,279,500

About WRQ

WRQ provides innovative technology for solving the most challenging business problems. For more than 20 years, WRQ has been helping Fortune 500 companies access and integrate information, so they can transform the way they do business. With more than eight million users worldwide, WRQ is one of the top software companies in the U.S. and is consistently recognized for its award-winning products. A privately held company, WRQ is ranked as one of the "100 Best Companies to Work for" by *Fortune* magazine. The company offers its software and services in 51 countries through a global network of business partners. For more information, visit the company's web site at www.wrq.com.

ABOUT FUENTEZ SYSTEMS CONCEPTS

Fuentez Systems Concepts (FSC) is a high-tech systems engineering and integration company with more than 15 years of experience in both commercial and government sectors. Its wide-ranging capabilities include:

- Enterprise application integration
- Network consulting and design
- Network security engineering
- Software development
- Systems integration

Headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina, FSC employs 250 people and has branch offices in California, Virginia, and West Virginia.



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