

Success Story



Delphi

ORGANIZATION

Euclid Technology



APPLICATION

- ClearVantage from Euclid Technology – Integrated CRM, ERP, eCommerce and Web Content Management

IDE OF CHOICE

- Delphi

CHALLENGES

- Windows Vista enabling of existing product
- Competing against companies with much larger development teams
- Providing reliable access using SOA architecture

RESULTS

- First in industry to run on Vista and XP
- Compete successfully with companies with 10x larger development teams
- Support for SOA, web services, web and client/server

“Delphi helps Euclid Technology be first to market with Enterprise Solution on Windows Vista.”

– Charles Vinal, President and CEO, Euclid Technology

INTRODUCTION

ClearVantage from Euclid Technology is an integrated CRM (customer relationship management), ERP (enterprise resource planning), eCommerce and Web Content Management solution built with Delphi. ClearVantage is designed for use by trade associations and non-profits, and is currently used by over 100 organizations ranging in size from 15 to 1000 employees.

WHAT EUCLID BUILT WITH DELPHI

Features of the ClearVantage solution are used by everyone in the organization – from the receptionist to membership management to the executive director. What’s more, the association or non-profit’s constituents use the websites that are powered by ClearVantage to purchase products, track orders, pay bills and interact with organization. Member Connect, the ecommerce and web content management functionality, powers approximately 75 websites which collectively are accessed by over a million people each week.

A LOOK UNDER THE HOOD

ClearVantage encapsulates its extensive business logic into a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) that can be accessed using both proprietary and standards-based interfaces (e.g., SOAP and XML). Functionality is provided to users through four user interface options: a smart, thin and powerful client for employees (ClearVantage.sc), an html client for internal and remote use (ClearVantage Web), a mobile web client for smart phone users (ClearVantage Mobile), and a web development platform (ClearVantage MemberConnect) for building and managing highly functional customized web sites. ClearVantage also has integrated query, communication and business intelligence tools

such as cross tabs and charting. ClearVantage uses the SQL Server 2005 database, and also runs on SQL Server 2000 and Embarcadero’s InterBase®.

Euclid has ported the ClearVantage enterprise application (more than 480,000 lines of code, plus multiple 3rd party components) from Delphi 5 to Delphi 2007. The SOA and web architecture were ported from Delphi 7 as well, requiring no more than a recompile. The application now runs on Vista, has all of the glass features and dialogs, an optional Office 2007 ribbon interface and also runs as it always has on XP.

Web Services are primarily wrapped in ISAPI DLLs for ease of integration with other web development applications. The ISAPI DLLs connect to the program’s web services to get data, and then return the data in the selected format to the calling application – such as a formatted web page or raw XML data. Clients access ClearVantage “web objects” (which are the ISAPI DLLs) from just about every platform – including ASP, ASP.NET, ColdFusion, PHP and Perl. Although ClearVantage offers direct access to our SOA/web services through SOAP and XML, most developers accesses the functionality using URL name/value pairs passed to the web objects.

ClearVantage Mobile is accessed through any smart phone or PDA that has an integrated web browser. In addition, the desktop application – ClearVantage.sc (smart client) – integrates directly with Outlook, allowing PDAs to synchronize the user’s Outlook data without an internet connection. However, with the advent of CV Mobile, which can work over any cell connection, the Outlook synchronization model may be a less desirable approach than having your data available anywhere, anyhow, anytime.

DELPHI WAS THE CLEAR CHOICE

Ten years ago Euclid looked at all available products to build ClearVantage – Visual Basic, PowerBuilder, C++, and Delphi. According to Euclid Technology CEO, Charlie Vinal, “We decided that Delphi was the best tool available because of its robust environment and true object-oriented tools. Over time Delphi has consistently risen to meet our needs. From its origins in client-server development to its current support for developing extensive Web based services, Delphi has allowed us to leverage everything new and good about the Internet, without abandoning our extensive and proven code base.”

DELPHI MAKES OUR DEVELOPMENT TEAM MORE PRODUCTIVE

“Using Delphi allows us to compete against development teams that are ten times as large, because we’re more productive,” says Vinal. “We were able to build a great foundation, and because core functionality is encapsulated in our object-oriented architecture, we are able to pull out old plumbing and put in the new in a fraction of the time. Euclid has 25 employees and a development team of 5 engineers. We compete against companies with development teams of 50 to 100, and our software is consistently evaluated as better. We have a 90% win rate with prospective customers when our software is evaluated.”

“Thanks to Delphi, we are the first in our industry to release a Vista compliant application – which helps solidify our position as a technical leader.”

– Charles Vinal, President and CEO, Euclid Technology

“Now we’ve stayed with Delphi as we’ve moved from an object-oriented architecture to a service architecture. Our code is extremely optimized and wrapped in Web services that can be accessed by any of our own or third party applications. So we’ve been able to provide better, more reliable software to our customers because they have access through our SOA architecture.

Where Delphi excels is that it provides a complete solution to get everything you need to get done...done – Web, Client Server and Web Services are well supported; apps get written in their native code and run super fast; you can build an ecommerce, content management solution fast. Many of our customers manage very complex processes that don’t lend themselves to simple interfaces. Delphi gives them super rich, easy to deploy interfaces. One tool lets us be very productive across multiple delivery mechanisms.”

BEING FIRST TO VISTA IS A MARKETING WIN

Making ClearVantage compliant with Windows Vista was important to Euclid’s customers, many of whom have standardized on the Microsoft platform and are planning to move to Vista over the next year. According to Vinal, “our customers wanted, or would soon want, the ability to use the Aero interface, the new dialogs and other features of Vista. They want to know that Euclid is a technology leader – not just compliant, but ahead.”

Vinal sometimes is asked why he’s using CodeGear tools to develop for the Microsoft operating system. His reply is to the point, “we’re the first in our industry on Vista and still run great on XP. The success of our products and our company is reason enough. CodeGear keeps us ahead.”

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