



By Expanding Its Use of BIRT, Telecommunications Company Improves Data Visualization and Finds New Insights into Its Network Operations

Business Profile

Large telecommunications company

Challenges

- Provide consistent visualizations for a variety of data
- Create a user-friendly environment, taking pressure off IT
- Improve time to market for reporting functionality

Solution

Actuate BIRT, powered by BIRT iHub

Benefits

- Interactivity, ease of use for end users to personalize their data
- Up to 85% time savings to build visualizations and reports
- Consistent reporting for wide range of users

A large telecommunications company – providing internet, cable, satellite and television programming – needed a reporting solution to help its engineering department visualize data on capacity planning and trend analysis. The goal was to improve insight and better respond to questions related to infrastructure, service and budgetary requirements, but they required the right tool to help them do it.

At the time, the engineering department was already utilizing Open Source BIRT, having created 30 reports to track engineering projects, distributing them as PDFs. While the team liked the tool and the BIRT online developer community, they needed additional functionality that would lessen the burden on IT by integrating self-service features such as reports and dashboards. They also required dedicated support and increased interactivity, so they set out to find a commercial reporting solution to meet their growing needs.

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Applications Developer

The Actuate Solution

Given their existing use of and appreciation for Open Source BIRT, Actuate’s commercial business analytics and reporting solution was an ideal choice for the company, providing the additional functionality they needed while allowing them to continue using a tool they liked and reducing IT’s overall workload. “If we continued with Open Source BIRT, we knew we would need to build a lot of additional functionality around it, and that was not really something we wanted to take on,” says the company’s Network Database Systems Manager.

With that in mind, the organization migrated to Actuate’s BIRT iHub commercial deployment and visualization platform. This move enabled them to meet the continually changing needs of their diverse internal information consumers,

empowering them to create personalized, interactive reports and dashboards. In addition, the company decided to leverage its investment in Actuate and convert all the reporting in Remedy to commercial BIRT, upgrading it from Open Source BIRT, which comes embedded in the IT service management suite. "In actuality, Remedy uses BIRT throughout the tool already. Having the Actuate designer enabled the developers to go in and do customizations, and allows them to interact on the fly," continues the Network Database Systems Manager.

Today, BIRT pulls from a variety of data sources, including Oracle and Vertica databases, and has a wide range of users, including operational teams, regional operation centers, service technicians, maintenance technicians and engineering and business managers. The BIRT portal is offered on an internal network, allowing anyone from the active directory to log in. Hundreds of people use the solution, reaching as high as the Chief Technology Officer.

BIRT has added the data visualization component previously missing. "It's replaced having to build applications specifically for displaying data, customizing charts and graphs and the like," says an Applications Developer for the company. "And it really narrowed our time to production for any kind of visualization reports."

Benefits

Reporting Consistency and Interactive Functionality

Prior to BIRT, the organization had a variety of older systems that each had different reporting functionality and styles, with disparate layouts, structures, headers and footers. BIRT's advanced visualizations helped them create a more consistent, professional appeal. "The Actuate suite really helped us structure things a bit more and have consistent reports going out for a variety of different uses and lines of business," says the Applications Developer. "The functionality that people are using

it for is anywhere from realtime operational functions – like how is the plant working now – to capacity planning, which could be looking at months of data and doing things like trending and forecasting."

That increased functionality means users themselves no longer have to export reports into Excel for manipulation, instead interacting with data directly in BIRT. "They're able to filter by time and put in various parameters and locations, then drill down based on those parameters," the Applications Developer continues. "They also love how if they want to run it for a different set of parameters, they can go into the interactivity and bring up the menu at the bottom."

Time Savings

Introducing BIRT has delivered a 75 to 85 percent time savings – time that would have previously been spent building visualizations and reporting into each application as needed. Hand-coding visualization components would often take four to six weeks, compared to just one week building the same functionality with BIRT.

Ease of Use

As new developers have been hired, they've each learned to use BIRT quickly, templating and building reports within just a couple of days, without formal training. This has helped create an efficient, effective reporting development environment. End users are also able to see and manipulate data the way they need without IT assistance, creating charts, graphs and other types of display in a drag-and-drop fashion that's easy to understand, customizing the look and feel of their information without the need for custom coding.

While there have been few problems, the IT team also feels more confident having technical support readily available, and have found Actuate's support team quick to respond to their requests.

Actuate – The BIRT Company™

Actuate provides software to more than three million BIRT developers and OEMs who build scalable, secure solutions that save time and improve brand experience by delivering personalized analytics and insights to over 200 million of their customers, partners and employees. Actuate founded and supports BIRT – the open source IDE – and develops BIRT iHub™ – the world-class deployment platform – to significantly improve productivity of developers working on customer facing applications. Actuate's BIRT Analytics™ delivers self-service predictive analytics to enhance customer engagement using Big Data. BIRT Content Services empowers ECM architects to easily transform, process, personalize and archive high volume content. Actuate is headquartered in Silicon Valley with more than 5,000 enterprise customers in financial services, technology and government. Visit actuate.com and developer.actuate.com.



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