

Major Transportation Safety Agency Depends on Actuate to Help Drive Insights, Real-time Response

"BIRT makes creating dashboards from disparate data sources easier than anything we've experienced before. Combined with Actuate, BIRT has improved our productivity and financial management throughout the Operations Center."

— *Software Developer and Database Administrator*

The Agency Challenge

Established to maintain the safety of transportation, this safety agency can't afford to make mistakes. The central hub is its Operations Center, which houses the logistics services tasked with maintaining transportation safety in 45 countries around the world. Logistics Services supports national and international systems 24 hours a day, 7 days a week when faced with hurricanes, typhoons, tsunamis, transportation corridor problems, or equipment failure.

Because of its critical role in transportation safety, the agency needed a powerful and versatile web application to visualize and report on critical operational and financial data. Prior to Actuate, they relied on reporting solutions from Sybase, Oracle and PowerBuilder.

"Our old reporting solution had too many performance issues and made it difficult to build reports and analyze data. We needed a new solution that could connect a large number of data sources into a single, web-based dashboard format. And we needed the solution up-and-running quickly," states the lead software developer and database administrator.

> COMPANY PROFILE

Major Transportation Safety Agency

> INDUSTRY

Government

> CHALLENGES

- Cumbersome development, with limited data sources
- Poor system performance prevented analysis of real-time data
- Lack of web access or at-a-glance visualization

> SOLUTION

Integrated BIRT platform produces operational dashboards for instant, at-a-glance information from multiple systems to a large number of operational and financial databases and applications

> BENEFITS

- Gain intuitive, interactive insight into operational information
- Experience rapid reduction of development timeframe
- Leverage readily available code resources and expertise from large BIRT open source community
- Users can customize their interface, specifying what content and data they want at their fingertips.

The Actuate Solution

The agency selected Actuate's BIRT (Business Intelligence and Reporting Tools) development platform to provide a secure, flexible and reliable rich information application solution for their employees and contractors. The agency chose BIRT based on the following criteria:

- Ability to pull data from wide variety of data sources
- Flexibility to develop rich information applications - fast
- Actuate iServer functionality, including user and security management
- Powerful, user-friendly interface
- Web-based information delivery
- Proven scalability
- Dependable, integrated infrastructure

BIRT provides the front-end dashboard to a large number of operational and financial databases and applications, including agency-wide financial data, an ERP application and a configuration management system. The data pulled from these sources includes asset and capital management, budgets, IT resources and utilization, project and performance management, field support, quality control, help desk and call center, customer intelligence and employee/human resources data.

BIRT is used by about 500 (growing to 1,200) employees and contractors comprised of

branch managers, team leads, electrical engineers, software engineers and meteorologists. The Engineering team at the Operations Center for the agency utilizes this information for the following:

- Tracking project progress and status
- Following budget usage, burn-rate and forecasts
- Measuring workload
- Reviewing problem sites within the company
- Evaluating processes and methods of field call resolution
- Managing creation and updates to technical documentation
- Monitoring progress against performance metrics

The users view information on around 1,200 dashboards, the majority of which are produced in real time. The BIRT dashboards provide instant access to highly summarized information in an at-a glance format with the ability to drill down in all areas. Users can customize their interface, specifying what content and data they want at their fingertips.

"Field and help desk reports are summarized into a dashboard in order to depict a snapshot of the health of the system at any given time," states the software developer. "BIRT rolls up information from each field call for particular locations, systems and pieces of equipment to provide management with a consolidated status update."

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Benefits of Actuate and BIRT

Intuitive, interactive insight into real-time, operational information

BIRT's web-based dashboard format provides a concise view of information sourced from multiple applications, providing a front-end dashboard to a large number of operational and financial databases and applications. The agency leverages the BIRT Interactive Viewer for its ability to add interactive Flash objects to BIRT reports.

"Our users like the BIRT interface – it's both friendly, intuitive and powerful. BIRT enables us to personalize each user's start page based on what they are working on and what department they work in," says a software program manager. "With ready access to job-specific data from across our organization, employees can act on information to do their job better and faster. Our application, powered by BIRT, takes the complex and makes it simple."

Rapid reduction of development timeframe

BIRT has changed the way the agency accesses and utilizes performance and financial data. According to the software program manager, "BIRT has enriched our information application development, taking it to a new level. Integrated functionality, such as the grid/data table feature, enables us to speed development time. We are able to map data out of the database table and onto a BIRT report from start to finish easier than anything we've experienced before," says a software program manager.

Leverage readily available code resources and expertise from large BIRT open source community

The agency has leveraged the BIRT Exchange open source community site to help make their developers more productive and information applications more effective. BIRT Exchange lets application developers access and share knowledge and resources relating to BIRT development. The agency also benefits from development techniques and sample designs found on the BIRT Exchange Marketplace, an open software showcase where developers can promote, share or sell BIRT-related applications, solutions and components.

The Agency Future

Actuate and BIRT will remain a key part of their information technology infrastructure, delivering intuitive, interactive performance and financial information throughout its major operations hub. According to the software program manager, "We plan to develop more dashboards, continuing to simplify the presentation and data based on user needs. BIRT has proven to be a flexible, secure and reliable solution and will continue to be an important component of our information delivery strategy going forward."

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Actuate: The people behind BIRT

Actuate founded and co-leads the Eclipse BIRT open source project. ActuateOne is a unified suite of products for rapidly developing and deploying BIRT-based custom Business Intelligence applications and information applications. Applications built with ActuateOne provide one user experience regardless of task or skill level; are supported by one server for any deployment including cloud and are built with one BIRT design that can access and integrate any data source - including high volume print streams. ActuateOne adds rich data visualizations, including interactivity, dashboards, analytics, and deployment options to web and mobile BIRT applications, helping organizations drive revenue through higher customer satisfaction and improved operational performance.

Actuate has over 4,700 customers globally in a diverse range of business areas including financial services and the public sector. Founded in 1993, Actuate is headquartered in San Mateo, California, with offices worldwide. Actuate is listed on NASDAQ under the symbol BIRT. For more information, visit the company's web site at www.actuate.com or visit the BIRT community at www.birt-exchange.com.