



business solutions

A CASE STUDY OF PLATFORM MIGRATION - UNISYS MAINFRAME TO UNIX

ALBERTA BLUE CROSS, EDMONTON, ALBERTA : Projects by Inqlenet Business Solutions, 2001

Summary

Alberta Blue Cross is an independent, not-for-profit organization focused on providing supplementary health care services in the Province of Alberta. Alberta Blue Cross provides both group and individual health care plans under licensing by the Canadian Association of Blue Cross Plans and the American Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Alberta Blue Cross went through a “package replacement” initiative for many of their Unisys 2200 applications beginning in the late 1990’s. A large reengineering project was also undertaken for the Claims Processing application, when no replacement package could be found for what was deemed the organization’s most critical business function. Once completed, only the Group Enrolment and Billing applications remained on the Unisys 2200, and a decision was made to replatform these to UNIX with Oracle.

Motivators

The primary motivation to move off of the Unisys 2200 was to consolidate applications on a single ITA. Although significant cost savings (resulting in an eight-month ROI), could also be realized, the main consideration for replatforming was to migrate from the 2200 in such a way as to minimize and mitigate the risk of service interruption to plan holders, while bringing the Enrolment and Billing application forward to make use of technology and skills that were part of the go-forward ITA for Alberta Blue Cross. Alberta Blue Cross had made significant investments in SUN and HP UNIX servers, the Oracle RDMS and EMC NSD technology in order to complete the other package projects. It was deemed both cost effective and good business strategy to move the remaining 2200 applications in line with the ITA.

Options/Alternatives Considered

Initially, Alberta Blue Cross investigated package applications to replace everything on the 2200. Packages were found for many things, but not for Claims Processing, Group Enrolment and Billing. Due to required business process changes, a decision was made to reengineer Claims. This was completed in 2000, leaving only Group Enrolment and Billing.

Alberta Blue Cross was offered (“free”) applications by other Blue Cross entities. Most of these ran on IBM “390” architecture, with which Blue Cross had no experience. As well, the capital and ongoing costs of the 390 architecture made these applications very expensive even if there would be no software acquisition costs.

In late 2000, Alberta Blue Cross realized they were only a year away from a very expensive Unisys 2200 “renewal”, and elected to begin a replatforming project to avoid those costs. Replatforming commenced in February 2001 and was completed in November. The 2200 was decommissioned and removed for disposal.

Results

Alberta Blue Cross replatformed in just ten months, completing the project on time and on budget. The replatforming project cost was \$ 500K. Ongoing cost savings of \$ 75K/month have been realized. All applications are now Oracle-based, with some MAPPER applications still remaining as MAPPER-C on UNIX. No downtime or service interruption was attributed to the migration, meeting the initial primary objective of replatforming.

For more information, email info@inglenet.com or visit our website at www.inglenet.com

**4310 Sherwoodtowne Blvd., Suite 400, Mississauga, ON, Canada, L4Z 4C4
Phone 905 848 2030 : Fax 905 848 3108**