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REFLECTA BRINGS
ITS PROGRESS-BASED ERP
TO THE CLOUD
IN JUST ONE YEAR

reflecta + servoy

Reflecta has used Progress to develop its enterprise resource planning (ERP) software for the sports, shoe and fashion industries since 1990. The application has enjoyed great success from its inception. Today, 80 customers in the Netherlands and Germany rely on Reflecta's ERP for their operations.

Reflecta – a retail software vendor – modernizes its progress-based ERP, moves it to the cloud and saves 3 years in development time.

The Progress application initially ran on a Unix platform accessible to end users via Telnet sessions. In 2000, the company decided to migrate to Windows and embarked on a complete rewrite. The new solution was launched after five arduous years. When the market next demanded a move to the cloud, however, economic conditions were different for Reflecta. In the wake of the Great Recession, developing an SaaS Progress-based ERP from scratch would have been prohibitively costly.

Being able to build on top of a solid Progress base with Servoy was important for Reflecta

Challenge

Reflecta needed to modernize its user interface (UI) and reuse the existing Progress backend.

The requirements for the new ERP included the ability to
> Run natively on any platform or device (fashion-conscious users prefer MacBooks or iPads, yet Reflecta's front-end was only available on Windows).

> Run as software as a service (SaaS) to meet market needs.
> Seamlessly connect the new cloud-based UI to the existing Progress backend.
> Use rapid application development (RAD) to minimize cost and, therefore, risk.

Solution

Reflecta looked at several development environments and selected Servoy's RAD platform because of its
> Scalability: It easily handles large applications such as ERPs.
> Ease of use: 4GL development is done in JavaScript, which is easy to learn.
> Productivity: Its comprehensive framework of easily connected visual objects shrinks development times.
> Flexibility: The visual objects are fully customizable to meet complex requirements.
> Modern architecture: It is designed to be able to write cloud applications.

> Support: The Appsurance program of training, code review, technical support and consultancy ensures help is only a call or an email away.

The project started with a two-month proof of concept (POC) to confirm that Servoy met all requirements. The POC included the development of a new solution layer using Servoy.

Reflecta then replaced the ERP's outdated data access layer to provide transparent access to the Progress database for the new screens, forms, viewers and grids. The access layer was rewritten in Progress because of the legacy code. It was the most time-consuming part of the project and took three months.

Reflecta leaned on Servoy's expertise by signing up for the Appsurance program, initially having twice-weekly calls with a consultant. The Servoy support team reviewed the code for the connection layer and assisted with all questions. Servoy helped Reflecta focus on the most important aspects of the development and save time.

The windows contained in the Progress repository database were exported into JIRA to provide an accurate estimate of total development time—one year—for the new cloud application. With thousands of forms to create, building a new UI for an ERP is a formidable task. But with Servoy, developers can create new forms in only 15 minutes, on average, and save considerable time.

Ton Dekker, R&D manager with Reflecta, says, "Java is very complex and therefore time-consuming to code with. I have seen a lot of companies try to build their own framework in Java and fail. It is much wiser to use a proven RAD environment and JavaScript. Using the Servoy platform and framework, we saved between three and four years of development time."

Results

With Servoy, Reflecta was able to reuse its Progress backend and build a new SaaS product to show to prospects within a year.

"Servoy was years ahead in terms of its ability to help us meet our objectives," explains Ton Dekker. "We wanted to focus our development efforts on the business logic, not the framework, and with Servoy we can do exactly that. Email integration, authentication, Active Directory—everything is available out-of-the-box and ready to use. And UI rendering is extremely fast and responsive. A process that used to take 10 seconds now takes only one."

Many companies need to migrate a complex Progress application to the cloud. Others with the same challenge have watched the Reflecta project with great interest. Ton Dekker recently invited some of them to a demonstration of his company's new solution. He said, "The visitors were greatly impressed with our gorgeous UI and even more so with its lightning-fast performance. They know their users want to use their application without ever having to wait. They loved the user experience we were able to create with Servoy."

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About Reflecta

Reflecta is a market leader in Fashion ERP software in the Benelux market. For over 25 years we have been making Fashion companies more successful with our software. We have a deep understanding of the fashion market and stay current with the latest technology developments to deliver an ERP with a great User Experience to our customers.

About Servoy

Servoy makes it easier to deliver great business applications. Applications can be delivered to any device from a single codebase in record time. Servoy BV, a Deloitte Fast 50 Technology company, is an international firm that creates an award-winning powerful hybrid development and deployment platform. Servoy is used by independent software vendors (ISVs), organizations and consultants in over 50 countries. Servoy has been recognized by Gartner as a Cool vendor in PaaS.

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