



Business Intelligence



Migration of BRIO Reports to Crystal Enterprise

California State Government Agency

COMSYS recently acquired Praeos Technologies Inc., a leading Atlanta-based provider of IT consulting services specializing in the business intelligence, data warehousing and analytics sectors.

Praeos' strong practice in business intelligence and data warehousing have become the platform for these services offerings within the COMSYS Managed Solutions Group. Together, these combined business intelligence practices, now called COMSYS BI Practice make COMSYS a leading provider in these sectors.

CLIENT SITUATION

For years this state agency client had allowed their many operational units to identify and purchase the application software they thought was the best solution to address their business needs. Often, IT was not involved in the evaluation of software purchases leaving a de-centralized tracking of purchases and application deployment. Adding to the confusion, there was no attempt to consolidate or share usage of the same type of software solution. Following a recent internal audit of purchased software, the client discovered it was using multiple business intelligence (BI) reporting platforms all running in production simultaneously. Two such reporting platforms were Crystal Reports and BRIO.

The client immediately called for the migration and/or conversion of all related BI reporting applications and reports to Crystal Enterprise 10 (CE10) and to centrally administrate them

within the CE10 platform. One such case was an older, heavily customized application of 33 Internal Audit and Cost Accounting reports that were developed using BRIO Query.

COMSYS SOLUTION

After purchasing CE10 from Business Objects, the client turned to COMSYS National BI Practice for the installation of the CE10 platform and the conversion of the BRIO Query reports to their new CE10 reporting platform. These reports were highly valuable to the client, as the BRIO application supported the Department's internal monitoring and auditing of the client's multiple state offices for fraud, daily run rates and associated costs. The client had not been able to produce the needed reports for several months due to unknown system failures. The external consultants that had developed the application for the client were no longer available for maintenance support issues.

The client's Auditors also needed to reduce the amount of time and effort expended each month to produce the Commercial and Non-Commercial Written Drivers License Test Volumes reports. In order to produce these reports, the Auditor's had to run the underlying BRIO queries a total of 12 times for each report to obtain 12 months worth of data. As there were 10 different types of Commercial License tests, this required 120 full passes of the

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Audit database for the Commercial Report and an additional 60 full passes of the database for the 5 types of Non-Commercial License reports. The 120 full passes of the database contributed to very high data center processing cost.

After significant analysis of these 15 Cost Accounting reports written in BRIO, COMSYS determined that both the Non-Commercial and Commercial Written Test Volumes reports were not actually produced directly from BRIO but rather from a complex and convoluted architecture that consisted of BRIO Query scripts, an extensive Java subroutine layer initiated by BRIO that analyzed the retrieved DB2 data and created a semantical result set of data that BRIO then simply summarized. The final report format was a result of extensive manual manipulation of data that populated a Microsoft Excel-formatted worksheet.

COMSYS concluded that all cost accounting reports could not just be 'converted' from BRIO to CE10 but rather completely rewritten.

Taking advantage of the comprehensive architecture and capabilities of CE10, COMSYS designed a new approach to developing the Cost Accounting reports that only required one pass of the large DB2 database instead of the 120 passes that were currently required.

COMSYS provided a recommended Best Practice conversion strategy to CE10 for all existing BRIO Query reports. In addition, COMSYS provided a project team that included a very experienced Crystal Reports developer that also had a working knowledge of BRIO Query and effective BI Reporting Systems Architecture, and a part-time project manager to work closely with the client project manager to identify risks, issues and clarify project direction and scope based on COMSYS findings. The client project manager served as a focal point within the client organization whenever the project team needed additional resources or information.

CLIENT BENEFITS

All reports were successfully converted (or rewritten) to Crystal Enterprise 10 and delivered by COMSYS into a production environment.

- The client realized its first reporting platform BI reporting consolidation to CE10 upon COMSYS' completion of the conversion of the BRIO Query Internal audit reports to CE10.
- Significant cost savings were realized with the elimination of the BRIO license and maintenance fees, and from no longer having the need for associated internal platform administration and technical support costs.
- By reducing the required 120 full database passes to produce the Commercial Drivers License Report and the additional 60 full database passes to produce the Non-Commercial Drivers License Report down to only 1 pass of the database for the combined report contributed to huge data center processing cost savings.
- A major deliverable of this project was COMSYS-led training for the internal auditors and related support personnel so that they could learn how to design and develop their own audit reports using CE10. This training and associated knowledge transfer occurred for all aspects of the CE10 tool set.
- By utilizing the new Crystal Enterprise User View feature, and developing user-friendly and reusable User Views to mask the complexity of the DB2 database structure, the client's Data Administration Group was able to establish the beginnings of a manageable metadata methodology strategy.

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