

UK's Integra Systems Ltd. reaches more tourists aboard ASP express

Overview

■ **The Challenge**

UK software developer Integra Systems Ltd. wanted to expand distribution of its Destination Management application ORIGIN to the United States

■ **The Solution**

IBM xSP Prime program with IBM @server xSeries™ servers using Intel® Pentium® III Xeon processor

■ **The Benefits**

Received both technical and business-level assistance in opening an Application Service Provider (ASP) channel, increases revenue potential by expanding reach to new markets, and wins credibility with customers while saving them infrastructure cost

Online tourism gains momentum

Online travel sales are exploding. Compared to other products sold on the Internet, the tourism and travel industry stands to corner half of all e-commerce within the next few years (World Tourism Organization Business Council).

Seizing on that enormous opportunity is Integra Systems Ltd., a software developer based in West Sussex, England, and California. Integra's flagship product is ORIGIN Destination Management, which stores and delivers tourism-related content, such as local restaurants, attractions, shopping and events, to many different users. Tourism boards, for instance, use the software to sell or promote unique tourism experiences to visitors and the tourism trade.

Integra first approached IBM in late 2001, with the idea that IBM could help distribute its software more effectively. Previously, customers would purchase ORIGIN Destination Management through traditional distribution channels and load it on their own servers. "But with online tourism now surging, we wanted to climb aboard a faster train," says CEO Graham McKenzie.

IBM also gave Integra a wider reach to new markets, especially in North America. "With IBM being one of the few truly global companies, we knew we could rely on them to help distribute and support our products, wherever we wanted to go," he adds.

"The IBM solution has given us the confidence to go forward, knowing full well that IBM understands both the technology and the business environment in which we operate."

Graham McKenzie
CEO
Integra Systems Ltd.

Application Name	Middleware	Database	Operating System	Hardware	Processor
ORIGIN Destination Management	Citrix Metaframe Server	Destination Database System	Windows NT®/2000	IBM @server xSeries server	Intel Pentium III Xeon

ASP—the logical way to go

Distributing ORIGIN Destination Management through ASP channels seemed the logical way to go. First, it would give Integra an opportunity to easily reach the United States, a prime market for its software. Second, it would be a tremendous cost saver for customers, who no longer would have to worry about investing thousands of dollars a year in hardware infrastructure.

But Integra needed more than technology assistance to ASP-enable its application; it also wanted to align with a provider who understood the travel and tourism business. “Frankly, IBM was the only major hardware manufacturer who had extensive business experience in our field,” McKenzie says. “They understood what we’re trying to achieve from a business angle. That set them apart.”

Testing the waters

To get ORIGIN Destination Management primed and ready as an ASP product, the folks at the IBM xSP Prime Center, in Hursley, UK, performed rigorous scalability and load threshold tests on the application.

All the tests were conducted on IBM @server xSeries servers, featuring Intel architecture—the recommended platform for running the application. McKenzie felt that the combination of the xSeries servers and Intel processors gave customers a highly reliable, scalable and available environment for running ORIGIN Destination Management. “The xSP Prime program provided proof that we had a solid, fully-tested ASP product. This was important to our customers, especially in such a demanding Internet segment like online tourism.”

The xSP Prime team also tested Citrix Metaframe Server as the middleware for rapidly deploying the application to customers worldwide. “Now when we deploy ORIGIN Destination Management to a new customer, we ask if they have a link to the Web; if the answer is yes, then we can set them up the following morning,” McKenzie says. “It’s that quick.”

Positioned to expand

Integra is now in position to expand its business from Europe and Africa to the United States and the Pacific Rim. By the end of 2002, McKenzie expects most of the new business in the U.S. to come through the ASP channel. In Europe, he wants to convert many existing clients to the ASP model. So far, they’re getting a “very positive reaction,” he says.

For more information

To learn more about IBM solutions for Internet-based companies, visit our Web site at ibm.com/xspprime or call your local IBM representative.



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1133 Westchester Avenue
White Plains, NY 10604

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08-02
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G583-0580-00