



Simon & Schuster migrates off the mainframe, reduces IT budget and increases speed of business operations with GT Software's Migration Solution

Publishing giant Simon & Schuster was founded in 1924 and its operations have evolved over the decades. Relying just on its reputation to continue to function efficiently was a strategy the business knew would not work regarding its mainframe, which had slowed corporate processes, resulting in higher costs. The publisher decided an upgrade was necessary and opted to port its mainframe applications to Windows Server® and the Microsoft .NET Framework® to improve its operations.

CHALLENGE
Needed new distribution system to support annual book orders

Saying Dave Schaeffer has a challenging job is an understatement. Simon & Schuster's vice president of distribution and fulfillment oversees the publisher's distribution of 262 million books annually —amounting to 1.9 million orders and 5,000 tractor-trailer truckloads of books each year. If these trucks were parked end to end, it would cover the length of highway from the business's Philadelphia-based location to New York City.

This is just a part of what Schaeffer handles at the publisher. He must also stay updated on any and all challenges taking place with his colleagues who manage the company in a consumer-driven industry.

"If an author does well on 'Oprah' or '60 Minutes,' we get a sudden rush of orders that has to be fulfilled immediately. That's just a small example of what we call 'extreme publishing,' reducing the cycle time for every aspect of publishing, from authoring to getting the published book into the customer's hands," Schaeffer explained. "Processes that used to happen once a day now have to happen several times a day. That not only requires doing things faster, it requires doing them differently - such as integrating our order processes with those of our customers on one end, and our distribution processes with those of our distribution partners on the other end."

The publisher's aging mainframe included applications with 5 million lines of code and data stored on DB/2 databases and virtual storage access method files. These systems were not designed to support the type of agility Simon & Schuster needed from its IT solutions.

Schaeffer explained that shipping books on an on-demand basis was simply not feasible given that the universal order processing system only allowed morning and midday shipments. The time for batch processing cycles to finish increased as demand grew, with some processes exceeding 12 hours.

CLIENT
 Simon & Schuster

INDUSTRY
 Publishing

HQ
 United States

CHALLENGE
 Aging mainframe resulted in increased cost and slower operations

SOLUTION
 GT Software's Migration
 Fujitsu NetCOBOL (distributed by GT Software)
 GT Software's NeoKicks®

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Dave Schaeffer, Vice President of Distribution and Fulfillment

SOLUTION

Selected cost-effective solution to migrate off the mainframe

Although Simon & Schuster could have replaced the existing mainframe with a more powerful system, such a move would have required three times the capacity - a cost-prohibitive endeavor that the company wanted to avoid.

Anne Lloyd Davies, chief information officer at Simon & Schuster, said a UNIX-based solution would have necessitated code reengineering that was also costly. The publisher also considered an ERP system, but that too, was simply too expensive to yield any tangible benefits.

Simon & Schuster decided that Fujitsu NetCOBOL, distributed by GT Software, and GT Software's NeoKicks® were the most cost-effective options to update its mainframe. These tools allowed the publisher to preserve traditional business logic by porting existing applications to native Microsoft .NET code. This process would allow Simon & Schuster to preserve the original business logic, written in CICS/COBOL, that was familiar to end-users.

Simon & Schuster also migrated its DB/2 database and VSAM files to Microsoft SQL Server 2005 database software. The ported solutions were run by a 32-bit, eight-processor Unisys ES7000 system running Windows Server 2003 Enterprise Edition.

RESULTS

Business agility improvements, IT budget reductions and efficiency gains

Simon & Schuster's persistence on finding a way to implement a more modern mainframe paid off for the publisher. Since porting its UOPS and related system to Windows Server, the company saw:

- Business agility improved by 300 percent
- The shipping backlog reduced by 33 percent from 3 days to 2 days
- The quarter-end financial close period cut from 3 days to 1.5 days
- The firm's IT budget reduced by 11 percent
- Nightly batch processing window cut in half
- IT "trouble tickets" cut by 75 percent

Michael J. Grant, vice president of applications development at Simon & Schuster, estimated the publisher saved as much as 80 percent over expanding the mainframe or rewriting the solutions for UNIX.

Finally, Simon & Schuster experienced faster trouble ticket processing time, reducing such tasks by 75 percent and boosting order fulfillment completion from minutes to seconds.

Simon & Schuster has been in business for 90 years, and much like how the publishing industry has experienced trends during these nine decades, the company itself has evolved as well. The new Windows Server and the Microsoft .NET Framework has positioned the publisher to remain a leader in its respective market.



IT Budget
Reduced by **11%**



Business Agility
Improved by **300%**



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IT "Trouble Tickets" Cut
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Dave Schaeffer, Vice President of
Distribution and Fulfillment

For over 30 years, GT Software has helped enterprise organizations unify business information across platforms, data formats and programming languages — including the “hard to access” mainframe. More than 2,500 organizations across the globe trust GT Software to help them improve business intelligence, workforce productivity and customer experience.