CASE STUDY

ILLUMINATOR

Knowledge Repository

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ILLUMINATOR & Knowledge Repository

Problem

The client has a multiple decade presence within the broadcast and telecommunications industry. It has also witnessed the evolution of how information is recorded, distributed, stored and archived. This includes management of paper-based records, the introduction of alternative electronic media and more recently to the latest forms of industry record keeping practice. Standardisation in this regard (for large corporate companies) invariably represents very large volumes of records generated in several Microsoft Software formats (Word/XLS/Visio/PPT) which are subsequently stored in enterprise class document and drawing repositories. These document vaults can accumulate multiple millions of files (x N versions) and represent a best effort, but fragmented, baseline of the organisation's infrastructure and assets.

The client portfolio includes national networks whose composition extends to many millions of components. The systems in which these elements are deployed are complex and are subject to continuous change. Successive waves of major programmes and projects introduce ongoing modifications to the baseline, which is recorded and stored by the methodologies discussed above. This can present challenges to multi-workstream project teams attempting to understand a network baseline for next-generation project purposes. It is very difficult to know with any accuracy what the current state of play is when exploring a myriad of time shifted record files dispersed

throughout a labyrinth of permission-based document folders in diverse repository structures.

Initiatives to help alleviate the problem included the creation of 'system handbooks', e.g. for a typical broadcast service, and subsequently maintaining these for each installation in the network. Such documents contain the accumulated work-stream records for each sub-system component. These systems, however, are deployed hundreds of times throughout the network. Record update policy was random in nature with different teams and individuals holding diverse views on how it should be managed. This was further compounded by the volume of separate systems in multiple networks, which made the task of reliable record maintenance extremely onerous. Spreadsheet formats not scalable and difficult to extend, spreadsheet documents can fall over after a certain level of data is reached and can become difficult to query / interrogate.

Solution

GD worked with the client to introduce a web-based advanced alternative format of the handbook concept discussed. The primary objective was to radically reduce the effort spent creating and maintaining the associated records. The ILLUMINATOR software platform was proposed as the most suitable toolkit to realise this ambition.

The concept involved an analysis of all forms of information held with a view of categorising these as network generic or site specific in nature. ILLUMINATOR templates were designed to accommodate and reflect these differences. It became evident that, in essence, the bulk of records could, with some content adjustment, be classed as generic in this regard. Once modified appropriately, these records could be created as unique entities in the system.

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Associated site-specific records were designed, as far as possible, to be structured data format in nature. This allowed system designers to harvest a significant proportion of this specific data from existing maintained database assets. This facilitated the rapid production of web-based format system handbooks within the ILLUMINATOR platform.

Benefits

- System handbooks are created and maintained in a centrally managed future proof environment.
- Technical specialists are tasked with the management of generic records of which they are most familiar and best equipped to do from a knowledge perspective. A single shot update by the specialist is effectively 'multicast' to system handbooks across the estate.
- Site specific records are managed by a combination of database driven auto-updates, or, where necessary, franchised to permission granted personnel throughout the organisation.
- All changes are inherently recorded in meta-data. Approval governance can be invoked.
- Comprehensive notification facilities inform appropriate personnel of baseline changes to associated systems.
- Data quality has been improved and can also be validated and delta checked easily.
- Baseline reports may be extracted from the system for sites, clusters of sites, and by system and component.
- 'Site System Handbooks' can be extracted as time-stamped uncontrolled copies in formats such as PDF for offline information purposes as required – e.g. copies to suppliers and contractors.

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