



Transforming Yesterday's Content Silos to Create Agile, Content-driven Business Services

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“We are now well into process of moving all the FileNet repositories into a single data center instance. This provides us lower costs and the added benefit of full recovery and fail-over functionality”.

Overview

Country: United States

Industry: Insurance

Customer Profile

A Fortune 100 company that is one of the nation’s largest personal-line insurance firms, it employs over 35,000 people and over 12,000 agents while supporting an additional 40,000+ independent agents. It is referred to in this paper as “USA FSI-Insurance”.

Business Situation

Heavy user of imaging and capture type of document management systems, this company, a long time user of FileNet products, needed to upgrade to a more modern and stable platform.

Solution

USA FSI-Insurance rejected the FileNet P8 upgrade due to the high cost and instead looked for other options. The company decided that Oracle’s Content DB platform provided a more cost-effective and functional system and consequently implemented Content DB.

Benefits

- Reduced software costs
- Reduced hardware costs
- Highly resilient
- Services oriented platform approach

ECM Project Director

Abstract:

As a major insurance company, USA FSI-Insurance* operates a business that manages high volumes of electronic and paper documents. As with many insurance firms, USA FSI-Insurance has invested heavily in document management, claims processing support, imaging, and workflow related solutions, often building its own proprietary (now legacy) systems. USA FSI-Insurance is now into the process of moving all FileNet repositories into a single data center instance and has already deployed Oracle Content DB widely. Benefits already realized include:

- Reduced software licensing costs
- Reduced hardware costs
- Increased agility through best-of-breed services oriented platform layer

Situation:

On an annual basis, USA FSI-Insurance processes personal claims valued in excess of \$18 billion US. Essential to the success of USA FSI-Insurance is the need to process and assess these complex claims in a timely and cost efficient manner. Given the highly competitive pressures in the insurance industry, USA FSI-Insurance is continually looking for ways to reduce unnecessary costs and improve key processes that support the business.

As with many insurance firms, USA FSI-Insurance has invested heavily in document management, claims processing support, imaging and workflow related solutions. In fact, the company has achieved a level of quality and service that is amongst the highest in its industry. In late 2004, USA FSI-Insurance began

* USA FSI-Insurance is a pseudonym for a US insurer that prefers to remain anonymous.



to look across its IT department with a view to streamline its claims processes. There were three main elements to this review:

- A full review of its current strategy for managing and utilizing documents and unstructured content across the enterprise
- A complete rebuild of its legacy claims processing application
- Move completely to a SOA (Service Oriented Architecture) infrastructure

Initially these were three quite separate initiatives, but over time USA FSI-Insurance understood that they should be seen holistically—that much, if not most, of the important information being processed by the firm was in the form of unstructured data, and that a somewhat revolutionary approach would be required to move them to the next level. This move would take the company away from an “islands of information and activity” environment, to one in which information could be managed more centrally and be accessible “as and where required” on demand across the enterprise.

Currently 3TB – growing rapidly	51 Windows Servers
300,000 documents added per day	Optical Disk Arrays

Solution:

In making this shift, USA FSI-Insurance found itself facing some major challenges.

- How to cost effectively consolidate nine separate repositories into a single instance? This was essential to future success, as managing silo-based content was beginning to cause many problems:
 - Due to the fact that Content could not be searched or accessed in a co-ordinated manner
 - Skill sets for different repository environments needed to be maintained.
 - Retention and compliance issues were becoming overly complex when managing claims content in differing locations.
- How to build a services oriented layer on top of this unified repository that would provide seamless bi-directional access between business applications and users and the content repository?

USA FSI-Insurance had made a strategic decision to move to a services oriented IT approach. For claims processing, the aim was to build a services layer on top of this unified repository, which would then enable seamless integration with various legacy business applications and new applications still in development. But, incumbent vendor, FileNet’s initial cost estimates to transform the content infrastructure were unrealistically high for the work. Consequently, USA FSI-Insurance rejected the upgrade to FileNet P8, despite the existing investment in FileNet technology.



- How to build a more stable and robust architecture--one able to support full fail-over and backup capabilities along with providing high availability functionality?

The firm had been encountering significant performance problems with their existing FileNet deployment. Outages were regular; performance was patchy, and the reliance on optical disks, some of which were now six years old, made for a deteriorating situation.

USA FSI-Insurance rejected a FileNet P8 upgrade as a potential solution for its requirements. Though the new FileNet P8 platform architecture appeared to be a big improvement over earlier products and was technically appealing, the upgrade cost was significantly higher than other alternatives. Migrating to FileNet P8 was in effect a move to an *entire new platform*.

When USA FSI-Insurance looked at the market and determined that there were non-FileNet options available that would meet current needs and potentially be more cost effective. As part of this process Oracle was invited to propose its solution as it had already proven its value to USA FSI-Insurance on a major e-mail and calendaring project.

When first looking at Oracle as a potential document management supplier, USA FSI-Insurance wondered whether this was too much of a risk to undertake since Oracle is best known for managing structured not unstructured data, and the incumbent vendor, FileNet, was recognized as a best in class player for imaging and workflow type document management. However because Oracle's solution was available at a significantly lower price than the FileNet solution, USA FSI-Insurance decided to investigate the Oracle solution. In addition Oracle's leadership status in the area of SOA made it a strong candidate on paper.

A proof of concept (POC) exercise was arranged to ensure that Oracle could not only handle unstructured data effectively in the database, but that it could scale and provide the necessary performance. Once USA FSI-Insurance received the results back from the POC, it was all systems go as Oracle had easily met or outperformed expectations.

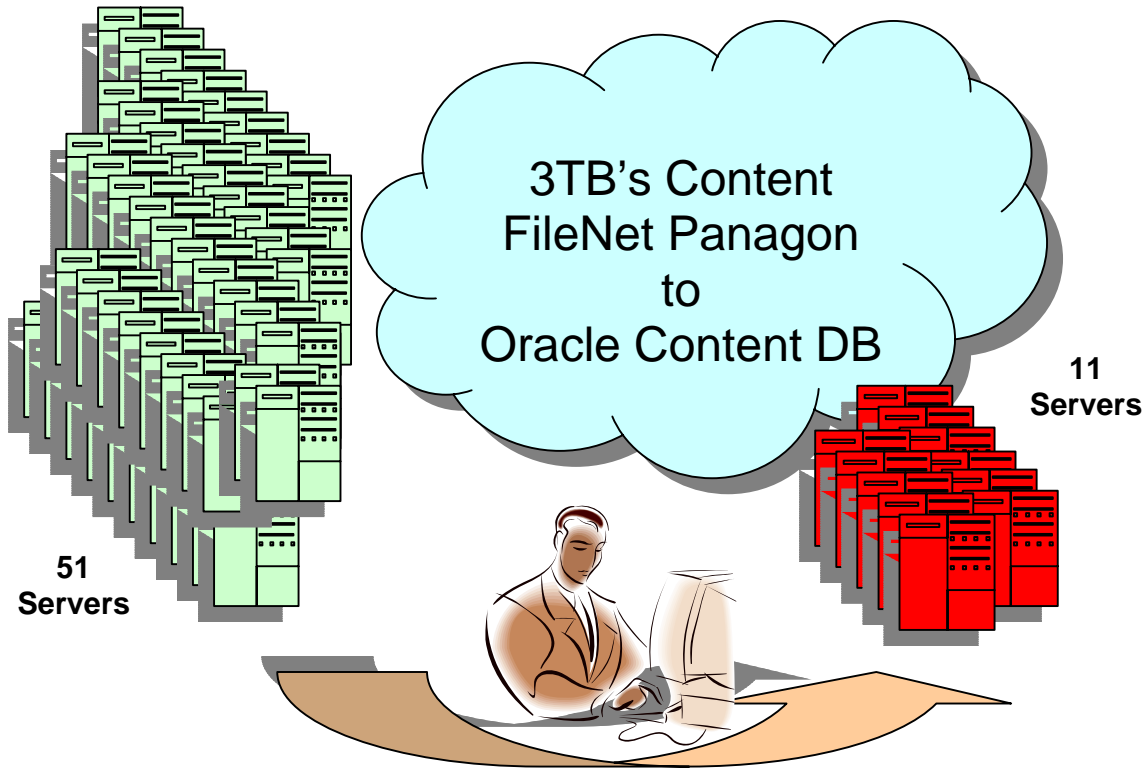
The upgrade project consisting of two major tasks:

- Migration of the content out of the FileNet repositories and into the Oracle Database
- Building of the SOA layer

Despite some initial concerns, the effort to migrate the content was not in fact a particularly difficult exercise. USA FSI-Insurance discovered that a number of tools were



available in the market to facilitate the migrations. After choosing a migration tool, USA FSI-Insurance was pleasantly surprised to find that the work went quickly and smoothly.



The largest piece of work was in building a unified services layer - utilizing the unified content repository and Oracle Content DB layer along with the use of Tibco for EAI integrations into existing legacy systems, etc. The services layer was designed and built to enable seamless search, store and retrieval of content across the enterprise.

One of the key drivers behind building the services layer was to ensure that document and content management functionality could become functions easily available within existing applications. USA FSI-Insurance does not see much value in document management as a standalone activity, but as a function that supports broader ongoing business activities, content and document management capabilities are invaluable. Furthermore, making this transformation as invisible as possible to the majority of users was a high priority. Aligning the technology transformation with an existing enterprise-wide activity to build a taxonomy was also essential.

Currently 3TB – growing rapidly	1 Database Server
300,000 documents added per day	4 AIX Boxes

USA FSI-Insurance’s lessons to date have clarified that taxonomy creation is largely a person/consulting activity rather than something that can be effectively speeded up by



technology. USA FSI-Insurance is doing this project by focusing on one subject area at a time, while making full use of the de-facto ontology that is provided by the company's Oracle-based Data Warehousing systems.

USA FSI-Insurance has widely deployed Oracle Content DB and is moving all the FileNet repositories into a single data center instance. Despite some initial departmental skepticism this has proven much easier than they expected. While migrating content from one repository to another is always going to be a tricky task, it was not as difficult as expected. USA FSI-Insurance also noted that moving from their old FileNet system to the newer FileNet P8 would also have been a major migration exercise, and still would not have come with the gains of full fail-over and recovery functionality that is inherent to an enterprise standard database.

Benefits:

Reduced software licensing costs

The move to Oracle Content DB has saved USA FSI-Insurance approximately \$20 million in software licensing costs alone.

Reduced hardware costs

USA FSI-Insurance moved from running 51 Windows servers to only 11 Unix servers, which included redundancy for high availability. The basic Oracle Content DB solution required only 5 servers. The previous Window servers did not provide backup and failover capabilities. There has been a slight increase in overall storage needs.

Introduction of full back-up, fail-over and high-availability capabilities

USA FSI-Insurance moved from the optical disk array that the FileNet system had relied on and are moving all content and metadata into Oracle Database 10g. Oracle Database 10g provides state of the art back-up and high availability capabilities, virtually eliminating downtime and performance bottlenecks.

Increased agility through best-of-breed services oriented platform layer

A services oriented architecture enables USA FSI-Insurance to fully benefit from the increased ability to service end users needs by supplying integrated and nearly invisible functionality of content where and when it is required.

Improved imaging and workflow capabilities

Experience with FileNet products led USA FSI-Insurance to the conclusion that FileNet's workflow and imaging capabilities were not as robust or usable as those provided by



Oracle Content DB. For USA FSI-Insurance, the FileNet workflow tools were of little use except in document-centric situations, and the FileNet imaging system had a tendency for excessive downtime. The Oracle solution includes a more comprehensive workflow product that covered all types of data and content. In addition, the new system is a much more reliable imaging and document management platform.

Future Benefits:

USA FSI-Insurance hopes to use the single unified corporate repository with the fully functioning services layer to gain a wide array of future benefits.

First and foremost will be the ability to more easily manage records and retention schedules across the enterprise. Linked together with future ILM (information lifecycle management) projects, USA FSI-Insurance plans to effectively manage all of its content from creation through to compliant destruction.

Though it is too early to measure accurately, initial indications are that USA FSI-Insurance will be reducing its current maintenance costs significantly. This is due to the reduction in the number of servers deployed and is also due to the ease of use and scalability of the Oracle system.

Summary:

Enterprises currently running older and more traditional document management systems may want to look at a new, potentially more cost-effective and robust solution now available to them. USA FSI-Insurance took what appeared to be a radically new path, approaching the leading database vendor Oracle for a solution rather than staying with its incumbent supplier FileNet (or moving to another traditional document management vendor such as Documentum).

Overall, USA FSI-Insurance's experience has been very positive, with hugely reduced costs at the same or better performance. USA FSI-Insurance does not believe that document management has much value as a standalone business application with its own front end for access, but rather, the company sees access to and control of documents and related content as a part of the day-to-day activities within existing work applications.

As such, USA FSI-Insurance sees document management capabilities becoming a part of the IT infrastructure, with a web services layer enabling seamless access to this centralized and well-managed content. The move to a leading IT infrastructure vendor like Oracle to support this vision was paramount to USA FSI-Insurance's success. Many industry observers believe that the days of separate content repositories running on expensive independent, stand-alone file servers are numbered. USA FSI-Insurance's experience is indicative of this trend.