

Jefferson County, Colorado

Industry:	Government (County Administration)
Product(s):	BEA WebLogic® Enterprise Platform (BEA WebLogic Server™, BEA WebLogic Integration™)
Partner(s):	Insevo
Business Problem:	Complexity of different applications
Project:	Integration platform to reduce integration complexity, freeing the IT staff to concentrate on adapter development and the business analysts to focus on business logic
Why BEA:	“Enables a best-of-breed strategy. We can deploy the best systems and applications, while BEA ensures compatibility and interoperability.”
Highlights:	The county saved a considerable amount on integration costs. “We reduced by 65% the cost of integrating our ERP system.”

COMPANY BRIEF

Jefferson County, Colorado is a thriving suburban business, industrial and residential community of about 520,000 west of Denver, where the Great Plains meet the Rocky Mountains.

Information about everything from zoning and collecting taxes to snow plowing and fighting fires are recorded and attached to parcel data managed by an address management system. The Sheriff's office uses it for crime enforcement and analysis of crime patterns. Voter registration is also based on it. All the information that moves through county systems and applications is tied to parcel addresses, which is why the system is the most critical piece of IT infrastructure for the county.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

“Our biggest challenge is the fact that our county staff has remained static for eight years, with population growing 20 percent annually,” said David Gallaher, Director of IT for Jefferson County. “The staff has to be able to produce more with existing resources. If we can automate processes, we can make staff more efficient, especially if we could cut down on the need for people to visit county offices.”

One aspect of this challenge is solving the recurring problems the county has with integrating systems developed in-house and packaged applications. Integration problems have become increasingly complex as fewer new applications are being developed for the IBM AS/400 computing environment, and older computer languages are rarely used for new development.



BUILT ON BEA™ SOLUTION

The county chose the BEA WebLogic Enterprise Platform, including WebLogic Server and WebLogic Integration, in order to utilize a common framework and tools that ease integration among disparate systems.

“The integration platform decreases system administration costs by replacing point-to-point connections between applications with a single platform,” said Gallaher. “The county currently has 160 applications, and if every single application had to interact with every other application, it would be unmanageable. We’d be spending all our time trying to integrate, and the cost of integration would be ten-fold the cost of what it costs to build the application. So we used WebLogic Integration as the hub, managing the integration with all the applications, saving time and money. With WebLogic Integration, we only have to do this once.”

The county investigated other application servers, including IBM WebSphere. “While WebSphere is a nice product, some proprietary components made us apprehensive about running it on various platforms,” said Gallaher. “There were also issues of performance, and WebLogic Server performed better.”

WebLogic Integration was chosen over WebMethods and its JD Edwards integration product, JDE XPI. “Something that’s only partially fitting to the standard is not what we want,” said Gallaher. “WebLogic enables a best-of-breed strategy. We can deploy the best systems and applications, while the BEA platform ensures compatibility and interoperability.”

The county saved a considerable amount on integration costs. “We reduced by 65 percent the cost of integrating our ERP system from JD Edwards, so that it talks to our Oracle-based application,” said Gallaher.

Another project, integrating the JD Edwards system with custom applications on the AS/400, went from decision to completed implementation in less than 30 days. “We were able to actually integrate our systems in three days, without affecting the day-to-day running of our production environments,” added Gallaher.

Jefferson County expects to see significant savings and time reductions in follow-on projects. The county has committed to making every application work on the Web. “While this is useful for the residents of Jefferson County, it is even more useful as a way to reduce administration costs,” said Gallaher. “We can provide information online so that people have less of a need to visit county offices.”

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