



iDC reforms government accounting with WebSphere solution.

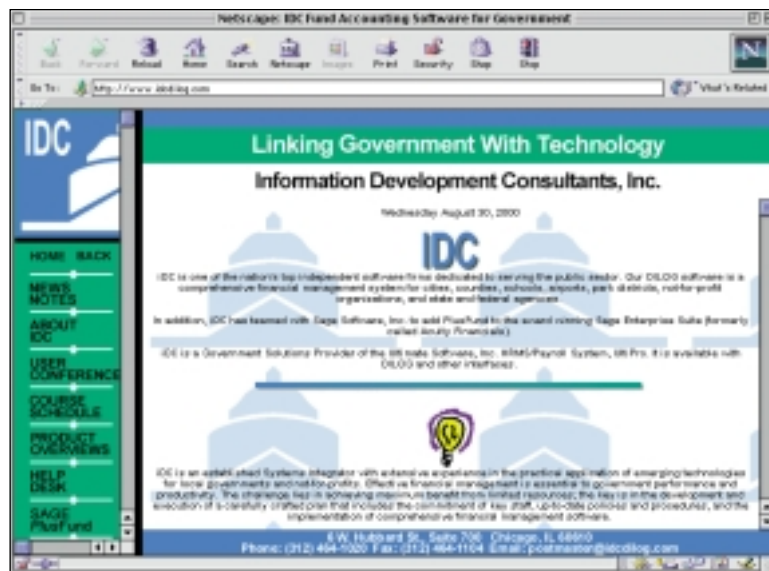
Application	Web-enabled public sector accounting software intranets
Business Benefits	10- to 15-fold increase in speed-to-market; 100% preservation of investment in legacy business rules
Software	IBM WebSphere® Application Server, Advanced Edition IBM DB2® Universal Database™ for Windows NT® IBM VisualAge® for Java™ IBM HTTP Server Prolifics Panther™ for IBM WebSphere
Servers	IBM RS/6000®
Business Partner	Prolifics Inc.

A Chicago-based application service provider is on a mission to make it easier for resource-limited organizations, such as local governments and nonprofits, to enjoy the efficiencies of e-business. iDC (Information Development Consultants) — a \$2.5 million, 16-employee company — makes software that public agencies use to manage their budgets.

iDC's core product is DILOG (Distributed and Integrated Local Government) Financial Accounting® Systems, a suite of 17 applications available by subscription.

“It takes proven technology and extraordinary expertise to put a multi-user, component-based system on the Internet. That’s what we get from IBM and Prolifics.”

–Carolynne Turner, President, iDC



iDC delivers robust and functional financial accounting software to governments and public agencies over the Internet.

It's about business, not just technology



WebSphere Application Server helps iDC integrate its solutions with customers' IT infrastructures.

“We evaluated competitive solutions, but decided that the EJB solution with WebSphere Application Server would require the fewest IT resources, the least training in Java and would get the product to market fastest.”

—Rick Adams, Chief Software Engineer, iDC

Subscribers used to license the DILOG software and install it on their own networks. But the cost of expanding network access can be burdensome to organizations with limited budgets and technical resources, and this restricted the market for iDC's e-government services.

To enable more organizations to use its product—and broaden its market share—iDC needed to simplify its service delivery model. The way to do this was through the Web, as access over the public Internet looked promising for solving its customers' ease-of-access and client maintenance issues. However, to make it feasible to invest in the development of a Web-based version of DILOG, iDC sought an e-business software foundation that offered scalability, reliability and portability and enabled rapid application deployment.

For fastest speed to market, iDC decided on a component-based Enterprise JavaBeans™ (EJB™) environment. The tool that best met iDC's criteria was Prolifics Panther for IBM WebSphere. Developed by IBM Business Partner Prolifics, Panther for IBM WebSphere is an intuitive, EJB-based tool for creating applications that run with IBM WebSphere Application Server.

Now, six months later, the new DILOG solution is ready for live beta testing. “We accomplished the job 10 to 15 times faster than we could have by writing in native Java or C++,” says Rick Adams, iDC chief software engineer.

Efficient integration

Prolifics chose to partner with IBM and use IBM WebSphere Application Server, Advanced Edition in order to provide a robust, open standards-based environment in which to deploy its Panther solutions. According to Richard Westle, Prolifics' CEO, “WebSphere Application Server enables us to offer our customers solutions that tightly integrate with their IT infrastructures, connecting front-end transactions with back-end systems.”

For its own part, iDC had also searched for suitable Web application servers for DILOG. “We evaluated competitive solutions,” says Adams, “but decided that the EJB solution with WebSphere Application Server would require the fewest IT resources, the least training in Java and would get the product to market fastest.”

Accounting and accountability

The Web-enabled DILOG Financial Accounting system provides financial staff members in iDC's customer organizations secure Web access to fast, stable, accounting software. The software is just one part of a comprehensive e-government service, which iDC will soon make available on its government-to-citizen (G2C) and government-to-business (G2B) Web site, 4gov.com. This site will offer both City Hall and Community Center services such as council/board proceedings, a calendar of local events, opportunities to comment on current public issues (like teen curfews), as well as e-payments for utility bills, parking tickets and business licenses. Elected officials, citizens, businesses and government employees will use the same secure Web site to communicate and transact business.

Customers logging on to DILOG are presented with an interface that is automatically customized according to their user profile and access authorization level. In fact, from online data entry to online inquiry and reporting, many of the functions performed by DILOG are controlled automatically because of built-in business rules. These rules, for instance, prevent co-mingling of funds and enable money to be properly encumbered for spending. With the knowledge built into the product, DILOG aids an organization in maintaining appropriation and budgetary controls.

Building room for growth

With its Web-based, multitiered DILOG system, iDC is able to provide a scalable solution without having to re-engineer applications and can quickly develop and integrate new applications. On the back end, iDC manages the customers' data on a variety of data management systems, including Oracle, Microsoft® SQL Server and C-ISAM databases residing on RS/6000 and Microsoft Windows NT Servers at its Chicago site. The system utilizes IBM DB2 Universal Database for Windows NT on servers at its Florida location. The ability for iDC to pick the best data management solutions for its customers was very important.

At both locations, WebSphere Application Server, residing on RS/6000 and Windows NT servers in the middle tier, drives the DILOG applications by invoking Panther-built Enterprise JavaBeans, which access the back-end databases. The Panther EJB Web Application Server communicates with IBM HTTP Server software to deliver the user screens to the client's browser.

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–Rick Adams



The iDC DILOG suite of applications makes it easier for government managers to keep track of funding and expenses.

“WebSphere Application Server enabled us to give our customers flexibility and achieve the scalability we need to grow our customer base without overloading our infrastructure,” Adams remarks.

Furthermore, iDC has already been able to develop a new application using the same technology in less than eight weeks. The new Citizen Request Desk is a community help desk available over the Web that anyone can use to report a problem, request a service, or get a question answered. As Adams puts it, “With Panther for IBM WebSphere we’ve turned out a new application almost as fast as we could design it. EJB components enable us to fill in the whole picture working from small, manageable pieces.” iDC will now go on to enhance this product adding automatic e-mail routing to the appropriate departments and managers, using IBM VisualAge for Java to create the new functions. The company anticipates being able to provide many other innovative applications on the Internet using Panther for IBM WebSphere.

Carolyn Turner, iDC president, points out, “It takes proven technology and extraordinary expertise to put a multi-user, component-based system on the Internet. That’s what we get from IBM and Prolifics.”

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