The New Collegiate University Development Database -Implementation Issues Stewart Watson 16th June 2008

Synopsis

Supporting Development and Alumni Relations the new system is aimed at all members of the Collegiate University. To this end there are many challenges and issues of concern. This workshop will look at some of the key technologies and issues surrounding implementing the Blackbaud Enterprise CRM at the University of Oxford and what it means for users and stakeholders. Of particular note will be the system architecture, connectivity and data migration.

Topics

- 1. What is DARS
- 2. Project Objectives
- 3. A quick look (screenshots)
- 4. The technology stack
- 5. Deployment and connectivity
- 6. Current project status
- 7. Any questions

What is DARS

- Development and Alumni Relations System
- Contact/Constituent Relationship Management
- One repository of data
- Open areas and secure control
- Process focused

Strategic Aims

- Supports the Campaign for the University of Oxford
- Sharing and collaboration between Development and Alumni Professionals
- Support common process and best practice
- Offers economies of scale

Benefits

- More effective operational processes
- Increased staff productivity
- Reduced working cycle times
- Improved decision making
- Better working relations
- Improved customer service
- Reduced average system operating charges

Project Objectives

- Work with Blackbaud as a partner (a significant internal team)
- Implement core functionality first
- Establish a stable baseline
- Focus on process and data
- Support internal processes and users
- Establish training and support for the future

User Interface - contacts



Relationship Tree



Managing Prospect Workflow

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Event Management



The Technology stack

- Smart Client (ClickOnce) over a web connection
- Blackbaud have built a 3 layer architecture:
 - Role/Process focussed modular top layer
 - Open Standards Web service middle layer
 Microsoft .Net 2 / SQL Server foundations
- 'Relatively' easy to build new modules this doesn't mean cheap.

ClickOnce

- MS Brand a web application technology that is part of the Windows platform
- Provides all of the traditional benefits that make web applications popular:
 - No install is required on the client.
 - The user does not have to be an admin to use the application.
 - The application is accessed via a web URL via standard HTTP.
 - The user always is running the latest version of the app.
 - The administrator simply updates files on the server to upgrade to a new version or patch.
- ClickOnce applications have full access to the entirety of the Windows Platform Win32 API (classic Windows API)
 - COM (for driving Word and other Office apps)
 - Net Framework Class Libraries (including whatever features are in APIs, including the latest version, such as WPF and WF)

ClickOnce (2)

- Can run outside of the web browser sandbox restrictions so if the application needs to do something like drive Outlook or Microsoft Word then there are no special considerations it just works like a non-web Windows application.
- The SQL Server 2005 Report Builder application uses ClickOnce to deliver a rich ad-hoc report-authoring tool via the Report Services web server.
- Some similar web application technologies
 - Java
 - Flash (Flex/Apollo)
 - ActiveX
 - AJAX most similar
- ClickOnce apps can be developed using C#, VB, jscript, J#, C++, or any .Net language. Blackbaud use VB.Net for Infinity.

ClickOnce (3)

- ClickOnce is a Windows platform technology. Therefore, applications designed for ClickOnce can <u>ONLY</u> be used from a computer running Windows.
- The ability to have full access to the Windows API is ClickOnce's greatest strength, it is also a deal breaker if the application is required to support non-Windows operating systems. (Though it could be used over a remote session to a Terminal server!).
- All application services are also available via SOAP web service calls via HTTP/S and Xml. In addition some features are delivered via HTML and other non-ClickOnce mechanisms (e.g. reporting from MS SQL Reporting Services).

ClickOnce (4)

- On first use by accessing the URL a set of compressed files is downloaded and extracted into a per-use cache on the client. The app launches and runs like any other Windows application.
- The next time the user accesses the URL the app simply launches from the cached copy.
- If the administrator updates the files that are part of the ClickOnce app on the server, the next time the user clicks the url the new compressed files are downloaded automatically. Therefore a user always runs the latest version of the app.
- ClickOnce compares the cache timestamp vs. the current server timestamp The current compressed size is ~7MB.
- No special configuration of Windows required for ClickOnce XP or Vista (latest SP's)
- Must have .Net Framework 2.0 installed.

Change of architecture and emphasis





Business and IT Architecture



Deployment and Connectivity



MS Exchange Server?

MS Exchange Server

- Email (through routing)
- Contact data
- Diary/Calendar
- Downloads (for set-up)
- Synchronisation
- Multiple Servers

Email Routing



Data Migration Issues

- Cleaned data before starting (an assessment will usually be made jointly by the source group and the project team).
- Most migrations will have an established template starting point (unless completely bespoke source app).
- MS SQL Integration Services utilised to aid the import of data
- Iterative process of checking accuracy of migration.
- May have to decide to 'cut our losses' and add some residual data by hand again.
- There is always something 'unique' in a source.

Current Project Status



Any Questions?