



Vodafone – Panafon Hellenic Telecommunication S.A.

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Dr. Petros Panagiotidis

Business Systems Integration
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Challenge

Vodafone – Panafon Hellenic Telecommunications S.A., a member of the Vodafone Group, is the largest mobile communications operator in Greece. Vodafone – Panafon developed with the help of BYTE Computer S.A., its Premier Systems and Software Integration Vendor, a complete integrated suite of the “NCMDI” Core Software Applications. “NCMDI” stands for Network Configuration Management Database Integration which constitutes an innovative and robust software environment that allows Vodafone to effectively manage the necessary processes to acquire, build, activate, operate, maintain and upgrade its radio network throughout Greece. The suite of software applications was developed and integrated using various technological platforms from vendors such as SAP, IBM and Microsoft, allowing access to authorised users via their Intranet Portal. However, additional access to vital information hosted in the aforementioned applications was also required by various company wide user groups. These user groups had different, read-only requirements, while hiding the complexity and removing unnecessary functionality from the applications was also of top priority. What remained was the necessity to implement an external cost efficient and robust solution that would meet the demanding search enterprise needs, while respecting the existing security applied in the various systems.

Solution

“We were lucky that Byte, our Premier Systems and Software Integration Partner who developed and integrated most of our Applications, had a strong relationship with Google Enterprise. When we saw the functionality, the speed, the quality, the security compliance and the flexibility of the Google Search Appliance solution, we stopped looking any further and we concentrated on “crash-testing” it. Today I have to admit that the Google solution not only met but exceeded our expectations and serves us well with whatever we throw at it with unbelievable speed, superior quality and administration free operation. Further to this, it is the first time that we can provide, in information economic term, tangible data of a stunning ROI ratio (investment vs. benefit), even when we exclude all the soft benefits that are derived from the use of the tool, namely things like informed decision-making and improved communications.

The Google Search Appliance has attained the status of both mission and time-to-market critical in our strategic software portfolio and it is regarded as indispensable not only by the IT department but by the user community as well, since it achieved record-breaking, critical-mass numbers at a blink of an eye.

“If we had this solution three years back, when we started our integration project for the core network processes, we would have saved more than 22 man years of effort”

Google Enterprise Implemented Product

Google Search Appliance (500.000 documents capacity)

Challenge

In May 2002, Vodafone – Panafon Hellenic Telecommunications S.A. initiated a strategic 5-10 year integration program, aiming to integrate business processes on strategic platforms, in order to support and sustain cost competitive advantage. From the strategic plan emanated a number of integration projects. One of the pillar projects was the integration of the core network processes.

About the Google Search Appliance product

The Google Search is an integrated corporate search solution that extends Google's award-winning search technology to intranets and websites. The Google Search Appliance is available in three models: the GB-1001 for departments and mid-sized companies; the GB-5005 for dedicated, high-priority search services such as customer-facing websites and company-wide intranet applications; and the GB-8008 for centralised deployments supporting global business units.

For more information contact us

www.google.co.uk/enterprise



The VF-GR integration agent, namely the Business Systems Integration Team (BSIT) spent nearly 2 calendar years in interviewing key users and collecting information residing in various sources. The BSIT designed a holistic Information Integration solution where SAP was chosen as the platform to support the core business processes, while IBM/Lotus and Microsoft technologies were chosen to cover selected user centric applications. All these technologies and applications have been integrated in the back end with single master data instances and in the front end via an Intranet portal. The majority of these applications relate to Radio Network Node Location Registry, Licensing, Node Structure and Affiliation, Preventive and Corrective Maintenance as well as Work Order Management. Furthermore these applications provide a series of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) which are monitored by the use of Management Cockpits.

After the implementation of the above and the user acceptance phase, the system went live in June 2006. Shortly after, it was evident that apart from the authorized technical personnel, a series of other user groups (i.e. Customer Service) needed access to these systems in order to obtain information for Trouble Tickets affecting network availability, Scheduled downtime for maintenance, etc. This led to new requirements that would enable dispersed user groups to have read only access to a subset of the information. That, in sequence, brought about business issues around software licensing, support, training etc.

A new thought was triggered: could Vodafone – Panafon provide instant search, read-only capabilities in these applications without the need to enroll all of its personnel in all of these applications and without sacrificing performance and security issues?

Solution

Vodafone began to seek solutions that could solve this imminent problem. After a certain amount of research, they found various search solutions. However, none of them were easy to implement or price/performance effective. It was then that Byte, having recently formed a relationship with Google Enterprise, introduced the Google Search Appliance, thus presenting a proposal towards a viable solution. Various interfaces needed to be produced in order for the GSA to access the SAP, Microsoft and Lotus / IBM application data, so the combined Vodafone – Byte team began the development without further delay.

Nearly a month later, the pilot setup was in place. A series of SAP based BAPIs (Business Application Programming Interfaces) were developed tested and fine tuned so that the strong security model of Vodafone was not compromised. As for the other technological platforms, things were much easier since Google provided out-of-the-box functionality, leading to the desired results.

Result

Today, Vodafone – Panafon has set the project into production and an enormous user community throughout the Organization has split second access to all of the vital information they are seeking, simply by typing **search.vodafone.gr** and entering the radio location mnemonic, code or description. The GSA intercepts this search request and displays real-time results in a user friendly manner, with instantaneous response and the simplicity that is a trait of Google.com.

Future Plans

Vodafone – Panafon plans to increase the document count of the GSA they purchased and expand its reach within their intranet. Additionally they are about to add another GSA to provide search facilities to their extensive Vodafone Shops network. Furthermore, there are plans to utilize Google Maps to provide a visualization of all their Radio Network nodes, associating them with the relevant information around maintenance history, open trouble tickets, Node structure and other information.