

Right Information, Right Decisions, Right Time Solving DOE EERE Information Management Challenges

The Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's (EERE) Office of Information Business Management System's (IBMS) mission is to lead the development and implementation of information and business management systems that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of EERE's management of programs and its portfolios of projects. One of IBMS' main responsibilities is the delivery of information that is accurate, timely, and easily accessible.

IBMS created the EERE information System (EIS) in 2005 with the primary goal of getting EERE's financial, budget, and program performance data into the hands of the people that needed it the most; the analysts and executives.

Customer Background

The Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's (EERE) mission is to strengthen America's energy security, environmental quality, and economic vitality in public-private partnerships. The office is responsible for the development and marketplace integration of renewable and environmentally sound energy technologies, as well as the preservation and efficient use of our nation's valuable resources.

With an annual budget of \$1.74 billion and managing a portfolio of ten research development demonstration and deployment (RDD&D) programs, EERE needs an information system that allows for user (C-level, program managers and analysts) accountability and can keep pace with new energy efficiency initiatives and the legislation that result from these policies.

Business Challenge

The EIS system was created in 2005 and with time the system became overloaded with report redundancy, user growth, and content.

The system was failing to give full insight into RDD&D program performance and lacked report standardization across the board, which hindered decision making.

Finally, IBMS was becoming overwhelmed by the number of information requests and program requests for financial and performance information and analysis. Adding to the challenge was a recent upgrade to Cognos 8 that was not used to its full potential.

These challenges affected the quality of service that EERE was able to provide. The information was inaccurate and therefore budget, forecasts, and reports were imprecise.

Technologies

BI Consulting Services

Cognos 8 Business
Intelligence

Microsoft SQL Server

Microsoft Server 2003

About MicroLink, LLC.

Founded in 1998, MicroLink provides Knowledge Management, Collaboration, Business Intelligence, Information Discovery and CRM solutions. We have a history of providing reliable, high quality, customer-driven solutions that focus on improving productivity, collaboration, and teamwork throughout our customers' enterprise.

MicroLink has a reputation for consistent, superior performance, and outstanding work at federal agencies, and commercial organizations, we have earned the respect of our clients, partners, and employees.

MicroLink is the 2008 Microsoft Repeatable Solutions Partner of the Year, Microsoft's Federal Partner of the Year, DoD Partner of the Year (2006, 2007) and Autonomy's Global Partner of the Year.

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EERE understood that a knowledge management solution would be the catalyst to help this situation and decided to seek recommendations to improve the system.

Solution

MicroLink, a Cognos Silver Reseller partner, was requested to provide a third party consultative system analysis to identify system improvement recommendations for the EIS system. Once this analysis was complete, the recommendations included:

- Establishing a multi-server environment to handle the increased usage of the system and content growth
- Reorganizing and streamlining the portal content, updating the look and feel to align with other EERE systems, and enhancing the usability of the system
- Creating standard reporting templates for development and ad-hoc report writing
- Leveraging new features of Cognos 8 such as business scorecarding

These recommendations were seen as key to improving the EIS usability and preparing the system for future growth. After reviewing and approving the recommendations, EERE employed MicroLink to deliver the solution.

The MicroLink development team comprised of BI experts and financial analysts enhanced the performance of the system by assisting in the installation and management of the system on a new multi-tiered server architecture. Using the multi-tiered server fostered scalability which is crucial as the system has a planned expansion to four hundred and fifty users by the year 2009.

Working with IBMS and the program performance team to develop program metrics, the team leveraged the Cognos 8 suite to include enhanced business scorecarding that would monitor the performance of the programs against their goals.

In addition, MicroLink ensured consistency of data delivery and quality by analyzing and standardizing data retrieval and centralization from various EERE information systems.

Benefits

The new and improved EIS system provides the right information at the right time for the users to make informed decisions. EERE's workforce now has a knowledge management solution for:

- Quick access to information allowing faster response to requests from department constituents
- User-friendly environment for EERE programs allowing the ability for ad-hoc information analysis
- Consistency for data delivery and quality to improve EERE reporting capabilities
- Better decision making ability with standardized reports from various EERE information systems
- Enhance the ability to monitor performance

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