Customer Story

The State of Connecticut Extends Ad-Hoc Reporting and Data Analysis with Entrinsik Informer

Conversation with Mark Hennessey, IT Services Division, Connecticut Department of Social Services

Pain points

- Extracting data from information system for reporting and data analysis was complicated
- Modifying and customizing reports had to compete with other, more urgent needs for limited 'enhancement' dollars
- Static reports were problematic for many departments, and varying reporting needs were almost impossible to satisfy

Results

- More users than ever can create reports, reducing the burden on IT and outside vendors
- Greater security level so users only see the reports they are allowed to run, and even within reports users only see the columns that they are allowed to see
- Provides the right data at the right time and has been used to make old processes more efficient

Informer   **entrinsik.com/informer/request-a-demo**

Connecticut Department of Social Services Customer Story

Challenge

In the State of Connecticut's Department of Social Services, the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement is the lead agency supporting the enforcement program along with players from multiple agencies and two branches of government.

The Connecticut Child Support Enforcement System (CCSES) began as a Prime Information system and was migrated to Sun hardware and UniVerse in the mid-1990s. Extracting data from this system for reporting and data analysis was difficult and complicated; a pre-processor was executed to build a temporary file which was then listed for each report. Because the department's application support and development is outsourced, modifying and customizing reports had to compete with other, more urgent needs for limited 'enhancement' dollars. Even with a few power users who were allowed to do selections against production data, ad hoc reporting was still an improvised, hit-or-miss process.

"Static reports were problematic for many departments, and varying reporting needs were almost impossible to satisfy with the current solution," says Mark Hennessey in the IT Services division of the Department of Social Services in Connecticut.

For example, Judicial Branch employees handling court-based enforcement needed reports sorted differently than other stakeholders. It was a tedious process of wrapping text report files with HTML or distilling PDFs, and these were still static reports unable to be easily manipulated or revised.

Solution

The State of Connecticut needed a reporting solution that would address their disparate data reporting and analysis needs throughout various departments. After comparing several BI solutions, they chose to implement Entrinsik Informer because of its lower total cost of ownership and stellar reputation in the Rocket U2 database community.

"We wanted to accelerate report creation and make it easier for users to access reports," said Hennessey. "We came for the ease of report creation. We stayed for the report management, scheduling and distribution!"

Implementing Informer was a simple and straightforward process, and end-users were quick to adopt the new software. "Rolling out the product to our user community was actually fun – it was one of those few times where we were perceived as doing something FOR our users, rather than doing something TO our users," said Hennessey.

Results

The Connecticut Department of Social Services now has more users who are capable of creating reports than ever before. This greatly reduces the burden on their small in-house IT team and outside vendors, and users who utilize the reports love the ability to create their own customized views.

Informer can pull data from multiple data sources (including SQL) and is also being used to support other parts of the department whose mainframe applications simply can't give them the data they need in the format they want. Now, using Informer, the right users get the right data at the right time which allows them to focus resources where they can be best deployed.

Users also now have a layer of security in reporting processes that was greatly lacking before. Users only see the reports they are allowed to run, and even within reports users only see the columns that they are allowed to see.

The department has also been able to use Informer to make old processes more efficient. For example, a legacy report that users relied on to monitor their child support cases was only run once a month due to the slow report run-time. "Our pre-processor now runs in less than an hour. We run the pre-processor every night so our users can run their report on their schedule, when they need the information," said Hennessey. "It's the IT trifecta of saving time, saving money and creating user satisfaction."

Users have also been leveraging Informer dashboards to visualize everything from caseload breakdowns across the state, to application security violations, to specific collection activity. Log data from federal partners is even being used to display interstate case communication activity. Even in-house Net developers have stopped using Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services or other ad-hoc reporting approaches and are now using Informer for their applications. It accelerates their development time and the end users prefer it.

"I have recommended Informer several times, for the following reasons: One, the value for money – Informer is a very cost effective tool. Two, ease of administration and use – even in environments that have more sophisticated reporting tools, there's likely a place for Informer. Three, first-rate training is available at very, very affordable prices, and four, Entrinsik is an awesome vendor," said Hennessey.

It's the IT trifecta of saving time, saving money and creating user satisfaction.

Mark Hennessey, IT Services Division, Connecticut Department of Social Services