IBM

Rail Safety and Standards Board on track with IBM.

Overview

■ **The Challenge**
– Improve manageability and governance for critical safety application
– Improve accessibility and usability for diverse users
– Improve management reporting

■ **The Solution**
– Design, implement, host and support an advanced Web-based safety management system
– IBM Business Consulting Services provided Business Consultancy, IT Consultancy, Application Development Services, Application Management Support, Enterprise Services for Microsoft® Technologies
– IBM Global Services provided e-business Hosting Services – Managed Hosting; Integrated Technology Services – Network and Help Desk Services

■ **The Benefit**
– More flexible, user-friendly application
– Quicker and more cost-effective to implement requirements
– One-stop solution simplifies governance

The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) is the independent organisation charged with improving health and safety on Britain's railways. One of its responsibilities is the Safety Management Information System (SMIS), which records all safety-related incidents. The law requires that Britain's rail service providers record all such events, like 'Signals Passed at Danger' or passengers injuring themselves at a station. Government and the industry use these reports to enhance safety strategy.

With 60 companies providing railway services to millions of passengers each day, the range of safety-related data SMIS records is vast. As a result, the system became unwieldy. This was particularly evident when the RSSB needed to change the SMIS database or business logic to reflect amendments to industry requirements and legislation.

Jeff Brewer, RSSB's SMIS Project Manager, explained: "We needed to simplify the ongoing development and maintenance of SMIS and enhance the application itself. Using separate suppliers for application development, hosting and support made maintaining the system slow and expensive."

"We're very happy with our IBM relationship. It supports us with long-term technology and industry expertise that's simply invaluable"

– Jeff Brewer, RSSB's SMIS Project Manager

Easy safety report access

Another key consideration was simplifying and expediting the production of management reports for government organisations like the Health and Safety Executive. In addition, with users ranging from clerical workers to Safety Managers, the enhanced SMIS needed to be highly accessible.

"We used to deal with a wide range of technologies and access methods in each of the companies using the system," said Brewer. "We wanted a Web-based solution that would improve ease of use, enhance accessibility, and make managing and evolving the system far simpler."

A cost-effective 'one-stop' solution was essential for RSSB, so the organisation turned to IBM for help to design, implement, host and support an enhanced Web-based SMIS.

"IBM understands our industry and technology and that's absolutely critical. Choosing IBM as our sole partner for the project also gives us contractual simplicity and promotes better governance," said Brewer.

Step-by-step process

IBM managed and delivered the project – including system design, implementation, application hosting, training and ongoing support.

By developing the new application as a secure Web-based solution, IBM provided all users with a more uniform, consistent and informative interface for data entry and reporting. A powerful workflow engine ensures safety data is entered accurately. Users get a constant graphical display of precisely where they are in the process and which steps remain.

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>
> – *Jeff Brewer, RSSB's SMIS Project Manager*

Best of both worlds

"For new users, SMIS is much less cluttered and easier to use," said Brewer. "However, we haven't sacrificed any functionality for our existing users. Navigation is easier. Overall it's much more accessible and user-friendly."

With more than 4,000 rules governing incident and accident recording, SMIS is a complex system – but the IBM architecture makes it faster and more cost-effective to execute changes in those rules, such as adding new fields or redesigning the workflow.

The smooth, daily running of the system is also an IBM responsibility. As well as providing Help Desk and a full application support regime, IBM Global Services hosts the system, providing a secure environment and helping to ensure the integrity of RSSB's data through rigorous back-up processes, all governed by well-defined Service Level Agreements. The system is built for easy maintenance to minimise down-time.

"Ongoing support from IBM Global Services really does provide high value," said Brewer. "With the new system we can respond to requests from government and the industry in a much more controlled and cost-effective way. When legislative changes require SMIS to capture and report on new types of safety information, it's much easier to make those changes happen."

Future safety improvements

Future additions to SMIS will include the ability to record assaults on railway staff and irregular working, where work is done outside established rules and parameters.

"We're very happy with our IBM relationship. It supports us with long-term technology and industry expertise that's simply invaluable – enabling us to continue the work of making Britain's railways even safer," Brewer concluded.

For more information

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