

Bellamy - Case Study

looksoftware™

Critical issue

- ▶ Unhappy with current modernization tool, time consuming and costly
- ▶ Needed a web-based interface quickly as new staff were unfamiliar with 5250 green screens
- ▶ Required to re-introduce a wholly new and updated look and feel, whilst retaining the excellent software business logic within their applications

Solution

- ▶ Integration with MS Office desktop applications
- ▶ SOA capabilities and web services provided
- ▶ Easy-to-use, flexible solution

Results

- ▶ Within 6 months of making the new applications available, 30 sales have been made!
- ▶ Significantly improved System i application competitiveness
- ▶ Opportunity for an On Demand SaaS (Software As A Service) solution as an alternative service to their customers
- ▶ Retained a number of clients who were looking elsewhere

Bellamy modernizes System i solution and makes 30 sales in 6 months!

Background

Bellamy Software, with a team of 28 people and based in Edmonton, Alberta is the largest supplier of municipal systems software in that Province and has provided systems and support services to the public sector market in Canada for more than 28 years.

Established in 1979, and recently acquired by Sylogist in May of 2006, Bellamy develops, implements and supports a fully integrated line of software solutions for the public sector and serves over 80 customers including cities, towns, counties, school boards and regional utilities, primarily in Western Canada. Their suite of software includes :

- ▶ Municipal Finance, Operations and Services
- ▶ School Board Finance, Operations, Records Management, Payroll and HRIS
- ▶ Utilities Billing and Financial Accounting, and a host of other services

They sell and service IBM i5/OS (System i) servers and related hardware and IBM software products. Other partners include Alpha (US), DKTek (Canada), IMI (Europe), MuRho (Asia) and F5 Networks.

As indicated above, Bellamy was acquired in May 2006 by Sylogist Ltd, who develop, install, integrate and maintain enterprise management software systems for mid-size public and private sector organizations. Sylogist is a publicly traded company on the TSX Canadian Venture Exchange under the symbol 'SYZ', and has its HQ in Calgary, Alberta with branch offices in Edmonton, Vancouver and Atlanta.

Sylogist is an integration partner for SAP, the world's leading software manufacturer of ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software and they work with other leading software and hardware providers to provide end-to-end application and infrastructure solutions, experience and expertise. Their key focus is to help customers further realize the value of their investments in enterprise systems, by providing very specific consulting expertise and products that complement and extend this powerful, integrated environment. The Bellamy acquisition and that of Collaborative Learning Network Inc. (CLN) in August 2006, makes Sylogist Ltd the largest provider of municipal ERP solutions in Canada.

Problem

The difficulties associated with maintenance and deployment with Bellamy's existing modernization tools, had become unacceptably complex and costly. The delays incurred whilst waiting for change requests to pass through the competitors support team, and getting them readied for client-wide deployment, were further delaying the launch of new features and upgrades. A way had to be found to circumvent this maintenance step and ensure a speedy and cost-effective deployment.

"The development environment looksoftware offered was reuse based and allowed easy extension and enhancement while other vendors we're promoting proprietary languages aimed more at redevelopment than reuse. Overall, the project from start to finish has been much less daunting with looksoftware than what we envisaged with any other vendor.

Ken Shelton, General Manager,
Bellamy





webView 2.0 provides modern, intuitive access to the RPG back-end

Further, a factor of demographics which is hitting Bellamy's clients – and indeed is becoming a reality for many System i shops – is that many clients had been on the System i platform for more than 20 years. These organizations are starting to undergo significant staff turnover as the Baby Boomer generation begins to reach retirement age. The loss of these knowledgeable resources means new – and younger – replacements are being hired who have no knowledge of the operation of a 5250 based RPG application. Green screens – what the heck are they?! This had become a major disadvantage for Bellamy's products and they needed to move to a web-based interface quickly.

Despite rich workflows and functionality of the product, Bellamy had to constantly try to overcome perceptions of 5250 screens as outdated technology, with their competitors easily picking on the text-based screens and what was perceived as the awkward processing of information. Bellamy had to find a way to quickly and cost-effectively re-introduce a wholly new and updated look and feel, whilst retaining the excellent software business logic embedded in their applications.

"We also needed a way to integrate with MS Office desktop applications which are so

prevalent in the typical office environments we service. Simple functionality like emailing, archiving, data transfer and form letters were lacking in our 5250 world. We needed a way to provide end-users with easy access to and simple integration with Word, Outlook and Excel."

"Having assessed what we needed to ensure the ongoing primacy of our market position, we could tell that **looksoftware's** solution was exactly what we needed as it offered us a quick and somewhat painless entry into web services, SOA and composite application extension," said Ken.

It was important that Bellamy be able to offer new and easier ways to access data securely and in a predictable manner and that it was perceived as an 'open for business' application suite. They needed SOA capabilities and web services to bring that about.

The selection process

A number of competitive offerings were evaluated. After doing further web research and reviewing various press articles, Bellamy came across **looksoftware**. It seemed at first glance that the whole suite offered by **looksoftware** was relevant to their needs including **newlook**, **centric**, **soarchitect**, **lookserver**, **smartclient**, **thinclient** and **mobileclient**!

The combination of fast time to market, improved future functionality, proven track record and cost effectiveness, were all very attractive and exactly what Bellamy needed. "When comparing these factors to the other vendors, we found **looksoftware** so easy to do business with. They were friendly and open to the needs we presented in order to fit within our business model," said Ken.

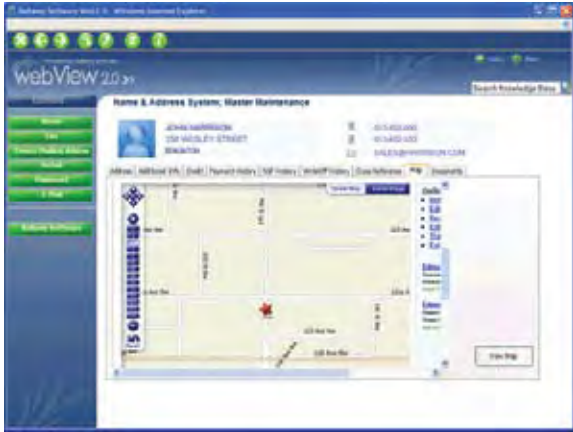
It all came together very quickly after that, thanks to the 'easy to do business with' nature of **looksoftware**. They met all requirements of a dynamic architecture, ease of use, functionality, integration capabilities and the need to access the presentation, application and data layers. **newlook** was found to be faster and more accurate than the manual work that would normally be done to get the alternatives to operate in a similar fashion.

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The solution

Bellamy was in a rush to say the least! They had three weeks left before the unveiling at the biggest event of the year - The Bellamy Partnership Forum. This is an annual event with 250 clients gathering for three days. The opening address would highlight their new direction and new user interface.





webView 2.0 presents all customer information in a single view – including System i data, nonstructured objects like documents, spreadsheets and images and web based information like mapping.

It was agreed that a prototype would be developed. It would be shown at the show and would be stable enough to allow all three days of presentations to use and highlight the applications within the new interface. Nick Hampson, looksoftware's designer, worked remotely with the Bellamy team during the runup to the event. With Nick's help and a lot of late hours back at the ranch, the prototype was ready in time for a triumphant and exciting opening address at the forum!

Following that initial launch, Bellamy attended three days of training with looksoftware in Costa Mesa. Those three days enabled the team to forge ahead with phase II of the development plan. They've found that as they get more advanced and comfortable with the looksoftware suite, they have been able to bounce ideas and challenges off looksoftware's support and development team. "They have been extremely supportive and helpful with all our development needs. We recently had their development manager onsite in Canada for three days helping with phase III of our plans, including dipping our toes into web services, SOA and hand-held functionality", said Ken.

"It's amazing how quickly our team has become productive with

looksoftware - from nothing to a functioning prototype in three weeks! said Werner Biegler, President and CEO. "It's important that we continue to develop more functionality and improve the end-user experience, thereby keeping our product suite at the forefront of delivering what our customers need," Werner said.

Benefits

Web deployment now makes it so much easier to deploy the software to their diverse and widespread customer base. All clients are smart clients, and there will be some mobile functionality coming soon. With desktop integration, there is new email functionality, document archiving, spawning letters, data transfer enhancements etc. A major new benefit of the modernized applications is that Bellamy has been able to combine multiple components of different applications into more easily manageable, tabbed interfaces.

"looksoftware has significantly improved our System i application competitiveness. Yes for sure, we can now not only offer a modern look and feel, as well as integration with MS Office, new and easier user workflows, mobility and web services with SOA. Indeed we expect our

looksoftware application will drive future hardware sales for us and IBM," said Werner. "This will not only enable us to hold our own in our existing customer base, but will drive new business our way, and even allow us to have an On Demand SaaS (Software As A Service) solution as an alternative service to our customers."

Although it's still early days for Bellamy with looksoftware, the results are very positive. Within 6 months of making the new applications available, 30 sales have been made! This rapid adoption is a direct result of a client perception that end-users will more readily embrace the graphical user interface versus the 5250 screens. Clients perceive less maintenance and upkeep of the GUI than with the previous solution.

"looksoftware has helped us retain a number of clients who were looking elsewhere and we have recently won three new clients who probably wouldn't even have considered us with our 5250 screens!" said Ken.

The newly branded 'webView 2.0' offers the most reliable and cost-effective, unified management solution for municipalities, school boards and regional energy authorities in Canada – and, with their philosophy of accommodating a high level of customization in order to achieve a tighter fit for their customers, Bellamy is onto a sure fire winner!

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