

## Change as a Chance

*ista is the global market leader in the consumption-dependent billing of energy, water and ancillary costs. The services offered to property managers, house owners and energy utilities range from the supply and installation of meters to metering and consumption-dependent billing. With its products and services, ista makes an important contribution to the responsible use of water, heat and energy.*



ista depends on reliable, well tried and future technology. Mainframe- and SAP R/3-applications are the strategic base of data processing. tcACCESS provides the solution to connect both worlds.

The traditional data processing of ista is based on an IBM mainframe, hosting VM/ESA and VSE. The operational application is ABRE, a CICS-based application written in COBOL. ABRE covers the essential business of ista: measurement, cost allocation, billing, and revenue management of energy consumption. The production data is stored under VSAM. Due to the high number of daily transactions and ista's commitment to provide excellent service levels to the end users, ista has installed ABRE in multiple CICS partitions. On the network side, SAP R/3 is being used, running on an IBM machine with AIX and ORACLE.

The multi platform data-store was the reason for using tcACCESS.

"In our pre-tcACCESS period we have been transferring the data between the platforms using a Batch interface" Falko Scholz, Manager Application Development explains the situation at that time. "These processes were really large-scale and error prone. We started to look for a solution which would enable us to synchronize the data of both platforms in real time. We received marketing information about tcACCESS from B.O.S. which made us curious about the product. We installed it and immediately realized the potential for our use." Scholz points out the support of B.O.S. which also provided a direct access to files maintained by a software product called SPITAB.

The decision was made to purchase tcACCESS from B.O.S., München-Haar, Germany.

Today tcACCESS is the transparent connecting link between the mainframe, SAP R/3 and WINDOWS NT. Modifications made to the VSAM files by the ABRE CICS-application are being directly applied to the SAP R/3 data base. The CICS program informs tcACCESS about the changes and tcACCESS passes the modified data to the AIX server. Aside CICS, the data

synchronization is also directly performed from VSE-Batch processes.

"We use the UNIX based Listener of tcACCESS, which directly receives the modified data from our COBOL programs using predefined TCP/IP ports. The Listener then feeds the data into SAP R/3 using the JCONNECT interface from SAP and a BAPI." Christiane Drees, Application Developer explains the technical process. "The communication was complex, because we had to communicate from multiple CICS-Partitions with the Listener. But we could overcome this difficulty because the Listener was capable of dealing with the situation."

The data synchronization into the other direction also works satisfactory in production. The SAP R/3 based Contract- and Accounts Receivable-interface directly exchanges data with the mainframe. Christiane Drees: "The communication is bi-directional: We read data from the mainframe and write data to the mainframe. We use the JDBC component of tcACCESS to perform that task."

ista also has developed WINDOWS DELPHI-programs to access mainframe data via ODBC. "We have been successful with tcACCESS in a short period of time. B.O.S. has been a very competent partner who helped and supported us in the early stage of the implementation" Christiane Drees forms a positive judgement.

Falko Scholz is very pleased with tcACCESS and B.O.S.: "Change as a Chance is one of our corporate values. Heading towards the New Worlds was a significant change for us and it meant a chance to us as well. tcACCESS helped us meeting our goals.

Products from B.O.S. simply work as expected. The support is excellent, you need help, you call them and you can anticipate a solution."



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