



Case Study

Industry: University
Operating System: VM/VSE
Data Structures: VSAM

The customer is a University in Italy, which specializes on economical subjects. The data processing department of the University operates a VSE/ESA system. Student data and general production data is stored on VSAM files. It was considered to migrate the VSE/ESA System to a Client/Server platform.

tcACCESS was presented to the University as a solution to easily combine the existing VSE/ESA system with the University network, which consisted of UNIX, NT and W9x workstations. Students and staff used the workstations. Several servers provided strategic services. The need was specified by the University as follows:

- To develop new and modern applications but still maintain compliance with existing mainframe applications.
- To develop a Web based B2C application with access to production VSAM files.

tcACCESS was installed beginning of 2000. A project was set up and during the testing period a Library application has been developed. This application accesses the mainframe student data, which is VSAM based and links this data with information from an ORACLE database running on an IBM AIX RS6000 system. Additional projects followed, which are described in detail later.

The usage of tcACCESS and the new application perspectives has cancelled the migration project to a Client/Server platform. The university can use the existing resources and still develop new applications supporting state of the art technologies, like SMS protocol. As a side effect, budgeted costs have been drastically reduced. For the Web based B2C application, there is no need to mirror the production files, no additional middleware (hardware and software) was necessary, because data access is directly done on the mainframe. Although not planned, a third party Internet application has been replaced by an in-house developed application using tcACCESS. The reason for this unplanned development effort was the extreme weak and expensive support of the software vendor. Development of this application was very fast, a tcACCESS responsible of the University claims.

Production use of the product:

MS-Office: MS-Access application, which accesses VSAM files and a UNIX (AIX), based ORACLE database.

Student certificates

The application enables students to securely sign on to their student information and create certificates. The application is developed in JAVA and accesses the VSAM student files

Tax exemption: JAVA based application, which accesses VSAM files and utilizes mainframe PL/I programs.

Student Loans Management:

JAVA based application accessing VSAM files.

Student Service application:

Web based application written in JAVA, using the JDBC-ODBC bridge and accessing VSAM files via the tcACCESS ODBC-Server.

Cell Phone Service:

Application that enables a student to use his cell phone and the SMS protocol to retrieve or update the VSAM based student files.

This application has been developed and put into production. It is a 7 days 24 hours a day application and ran without any interrupt during the first month of operation.

The University spokesman claims, that the investment in tcACCESS has made VSE a strategic platform. New technologies have been introduced which can now co-operate with the robustness, reliability, and stability of the VSE mainframe. tcACCESS has become the integral part, which transparently connects the new application with the production resources on the VSE mainframe. The person responsible for tcACCESS at the University likes to say that the new answer from data processing to requests for new applications is:

Yes, we can do it!

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