Case Study

Social Services Agency
County of Santa Clara

County of Santa Clara, Social Services Agency

San Jose, CA

SOLUTIONS USED: **APOS STORAGE CENTER**, **APOS INSIGHT**

BACKGROUND:

The County of Santa Clara is the most populous county in the San Francisco Bay area, and home to California's Silicon Valley. Headquartered in San Jose, the County of Santa Clara Social Services Agency (SSA) strives to be "*a culturally sensitive and socially responsible public agency providing high quality, professional, financial, and protective services for residents of Santa Clara County*." The agency services 15 incorporated cities in this populous, urbanized and affluent county.

The SSA has been using SAP BusinessObjects as their reporting engine for more than ten years. SSA also relies on SAP BusinessObjects to meet regulatory compliance requirements for the creation and retention of documents of record.

The SSA consists of a number of departments of which the Department of Employment & Benefit Services (DEBS) is the largest consumer of business intelligence with the largest number of BI users. The Department of Family & Children's Services (DFCS), Department of Aging & Adult Services (DAAS), and Agency Office (AO) round out the field.

The SSA's 600-plus BI accounts currently use Desktop Intelligence and Web Intelligence as their primary report delivery medium. At the time of writing, the SSA was in the process of planning its migration to BI 4, so investigation of and preparation for the inevitable full adoption of Web Intelligence was also under way. More recently, the BI team has been delivering BI to the agency's information consumers via SAP BusinessObjects Dashboards (formerly Xcelsius).

CHALLENGE:

Thinh Hong, Information Systems Manager with SSA, told us there are solid motivations in place for the migration to BI 4. For example, SSA needs to migrate to BI 4 to carry out their plan to integrate the SAP Business Planning and Consolidation (BPC) solution (version 10) with SAP BusinessObjects. She also noted they were looking forward to working with multi-source universes, BI Mobile, and Design Studio dashboards, as well as the transition to Query as a Web Service (QaaWS).

In preparation for the impending migration to SAP BusinessObjects BI 4 and transition away from Desktop Intelligence to Web Intelligence, the SSA needed to be able to do an inventory and form a complete understanding of their BI system and what is currently being used. They knew they had approximately 800 reports in the system that were being scheduled or viewed in the current year, but they also knew they had no way of knowing how many other reports were sitting in personal folders or those that have not been used.

They also had concerns about backing up, archiving, and selectively restoring reports to optimize system performance and comply with regulatory requirements. Ms. Hong told us:

> There is no easy way to back up and restore objects in our SAP BusinessObjects deployment. It is vitally important that we retain BusinessObjects report instances for regulatory compliance. These instances have multiplied over the years and have continued to reside in our BO system consuming system resources and impacting system performance. Lacking the ability to monitor and purge the aging report instances, while ensuring we remain in compliance with government regulations, was a major concern.

SOLUTION:

These concerns led the SSA to contact APOS Systems and investigate the **APOS Storage Center** and **APOS Insight** solutions.

The SSA implemented the APOS Storage Center solution in 2011. APOS Storage Center lets the SSA manage their SAP BusinessObjects storage requirements more efficiently, safeguarding their documents and providing immediate access to backed-up and archived document instances so they can fulfill internal and regulatory needs quickly and easily.

APOS Storage Center allowed SSA to implement a policy whereby instances were archived and removed from personal folders after an established period of time, thus allowing them to reclaim hundreds of gigabytes of storage, and improving system performance and user access to information.

Ms. Hong commented:

> APOS Storage Center provides us with an efficient, rules-based means of cleaning up our BI environment, and the ease with which it allows us to back up and selectively restore objects has been very useful. We can archive and retrieve historical instances in a neutral format, which is important, because we maintain a five-year window on instances for regulatory compliance.

In 2013, the SSA implemented the APOS Insight solution. As the volume and complexity of their SAP BusinessObjects deployment grew, so did the need for greater system visibility. They implemented APOS Insight to achieve awareness of reports, object usage, run durations and security profiles, and for dashboard usage monitoring. Ms. Hong told us:

> APOS Insight's impact analysis capabilities allow us to see what effect changes to our data model will have downstream. It has allowed us to analyze SAP BusinessObjects metadata effectively. The information we've gathered through Insight has been very useful in helping us to manage and troubleshoot our BI environment. We will be using APOS Insight to compare environments pre- and post-migration to benchmark performance and to ensure security has translated to the new system properly, and to build a list of reports for conversion from Desktop Intelligence to Web Intelligence.

WHY APOS?

The SSA SAP BusinessObjects team made their initial approach to APOS after discussions with peers at an SAP BusinessObjects user conference. They discovered that APOS Storage Center gave them the functionality they needed.

According to Ms. Hong, APOS Storage Center gave the SSA:

- Easy automated backup, archive and delete processes
- A rich set of rules for backup, archive, and delete
- The ability to restore objects selectively
- The ability to delete instances selectively

She also noted APOS Storage Center's easy installation and maintenance and low cost of ownership, as well

as the prompt and accommodating service the SSA received from APOS Technical Support, particularly with regard to requests for new and enhanced features.

When the SSA were faced with growing volume and complexity, and impending migration to SAP BusinessObjects BI 4, they returned to APOS for the Insight solution.

APOS Storage Center and APOS Insight are now integral parts of the SSA's risk mitigation strategy. These solutions allow them to safeguard objects, document instances, and instance integrity for audit and compliance purposes (e.g., financial and healthcare regulatory requirements).

Ely Turkenitz, Data Services Director at SSA, sums up their experience with APOS well managed BI solutions and the APOS team:

> SAP BusinessObjects has been a very good tool for us to address BI, dashboards and reporting needs. However, as robust as it is, the operations and administration side of it leaves a lot to be desired: it is complex, a bit disorganized, and it changes significantly from one release to another. Furthermore, it lacks some basic management tools that, in a large deployment such as ours, are so badly needed. This is where APOS comes into the picture: we have been using APOS products for four years now, and have been very happy with them. The product offering is rich, clever, and it complements the SAP product very well. The software is stable, affordable, and very easy to use. Equally important, the support from APOS has been superb. We have had very good experience with APOS, and we plan to use them for many more years.

APOS Systems Inc. is an SAP BusinessObjects Technology Partner, with a BI history dating back 1996, when we became a Crystal partner. APOS has acknowledged a key SAP BusinessObjects XI - its open architecture - and has designed and developed a variety of solutions that offer customers additional capabilities within the SAP BusinessObjects enterprise infrastructure.

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