

NetRouter's new platform enhances cutting-edge application



Overview

■ **Application**

Web-based route and distribution optimization engine for transport and service industries

■ **Benefits**

Enhanced distribution efficiency, improved customer service and reduced delivery costs

■ **Hardware**

IBM RS/6000®

■ **Software**

*Development: IBM AIX® 4.3.2,
Lotus® Domino™ R.5;
Application: NetRouter™*

NetRouter, Inc. offers a complex routing and distribution optimization solution, NetRouter, to companies facing the challenge of balancing operational efficiency with personalized customer service. Established in 1998, NetRouter, Inc. received an eEDGE Fund grant to develop its original optimization engine as an e-business application. Buddy Bradford, company president and CEO, selected Renaissance Worldwide to develop NetRouter's new Web site. Together, they redesigned the existing system into a Web-based Lotus Domino database, including a completely revamped user interface.

In addition, Renaissance and Bradford, also the company's founder and original application developer, had to create the new user Web interface with minimal changes to the engine's proprietary software and algorithms. This approach ensured that users had the flexibility to enter and continuously modify their individual data without interfering with the efficacy of the application. "We needed to combine the power and simplicity of the Web with the proven experience and reliability of a workhorse desktop application," states Bradford.

New platform, new potential

Bradford and Renaissance had previously selected Lotus Domino R5 as the new NetRouter database application. They then chose the IBM RS/6000 using AIX 4.3.2 as the server platform. The RS/6000 was a natural choice for the project, favored by Bradford as the perfect complement to Lotus Domino. "Routing is a big number-crunching problem. The central processing of the RS/6000 has the speed necessary for NetRouter's complex routing algorithms. Combined with Lotus Domino, NetRouter is a pure IBM solution," comments Bradford.

NetRouter now takes the engine's user interface to a new level of capability. A company defines its entire distribution network on its own secure NetRouter account, including all critical efficiency parameters, quality criteria and associated cost values. Changes to any and all user-driven values can be made easily and immediately, either to reflect new standards or test various distribution scenarios. Client implementation time varies according to complexity, but, on average, a new account can be loaded and activated on NetRouter in a matter of days with virtually no new resource commitment and minimal training.

Behind the scenes, the NetRouter engine emerged better than ever on its new platform. Always effective at saving users hours of time, the new RS/6000 Lotus-based application has the ability to solve routing optimization queries at blistering speeds—a 1,000-order route can be prepared in seven minutes.

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Buddy Bradford, President and CEO, NetRouter, Inc.

New NetRouter improves client confidence

Users of the original optimization application on a desktop system since 1998, ABC Pest and Lawn Services willingly agreed to be the first users the new Web-based application. Based in Austin, Texas, ABC delivers a wide range of pest control services to private and commercial clients throughout Texas. Its most popular service, the Dow Chemical® termite control product Sentricon™, requires an efficient routing solution. “Sentricon is delivered in a repetitive and predictable pattern. Routing efficiency is a huge factor to the success of this service,” notes Matt Burns, vice president of ABC.

ABC gave the new application high marks for the new user interface. “The key to NetRouter’s ease of use is how well it allows a company to interface with its own information on

the database,” says Burns. Easily loading its customer information onto the new NetRouter database, ABC found the Internet a friendly and secure environment for route planning and “what-if” scenarios.

The effect on the company’s bottom line has been significant. ABC estimates that a 12 to 13 percent savings on delivery costs resulted from NetRouter use. “ABC has a corporate standard of seven stops a day. With NetRouter, we’re enabled to handle up to nine. We know it’s good,” says Burns.

Beyond development

NetRouter’s impact on the bottom line is tangible. Bradford comfortably estimates that a company implementing the application can save 25 percent in associated routing and distribution costs as a result of reduced fuel costs, fleet vehicles, delivery staff and administrative time.

Pleased with the success of NetRouter in its new RS/6000 and Lotus Domino environment, Bradford continues to solicit new clients. Notes Bradford, “Application hosting presents an ideal alternative to building and maintaining a new or expanding application infrastructure. Our next objective is to work with IBM to acquire the education, assessment and enablement assistance needed to offer NetRouter as a world-class solution.”

For more information

Visit the RS/6000 and pSeries Web site at: ibm.com/servers/eserver/pseries, or contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner.



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