

CASE STUDY

Iron Mountain Conquers Data

Commentary by Dave Weldon

Vice President of Technology, Iron Mountain

Customer Profile

Iron Mountain stores and protects digital information, physical records, and artifacts for more than 90,000 customers worldwide. Specializing in offsite data storage, disaster recovery, comprehensive records management, and business continuity services, Iron Mountain's annual revenue tops \$2.2 billion.

Challenge

Changing business models, new regulatory requirements, and rapid growth through acquisitions posed data access and reporting challenges for Iron Mountain. "We were consolidating 11 different billing systems to try to understand our customers and what they were buying," says Dave Weldon, vice president of technology at Iron Mountain.

With so many billing systems, it was difficult to get a consolidated view of customers. Further, Iron Mountain tapped into demographic data from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) to enrich its understanding of customers and prospects—adding another layer to the data complexity. Finally, Iron Mountain aimed to sustain a growth rate of 10 to 15 percent per year, which meant the company needed to be able to access and understand their data in order to identify new customers, as well as sell more to existing ones.

"Adding D&B information to the data warehouse told us a lot more about our customers, their locations, what industries they are in, and how big they are," says Weldon. "Unfortunately, we weren't able to get that information into the hands of our business community. We had a very large database and only about 10 people—mostly marketing folks—that used it."

Turnaround time was also an issue. The sprawling complexity of data sources and sheer volume meant IT analysts took up to two months to deliver hundreds of reports to the business-user community.

"This cycle took anywhere from a day to 60 days, and it was happening at a rate of about 700 to 800 report requests a month," says Weldon. The company needed faster and more accurate reporting, as well as the ability to provide tailored reports drawn from the 180 databases.

"Getting a worldwide snapshot of a customer and what they were buying used to take two months, and the results were not very accurate. Now it takes two minutes—and it contains three years of historical buying trends."

Dave Weldon, Iron Mountain

The Result

Iron Mountain looked to Business Objects to help them integrate, manage, and report on data stored in systems across the organization. Solutions implemented included BusinessObjects Data Integrator, BusinessObjects Data Federator, BusinessObjects RapidMarts, BusinessObjects Enterprise XI, BusinessObjects Web Intelligence, InfoView, and Crystal Reports.

Real-Time Access to Integrated, Trustworthy Data

Iron Mountain uses Data Integrator to consolidate summarized invoice information from their 11 billing systems into their data warehouse, and Data Federator to supplement the historical information with real-time access to production databases.

"Getting a worldwide snapshot of a customer and what they were buying used to take two months, and the results were not very accurate. Now it takes two minutes—and it contains three years of historical buying

trends," says Weldon. "BusinessObjects Data Federator was the only technical solution we could find that did the job quickly and easily."

Increased End-User Adoption and Ease of Use

Iron Mountain implemented Crystal Reports and InfoView to support standard reports from its IT group. "These tools made information accessible to about 85 percent of our business community," says Weldon, "a far cry from the handful of people who were able to use our reports in the past."

Weldon praises Crystal for its prompting, drill-down, and graphic features that make standard reports "easy to use and meaningful," and InfoView for its reporting folders, batch scheduling, file exporting, and e-mail distribution.

Powerful Ad Hoc Reporting

Iron Mountain has trained more than 850 people in the use of standard reports, and another 120 in ad hoc reporting. End users include analysts in marketing and finance, as well as business users from sales and account management. For super users delivering sales, financial, and marketing analysis, Weldon notes, "Web Intelligence is a friendly and powerful ad hoc reporting tool that gives them the level of sophistication and detail they require."

Quality of Service and SLA Performance

Looking ahead, Iron Mountain plans to use Business Objects to manage service-level agreement (SLA) performance. "As we get a more complete picture of our customers and their buying habits, we want to continue filling out that picture by looking at how well we are able to perform to the SLAs we have with our customers," says Weldon.

Access to, and use of, trusted information is truly driving change and business performance at Iron Mountain. ●