

Major Aeronautical Manufacturer Moves beyond Paper with Brava!

They were looking to put paper in their past.

With top-level clients like the Pentagon, a company cannot afford to have their design and engineering processes still in the dark ages. A Prime Contractor of all UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) activities for a prominent defense electronics company was getting a lot of attention for their advanced development of a pilot-less air vehicle. Designed to loiter for 24 hours over a site, providing clear aerial imagery, the Pentagon was very interested in the possibilities this aircraft presented for surveillance purposes, but such a client would also come with high expectations on time, cost and security.

As it stood, three copies of a drawing were created for each project in order to protect the integrity of the original design. These were then sent to their perspective destinations: planning, engineering and the necessary off-site location. Drawings per project could range anywhere from 30-100, depending on the intricacy of the design.

"Repro would be backlogged up to 30-35 days," remarked the Configuration Management Supervisor on the bottlenecking that would occur due to the tedious process of reproducing CAD drawings. In addition, three to five days had to be factored into every project for mailing to locations outside the company, not to mention the long-term impracticality of paper and the space it takes to organize and store. This added unnecessary cost and time burdens to projects. One of this supervisor's goals for the company was, "to eliminate file cabinets," along with providing the company a more timely system for sharing drawings company-wide that still offered the necessary security.

Brava!, developed by Informative Graphics Corp., a Phoenix, Ariz.-based software company, is a zero-administration, Java-based viewer that enables users to view, print and redline image and native CAD drawing formats through the convenience of the Web. The only truly scalable solution, Brava! is used in more online deployments than any other product of its kind - making it the de facto standard. Electronic files can be shared with contributors in a secured environment, without requiring them to have the same native application installed or the expertise to run it. Brava! is integrated with several EDM and PLM applications, also allowing users to manage check-in/check-out annotations and to pull attribute data from the vault for ISO banner and watermark printing to ensure corporate documentation security.

Other companies offered DM tools with Web publishing functionality, but only through an outsource service provider arrangement. This did not give the sense of document security they were looking for. The providers of the contractor's ECMS Server, a Product Data Management System, had more than 30 years of business experience behind them and were familiar with Informative Graphics' reputation for good products. The CEO and staff were able to thoroughly test and recommend Brava! for the Configuration Management department. Account managers at Informative Graphics walked through a Web demonstration over a conference call with the department supervisor, providing the full experience of Brava!'s functionality and immediately addressing any questions.

"Those guys (at IGC) were very cooperative," said a staff member on the support they received during the testing and incorporating of Brava! with the ECMS server.

Along with Brava! offering everything they were looking for in a viewer, the low cost of 100 floating seats with maintenance also won them over.

"One of the company's goals is to streamline, and Brava! is helping us do that."

With Brava! now in place, drawings are conveniently shared over the Web within the company as well as off-site, drastically cutting down on reproduction, mailing time and expenses. Drawings now only take 2 days, as the Repro staff can simply go to a particular project file through the intranet and print information requested. They are also working on scanning all pre-Brava! drawings into the engineering database to completely eliminate all paper from the process and have now gone to 42-inch plasma screens, enabling an entire team to view and collaborate on a drawing in unison.

"My vision is enterprise," said the Department Supervisor on his vision of migrating the whole company to Brava!.

"It reduces the time line, creates communication, reduces cost and improves customer satisfaction."

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