

Aon Global Professional Services (A Wang VS migration case study)

Move to Oracle boosts Aon's legacy broking system

Belgium, 27/05/2001

Anubex and Rebus Managed Services worked in partnership with leading independent broker Aon Global Professional Services to migrate its legacy broking system from Wang VS to Oracle /Windows NT.

"Calculations which previously took a week on our Wang VS can now be processed over a weekend and results are available for our clients on the Monday morning."
- John Carr, Finance and IT Director, Aon Global, Professional Services.

Aon Global Professional Services division (GPS) provides risk advisory and insurance brokerage services to the world's largest professionals, including the Big 5 accounting and consultancy practices.

It is part of the Aon group, whose fast-paced growth began in 1982, when the Ryan Insurance Group merged with Combined International Corporation. Today, the Aon group employs 50,000 employees and has annual revenues of \$7 billion, making it the second-largest insurance intermediary in the world. In response to an increasingly complex market with many mergers and acquisitions in the client base, combined with a relentless increase in claims volumes, GPS began development of an integrated client, risk and claims management system in 1988. This was based on Wang machines, using the PACE database. GPS was determined that this system would provide complete support of its business processes and this, combined with the highly complex logic required of the system, meant that the GPS system was not completed until 1995.

Time to migrate

With Wang's filing for Chapter 11 protection, the risks involved in operating a Wang-based system rapidly increased, as did the costs of supporting and maintaining a proprietary system. GPS' clients were also increasingly concerned with their business being transacted on a Wang-based platform. John Carr, Finance and IT Director, Aon Global Professional Services, said: "The Aon group has had a directive to replace all Wang-based systems. Our objective was to retain the existing functionality, but with improved speed on a 'going forward' platform." Aon reviewed the alternatives available and an initial study showed that a redevelopment project was likely to take around 50 man-years' effort.


This was eliminated on cost, risk and timescale grounds. A number of migration vendors were invited to tender and Aon chose the tools from Belgian-based migration specialist Anubex, because of their proven high level of automation. Louis Heymans, Managing Director of Anubex, commented: "Where a system provides the required functionality, migration retains the investment in the existing system, while adding value by placing it within a more scalable, open environment. Often much of a system's functionality is not clearly understood or documented and this causes problems when trying to re-engineer the application." Rebus IS was selected to perform the migration itself, based on the quality of prior work undertaken with Aon, as well as its unique expertise in this area, having successfully worked with Anubex on a previous migration project.

Team effort

The migration started and Anubex worked closely with both Rebus' Computer Services division and Aon's own IT staff. Collaborating in this way fulfilled one of the project's key objectives to deliver an Aon team, capable of supporting and enhancing the broking system after migration. With development and testing activities going on in three locations, systems were put in place to provide a controlled environment where newly-converted segments of the system could be delivered and testing faults could be reported and turned around rapidly. Testing the converted application was a major task in itself. Although technical testing was performed by the developers prior to delivery, Aon wanted rigorous regression-testing of the converted system against the Wang version. Supported by information supplied by Anubex and Rebus, Aon checked every function on all of the 8,000 screens in the application prior to live implementation, with only minimal problems encountered. The migration of the GPS application took around 12 months before live implementation in May 2001 and was achieved within budget. Throughout the project, there was no impact on daily operations until the switch-over to the new system.

Robust support for complex migrations

The migrated system provides the backbone of the GPS division's daily claim processing operations in a highly complex environment. The system's operators have reacted positively. "User acceptance and enthusiasm are very high.



By choosing an automated migration, we have been able to introduce the new system to the users with minimal training”, said Mr Carr.

The increased efficiency of the system has allowed information to be provided to insurers and clients in a much more timely way. “Calculations which previously took a week on our Wang VS can now be processed over a weekend and results are available for our clients on the Monday morning.

This allows us to provide a better service and in turn allows our clients to manage their liabilities more closely. “The system was delivered within budget and the greatly reduced operating costs mean that we expect to start delivering return on investment in a short timescale.

Now that the system is based on a modern platform, our first priority is to use the availability of the data contained within it to provide better information to our own management, our clients and underwriters.”

For more information:

Anubex nv
migrations@anubex.com
www.anubex.com
T +32 (0)3 450 42 50
F +32 (0)3 450 42 51