TSG Software

Mantis Conversion – Irish Life & Permanent

Faced with a substantial increase in costs at the renewal date for their Mantis product, Irish Life & Permanent were forced to consider removing the proprietary and expensive Mantis programming products and converting the existing applications to a different environment. TSG Software, with many years of experience in Mantis conversions, were able to offer a cost effective way of giving Irish Life & Permanent a set of applications that were identical to the ones created in Mantis.

About AIB

The Irish Life & Permanent group is a leading provider of personal financial services in the Irish market. The group is made up of Irish Life – Ireland's largest life assurance company and the market leader in life, pension and investment products, and Permanent TSB – the leading provider of residential mortgage finance in Ireland. The group has over one million customers in Ireland.

Problem

Substantial one-off fee for renewal of Mantis licences.

Mantis applications providing essential functionality - could not be retired.

Solution

Seamless migration to CaseGen

Removal of run time modules

Benefits

Significantly reduced licensing costs

Improved development tool

Minimum downtime

No training or hiring costs

THE PROBLEM

Irish Life & Permanent had used the Mantis product from Cincom to create programs and applications that were running on the mainframe. Despite having satisfactorily used the product for some years, they were forced to review their options when Cincom announced a large one-off fee at the next renewal date.

Seamus Harkin, IT Solutions Architect at Irish Life & Permanent, describes the situation: "We basically had three choices; 1. Pay the fee, 2. Convert the programs and applications, and 3. Shut down the systems [using Mantis]". As the Mantis applications provided essential functionality to the business, shutting down the systems was simply not an option. To find an alternative solution to paying the one-off fee, they contacted TSG Software.

THE SOLUTION

With many years of experience in Mantis conversions, TSG were able to migrate the existing Mantis programs into CICS COBOL, with the new programs offering the same functionality as Mantis, but without the licence renewal fee. TSG converted 15 applications comprising several hundred programs to the new environment.

TSG performed the conversion by obtaining the user written source code for the Mantis applications from Irish Life

& Permanent and analysing the programs before converting them into new, well structured, COBOL programs.

The COBOL programs were identical in functionality to Mantis, and could therefore be used by the same people without the need to retrain. They were also much cheaper to run as they didn't require any licence fees to be paid.

THE OUTCOME

TSG successfully converted 15 applications from Mantis to COBOL, and by doing so provided a replacement program that was identical in functionality to Mantis, and that required no re-training or additional resources. Most importantly, the conversion was done at a fraction of the cost that would have been incurred at the licence renewal date for the Mantis product.

Furthermore, as COBOL is more common it provided a more standard environment for the developers to work in. Harkin states "While there was no other reason besides cost for moving across to COBOL, there were definitely significant upsides. For instance, the skill set available or Mantis was very limited."

ADDING VALUE

TSG's experience in Mantis conversions meant that they were aware of the many issues that can occur with the new system during the conversion, and could therefore provide solutions for them before handing over the new programs to Irish Life & Permanent.

Harkin adds the following: "We had a set time frame in order to avoid a significant charge for continued usage of Mantis, and with the help of TSG we were able to convert our applications within the deadline.

Without the professionalism and commitment of the TSG people involved on this project, I have no doubt that we would not have made our target."

IN SUMMARY

TSG provided Irish Life & Permanent with a replacement for their Mantis product that was easy to use, required no training of staff, and that avoided the significant licence renewal costs.

TSG's commitment during the conversion process was recognised by Irish Life & Permanent as being a significant factor in getting the conversion completed successfully, and on time.