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CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Illinois Century Network

Illinois Century Network Provides Superior Support with BMC® Remedy® Solutions

Geography
North America

Industry
Education

Business Need
Replace a homegrown problem management solution which was limited in functionality and scalability.

Solution
ICN implemented BMC® Remedy® solutions to address their key requirements: fast performance for remote users, the ability to interface with other systems, easy migration of existing data into the new system, and reporting capabilities.

Results
> Better service to constituents
> More responsive reporting to stakeholders
> Clear linkage between IT assets and critical IT services

Needing to replace its homegrown incident management application, Illinois Century Network (ICN) chose BMC® Remedy® Service Management solutions as a way to provide better service to customers and more responsive reporting to stakeholders — all while keeping costs down.

In 2001, the State of Illinois tied for first place in the Digital States Survey, an award that recognizes excellence in government technology initiatives. A major contributing factor in garnering this prestigious award was the Illinois Century Network (ICN), a world-class IP education, training, and electronic information.

ICN provides high-speed access to data, video, and audio communication for 5,700 educational, governmental, research, and nonprofit entities in Illinois. With two million end users, ICN is the largest network of its kind anywhere in the world. Further, the agency is saving the State of Illinois between $12 million and $15 million a year by offering the lowest possible cost for constituents to receive bandwidth to both the commercial Internet and each other. ICN is committed to providing the best possible service to constituents and is using BMC Remedy Service Management solutions to help keep costs down while also providing superior support.

PREPARING FOR RAPID GROWTH

ICN's previous homegrown problem management application was limited in functionality and did not support sophisticated workflows and business processes. Order tracking was handled by a different group using different software and different process. Not only that, but support personnel in the nine regional technology centers (RTCs) tracked their activities using spreadsheets and databases. ICN recognized that they needed a consolidated approach for handling constituent requests and complying with governmental reporting mandates.

With a growth rate of six to eight percent each month, the agency also realized that it needed a more formal, sophisticated approach to servicing constituents and reporting on its activities and performance. "Our key requirements included fast performance for our remote users, the ability to interface with other systems, easy migration of our existing data into the new system, and reporting capabilities," recalls Lori Sorenson, Deputy Director for Administration. Column Technologies, a BMC solution provider, proposed a solution that leveraged the out-of-the-box functionality of BMC® Remedy® Customer Support and BMC® Remedy® Asset Management, as well as the flexibility of the BMC® Remedy® Action Request System® (AR System®), a consolidated service process management platform for automating and managing service management business processes.

KEEPING CONSTITUENTS HAPPY

Today, virtually every ICN staff member in the central office and in the nine RTCs uses the BMC Remedy solutions to track constituent contact information for communications, process and track orders for new services, track constituent hardware data for troubleshooting and technical support, and feed information to the billing system.

"With BMC, we're able to serve more people, provide better service, and still be accountable without increasing our staff."

Lori Sorenson
Deputy Director of Administration
Illinois Century Network

Key Products Used
> BMC® Remedy® Customer Support
> BMC® Remedy® Asset Management
> BMC® Remedy® Action Request System®

BMC Remedy Customer Support handles provisioning, phone support, incident management, requests, and complaints. All constituent data now resides in a single system, making it readily available to everyone who needs it. "With BMC, we're able to serve more people, provide better service, and still be accountable without increasing our staff," reports Sorenson. "Our constituents are very happy with the service we provide."

DELIVERING FASTER RESOLUTION AND PROACTIVE NOTIFICATION

Using BMC Remedy Asset Management, ICN can immediately determine which constituents are affected by a circuit outage, as well as which services are being provided to those constituents. The system shows the interrelationships among circuits, including whether or not a circuit is part of a distribution router, which would indicate a larger issue. Sorenson explains, "A circuit can serve 28 or more different constituents. If that circuit goes down, BMC Remedy Asset Management enables us to know who is impacted. The system shows us, for example, that the circuit is being fed by a certain piece of hardware, which is being fed by this circuit, and so on. If one link goes down, we can see everybody who is affected by the disruption, so we can immediately notify the constituents and tell them what's happening. This also enables us to quickly take corrective action." Rachelle Caldwell, ICN systems analyst, adds, "We usually notify the constituents before they even know that the service is down."

CREATING REPORTS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

The State of Illinois pays for the baseline ICN services, ensuring that most K-12 schools and libraries have high-speed Internet access at no cost. Additionally, ICN participates in the federal government's eRate program, which reimburses certain schools and libraries for telecommunications expenses based on financial need. Because government funding is involved, and because constituents must pay for any services beyond the baseline level, ICN must carefully track usage and demonstrate that the amount it charges for services are in line with what other providers would charge. The agency must, for example, report on how many constituents it serves, the percentage of resources each one uses, how much bandwidth is provided, and how much it costs ICN to provide that bandwidth on a per-megabyte basis.

With BMC, ICN easily can generate these reports in a variety of formats. In addition, when constituents exceed baseline usage levels, the solution passes the appropriate data to ICN's MAS 90 application for billing purposes. Consequently, the agency can ensure that it receives payment for all the services it delivers.

ICN managers also use the solution's reporting capabilities to monitor staff workloads, measure performance, and spot trends in hardware problems. Sorenson says, "We look at response time provided to constituents, how promptly we turn around quotes, and how quickly we're closing trouble tickets. We also look for trends, such as if a certain type of hardware seems to be experiencing multiple problems or the same kind of problem over and over. This is a red flag, and we can be proactive and come up with a long-term solution to the problem."

AUTOMATING DEPRECIATION CALCULATIONS

ICN is required by state law to provide detailed reports on depreciation expenses for millions of dollars worth of inventory. In the past, the fiscal staff spent months manually generating these reports using spreadsheet software. Now, Caldwell is developing a depreciation expense application on BMC Remedy AR System to automate the process. The application will pull inventory records based on specific criteria, calculate depreciation expenses for each item, and update the inventory application with the new depreciation information. "Now, instead of spending months calculating depreciation expenses, the financial people will be able to select the fiscal year and period, and then just click a button," Caldwell said.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

According to Sorenson, both BMC and Column Technologies have far exceeded ICN's expectations. "The talented staff at Column put in a tremendous amount of time and effort," Sorenson said. "They guided us down the path that offered the best solution for ICN. Our staff fully embraced the BMC Remedy solutions right from the beginning, which says a lot about the solution's ease-of-use and fast performance. And the flexibility in reporting allows us to respond quickly and efficiently to requests for information."

Caldwell added that BMC Remedy AR System also has exceeded expectations from a development standpoint. The platform's flexibility has enabled her to build a variety of custom applications to support ICN's unique operational and reporting needs. Caldwell said, "With BMC, when it comes to adding features that streamline our business, we're limited only by our own imagination and skill."

About Illinois Century Network

ICN is a telecommunications backbone that provides high-speed access to data, video, and audio communication to more than 5,700 constituents, including schools, colleges, universities, public libraries, museums, local and state agencies, and hospitals. The company's constituents represent approximately two million citizens, mostly students. A state agency, ICN operates under the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

BMC Partner – Column Technologies

Column Technologies is a national provider of enterprise infrastructure management solutions that enable organizations to manage their internal and external service delivery more effectively. A BMC solution provider partner since 1998, Column provides software, consultative services, and education.

About BMC Software

BMC Software delivers the solutions IT needs to increase business value through better management of technology and IT processes. Our industry-leading Business Service Management solutions help you reduce cost, lower risk of business disruption, and benefit from an IT infrastructure built to support business growth and flexibility. Only BMC provides best practice IT processes, automated technology management, and award-winning BMC® Atrium™ technologies that offer a shared view into how IT services support business priorities. Known for enterprise solutions that span mainframe, distributed systems, and end-user devices, BMC also delivers solutions that address the unique challenges of the midsized business. Founded in 1980, BMC has offices worldwide and fiscal 2006 revenues of more than $1.49 billion. Activate your business with the power of IT. www.bmc.com.

To learn more about how BMC can help activate your business, visit www.bmc.com or call 1.800.841.2031

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