

Transportation Company Provides 24/7 Access to Critical Data Using OpenText HostExplorer®

OpenText HostExplorer improves stability and scalability as the preferred host access solution of fast-growing, regional transportation company

To achieve 98 percent on-time delivery performance, USF Holland requires systems to be online and accessible 24/7, and OpenText HostExplorer® has delivered on that requirement for many years. For USF Holland, no system downtime, even during software migration, is the key to success.

USF Holland was founded in 1929 as a regional transportation carrier. Due to several acquisitions, including one by YRC Worldwide in 2005, USF Holland has undergone explosive growth in recent years and now includes 80 local service centers, 9,000 trailers, 5,400 tractors, and 10,000 dedicated employees. USF Holland provides direct regional delivery to 22 states and 2 Canadian provinces. They delivered nearly 20 million shipments last year and retained their status as an industry leader for on-time delivery and exceptional service.

A need for constant connectivity

Access to key sales and freight information from all locations, day or night, is critical to the operation and success of a transportation company. USF Holland relies on a vast database of information in order to manage their shipments efficiently; they have spent years fine-tuning a complex system to manage and facilitate their shipping processes. Rick George, Assistant Director of Information Technology at USF Holland, immediately recognized the

benefits of OpenText HostExplorer® in contributing to the efficiency of company operations. He explains, "Our freight management system stores all the order, customer service, tracking, pricing, and route information; it's at the core of our business." Because the freight management system is installed on an AlphaServer in an OpenVMS™ environment, employees originally used video terminals to access and input data. "When we moved to Windows® machines, we knew we'd have issues with accessibility between the two systems," says George.

A smooth transition with HostExplorer

OpenText HostExplorer is a secured host access solution that facilitates access to business-critical information stored on legacy systems, such as mainframes and AS/400. HostExplorer offers a low-risk deployment strategy and a non-disruptive migration path to companies that are considering moving away from their current emulation solution.

INDUSTRY

Transportation

CUSTOMER

USF Holland—a Division of YRC Worldwide

CHALLENGES


- Substantial investment made in a legacy system
- Systems must run 24/7, even during migration
- Fast-paced company growth

SOLUTION

- OpenText HostExplorer®

BENEFITS

- Low-risk deployment and migration paths
- Seamless access to data
- Leverages the investment in legacy systems
- Integrates with existing software
- Scales limitlessly to accommodate company growth



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RICK GEORGE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, USF HOLLAND

When they made the decision to convert to PCs at the main office in the 1990s, the USF Holland IT department realized they required a solution to access their data on the AlphaServer from the PCs. The IT group advocated the selection and implementation of the HostExplorer solution to the organization. "Conventional terminal emulators could not provide the required customizations to meet the needs of our users," explains George. "And it was essential that we employed a solution that would not interrupt or degrade business processes during migration."

Stable and seamless access

In the two years that followed the initial implementation of HostExplorer at the main office, the IT group rolled out WinTerms to 80 of their regional offices. HostExplorer is installed on a Citrix® MetaFrame server, and users access Citrix from their PCs or WinTerms. From there, they can access the freight management system on the AlphaServer. George manages the team that administers HostExplorer. According to George, "Employees simply click on the freight management system icon. HostExplorer is so seamless the users don't even know that it's there, and from an administrative point of view, that's great!"

The ability to customize HostExplorer sessions was part of the appeal of the solution. According to George, "We can do a lot of things with HostExplorer that we couldn't do with the original video terminals. We can support a larger screen size, so users don't have to page forward and backward. It makes much better use of our screen real estate, and it also helps administrators who need a larger area to work with." He adds, "We've customized colors for fields, which makes it faster and easier for users to find what they're looking for. We couldn't do that with the video terminals either."

The USF Holland IT group understood that several pieces of their current infrastructure would be changing as the emulation solution was being rolled out. The migration to HostExplorer has been smooth with no disruptions to business operations. USF Holland's exceptional 98 percent on-time service and 0.5 percent claims ratio standing (one of the lowest in the industry) was maintained in part due to the stability of HostExplorer. "In all the years that we've used HostExplorer, it has never let us down. It's the one part of our system that I don't have to worry about. I've never had to call for support," confirms George. HostExplorer extends the life of their legacy system and protects their investment in the freight management application by scaling limitlessly to accommodate business growth.

Protecting the investment in legacy systems for years to come

If Assistant IT Director Rick George has anything to say about it, HostExplorer will be the solution for protecting the company's investment in the legacy freight management system for years to come. During the acquisitions, George has been an adamant supporter of HostExplorer and has championed its use across the organization, affirming, "Our HostExplorer deployment has been very successful. I don't want to change it—this works." Recently, he added, "I just installed the new version of HostExplorer, and it just keeps getting better. I went in to configure my favorite screen size and colors, and it was even easier to configure than previous versions. The screen options are clean and intuitive. You don't need a user's manual to make it work."

The ease of migration, proven track record, stability, and scalability of HostExplorer ensures its place as the preferred host access solution of the fast-growing, regional transportation company. USF Holland has come to depend on the ease-of-use, efficiency, and security of OpenText solutions, and they see their relationship becoming even more important to their success in the future. ■

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