

## Major California University Graduates with Hummingbird®

Anyone who's been to college knows the value of the library—a single place where you can find all the information you need to get your work done.

Imagine, then, how ineffective the library would be if all its assets were split up, located in different buildings around the campus, and if you needed a separate library card or identification to obtain books or information from each location.

This nightmare was actually a pretty good way to describe the back-end business-intelligence infrastructure on the campus of a major California University, where until recently administrators were forced to try to cobble together information from a wide range of proprietary systems.

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**Senior IT Manager**

Though most of the university's business processes were computerized, each division—a list that includes admissions, employee payroll, facilities management, research and instructional workload, among others—had its own system, operating independently of the other divisions.

According to the Senior IT Manager in the university's office of resource management and planning, the evolution of proprietary systems had created "silos of information" that hampered the university's ability to make strategic decisions based on data taken from all areas of operation.

"It was difficult to provide standardized, high-quality information to analysts and decision makers across the organization," says the IT manager. The problem finally drove the university to develop a campus data warehouse project, with the goal of integrating, standardizing, and enhancing access to information for operational, tactical, and strategic decision support. The tool the university chose to reach its goal was Genio, a universal data exchange solution from Hummingbird.

### From Silos to Warehouse

The problem at the university, of course, is not unique. In many enterprise business operations, separate divisions have turned to point solutions for help in their vertical business categories. Many of these systems are good at solving a particular problem or serving a narrow business need, but none are designed to cross the scope of the enterprise—or in the university's case, the entire campus operations.

"Each of the divisions built their own systems at their own time," the IT manager explains. "The financial systems, the human resources systems, the student information systems, were all developed individually, and they didn't talk to each other."

#### Industry

Education

#### Customer

Major California University

#### Business Challenges

- Proprietary business-information systems produced "silos" of information, which were not easily shared across departments
- Business strategy decisions hampered by lack of single, all-encompassing data warehouse structure
- Numerous, disparate systems created lengthy delays in custom programming
- Multiple logins, identification schemes caused user confusion

#### Business Solution

Genio®

#### Business Benefits

- Provides single, campus-wide data warehouse structure for enterprise data modeling, as well as management and information delivery
- Reduces programming personnel costs
- Higher user and administrator productivity, through system's ease-of-use
- Provides scalable foundation for campus-wide system growth

While those deployments might have made sense internally, the jumble of systems was of little help to those seeking campus-wide information. According to the IT manager, his department supports a wide group of users from associate deans to directors of administration to people trying to make decisions about factors like enrollment growth and what that might mean to resource allotments for students, research, and facility expansion. To make such wide-reaching decisions, of course, required a tool that could extract data from multiple entry points. Data sources include various systems implemented in Oracle® and Microsoft® SQL Server running on a variety of hardware platforms. The target data warehouse consists of two data layers.

The detailed data layer is implemented in Oracle on a Sun® Solaris® platform. The summary data layer is implemented in Hyperion Essbase, also on a Sun Solaris platform. Users access both the detailed and summary data layers to satisfy their needs for operational, tactical, and strategic decision support. Under the historical infrastructure, the capability of extracting from multiple sources didn't exist. Another big problem, according to the IT manager, was that each departmental system had its own identification method, forcing users to remember how to interact with all the different systems they needed information from.

For knowledge workers seeking the big picture, the university's legacy infrastructure was a nightmare. "Trying to report on data from all the systems was extremely hard to do," the IT manager says. "We really needed an integrated reporting ability."

### Hummingbird Passes the Exam

The IT manager was confident in Genio, especially after Hummingbird Connectivity emerged as the victor of a rigorous request-for proposal (RFP) test that included competing products from a list of well-known vendors.

"The Genio proof-of-concept team was only one of two that was able to complete all the requirements of the onsite project," says the IT manager, who says that the vendors were required to demonstrate their products at the campus and show that they could pass a range of tests that included sophisticated data transformations. Genio was judged best overall by a panel of four senior-level technical representatives from various university departments.

After winning the school's rigorous RFP test, Genio was rolled out to a pilot group of 50 users in the university's undergraduate admissions department, the student information department, and the employee payroll division. That lucky group of users and administrators quickly learned the power of Genio as a data integration and ETL (extract, transform, and load) tool.

The pilot program was designed to test all the aspects of a fully architected data warehouse. The tasks put to Genio included enterprise data modeling; data extraction transformation and loading; database management; and information delivery to both technical and non-technical users across the various divisions.

"The improvements were sudden and amazing," the IT manager says, especially in the custom-programming area, where Genio Designer, a multi-user graphical development environment for designing data transformation and exchange processes, changed the way the university thought about project completion times.

"People were familiar with C programming and had low expectations about how long it could take to get a program finished," the IT manager says. "With Genio, people couldn't believe the amount of work we got finished in a short time. They thought it was magic. I say it's not magic, it's just having the right tool for the job."

According to the IT manager, the university's warehouse development staff now has a structured, documented, and easy-to-use environment for managing all aspects of the ETL process. "We have already estimated that the use of Genio saves us the equivalent of about one or two full-time, highly paid programmers a year," the IT manager says. "These are substantial savings in an organization where IT resources are scarce and in very high demand."

### The University Saves Money, Time on Programming

Thanks to the ease of use that is a major feature of Genio, the IT manager says that programmers and administrators aren't the only ones who can help build the university's warehouse system.

"Besides the cost savings in programming time and overall productivity, management appreciates the fact that Genio is self-documenting, a feature that allows non-technical managers and analysts to easily see what data transformations and business rules are being applied when data is loaded to the warehouse," the IT manager says. "It's also important that journey-level programmers are able to use the product with relatively minimal training."

The university is now looking beyond its pilot project, which has already scaled from 50 to about 100 users. Eventually, he says, thousands of users across the campus will be able to access the Genio-built data warehouse, which will expand to include operations in the university's financial, research, facilities, and instructional-workload information departments.



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