



C A S E S T U D Y

Web Power: Cass Uses SOAP/AM® to Modernize Their Operations

NuWave Customer Case Study:

NonStop Software:

SOAP/AM Server

SOAP/AM Web Service Client

Industry:

Payment Services

Successful companies get that way by focusing hard on their core business. This explains why so many Fortune 1000 companies outsource the onerous task of paying their most complex bills. But for Cass Information Systems this is their core business. In fact, they are the leading provider of payment services for utility, telecom, financial and transportation needs.

Cass leverages the latest technologies to ensure that these complex bills are paid accurately and on time. In addition to processing the transactions, the company also provides critical management reporting to help its clients better manage their expenses in the target areas.

Cass relies on the HP Integrity NonStop platform to meet its stringent performance, scalability, and availability requirements. On the software side, the addition of SOAP/AM® products from NuWave Technologies leverages the power of Web services. Notes Jim Crowley, manager of the internal programming department: "We are a technology-driven company, so it's important for us to have leading-edge solutions."

BLENDING ENVIRONMENTS AND EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Cass has embarked on an ambitious program to Web-enable its NonStop system-based applications. "We purchased SOAP/AM Server and SOAP/AM Web Service Client because we were confident they could help blend our Windows and NonStop environments, protect our IT investment, and enhance the efficiency of our operations," says Crowley. "They have met our expectations, and then some."

Project leader Tom Schaper offers a concrete example. "We routinely receive requests from users to accelerate payments on a given set of bills from our invoice file," he explains. "In the past, this would involve writing a custom program to extract and modify the specific set of bills to handle this request. Using the SOAP/AM® products, we were able build a browser interface that would communicate directly with programs running on our NonStop server. Users now have access to the tools they need to perform these tasks quickly and efficiently."

The benefit of Web-enabling HP NonStop services is clear. "Anyone with the proper authorization can access these services, run queries, or perform maintenance," says Schaper. "It significantly broadens the availability of our system to the user base." Today these users are internal to Cass; in the

future, certain services will likely be exposed to external users, subject to strict security controls.

According to Jeff Hopkins, director of IT for freight services, SOAP/AM® also benefits new IT employees. “We realized that we had a confusing array of interfaces,” he says. “We were presenting TACL, SCOBOL, various network-hosted applications, and our own portal. By creating Web front ends, we can present a common, consistent interface to our users, making it possible for them to become productive much more quickly.”

A LITTLE LIKE WINDOWS®

Cass investigated an alternative product offering before settling on NuWave’s SOAP/AM® product set. “Using the other solution would have required us to purchase, install, and learn several packages,” recalls Schaper. “Each package involved an investment in time, and a pretty steep learning curve. Once we had a short demo of SOAP/AM®, we were able to use it within a half hour. It made the purchase decision very easy.”

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—JEFF HOPKINS
Director of IT
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The download and installation are similar to installing typical Windows® applications; even better is the ongoing use of the product. “We can use SOAP/AM® to expose existing NonStop server applications to the Web without changing them at all,” explains Schaper. “Using the SOAP/AM® browser interface is very intuitive. The process of setting up a new Web service is as simple as answering a series of questions as it guides you through the process. It literally takes less than five minutes to set up and test a new Web service. All of this requires no change to the NonStop application or its configuration, allowing us to leverage our legacy applications in new ways.”

NuWave’s products have not only performed as advertised, they’ve also delivered some unexpected and pleasant surprises. “On our NonStop server we run the Guardian operating system, which has unique file structures, utilities, and commands” says Schaper. “SOAP/AM® gives users that are not familiar with Guardian OS the ability to work with these files by presenting them in the familiar Windows Explorer file/folder structure. In fact, once SOAP/AM® is installed and running on the NonStop, all interaction with the product is accomplished via the browser interface. This interface delivers security, functionality, and sophistication without the need to memorize commands or settings.”

SOAP/AM® products protect Cass’s NonStop investment by Web-enabling the applications.

SOA MADE EASY

One of the most exciting developments today is the service-oriented architecture (SOA) concept. SOA is a way for corporations to rethink the way in which they deliver services throughout the enterprise—a way to enhance business agility while protecting existing IT investment. The Integrity NonStop platform lends itself well to implementing a service-oriented architecture. Existing NonStop server applications can be readily exposed as SOA services, thereby modernizing the applications and increasing their value to the enterprise without users having to reengineer them.



Services come into play at Cass in many areas. For example, they are used to match images of bills with associated electronic data. "All of the business logic is included in a Web service," says Crowley. "Then the interface, whether it's a browser or a desktop client, talks to the Web service to get its answers: decisions on security, bills that are available for processing, and so on. The Web or desktop client deals only with the presentation, not the business-level decisions."

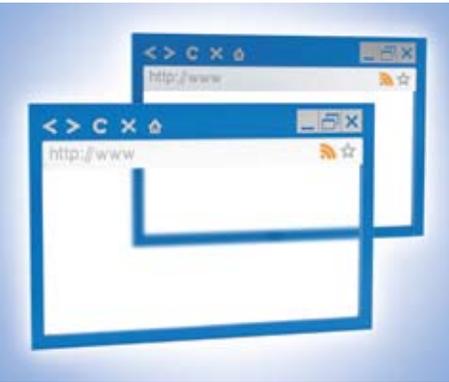
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THE FUTURE OF BILL PAYMENT

Schaper strongly recommends NuWave's products to other NonStop system users that are on the cusp of implementing a SOA strategy. "You want an easy way in, and this is the easiest and most cost-effective way," he says. "The learning curve is so minimal with SOAP/AM® that you can be up and running quickly. You don't have that long investment in time and energy trying to get another solution to work. The product works right out of the box, and everything is designed for ease of use."

Not surprisingly, Cass has big plans for SOAP/AM® going forward. Says Hopkins: "Some of the applications we have on the drawing board will provide interfaces to better manage security, improve system configuration, pay bills more quickly, monitor service level agreements, handle exceptions more smoothly, and accelerate or 'force' the payment of specific bills. It's all about giving users more visibility into what's happening on the NonStop system in a real-time fashion, and pushing that out in a secure, standards-based interface that they're comfortable using."

Crowley's overall impression of NuWave as a business and technology partner is overwhelmingly positive. "I'm impressed," he concludes. "NuWave has a great product. It's easy to use and requires very little training. We basically have two platforms, Windows and NonStop; this product allows us to blend the functionality contained in both of those platforms and make it one. It's been great—I really can't say enough about it."



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